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The Cultivation of Brotherly Love.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE NOVA SCOTIA EASTERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS COMPOSED.

Dear Brethren,—

We present an important subject for your consideration. Than this, we know of nothing more worthy of careful thought at the present time. Dr. Albert Barnes affirms that "perhaps no command of our Saviour is so little apparent to the world as that which enjoins the love of the brethren."

We do not undervalue the truth. The landmarks set up by the Lord of the way, in the New Testament, we must by no means despise, and neglect. As Baptists it behoves us to be true to our mission until all the professed followers of Jesus, rejecting human traditions, bow to the teachings of the sacred word. But religion does not consist in the maintenance of a sound creed, nor in the proper observance of gospel ordinances. Its essential element is love. Our orthodoxy may be above suspicion, our religious forms may be scriptural; our sanctuaries may be costly and moulded after the most approved architectural designs;—but these will not compensate for the absence of love. Without this there is rottenness at heart, and imbecility and death. If we are wanting in love for the brethren our profession is only as sounding brass. Without the existence of love amongst ourselves, our efforts for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom will appear to the world absurd and contemptible. Instead of eliciting their admiration, we shall attract notice, to secure contempt and scorn.

Brotherly love is the distinguishing badge of the Christian Church. Other organizations are known, by some peculiar doctrine, mode of dress, or sign, or outward token. "By this," said the Great Teacher, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This divine principle is implanted in regeneration, and its existence is represented by John as a proof of having passed from death to life. The same apostle declares, "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

This, then, is the sacred tie binding together the followers of Jesus; the golden chain, stronger than brass, that never galls nor burdens. He who finds a place in the church, but yet lacks in love, is out of his proper sphere, and should either repent, or go out again to his own company. For that want nothing can atone. Who would value apparent amiability of temper, in one who, in his own family is morose and unkind? Be he what he may abroad, at home he should cultivate charity and peace;—a professing Christian is judged, not by his attachment to men of other creeds, but by his love for the household of faith to which he belongs.

We have the character of love portrayed in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians—"Charity suffereth long, and is kind." It is an emanation from Him who is "slow to wrath." It is to be lamented that the world so seldom witnesses an exhibition of this heavenly grace. Not that the opportunity is wanting. The occasions for its exercise are frequent. In the fervor of religious feeling to love is easy; but let another treat us with indifference or injustice, and how quickly is the spirit of resentment aroused! It is well if the sun does not go down on our wrath, thus in an evil hour provoked. But how often does the returning day fail in dispelling the dark shadow from our heart. The bitter feeling is nursed to a glowing heat. The fire is kindled, and fuel added thereto until the peace of a whole community is disturbed, and the church rent asunder. "Charity," the apostle adds, "is not easily provoked." This agrees with the words of Peter "Charity will cover a multitude of sins," and with those of Solomon when he says that it "covereth all sins." There is no room for resentment, and enmity in the heart where charity dwells. A counterfeit is supposed to resemble that for what it is taken. If there are such in the churches what surer test do we have, by which to prove their worthlessness, than this that shows them to be wanting in the grace we are considering. Love is not extinguished by the breath of provocation. It "suffereth long"—it "is kind." This loving temper cannot fail under any provocation. "It beareth all things"; or, as the original implies, *covers up and conceals all*, even as the Lord does with the iniquities of his people.

Does this spirit prevail in our churches? Are the brethren endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace? Instead of selfishly enjoying his own mercies, is each earnestly seeking the other's wealth? Do all resist the devil and his wiles, and do they stand shoulder to shoulder, against the united hosts of darkness? Then are we eliciting the admiration of the world. Then do we realize the blessed ideal of the Psalmist when he exclaimed, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity?" And who would mar this beautiful picture? What hand so ruthless as to destroy an edifice so fair to look upon? Brethren if it be so let us add to the growing lustre of our name, and extend this heaven born principle to the ends of the earth.

But, alas! it is not so with us. If the picture represents what ought to be, it is not overdrawn. But that we do not realize the ideal, we must sadly confess. Look at the professing people of God before the hosts that oppose them, under the leadership of Satan. These stand in unbroken ranks,

Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield.

But those professedly engaged for God and Truth do not exhibit like unanimity and zeal. We see lines broken, disorder here and there. Their arms are turned against each other as though they were foes, and oblivious of the fact that the enemy is covering them with defeat and shame. O for a trumpet voice to sound out above the din of these contending factions, and to restore order along these ranks. Brethren, shall we appeal in vain. By the love of God, by the glories of heaven, by the terrors of hell, by all that is precious to man for time and eternity we entreat you let there "be no divisions among you." Let nothing alienate your affections, or break your union.

We do not wish to prefer any charges against the denomination so dear to our hearts, that cannot be sustained. If there be reproof

in the language we employ, it is the reproof of love. Some of our churches are walking in love, and many of our members are promoters of peace. But if there be a single instance of departure from the gospel rule, the word of admonition is required. That there are too many such cases is evident. We must not close our eyes to the fact, but rather protest against, and seek to remove the evil.

It remains to show briefly how brotherly love may be promoted. And first we would remark that one ought never to expect provocation from another. Many causes of offence would never have been found if they had not been sought. Some are too sensitive, too ready to misconstrue the motives of others. They expect so much deference, and are so suspicious that the very shade of neglect or provocation awakens their resentment.

Again; a frank and open-hearted manner of dealing with each other would tend to the increase of brotherly love. This would strengthen confidence and mutual respect. Our Saviour has given a rule for a specific case: "If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Be frank, plain, and affectionate. The simple going and telling the brother his fault does not fulfil the command. We must go with the right spirit. This will almost certainly ensure success.

We must further observe the law of forgiveness enforced by the Saviour, "I say not unto thee until seven times but until seventy times seven." The lesson is obvious. He who has not the law of forgiveness in his heart cannot offer acceptable prayer. He may seek for pardon as he forgives—if he does not forgive all offences against him he cannot expect forgiveness for all that he has committed against the Lord. We are required to love our enemies and to pray for those who use us despitefully, even though they continue to repeat their injurious acts. Their evil conduct is a temptation to us, but not our justification in wrong doing. "It takes two to make a quarrel." Forgive, and you cannot contend. Forgive, and there cannot be strife. The Chinese emperor who promised to destroy his enemies claimed that he had fulfilled his word, when by his kindness towards them he made them friends.

Confession is another duty that is plainly taught us in the word. "Confess your faults one to another." It is humiliating, and therefore hard, to acknowledge "I have sinned," but when it becomes a duty it should be cheerfully performed. He who thus humbles himself is truly noble, and more worthy of honor than many who gain the laurel wreath of fame. We are to be reconciled to a brother in order to place ourselves in a position to render acceptable worship. "First be reconciled to thy brother, then come and offer thy gift." He who would seek reconciliation with heaven, must have his conscience clear of offence towards man. How can one bow in true penitence before God, who cannot confess a fault to a brother?

We should cultivate whatever tends to the strengthening of mutual love. "Follow after the things that make for peace." We have need to guard our words and our conduct. We should give no countenance to the tale bearer and the slanderer. We should be less ready to give credence to what injuriously affects the character of a brother; and more willing to believe whatever is reported to his credit. Christians should manifest their kindly feelings when they meet by a smile of recognition, or by a pleasant word, or by the friendly grasp of the hand. True the church is not a mutual admiration society. We know others are not perfect, and we cannot lay any claim to that distinction ourselves. If then the Lord can forgive us and love us, it is a small matter if we love our brother. For brethren to go to law with each other is a direct violation of this rule we are seeking to enforce; and he who would be guilty in this respect should be treated as an offender by the church.

To know our duty towards the brethren, we have need to study more closely the character of Christ to consider his meekness and forbearance, in the midst of calumnies, insults and cruelties. We have need to consider the spirit of forgiveness that He endured even to the end, and that in the midst of suffering breathed out a prayer for his murderers. Jesus has given us the rule by which we are to determine the measure of love we owe to each other. "As I have loved you." Find the limit of Christ's love. Until your love has passed beyond those lines, disobedience to this command can have, in God's sight, no palliating circumstances.

We might enlarge to show the desirableness of cultivating brotherly love—its effect upon the church, and upon the world, but we forbear—and close in the words of an inspired apostle, "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children and walk in love."

REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL LITERATURE.

The press is an indispensable agency in fostering and forwarding all great enterprises. We rejoice that it is wielded with such power and success in spreading the gospel throughout the world, and promoting christian culture in the church. The progress of the age demands of us, as a denomination, more vigorous and systematic effort in the dissemination of pure religious literature. The time may not have arrived yet for the founding of a Dominion Baptist Publication Society. It is, however, an enterprise of such vital importance that the consideration of it presses upon our attention. In the mean time existing Baptist publishing houses should receive liberal patronage at our hands.

The *Christian Messenger* continues its successful career as an unflinching advocate of truth, and the commodious vehicle for the inter-communication of thought. We cordially recommend it as a good family newspaper, not only to Baptists but to others as well. We also recommend *The Baptist Teacher*, and the International Series of Bible Lessons to be used in all our Sabbath Schools.

Respectfully submitted,
J. B. McDONALD, Chairman.

Although the Jesuits have been engaged in the work of missions among the heathen more than two hundred years, not an instance is on record where they have sought to accomplish their work by translating the Scriptures into the language of the people. Popery has no greater enemy than the Bible.

For the Christian Messenger.

Rich and Poor.

They stood upon the pavement; they, the beautiful lady in front of her stately South-End mansion, and the bare-footed child whose richest clothing was but rags. The lady entered her home where all was elegance and comfort; the child drifted on into the crowd, God only knows where, and I was left to ponder upon the extremes of society. One side clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day; the other glad to gather the crumbs falling from the tables of plenty.

The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the "Maker of them all." So says the Bible, but I fear the rich are apt to forget that the poor have the same Father, and are their brethren. The poor are too often passed with no word or look of sympathy, while they gaze with hungry eyes and aching hearts at the superfluous trappings of the rich. In this great city the poor are everywhere; crouching in damp, loathsome cellars, stifling in hot suffocating attics, vainly trying to earn a few cents, which to them means bread, and consequently life, while the rich enjoy their luxurious homes, ride in their costly equipages, and then consider themselves abused if their slightest wishes are not gratified. Thoughtlessly sometimes, selfishly oftener, they wrap themselves with pride as with a garment, and regard neither the orphan's cry nor the widow's prayer. I have seen a lady (?) call a boy to hold her horse, and a dozen gladly spring to do her bidding, hoping for the much needed pennies, but the carelessly spoken "Much obliged" was the end of the affair. All very good as far as it goes, but "much obliged" will never buy bread and butter. Such cases are, however, full of the milk of human kindness compared with the replies made to appeals for help. How often have I heard the words, "Move on, I've nothing for you," and have wondered if people had either hearts or souls. But some will tell me "Oh, we get imposed upon by those who are not deserving." A very plausible excuse for want of charity and generosity, but is there not time enough wasted in various ways to find out and relieve many who are really deserving? Is it quite necessary to devote all our time, talents and energy to the fostering of pride, vanity, and selfish ease, when poverty stalks through the land like an armed man? In this season of "hard times" is it absolutely essential to life and happiness to wear twelve dozens of buttons on one dress, and other adornments to correspond? Are sewing-women mere machines, out of whom three extra hours of toil may be ground on Saturday night in order that the whim of wearing a dress on Sunday may be gratified? Is it right for men to drink wine and smoke cigars when the money thus wasted would lighten the burden of some poverty stricken brother or sister? Do people ever remember that God has said "The gold and the silver are mine," and that "to whom much is given of him shall much be required?" What account shall these give of their stewardship who, seeing destitution and want all around them, refuse to lend a helping hand to those who are trying to eke out a miserable existence? I do not intend to say that because people are rich they are of necessity selfish and unmindful of others, but while there are those living in affluence who are noble-hearted Christians, I do fear that the opposite is too often the rule. How long shall these things be? May we not reasonably conclude that these times, which promise to be worse instead of better, are sent of God to bring down the pride of those who dwell on high, and teach us lessons of charity and good will to one another?

Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them."

Boston, August 1st, 1876.

L. E. W.

A zealous Congregationalist once told the following, which she greatly enjoyed: During a visit among Baptist friends in Pittsburgh she accepted the invitation of the superintendent to be present at the Sunday School and take a class of little ones just sent up from the infant department. The lesson introduced John, the disciple of our Lord. As older heads have often confounded him with that John who "came preaching in the wilderness," the teacher felt anxious to bring out his personality clearly. So she asked: "By what names do you know this John?" "John the Evangelist," "John the Revelator," "John the Beloved," answered the eager voices. "Why was he called the Beloved?" continued she. "Because Jesus loved him best." "Why did He love him best?" persisted this friend. Imagine her discomfiture when a sweet voice replied. "Tos he was a baptist."

"Jack!" screamed a bright-eyed, golden-haired, fair-faced little girl of not more than six summers, to her younger brother, who had dumped himself under the wall, where he was digging sand with a strip of shingle—"Jack, you good-for-nothing little scamp, you are the torment of my life! Come right into the house, this minute, or I'll take the very hide off'm you! Come in, I say!" "Why, Totty," exclaimed her father, who chanced to come up at that moment, "what in the world are you saying? Is that the way you talk to your your little brother?" "Oh, no, papa," answered the child promptly, and with an innocent smile. "We were playing keep house, and I am Jack's mama, and I was talking to him just as mama talked to me this morning. I never really spank him, as mama does me sometimes."

"A costly wife" is the designation applied to a woman in London, for whom her husband paid a fine of ten dollars, imposed on her for drunkenness. It was not the one fine alone which entitled her to this description. Within a few years her unfortunate husband has paid one thousand dollars in fines for the same cause. But who can estimate the cash cost of drunkenness in which wives are mulcted by drunken husbands? Some one being asked "What is worse than a drunken man?" answered, "A drunken woman." A few years ago there was a well attested case of a gentleman cured of a great fondness for drink, by his wife insisting on taking glass for glass. Such a heroic remedy, however, can hardly be recommended.—*Ledger*.