

themselves in platoon style, the men on one side and the women on the other. Then followed a brief address of one of their Elders, and at a given signal, they commenced their dancing jig. It was the strangest exhibition I had ever seen. Some twelve or fifteen, males and females, took their stand about the centre of the floor, and began to sing in their peculiar style. All the rest, numbering about two hundred men and women, entered into the dance. I noticed old men, who looked as if they ought to be in their armed chairs, exerting themselves to evince their piety, by showing how they could trip it over the floor.

The religious tenets of this people are very peculiar. They claim that all the external ordinances of religion ceased in the apostolic age; that they are the only true church, and have all the apostolic gifts. They teach that all men may obtain forgiveness if they will become Shakers, but that there is no forgiveness for those who fall from their church. Their discipline is founded upon the supposed perfection of their leaders. The Mother, it is said, obeys God through Christ; European elders obey her, and American laborers and the common people obey them. Ann Lee is the person whom they call Mother. She was born in Manchester, England, in 1736. She was the daughter of a blacksmith, and was employed as a cutter of hatters' fur. At an early age she married Abraham Standley, a blacksmith, who lived in her father's house. About the year 1758, she became a convert to James Wardley, who was originally a Quaker, but who, in 1747, imagining he had some supernatural revelations, established the sect called Shakers, from their bodily agitations. Ann soon distinguished herself in her religious rites. About the year 1770, she made the discovery of the sinfulness of marriage, and opened her testimony against it. Marriage, she called the root of all human depravity; and made, in various ways, so much disturbance, that the people of Manchester shut her up in a mad-house, where she was kept for some weeks. In 1774, she came to America, and located herself, with a few followers, at a small place called Niskauana, eight miles from Albany, in the State of New York.

She was a woman of great energy, cunning and tact. She succeeded in gathering some followers, and when she had gained sufficient influence over them, she warned them of the great sin of following the vain customs of the world, and persuaded them to give up to her all their valuables, such as ear-rings, necklaces, buckles, &c. She asserted that she was not liable to the assaults of death, and that when she left the world she would ascend in the twinkling of an eye to heaven! Unhappily, however, for her claims, she died as other people die, September 8th, 1784. Mr. Ratabun, a disciple of Ann, but who renounced her faith, does not bear gratifying testimony to her moral character. He says he once saw her come to hard blows with William Lee. He adds: "It appears to me that the mother at that time was very much overcome with strong liquor." He says she was well skilled in profane and indecent language. But the Shakers hold Ann in the highest veneration. In 1828, the Societies of the Shakers numbered 16; the number of preachers about 45; members about 4500; and yet they are the true and only church! All the rest of mankind are in the way of error and death! I spoke of this to an intelligent Shaker at Lebanon. I asked him if it was not their duty, if they were the only people in the way of life, to endeavour to convince and convert men around them? But it seemed to me that he cared very little whether the wicked world was saved or not. He thought it quite certain that he should get to heaven; if others failed, it was their loss, not his. This was about the spirit he manifested. On the whole, I felt no disposition to be a Shaker after I had seen this strange people at Lebanon.

GREAT INVENTION.—A recent number of the Scientific American contains an engraving and description of a newly-invented swinging cradle, which can be made to swing back and forth for several hours, without stopping, by means of clock-work. The machine also plays a tune to soothe the little one, and effectually does all the business of putting him to sleep. It is the invention of L. F. Whittaker, of North Carolina.

It is stated in Brande's Encyclopædia that no fewer than two hundred and forty of the country banks failed in England and Wales during the years 1814, 1815, and 1816, occasioning nearly as much distress, loss, bank-

rupture and suffering as the great Mississippi scheme of France in 1719. During the years 1816 and 1817 a great number of banks failed in the United States; many failed in 1825 also; and the failures in the United States during the revulsion from 1837 to 1842 amounted to over one hundred and sixty, with a nominal and pretended capital of over \$132,000,000, and circulation of over \$43,000,000.

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1851.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

The same remarks with which we closed our last article with reference to discipline for entertaining and propagating dangerous errors, are equally applicable to cases of irregular and disorderly walking. Many who are unwilling to submit to wholesome restraint, and who are too wilful and wayward to be bound even by their own voluntary covenant, have strong objection to Church Rules and Bye Laws, but if discipline is to be maintained at all, or any irregularities to be noticed and corrected it must be by the aid of these definite forms of expression. Reasonable and consistent members cannot and will not object to them, if it is plain that they conform to the mind of the Head of the Church, and suspicion must rest upon such as object. Some members are like "Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them," and to hold the destiny of their fellow members, and bind or loose in cases of discipline at their pleasure. Now to carry out such a purpose there must be no Rules and Bye-laws as a common standard of reference. These like a constitution in the way of a Despot would be an effectual guard against arbitrary acts; but for this very reason the friends of regularity and order, and those who would allow to another all that they ask on their account, will rejoice in them as the only means and safe-guard to a just administration of discipline and as a continual help to unanimity among members. These Rules are very properly generally restricted to a few important matters which immediately affect the credit and welfare of the Church, such as the support of the Ministry, an attendance upon public worship and Church meetings and ordinances according to the appointment of the Church, and family worship. Coldness of heart, declension of religion and disaffection lead often to irregularity in these religious duties.

That the support of the ministry is a religious duty, notwithstanding all the objections of avarice and the slurs of infidelity, no just person will deny. Justice is an important element of religion; and it is just to pay a proper compensation for labour. The Saviour accordingly inculcates that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." On this as applicable to ministerial labour the apostle founds his argument in 1 Cor. viii., the conclusion of which is given in the 14th verse. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." What Christian worthy of the name will dare denounce what the Lord has ordained? How can such an one suppose himself walking orderly or feel himself entitled to the privilege of membership in a body, and refuse to submit to so just and reasonable an appointment of its Head?

Our Articles in keeping with this scriptural law, and at the same time insisting upon the distinctness of civil and ecclesiastical power, and the voluntary nature of all acceptable religious service, teach:

"But this is not to be effected by force or compulsion, or by the sword of civil power; but it is to be a free-will offering agreeably to the Scripture of truth; and every member deficient in this matter ought to be disciplined by gospel rule."

A willingness that cannot meet, and a refractoriness that will not are easily distinguished; and we do not think that a majority of a Christian Church will be apt to confound them, or that they would allow the penalty of the latter to rest upon the former. The pretext of some that they are not suited with the Minister employed by the Church is not at all relevant to the case. This is not a matter relating to them independently but in their Church relation. If they cannot walk with the Church, they ought not to be there—they are a weight upon its movements and only distract others by their opposition. So long as they profess or wish to walk in its fellowship their individuality of like and dislike in such things must be merged in the will of the Church. Who cannot see that any other

course would at once result in anarchy, and defeat the action of any Church with reference to ministerial support? The power and usefulness of many Churches have been palsied by laxity of discipline with reference to this offence. When the consequences of an offence are so far-reaching and disastrous as in this case, instead of laxity, there is required a more careful supervision and a punctual discharge of duty. Bad example in such things is exceedingly infectious. Selfishness, avarice, conceit and all such unlovely passions are excited and fed by the indulgence of such pretences; and one or two individuals who are vain enough to set their judgments in opposition to a majority of their brethren, or stubborn enough to defy their authority, will soon create by their unfair and determined agitation such a state of disquiet, that the labours of the most devoted or efficient Pastor will be paralyzed.

The great reason why so many Churches are without Pastors is not by any means the want of ability to sustain one; it is the want of a will to do so. The Head of the Church is dethroned; His law is set at naught.—Churches have adopted one of the most abominable and odious of all the papal usurpations, that of granting indulgence to sin, or of pronouncing absolution when divine commands are set at naught. Christ reveals his appointment, states in most intelligible terms what he has ordained, and condescends to reason it out, and to show its justice, and the Church refusing to call a Pastor, says, We will absolve the brethren: we will have no Pastor, and then we will not have to support one.

Is it to be considered a mystery that such Churches do not flourish? that some of our largest and oldest Churches are dwindling and their place and influence becoming swallowed up by other and more consistent bodies? not at all. "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." If in any connection we may expect to realise the truth of the general principle propounded by the Law-giver of the world: "Them that honour me, I will honor; and them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed," it is in connection with the order of his own house, and the progress of his own cause.

Where there is pecuniary ability in a Church to employ a Pastor they should at once do so, and require its members, if they would retain membership in it, to contribute their fair proportion of the means. If they are not able to support one among themselves, love to Christ, to the gospel, and to souls should constrain them to assist some other church in like circumstances to support one jointly, or they should contribute what they can to send the gospel abroad in their own or in foreign lands. They love their money and their gains or the indulgence of personal vanity in dress or furniture or some such thing or they could never hear the pressing demands now made upon Christians for pecuniary means with which to propagate the gospel and do nothing or next to nothing the year round for the Church and for the cause of God. James properly says of the faith of such "It is dead being alone." "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead."

But how is such a state of things to be repaired? We reply by discipline, wholesome gospel discipline! Set up the banner of Christ, promulgate his law, enforce it. If a man will not submit to that law, let no Church countenance the deception he is practising upon himself, nor allow the infection of his insubordination to corrupt and destroy others. If Churches think to require truth and honesty in their members, they must be true and honest as a Church. A magistrate should be the last one to break or connive at the infraction of the law of which he is appointed a guardian and the Church is a magistracy for Christ, "the ground and pillar of the truth."

(To be Continued.)

WHAT NEXT!—Those disposed to laugh at our late homily on the payment of Postage may have a new chapter gratis. Our remarks were hardly cold before a sagacious brother in the ministry, in a sister Province, found occasion to send us some money, (which by the way, he ought to have handed in a year ago without any expense to us.) Having enclosed two or three bills, he next puts in two British shillings; and thus makes double postage for us to pay; and as though that was

not enough, or being too conscientious to withhold the odd penny for 2s. 6d, he encloses that bulk of copper which raises the Postage to four letters, two of which were on account of the penny, and then leaves us to pay the postage bill. Now such a man should be made at once a Professor of Stupidity, having, as every one must admit, a decided genius that way. We commend him to the Dorcas Society, they may be inclined to dub him Knight of the night-cap, or at least to send him one to keep warm what little scone he may have left. If our brother should think of doing business, we should have a decided impression that he was mistaking his calling.

We received the kind note of Brother Chase, and will send the papers as directed. The minutes about which he enquires were sent in due season, by Captain Gilliat, who is now, we learn, at the Bridge, and can inform brother C. where they were left. We regret very much that any thing should have prevented their distribution, which we supposed had taken place two months since at least. We regret that brother C. did not inform us of what transpired at the late meeting of the Governors of Acadia College.

We would direct attention to the advertisement of the "Creole." This strongly built and swift steamer will keep up a weekly communication with the States, through the winter, touching at Eastport, Belfast, Frankfort, Thomaston and Portland, Me. She made her trip safely during the last week, which was as rough and stormy a week as we have any reason to expect for the winter. The accommodations on board this steamer are capital, those for ladies as many think superior to those of the Admiral. We wish the enterprising owners every success.

Brother Mutch returned from his Colportage tour to Charlotte County on Wednesday last, and having renewed his stock left on Thursday for Norton, from which place after a few days, he intends to proceed, if agreeable to the Committee, to Dorchester, Sackville, Amherst, &c.

Our friends east are acquainted with brother Mutch and with the character of the work in which he is now engaged, and will not need therefore our appeal to extend their sympathy and aid. Brother Mutch's sales in Charlotte County amounted to about £36.

LETTERS RECEIVED.—John Fillmore, with remittance; Charles C. Whitnie, do. do.; Rev. John Chase; Mr. David Stewart, with remittance; Rev. James Reed, with remittance; A. C. Hammond. The Library for which Mr. H. enquires we have not, but it can be obtained for £17 10s. cash.

We would remark that the above list of names does not include the *Postage-Man* alluded to elsewhere.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

HEBREWS II. 3. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

Wisdom leads its possessor to regard things according to their inherent value. Those that are made known to us in the Gospel are of more worth than all other things put together. They are man's recovery from sin to holiness, from spiritual alienation to union and fellowship with God. The means by which this is effected brings before us the whole scheme of *Mediatorship*. Jesus is made lower than the angels, that he may taste death for man, and bring in everlasting righteousness which is for all and upon all them that believe. The Holy Spirit descends in the dark and corrupt mind of man, and gives light and soundness and health. These place him in new and solemn relations, and add to his responsibility. In the coming of the Saviour he sees the loveliness of interposing mercy; the rigours of unbending justice, and the condescensions of rich and sovereign grace.—These are grand realities, they mingle their deep toned utterances, and roll them as a mighty tide into the depths of man's spiritual nature.

Therefore what earnest heed should he give to them; they should draw all his energies to one point of deep broken solicitude. So that in the time of prosperity, of trial, of adverse occurrence, when the sun of earthly happiness goes down amid storm, darkness and confusion, these should keep their hold upon the anxieties and affections of the heart. He may