

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## THE CAUSE OF GOD IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY.

No. 3.

A time of preparation is, in many instances, a season of trial to the Church of Christ; and whilst tracing the history of past events, the attentive observer of the operations of Providence (although he may deplore present evils) cannot fail to perceive that the author and disposer of all will eventually bring light out of obscurity, and order out of confusion, and that a night of preparation will usher in the dawn of a day of refreshing, from the presence of the Lord, when the Sun of Righteousness, by the brightness of his rising, will disperse those clouds of darkness which may have rested over the moral destinies of his cause. The Church of St. George was to pass through many changes, and experience a long and gloomy eve of preparation before the purposes of God were made manifest in effecting a more permanent and prosperous state of religion in the county. From the departure of Elder Dunbar to the year 1830, the church was destitute of a pastor, although having the transient visits of persons who professedly were Ministers of Christ, when Elder Ainsley, from Nova Scotia, visited the place, and a gracious revival of religion followed his ministrations. The hearts of God's people were quickened, and many sinners were converted. This period was fruitful of important events; and whilst a beloved Ainsley finished his course, and Charlotte County was the field in which he fell, fighting the battles of the Lord; it is also holy and hallowed ground, as the resting-place where repose the dust and ashes of the aged veteran of the cross, but as he fell in the glorious contest another was to rise up to occupy his place, and whose name is extensively identified with the Baptist cause in this Province—Elder Robinson of St. John.

From the windows of Deacon Russell's house in the Parish of St. Andrews, may be seen the mound surrounded by its appropriate paling, where lie the remains of the aged minister so universally known. It must be an interesting spot for the believer to visit; and whilst sitting in the room where he died, marking the very spot where his death-bed was placed, and hearing from the lips of him who so kindly ministered to his last earthly wants the circumstances of his short illness and decease, the past comes before the mind with vivid distinctness. The well-remembered form seems to appear, the well-known tones seem to be heard, an importance is attached to the most minute circumstance connected with one, who, though no longer amongst us, perpetuates his name and his memory by the living voice and active labours of him whom the Lord was pleased to make, through His instrumentality, his successor. The mantle of the departing Elijah fell upon the surviving Elisha. It is unnecessary to detail the particulars of the commencement of Elder Robinson's ministry, suffice it to say, that he was baptized by Father Ansley, and ordained by Elders Joseph Crandal and McCully, over the Church of St. George, in 1832. A great blessing followed his labours, not only in the church, but in different parts of the county; for, at that period, he was the only minister of the Baptist order in the whole region extending over the distance of forty miles, preaching in the churches of St. David's, St. Andrews, and St. George, all of which were organized about the same period of time. He continued in the church as pastor until the year 1840, when he removed to St. John, by the earnest solicitations of the brethren in that city. During his pastorate in St. George, he was greatly approved unto God in the conversion of sinners, and in gathering in those who had previously been converted, but had not publicly professed the Saviour, at Bocabee, now called 24 St. Patricks, who were dismissed and organized into a separate church, over which our beloved Burpe was ordained; yet when Elder Robinson gave up the charge, it numbered upwards of 300 members, including First Falls, Second Falls, Pennfield, and Mascarene and Letete, all of the disciples in which places were embodied in one church. Elder Robinson found an able coadjutor in the ministry in Elder Thompson, ordained over the First St. Andrews Baptist Church in 1834, where he still remains, possessing great fervency of spirit, and strong devotional feelings; he has been very much blessed, notwithstanding the disadvantages of labouring in a place where his youth was spent, previous to his conversion, and afflicted with disease which has often laid him upon the bed of long sustained agony, and which now threatens to remove him to his last resting place.

If it be God's will to take him to himself, his loss will be much felt and deeply deplored, not many Ministers can give to a meeting that interest which Brother Thompson can impart by his warm-hearted exercises, but we must pray that his sickness may not be unto death. Our aged Brother in the Min-

istry—Elder Thomas McGee, has also laboured for many years in this country, edifying the people of God and building them up in their most holy faith. An abundant harvest has been reaped and while toiling in the vineyard we may from time to time cast our mental vision back to that period when such great additions were made, and wish that a similar state of things were now in existence; but a wise God has gracious designs in those seasons of declension which we now experience. The character of the Church of Christ may be acquiring a stability and the minds of God's children may be receiving fixed principles of action at such a period as this, rather than in one of more apparent prosperity.

After a pentecostal season has been enjoyed, similar to those which have been experienced by our Churches, it requires time to test the genuineness of much of that which at the moment may have the appearance of pure and undefiled religion; much of the excitement has been like the crackling of thorns under the pot ignited by the flame; many prove to be only "stoney ground hearers;" many hear the word with joy, and run well for a season, but when offences come, and the first impulse of their fervour has died away, it evidently appears that they have been deceived. We may never see revivals of religion presenting the same aspects, which in past years they have possessed. Experience and observation convince us, that as the mind becomes more and more enlightened by the truth, there will be less of those fitful impulses, which may mark the character of Christians, as well as of Churches; but in place thereof, there will be a progressive spirit of piety, and a steady, practical working of the great principles of the Gospel; although we have much cause to be humbled, yet we have no cause to be discouraged.

In the present low state of our Zion we may see evils which ought to be rectified and knowing, by experience how much we are the creatures of habit may endeavour to stamp upon succeeding generations a loftier principle of Christian enterprise and a deeper tone of Christian feeling.

WILLIAM HALL.

For the Christian Visitor.

## Sabbath Evening Conference.

"They that feared the Lord," saith the Scriptures, "spake often one to another." When this kind of christian intercourse is conducted as it becometh the Gospel, it will not be found among the least of the means that the wisdom of God has instituted for the mutual edification, and increase of brotherly kindness and charity in the Churches of the Saints.

In a Church of Christ where all are brethren and members one of another (subject to like passions with other men) and differing in their dispositions, education, and predilections, according to the relations and circumstances, by which they had been influenced in the days of their ignorance, and the character of the instruction and discipline which they received at the time of their initiation into the church. Misunderstandings, differences of sentiments and feelings to a certain extent, must be ever looked for. Hence the adaptedness of the scriptural admonition, "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." We, however, form an incorrect idea of the real character of our relation to each other, if we attempt to sustain it by omitting to discharge faithfully the Apostolic injunction, "exhorting and admonishing one another," when required, lest we should be overcome by the deceitfulness of sin. This part of the ancient mode of imparting instruction and correction in righteousness is either criminally neglected by the mass of professors, or thrown on the shoulders of the pastor, who must either attend to it, or allow sin to rest at his brother's door; and not unfrequently, in the place of warning them that are disorderly, and supporting the feeble-minded, their delinquencies are currently reported to others in their absence, while no efforts were put forth to admonish or reclaim the defaulter.

We have already ascertained that difficulties, from the nature of things, must needs come. We have also seen that the Holy Ghost has wisely appointed and prescribed means for their removal; and probably in no other way can we more effectually reclaim backsliders, support the weak, instruct the ignorant, and rectify misconceptions, than by faithful and pointed conversation, conducted in the spirit of meekness.

Regarding the subject in this light, Deacon G., on a Sabbath evening in the month of —, after listening to two very practical and appropriate discourses from his pastor, on Christian faithfulness, directed his course to the dwelling of brother T., a member of the same Church, who was accustomed,

except at times of particular excitement, to absent himself at least one part of every Lord's day, from the worship of God. After the usual salutations and inquiries were gone through, in the most friendly way, the Deacon, in his usual grave and earnest manner, introduced the object of his visit.

Deacon.—It has been impressed for some time on my mind, that it was my duty to embrace an early opportunity of inquiring into your reasons for absentsing yourself so often from the communion and worship of the Church, and for taking little or no interest in the advancement of our Zion?

Brother T.—We are all pleased to see you, Deacon, though I fear that our reasons for being absent so very often may not be satisfactory to you.

Deacon.—Why? if they are scriptural, I must be satisfied.

Brother T.—We expected as much as could be, to be at meeting to-day; but just as we were about leaving, who came to the door but Mr. and Mrs. S., and so of course we declined going on their account.

Deacon.—That was the very time for you to show your attachment to Christ, who in his word has enjoined on us, "Not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is;" and in the place of yielding to the temptation of pleasing men more than God, you should have used your influence to bring them to the house of God, rather than join them in the desecration of the Lord's day.

Brother T.—You censure too hard, Deacon; I cannot see how you can prove that we were guilty of desecrating the Sabbath, by entertaining our friends, who are in good standing in Elder D.'s Church.

Deacon.—Our appeal must be to the Bible, on all such subjects, and receive from that infallible source alone our ideas of right and wrong—what we are to practice, and what to reject and censure. The evidences on which the observance of the first day of the week rest, are derived from the fact that our Lord on that day brought life and immortality to light by his resurrection from the dead; that on the same day he appeared to his disciples, who were assembled together in one place; and that the primitive christians, under the sanction of the Apostles, continued to observe the day unto the Lord, by meeting together to receive instruction, and for the observance of the ordinances of the gospel. I cannot therefore learn from this holy book, how the day is otherwise than desecrated, if it is occupied for any other purpose than that for which it was originally designed. If it is unnecessary for us to meet together as a christian assembly on that day, the observance of the day is also unnecessary—both must stand or fall together. It is therefore essential to the keeping of the day, (other things being equal) that we join the solemn assembly of the Church of God; and that your friends are professors of religion will not at all mitigate the sin of neglecting the house of God; but has rather given you a better opportunity of freeing yourself from the charge of any want of courtesy.

Brother T.—I confess that I am not so well acquainted with my Bible as I should be for the time that I have been a professor, but think from what limited knowledge I have of these things, that you have the right side of the subject, though I have never heard it explained so before. Why don't our ministers preach on the subject, that the people may understand?

Deacon.—So he has not many Sabbaths since, but you were not present. Those who absent themselves from the worship of the Church, not only violate a law of God, but deprive themselves of much valuable information which our Heavenly Father has appointed for "the edifying of the body of Christ."

Brother T.—What did you mean, Deacon, by saying that my friends being professors, gave me an opportunity of freeing myself from the charge of being inconsiderate?

Deacon.—I meant, that as your friends were professors of religion, that if they at all understood the relation which a christian sustains to the Church of which he is a member, no blame could be attached to you for attending in your place in the house of God with your family; and moreover it placed you in a position where you could with a very good grace show them the iniquity of gossiping among their friends on the Lord's day, in the place of being with their children in the house of God, receiving instruction on their duties as parents and church members.

Brother T.—What you have just said, Deacon, may be all true enough, but I have not felt of late, as if I could exhort or reprove any body. I feel dreadfully dark at present.

Deacon.—There must be a cause for your lack of zeal as well as for your darkness—for with Christ there is no darkness at all.

Brother T.—I suppose there is. But don't you think Deacon, our Minister preaches too much on the duty of Church members of late? For my own part I like to hear the promises preached up.

Deacon.—That our Pastor is a practical teacher is very true; but that he dwells more on the practical parts of religion than he does on other doctrines in proportion as they are revealed in the word of God, is, I think, far from being the case. While the Apostles, in their petitions to the ancient churches, reminded them that their salvation was by the favor of God, through the Lord Jesus, they at the same time occupied the greater part of their writing in teaching and enforcing the practice of pure and undefiled religion. Now, if our Ministers expect to feed the flock of Christ, it can only be accomplished by taking the Apostles, to whom a dispensation of the Gospel was committed, as their model. In my opinion our Pastor is a sound, correct thinking man, anxious, very anxious to present the whole church, if he could, blameless before God at the appearance of Christ.

Brother T.—I ain't much disposed to find fault with Ministers, but I can't help thinking that he expects too much from the Church when he urges on us so earnestly to aim at being what the Bible says,

Deacon.—You may mean well enough, Brother T., yet your remarks, if made in many places, might be injurious to your pastor. The things for which you find fault, I think I can prove to you to be strongly urged by our Lord in his addresses to his disciples, as we may learn from the following texts:—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed," &c. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say unto you." Now the minister's duty is to teach us to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded, and if we will attempt to select from the will of Christ what parts to observe and what to reject, without his authority, we substitute our own carnal wisdom in the place of the wisdom of God, and the King immortal cannot regard our course in any other light than that of rebellion, and as the sire of witchcraft. The safest way for ministers is to preach the things that become sound doctrine, and for us to sin at observing all the words of the law.

The evening being by this time far spent, the Deacon at the request of the family, closed the conversation by offering an appropriate prayer to the Father of our Lord Jesus.

ADELPHOS.

## The Pulpit and the Press.

The suggestion of the eloquent Edward Irving are worthy of sober consideration, especially in reference to the general newspaper press. Public sentiment has become in a measure changed of late, in regard to its legitimate province, as well as its mighty efficacy, as an instrument for inculcating moral truth and spreading religious intelligence. The religious enterprises of the day, with their benign results, and the condition and prospects of the moral world, are becoming known and read of all men, who have any claim to intelligence or philanthropy. Probably a five times greater amount of general religious information has been diffused through the secular press of this city within the last year or two, than in any previous year. And perhaps there is no county town, where the newspaper column would now be cheerfully granted for condensed views of passing religious events, if judiciously furnished, by those most conversant with such interests. In his original style, Mr. Irving says:—

It seemeth to me, that from the press there should at all times issue forth, amid its teeming company, some forms of religious truth to guide the course of those who are ever influenced by its novelties. On which account, though we should say nothing that has not been better said before we will out of regard to the constant appetite of the age of novelty, and out of pure love to the good old cause, set forth our opinion.

I fancy that if the Spirit of God were to choose out twelve men from the house of God, with whom to finish the great work of converting men, especially the men of this country, and for that purpose were, as on a second pentecost, to bestow upon them special gifts, the gift of writing powerfully would be a chief one; and the ability to write powerfully seems to me a greater accomplishment of a soldier of Christ, than the ability to preach powerful discourses. The one sends a dart, which though well directed, may fly wide of the mark, and having once spent its strength is useless forever; the other is the ancient catapult, which will discharge a thousand darts at once in a thousand different directions; and it hath an apparatus for making more darts, so that it can continue to discharge them forever. To use this most powerful of intellectual and moral instruments in the service of Christ is a noble ambition which should possess the soul of every Christian. He hath, in a manner multiply his soul thereby, and give to his ideal thoughts a habitation and a name.

Without disparagement of the pulpit, that acknowledged throne moral influence let the spirit of those suggestions be carried out through the papers of the land; let all whining, cant, or despondency, be avoided; let true catholicism and enlightened hope prevail; and a new era of general improvement and real patriotism may be confidently anticipated.—M. F. Currier and Inquirer.