

of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever, to have been spiritually enlightened by the inspired truths of the Bible, would be the first and the most earnest in imparting these truths to others. It might be expected that the whole church would be moved with one mighty impulse to the work of disseminating the knowledge that is necessary to salvation; and that there would not be left one member unaffected with the glowing desire of engaging in this glorious work. How is it then that in relation to almost every Sabbath School it is the complaint, that but a small part of the church is actually aiding in carrying it on? How does it happen that the grand difficulty is to procure religious instructors? There must be a very faint impression of Christian obligation on the minds of multitudes of professors; a very wide-spread disregard of most important duties and responsibilities.—The Church of Christ will never have fulfilled her mission as respects the Sabbath School till all her members are feelingly and actively devoted to its interests. S. ELDER.

Fredericton, August 29th, 1849.

#### CIRCULAR LETTER,

To the Churches comprising the Western New-Brunswick Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN.—In selecting a subject for your consideration, and upon which to address you in this annual epistle, we have made choice of one that yields to few others in importance. Although it has been inculcated from the Pulpit, the Platform and the Press, yet it may be received with less pleasure than some other topic. We refer to the obligations resting upon the Church of Christ to exemplify a spirit of Christian liberality.—The importance of such a spirit may be seen from its inseparable connection with the progress of the kingdom of Christ set up in the world; and his holy religion which he came from heaven to make known to the lost and the perishing.

The efforts of the primitive disciples to advance the reign of righteousness and truth among their fellow beings, were crowned with unparalleled success; and the spirit of Christian benevolence, which they possessed and exhibited, goes far to account for this prosperity. Their numbers were comparatively few and their pecuniary resources small, but such was their Christian enlargement of soul, that all they possessed was thrown into one consecrated channel. And, through divine grace, it had a powerful influence in securing the salvation of souls, and forwarding the interests of Zion.

It was not long, however, that real prosperity continued to crown the labours of the primitive Churches. And the reason is obvious. They lost the spirit of Christian benevolence, and imbibed the selfishness of the world; and, while actuated by that, their efforts could not meet the approbation of God, nor be attended with the divine blessing.

Comparatively nothing is being done at the present time to ameliorate the condition of men and save them from impending ruin. Where so many fields for Christian enterprise are presented, and so many affecting voices are calling upon the Churches for aid in behalf of those who are perishing. And why is it thus? The reason is clear. The same worldliness, that crept into the primitive Church, pervades that of the present day; and men, who are called the disciples of Christ, are panting and toiling for the pleasures and emoluments of this world. They are almost entirely destitute of that spirit of benevolence, which was a living, operating, and ever-expanding principle in the breasts of the early disciples.

The absence of a spirit of Christian liberality among the professed friends of the Saviour, and the possession of one directly the reverse are operating powerfully and constantly against the dearest interests of the kingdom with which God has identified his own glory and the present and eternal happiness of men. Why is it that so many Churches and congregations in this Province are destitute of the stated preaching of the Word,—the bread of life? Is it because there are no pecuniary means to sustain the servants of God who would supply this lack? No one acquainted with the temporal circumstances of the Churches comprising the Association, and who have any knowledge of the value of divine truth and the souls of men can come to such a conclusion. For, were there such a spirit of Christian liberality in exercise as the word of God enjoins and primitive believers exhibited, and were the much needed means

systematically collected, according to the scriptural rule "as the Lord hath prospered," and judiciously appropriated, there would be enough to supply abundantly every just demand. All our Sabbath Schools could be furnished with efficient Libraries; and our Colporteurs travelling through the length and breadth of the Province, could supply every family with the Heaven indited Volume, and other books of wholesome instruction.—Our Seminary at Fredericton, filled with knowledge-seeking students, would demand public attention and esteem; and from it would go forth year after year, young men whose mental faculties would be prepared to elevate the moral character of their countrymen and unite them together by the strongest ties. We should have, at least, five times the number of Missionaries that we now have in the foreign field: and our contributions would be increasing the fund appropriated to supply the Lamp of Life to the heathen, to whom a mysterious and divine Providence is every day opening an easier way of access.

We meet in our annual Associations, and deliberate on the means to be employed for advancing the interests of our Holy Religion. And, while looking upon the moral and intellectual harvest, spread invitingly before us, while thinking of its value and liability to perish and be forever lost, our hearts become deeply affected and our emotions warmly excited; and with our spirits grasping in warm desire for the salvation of sinners, we lay our plans for gaining so God-honouring and soul-inspiring an object. But pecuniary aid is indispensably necessary in carrying our schemes into effective operation; so that, with the blessing of Heaven, they may accomplish the object for which they were designed. If, then, we are destitute of a spirit of Christian liberality, which is so inseparably connected with the progress of the cause of Christ, no benefit can accrue from our stated meetings for deliberating, and forming plans which cannot be carried into effect for want of means. Indeed, it would seem almost as well to discontinue our deliberations, since they are devoted to mere castle building. It were almost useless to offer any more prayers for the promotion of the glory of God in the salvation of sinners, since they appear little more than useless and uncharitable petitions. Without such a demonstration of our love to God and the souls of men as is exemplified in the spirit of liberality, all our prayers and exhortations are no better than a solemn mockery.

If motives are needed, and can have any influence in stimulating us to an active exercise in the holy and charitable work, we have them, powerful and numberless, pressing upon our attention and under our observation.—The benevolence of the Divine Being towards mankind, ought indeed, to awaken in us a sympathy for our fellow beings who are enveloped in the thick veil of ignorance. The merciful kindness of God is exhibited in the creation of all things, and the provision made for the wants of every animate object. But the most inconceivable and unparalleled exhibition of God's merciful benevolence is seen in the plan of salvation, devised by the Holy Trinity for the redemption of man; and the means employed to carry it into execution. Can we live, in time and eternity, upon the streams of divine mercy flowing from the heavenly fountain, and allow selfishness to shut up our bowels of compassion against the cry of our fellow beings who are perishing for the want of the Bread of Life; with which we might instrumentally supply them? Shall the Divine Being open his hand and pour upon us benefactions more munificent than our most enlarged desires can ask,—and shall those benefits, so freely conferred and so undeservedly received, have no influence upon our minds,—awaken no spring of benevolence in our hearts to promote the glory of God? Ought we not, in imitation of our heavenly example, to devote ourselves and our substance to the spiritual welfare of a perishing world? And what a perfect example have we in Christ, the head of the Church? "Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He was rich in all the treasures of the universe,—emptied himself of them all, and descended into the lowest depths of poverty, that we might be called to the possession of great treasures in this world and a crown in the world to come. And shall not this unparalleled example of benevolence drive from our hearts the selfish spirit which characterizes the men of this world who have no experimental knowledge of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We might refer to many of the fol-

lowers of the Saviour, who, taking the Scriptures as their guide, exhibited upon all occasions that ardent spirit of love and benevolence of which their divine Master set them, such an imitable example. If, then, examples can have any influence in arousing us from our lethargic condition, and directing us in the path which we are imperatively called to follow, we have them most plainly laid down in the inspired word. We feel thankful that the Church is not entirely without examples of Christian charity at the present day, and that some of you do not live for this world, but in the hope of that which is to come.

Dear Brethren, let us turn our attention, then, to the great cause for which the Redeemer died, the salvation of sinners. Let us be sincere; let us be zealous; let us be liberal, for "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and "they that water shall be watered." If any persons have come to the conclusion, that their estates and enjoyments can be enlarged by robbing God of the tithes and offerings which are his most rightful due, they have reasoned erroneously and their conclusion betrays an ignorance of the principles of Divine government; and a want of observing the dispensations of Providence with which the children of men are visited. Do not the scriptures represent God as the lawful proprietor of all things? and men are indebted to him for all the blessings enjoyed in this life. How, then, can men expect prosperity in any occupation or enterprise while pursuing a course of action in direct opposition to the dictates of conscience and the plainest requisitions of the Bible. Will not such wickedness, so far from securing the Divine blessing, render the individuals liable to be put out of the stewardship, and the goods with which they are intrusted, given to others who shall be more faithful.

If parents store up wealth for their children by withholding from the cause of God what it justly demands, a curse will be bound up in such treasure, which will be entailed upon their offspring, perhaps, during time and eternity. If, then, we desire to obtain the favour of God ourselves, and be a blessing to others, both here and hereafter, let us seek after that holy and scriptural piety which manifests itself in Christian liberality.

The present state of the world calls, in a voice that cannot be silenced nor misunderstood, for benevolent exertions for its salvation, by all those who love the Saviour and the souls of men. To whatever part of the inhabited world we turn our attention, inviting fields for Christian enterprise and liberality present themselves. The word of God and the heralds of salvation are now having free access to thousands of the human race, who, not long since, raised an almost insurmountable barrier against all approaches of the Gospel. We cannot help observing the hand of the Sovereign of worlds in the vicissitudes through which some of the nations of the earth have recently passed and others are now passing. God is shaking to the very centre those kingdoms which stand opposed to the progress of his Gospel; and preparing them for the reception of truth. Can we turn away with indifference from those doors, opened by the providence of God, for the introduction of his soul-saving truth? Can we shut our ears to the cry of those who are perishing for spiritual instruction? coming, as it does, from every quarter,—from the nominally Christian, and from the heathen,—from home and from foreign lands. If we do become deaf to such appeals, the curse anciently pronounced upon Merz, will most assuredly fall upon us.—Many persons who profess to love the Saviour, and who are worth, not only hundreds, but in some cases thousands, tell us that such is the pecuniary depression under which the Province now labors, that they have nothing to contribute to the cause of God. Let such persons know that one of the principal sins for which God is now visiting the earth in judgment, is withholding more than is meet; it has tended to poverty already and will continue increasingly to do so until the sin be repented of. Dear brethren, let us seek for a clearer knowledge of the requisitions of the Bible, that our hearts may become more deeply imbued with the spirit of Christ. Then shall we hail with pleasure every opportunity of giving a fresh demonstration of our love to God and the souls of men.

The Committee on Foreign Missions submitted the following Report:

Your Committee regard the failing health of our beloved Missionary, brother R. E. Burpe, which will probably lead not only to the sus-

pension of his labours, but also to his entire withdrawal from the scene of his devoted exertions, as an event calculated to produce deep regret throughout our churches, and to awaken the liveliest sympathy for our afflicted brother. But while they view this event as one which cannot but produce profound sorrow, they yet consider it to be the duty of all to manifest humble submission to our Heavenly Father, who has been pleased to visit us with this trial of our faith and patience, for reasons which though concealed from our sight are doubtless characterized by the highest wisdom and goodness. Your Committee would express their decided conviction that the painful dispensation alluded to, so far from justifying discouragement and abatement of zeal among our Churches on behalf of the Foreign Mission, calls for redoubled and immediate efforts to sustain it. They regret that the general decline of the Union Societies, a principal object of which is the support of our missionary enterprises, has prevented the fulfilment of the repeated and solemn promises of this Association in relation to the Foreign Mission; and they are impelled to assert their belief that the failure of our Churches in this respect involves a serious neglect of religious obligation. They would affectionately and urgently, therefore, press upon the attention of the ministers and delegates present and upon all the Churches, the duty of putting forth speedy and strenuous exertions to furnish that proportion of the Foreign Mission Funds for which they stand solemnly pledged.

Your Committee also recommend that the following Resolutions be submitted to the Association this evening.

1. That this Association deeply regretting the impaired health of their beloved Missionary and the interruption thus occasioned to his labours, would bow in humble submission to this mysterious yet righteous dispensation of God, while they gratefully acknowledge the tokens of his divine favour accompanying the mission.

2. That while we regard this affliction as a trial of our faith, we feel bound to increase our efforts to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, assured that in due time we shall reap if we faint not.

In relation to the American and Foreign Bible Society, your Committee report:

That in their opinion this Society is one of the most powerful and effective agencies for the dissemination of the Gospel, and the promotion of the cause of Christ; and as such commends itself to the cordial co-operation and support of our Churches. All of which is respectfully submitted. W. HALL, Chairman of Committee.

The Committee on the Union Society beg leave to Report as follows:

The information received by the Letters from the churches show clearly that the recommendations contained in the Committee's Report of last year have not been carried into effect. While a few churches have been nobly carrying out the objects contemplated by the Society, the greater number have done but little. The Committee fully believe the organization of the Society admirably adapted to meet all the wants of the Denomination in money matters, if carried out in the spirit of benevolence, which should ever characterize the disciples of Christ.

Your Committee recommend the adoption of the sentiments contained in the Committee's last year's report in reference to a General Agent.

As it is a subject of vital importance to the denomination, the neglect of which has had a withering influence on its prosperity, they further recommend that action forthwith be taken to carry out the above recommendation.

T. W. SAUNDERS, Chairman.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

DEAR BROTHER VERY.—I give in detail a brief extract from my Bill of Sales of this tour. I reached Hopewell in an early part of June, and, as many of our friends are aware found, my books unnecessarily seized by Mr. M'Almon of that Port; was detained four weeks with the few volumes I had in the carriage; made few sales, but travelled 185 miles in visiting and endeavouring to get the books; received delivery thereof two days before the Association. Proceeded after the Association to Hillsborough for Macoz, and find my sales as follows: 145 volumes sold, 9 gratis;

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