

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXVI., No. 32.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, August 10, 1881.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLV., No. 32.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Faith, Hope and Love.

But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.—1 COR. XIII. 13.

Faith, hope and love are precious gifts, the church's glorious dower, Emblems of all she holds most dear, true secret of her power. Like gleaming stars they pierce the clouds by wind and tempest riven, And from the cross of Calvary lead the soul from earth to Heaven.

By faith we know the worlds were framed by God's Almighty word, And when redemption's wondrous tale the wayward heart has stirred, Believing in His love and grace, who came the lost to win, Faith shews the fountain opened wide, ready to cleanse from sin.

And then through all the journey home, faith's angel steps attend, With strength and courage for the way, with victory at the end, And sometimes from some mountain height by other pilgrims trod, Beyond the mists, faith sees afar, the city of our God.

Hope is the anchor of the soul entering within the veil, Steadfast as His eternal truth whose word can never fail, Jesus the great forerunner there, in priestly vesture stands, He pleads for Zion, yea her name is written on His hands.

"Faith, hope and love abide" but love is greatest of them all, How sweet upon all other gifts her benedictions fall, Love suffereth long, is ever kind, content to be unknown, Rejoicing in another's good and seeking not her own.

Yes they abide, Time's surging waves dash other hopes away, Earth's cherished goods, so fair to see, are rooted in decay; But love, immortal love, remains, so faithful, strong and true, Waiting with patience till death calls, and all things are made new.

And love divine! its height and depth we mortals cannot trace, We see as in a mirror now, but one day face to face, With eyes undimmed by self and sin, the wondering soul will learn All that was known in part below, and perfect love discern.

Till then, along the desert way, marked by the Master's feet, Bearing each others burdens, sharing the joy of each, Christ's ransomed hosts are passing on, a vast unnumbered band, Faith, hope and love their watchword, till they reach Emmanuel's land.
Montreal. F. M.

Associational Document.

Testifying for Christ

THE ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE N. S. EASTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, TO THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

Published in "Christian Messenger" by Special Request of the Association.

Dear Brethren,—

In this our Annual Letter we wish to call your attention to the great duty and privilege that belong to Christian churches, to give testimony for Christ.

The sources from which this testimony is to be drawn, are principally twofold, the Scriptures and Christian experience. The Scriptures supply the great and all-commanding treasury of testimony to Christ. "Search the Scriptures," said the Great Teacher; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." "To Him," says the Apostle Peter, "give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." And the Apocalypse declares, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Prophecy is full of Christ.

But the history contained in the New Testament affords testimony of the most reliable, complete and precious character concerning Christ,—His incarnation and mission, His life and death, His resurrection and ascension, His divinity and glory. John the Baptist was sent of God "to bear witness to the light," and he testified that Jesus "is the Son of God, the promised Messiah," "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Apostles were eye-witnesses of His miracles and majesty; of His humiliation and death; they saw and heard Him, and believed in Him; and conversed with Him repeatedly both before and after His resurrection. Their opportunities to become acquainted with Him were perfect and almost infinite. They were, therefore, witnesses fully competent to declare to the people all that they had seen and heard in connection with His person and work, His life and doctrine, His death and resurrection.

And they were divinely commissioned to be "witnesses" for Him "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth,"—that salvation is possible through Him alone,—that "His blood cleanseth from all sin,"—that access to God can be had only through Christ's atonement and mediation.

Now one great purpose and office of the Church of God is to bear testimony to Christ, and the power of his grace; that church which the Apostle Paul declares to be "the pillar and ground of the Truth," as it is in Jesus, can prove true to its character only as it shows forth, exemplifies and supports that "truth" in the spirit of faith and love. The church is to testify from age to age that Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life," the only and all-sufficient mediator between God and man.

A Christian church is a society, company, or collection of regenerate souls, baptized on credible evidence of their faith in Christ acting together in obedience to His commands for their own edification, the promotion of His kingdom and the maintenance of the truth in the world.

It is through receiving the gospel testimony concerning Christ that sinners are justified before God and saved. Great consequences depend, therefore, on the faithful performance of this duty by the church. And every church is required to bear testimony to Christ.

There are several ways in which this can be done, and none of

them superfluous or unnecessary, for God is the author of them all.

1st. By providing and maintaining, according to God's ordinance, an earnest, faithful, Christian ministry to proclaim and expound the gospel in the community. The ministry is appointed and called of God for the work of publishing and setting forth the truth as fully, clearly, and forcibly as possible, both to the church itself, and to all to whom access can be had. The ministers of Christ are required to "declare the testimony of God" concerning His Son in the flesh and the glorious work accomplished by his humiliation and death; and by sustaining them in the performance of this great duty the church is bearing testimony for Christ.

2nd. In maintaining, and in faithfully and devoutly attending the public worship of God. In a community the church testifies to the truth, excellence and glory of Christianity, and calls attention to the claims of God on all men for recognition, reverence and acknowledgement. Incalculably good results to individuals and to society generally result from having Christian worship steadily carried on among them in the spirit of faith and hope through Christ.

3rd. Testimony can be given to Christ by a church keeping in their full integrity and due order the ordinances which have been appointed by the Lord Jesus for his kingdom and to be observed to the end of time.

Baptism represents in figure the most important facts and doctrines of the gospel, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and testifies of Him as the crucified, risen and glorified Lord. Believers in Christ are the scriptural subjects of this sacred ordinance, according to the New Testament; for without faith it is impossible to please God by any outward ordinance or service whatever; and immersion, the form prescribed and sanctioned by the same authority, and significant, as it is, of the most precious truths of Christianity and facts of Christian experience, and adapted to impress them on the mind and set them forth before the world, must be maintained. Christ's law will not bend to man's option or convenience. The Lord's Supper exhibits Christ's death, and testifies in the most impressive and touching manner, His infinite love in dying for us; its purpose is to bring Him before us, and to awaken, deepen and perpetuate in us the most grateful and loving remembrance of Him. The communion is thus to be observed in the church, and to show forth "Christ's death till He come" to judge the world. The faithful administration of these ordinances in connection with the truth of the spirit's power and operation is of the greatest importance to the extension and purity of Christ's kingdom in the world. The Apostle John speaks thus:—"This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the spirit that beareth witness, because the spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, the spirit, the water and the blood, and these three agree in one."

The spirit of God, the water of baptism and the blood of atonement agree in their testimony that Christ is the Son of God, the head of the church, and Saviour of sinners.

4th. The most convincing and unanswerable testimony can be given for Christ by holy, consistent Christian living, by true piety maintained according to the teaching and example of the Lord, in all the movements and acts of the church. The Great Teacher called his disciples "the light of the world," and commanded them to impart light in the way just mentioned; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father that is in heaven."

5th. By carrying out a truly Christian discipline among its members, one in agreement with the command and spirit of Christ, for its own welfare and the good of souls, a church can bear testimony for Christ. The Apostle Paul in writing "to the churches of Galatia" directs them thus:—"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

6th. Beneficent Christian efforts for the moral and spiritual welfare of mankind, earnest labours direct or indirect, for the enlightenment and renovation of sinful humanity, directed simply from love to Christ, and desire for the salvation of sinners, is the most convincing testimony for Christ, the divinity of His religion and the power of his gospel to make men unselfish, benevolent, and God-like.

The preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom" of Christ "in all the world" by the Christian Church, is declared by the Lord himself to be "for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." A true missionary church is one that testifies for Christ to the perishing, at home and abroad.

7th. The social meetings of the church for Prayer and Conference afford calls and opportunities to the brethren to give testimony for Christ by declaring facts relating to Christian experience as known in their own personal history. The Christian warfare is in its progress so various and changeable in incidents and trials, victories and rejoicings, so fruitful in the evidence it affords of God's faithfulness and love, power and grace, that Christians have in themselves a spiritual revelation and history whose lessons of caution and courage, comfort and joy, faith and hope may be communicated with much profit; and to the honour of the Redeemer. These meetings should be utilized by Christians to testify from their own experience that "the Gospel is the power of God to the salvation of the soul."

8th. By means of Sabbath Schools, Churches and Christians can bear testimony to the youth of the community that the religion of Christ is most valuable and necessary, and worthy of the serious and earnest attention of all, and that all, old and young, should seek to obtain the rich spiritual blessings it proffers to mankind. The Testimony of Parents and Teachers, thus given in the spirit of love and fidelity is adapted to impress the youthful mind with the excellence and glory of true piety according to the glorious gospel of God.

9th. Much may be done at home in the domestic circle and among friends by personal efforts to present the truth to their minds and consciences, to win them to Christ and the kingdom of heaven. Even the humblest and most retiring Christian can bear testimony for Christ in this way. Confessing Christ in word, and by submitting to his ordinances and obeying his commands, is giving testimony concerning Jesus in a practical manner, and is adapted to impress

those who hear our words or observe our conduct. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." No one should be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ; and he that believeth it and holds it fast hath life and peace for ever. A living church, one in fellowship with Christ, and holding forth the words of truth and grace is a great blessing in any community and must exercise an influence highly beneficial to society.

The testimony of a prayerful, pure, joyous, shining Christian life, tells powerfully for Christ, and in favour of the Gospel; and must prove of incalculable value for the spiritual good of men. It repels doubt and helps to extinguish unbelief, and to fortify faith in Christianity as Divine. Infidelity and Scepticism have not yet forged the chains of an argument which can resist or demolish the logic of a holy, Christian life. Such a life is a potent and unanswerable testimony for Christ and Christianity. This testifying for Christ greatly benefits the church, and strengthens the individual members;—leads them to study and prayer; and it becomes also a means of reaching and convincing others that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him; and what is more; such faithful and loving allegiance as the discharge of this great duty implies, greatly honours the Lord Jesus before men.

It is feared there is not in our churches generally the faithful, earnest testimony given for Christ, which true, deep, powerful Christian experience and consecration demand and prompt. A return to a more simple, apostolic, intense Christian life, and a warmer and fuller expression of it both among ourselves and to others is very desirable, and indeed necessary to a more faithful discharge of the great duty we are urging and which the churches and every Christian are called upon to perform for Christ and the gospel. "Ye are my witnesses," saith the Lord. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

An essential characteristic of the Church of Christ as portrayed in the Apocalypse, is holding the testimony of Christ and giving forth that testimony for Him. Light and purity in them, and energetic service on their part for Christ and his kingdom, and consequent aggression on the kingdom of darkness, awaken the enmity of the evil one; a sure sign that they are Christ's, for the enemy of God and the Church knows his own, and will not seek to destroy them. "And the Dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ;" but in vain; "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" the Church of Christ. "And they overcame him" ("the accuser of the brethren") by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their Testimony.

How to call and keep a Pastor.

The following from Dr. Spears' Farewell Sermon addressed to Presbyterians may be commended to Baptists by changing the term "Presbyterian" into Baptist:

My remarks will have no reference to men, but only to the general principles of good Christian discretion. 1. Proceed as rapidly with this work as you can, and at the same time proceed intelligently and wisely. You must take time enough to know what you are doing, and to gain a high degree of probability your choice, when made, will prove to be one that you will not regret. 2. Have nothing to do with that class of men who are known as "pulpit-seekers." 3. Turn your attention in the direction of the Presbyterian ministry, and if at all practicable, make your selection within this circle. 4. All other things being equal, endeavour to procure a man who is comparatively young—who has the good fortune to have a good wife—who has his future largely to make, and who, if the right man, furnishes the reasonable prospect of a long settlement with you. 5. Choose a man whose translation to this pulpit will be to him an advance step in the history of his life. 6. Make your standard a man of good natural abilities, who has at least one strong working point in the construction of his mind, who has been thoroughly disciplined by educational culture, whose orthodoxy in the Presbyterian sense is beyond question and whose religious character and prudence are well attested by those who know him. 7. Have nothing to do with ministers, whether young or old, who run the machinery of church life upon the theory of momentary sensation. 8. Pay at least a reasonable degree of deference to the opinions of professional judges. 9. When you come to the actual choice of a pastor, and the preference of the majority shall be ascertained, then be sure to make that choice unanimous. 10. Above all, make the whole subject a theme of earnest and believing prayer to God.

My third item of advice has reference to the attitude which you should at once assume toward your new pastor. 1. Be thoroughly resolved that you will be satisfied with the man and his ministry, even if you should discover some things which you think might be improved. 2. Give him the confidence and affection of your hearts. 3. Always welcome him cordially to your dwellings, and bestow upon him those respectful attentions which are pleasant to every man, and have much to do with the comfort of a minister. 4. When you can do so with propriety and without foolish flattery, let him know from your own lips that his ministry is acceptable to you. 5. Never in his presence compare his ministry with that of any other man, so as to convey to his mind the impression that you mean to disparage him. 6. Be ready at all times to co-operate with him in what he may propose for the good of the church. 7. Never, except for the weightiest reasons, take ground against him. Brethren and friends members of the session, members of the Board of Deacons, members of the Board of Trustees, superintendent, officers, teachers and scholars of the Sunday School, members of this congregation, it only remains for me now to say—"I commend you to God and to the Word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified."

Many things are good for me, but none so as to draw nigh to God.—Jay.