

become antiquated, but more frequently upon the old forms of Christianity, more especially as embodied in the formulas and confessions of every Church. The age had an aversion to a settled creed, and doubt was exalted to the rank of a virtue. The leaders of the attack had themselves nothing new to present. As to the London *literati*, they were able to write brilliant articles, but they would be amazed if any one were to ask them to concoct a new faith. The Oxford essayists, however powerful in destruction, had as yet shown no spines for construction. The extravagances of the Oxford School of the last age had only helped to bring about the criticism and doubt of the Oxford school of this age, and he expected nothing from a younger Oxford which had cheered the Bishop of Oxford, and at one and the same time hissed the Dean of Westminster and Mr. Spurgeon. The rev. gentleman concluded by expressing the hope that in front of the formidable enemy, Christians of different evangelical denominations would combine, first in action, then in spirit and sentiment, and in the end in fellowship. Dr. Cairns (Barwick-on-Tweed) followed with some criticisms of the new edition of the "Leben Jesu," remarking that in his new edition Dr. Strauss wrote at a disadvantage, the continental mind being occupied with Réaumur, and having no room for two heroes of unbelief at the same time. In the flagrant contradictions of the two he might be forgiven for seeing the avenging hand of justice in the rejection of a Divine history. Mr. Peter Bayne said the present was a greater crisis than had happened in the history of religious opinion for nearly 2,000 years. Within the next half-century the discussion would be settled the one way or the other. The Rev. Dr. A. Thomson (Edinburgh) made the leading speech on the Sabbath-observance question. He stated that about 5,000,000 of the population were at this moment placed outside the reach of Sabbath influences by secular occupations, and to a large extent voluntarily. He besought the Alliance to use its utmost efforts to resist the compulsory Railway Bill, which would give the sanction of the State to the infraction of the Divine law. A good deal was said about the use of Sunday cars, of which it was said that in Edinburgh, but for church-goers, proprietors would not find them pay. The Rev. Dr. Jenkins said he feared parents were not sufficiently careful to put the children's toys and newspapers out of sight on Saturday night. Professor St. Hilaire spoke to the extent of Sabbath desecration in Paris, and the means of diminishing it. On Friday the proceedings were closed with resolutions expressing thanks to all who had taken part in the proceedings, and gratitude to God for the harmony that had prevailed.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger:

DEAR BROTHER,

Iota, in yours of the 17th inst., compels me to trouble you with one word. Neglect of discipline in some of the Baptist churches in E. N. S. was the text of my late offending paragraph. Iota seems to imagine that, in my reply to himself and *Delegate*, I have somehow retracted the charges made in that paragraph, or involved in it. He says, that "the remark of Brother Davis, that he did not refer to the E. N. S. churches when he spoke of 'unholy professors,' &c., 'nor to any in these Provinces,' is enough." Now no such remark is to be found in my reply. I ask there, "Are there no Baptist churches that have become worthless for good, and mighty for evil, by their neglect of Christian discipline? I do not refer here," I proceed, "to any such in these Provinces; but I think I have known such." Iota ought to have seen here, that my reference is to churches, and not to individuals. And my reference is made in good faith, so far as churches are concerned. I do not say, however,—as who has a right to say save the Searcher of hearts?—that there are not to be found in these churches individuals who may be described as "unholy professors, Christians without Christianity," &c. If I had not conceived of the possibility of such persons being found in these churches, my remarks would have been somewhat pointless; and to retract what I did say, in the manner which Iota represents me to have done, would be just to stultify myself. I am sorry to dissipate Iota's pleasant dreams. But I certainly said nothing so hopeful as he suggests; nor do I wish to be understood as retracting any thing I have said on the question of discipline in the E. N. S. Baptist churches.

Yours in the Gospel,

J. DAVIS.

St. John, N. B., Aug. 19, 1864.

The best way of being thankful to God for what he gives me, is a liberal distribution of it. Love every man for Christ's sake, and fear none in his cause.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 24, 1864.

The Circular Letters from the Western and Central Associations have both been, by request, laid before our readers. The former on "Union" and the latter on "Family Prayer" were calculated to do much good when read carefully, and carried out practically. The Letter from the Eastern Association to the Churches it comprises, is equally valuable, and deserves the thoughtful consideration of the members of Christian churches generally. We commend it to our readers.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Pastors and Delegates of the Eastern Baptist Association to the Members of the Churches which they represent, Greeting.

BELOVED IN THE LORD.—In compliance with established custom, we address to you such counsels and advice as we hope will be profitable to you as Churches and individual believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Various topics have been proposed for your consideration, in former Letters, all of which were intended to promote the stability, harmony, and Christian intelligence of the churches; especially their piety, developed in the spirit and conduct of each member separately. Being now desirous of promoting and perpetuating like results, in all your hearts and lives, and that you may enjoy much consolation in the Lord, we adopt, as our present theme,

THE CONSTITUENTS AND DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

A Christian Church in the New Testament sense of the term, is a company of disciples, who have received the grace of God by faith in the Lord Jesus; and by baptism, have been admitted into the fellowship of the body, and one with another. It is, moreover, essential to a Christian Church that they maintain the worship of God, the holy communion of the Lord's body and blood; that they watch over each other in love, and faithfulness, and maintain that government and discipline in the body, for which our Lord instituted an executive ministry, and every necessary law, in the gospel and letters apostolic to the churches. In practically giving effect to each and all of these obligations, so indispensable to the peace and prosperity of the churches, it is of great importance that all the members be firmly united and compacted together, in a sound faith and fervent love to each other, and that they "obey them that have the rule over them," while faithfully applying and executing the laws, which their great Head has enacted for their government. By such regard to the laws of Christ, promptly executed, as occasions arise, the unity, peace, and prosperity of the churches will be preserved.

Such being the ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS of the Church and her government, the question naturally arises: Can those bodies professing to be churches of Christ, be regarded as such, while they fail to assemble for the worship of God, to "commune" at the Lord's table, to be faithful to each other in love, to meet for prayer and conference, and labor not to reclaim the wandering or excommunicate the incorrigible, who, by their litigious spirit, endanger the peace of the Church? A candid answer to these enquiries, must, we think, be given in the negative, because they are deficient in what is ESSENTIAL to a Church state. The same is true of those bodies, which are also deficient in paying, what, by union of action, they might pay to sustain the preaching of the Word, and the diffusion of the gospel throughout the world. How can they expect to prosper when they adopt such a course?

We do not suppose that every small church, however liberally inclined, has the ability wholly to support a pastor; but we do suppose that every church is *essentially* bound by the word of God, "To lay by in store as God has prospered them," to pay, "cheerfully," as they obtain means, for preaching in their own church, and for the cause of their Lord and Master, abroad. And we are confident that if Christians were systematic and regular in "laying by in store" they might easily increase their gifts for missionary and other benevolent objects, much above what they are accustomed to be, and be twice blessed, in what they receive and what they give. We are aware that churches may be very few in their numbers, talents, and pecuniary means, and so widely scattered from each other, that they cannot meet frequently, without inconvenience. All such churches have a just claim upon our sympathies, upon our prayers and aid. But may we not ask, brethren, if meetings for serving Him who suffered trials, and toils, and death, for us, should be prevented by a little inconvenience, which would not prevent attention to politics, or scenes of earthly pleasure, which cost both time and money?

In view of these facts, would it not be well that such feeble bodies should be united as branches to some neighbouring churches, which enjoy a constant pastorate, and thereby become entitled to a measure of visitation and supervision, from time to time? Branch churches might enjoy monthly or bi-monthly the benefits of pastoral visitation, of the Conference, meetings for preaching and the Lord's Supper, and report annually, through the visiting pastor or by letter, to the parent church, their condition and statistics. By contributing, also, in their proportion, towards the support of the supervising pastor, and by aiding the cause of

Missions and kindred objects, they might, though few and feeble, maintain such regularity of order and action, as would redound to the credit and honor of the cause, and secure to themselves privileges and assistance, not otherwise to be enjoyed, in their weak state, and until they should acquire strength to carry out the designs of a church embodiment. The tendency of this course would be to keep alive the flame of love, the power of faith, and the energy of pious zeal in Christian efforts for the promotion of good morals, the conversion of sinners, the upbuilding of the church, and the salvation of numerous millions who yet remain in ignorance of Jesus Christ and the Bible, who are spell-bound in their superstitions, and fast sinking into an awful eternity. The question naturally arises, cannot these weak churches be strengthened and these small ones increased? It is hoped they possess the elements of strength if there were sufficient cohesion among the members, and if they would put forth the energy of united faith and prayer, and "revive the stones out of the rubbish," as Christians who feel the object to be gained is sufficiently important to demand their strongest and holiest endeavors. Let the piety of the churches rise, from its low temperature, to a degree which shall warm into life and energy, the whole phalanx of the elect; then shall "he that is feeble among them, in that day, be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." The power of the church is not to be estimated numerically; but by the degree of her piety. If this be frigid and sluggish, and her love and union cold, and slow in action, every exertion will be made with reluctance; and covenant obligations, though they be not denied, will appear to such professors as indistinct as an object in the distance, and their most sacred obligations be violated with impunity.

Let the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord, and the church be revived in all her graces; then will her members appreciate their religious privileges and obligations, as no longer to be contented without the stated means of grace and will say, "Why do we sit still?" Then both the heart and the hand will be opened, and the faithful will "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty." This is the great secret of every church and every Christian. "His piety that gives unity; and unity given strength."

When converts offer themselves to the churches, let them, first be duly instructed in the doctrine and commands of Jesus; and then be received into the fellowship of the church, under a full view of covenant obligations, that they may not soon forget their vows, and compel the church to discipline and exclude them. Let faithfulness be mingled with a large share of fervent love, and pastors and churches, instead of neglecting cases of backsliding and offence, till not a few require church action, be prompt and impartial to restore the straying and expel the irreclaimable. Then will the churches be as "cities built on hills," and their members as "burning and shining lights" amid darkness, which can be dispelled only by the light of life; and many, convinced by what they behold in the faithful, shall glorify God and say, "We will go with you for we have heard that God is with you."

May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance, and every Christian soldier gird himself in the panoply divine for the fight against sin, till by faith he gains the victory, and receives a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give to all them who love his appearing.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

FREDERICTON, N. B.

August 10th, 1864.

Our reasons for writing from this rural capital of New Brunswick are not of a very abstruse character. Having had an hour to spare, we begin telling the story of the Baptist Convention, before it actually commences. Being obliged to spend two days in this province, more than are actually required for the meetings, we have considered this the best means of securing a brief rest from the continued confinement of city life, and we take the steamer for "up the river," to renew our associations with the lovely scenery on the bank of the St. John. We shall, therefore, in as condensed a form as may be convenient, proceed to inform our readers

HOW WE CAME HERE.

Thanks to the Special Train arrangement for meeting the steamer *Emperor*, we are able to secure breakfast in a rational manner before starting, which is not always the case by the regular morning trains. As it happens, the last of our Canadian visitors are leaving by the same boat, and thanks to the efforts of our cabbies to accommodate them with the best carriages, we have to take one of the poorest instead of the one ordered; but, as we wish to avoid the greater inconvenience of losing our passage, we submit, as philosophically as possible, under the impression that we hereby contribute a trifle towards their favorable impressions of our city and province; and so we reach the depot. Here are the Canadians and New Brunswickers, with a large number of our citizens, who have been aiding in the entertainment of our guests for the past week, come to see them off, and give the last farewell.

The wish still to linger with each other is being pacified by exchanges of *cartes*. All the leave-takings being over, and places taken in the three cars provided for the passengers; the whistle is blown, the conductor warns the rest to "stand clear there" and now the hats are waving and voices send forth cheer after cheer, until the sound dies away in the greater and less animating noise of the train whirling off with its precious intercolonial freight.

At Windsor, in about two hours, and we find the steamer already arrived; the passengers are filling the wharf and depot with life and bustle. The activity of the parties engaged in putting the cargo on board shows that no time is to be lost, and all hands proceed with as much speed as possible to get on board, ready to start. At the same moment that we "cast off" the down train begins to move, and again cheers are raised by both parties as they take a centrifugal course under the powerful influence of steam—the rails guiding those who have accompanied their guests thus far, and those who are now retiring with the others who have come from St. John, whilst the iron arms begin to move up and down under the influence of the great motive power, and the steamer proceeds on its way plowing through the muddy waters of the Avon.

The weather is all that heart could wish, and under its influence the whole party are leaving terra firma for the glassy surface of the Basin, giving unmistakable expressions of the pleasantness of the visit to Nova Scotia. The joyousness felt by all, brings them together on the deck, and the vivacious and musical Canadians strike up a French melody with a refrain in which the company sympathize and join in chorus most heartily. Our time is now occupied in making further acquaintance with this little floating world. A slight haze partially obscures the beauties of the scenery, but as we have so large a number of passengers—about two hundred—we need nothing more to make the time pass pleasantly. We leave Avondale, Hantsport, Kempt, Cheverie, and here we are at Partridge Island, Cape Blommedon, Cape Split Cape d'or, the whirling, boiling waters of the Bay between these points, as the waters rush into the Basin, each in turn attract the notice of the company; till we are along side Isle Haute—the high island. The light houses are now looked, for to indicate the progress we are making towards "over the Bay."

The process of providing dinner for such a company "at sea" must be no mean operation. Alderman Coleman is very active in attention to the travellers he has in charge, and with great devotion to this truly aldermanic business, he sees them well taken care of. No complaint could be made of deficiency in either solids or fluids to suit the greatest epicure, and, of course, no scruples are indulged by those who are accustomed to partake of them. Having two total abstinence doctors on our left, and a moderate drinker of a seventy-nine years of age on our right, we suffer no great inconvenience by contact with the beverage which befogged our ancestor Noah. Tables continued to be filled by well-prepared appetites, and viands were brought on with great despatch to satisfy them for two or three hours—the last man taking about the last of the supplies, until one almost wondered where the provisions could have been piled away in the limited accommodations of the steamer.

Songs of different nationalities every now and again were heard breaking forth in different parts of the ship, and in all, the choruses were taken up, and sung most lustily, proving that the "jolly good fellows" are well satisfied with the cheer, with the company, and with all the world beside.

In the course of the afternoon, a Meeting in due form was called in the fore cabin, and resolutions expressive of high appreciation of the attention accorded to the gentlemen from Canada and New Brunswick, by His Excellency Sir A. G. McDonnell and Lady McDonnell, by Admiral Sir James Hope, by Members of the Government, by His Worship the Mayor and the Aldermen, and by the citizens of Halifax generally, were moved, seconded, and spoken to by several of the gentlemen—one of them being most eloquently given in French. Whiskies were expressed by several of the speakers of soon having an opportunity of reciprocating the kindness by a like representation from Nova Scotia coming to Canada.

Although a slight shower was falling as we approached the wharf at St. John, yet vocal powers were not to be restrained, and a number on the forward part of the deck strike up the "Canadian Boat Song" and conclude with the National Anthem—the last strain of which was being just completed as we touched the sides of the wharf, crowded with citizens in readiness to welcome our arrival. The piles of baggage are soon overhauled, each man of the hundred, looking for and picking out his own. The brethren Hon. Mel. Seely,