

Communications.

The Spiritual Welfare of the Churches.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

MR. EDITOR.—Through the columns of the *Observer*, will you present to the Baptist denomination in Canada West, a few suggestions relative to the spiritual well being of that body. I am particularly anxious you should do so; in view of the approaching annual associations. Where everything relating to the prosperity of the different Churches, should share a conspicuous part in the prayerful deliberations of those bodies.

I may expose myself to the charge of egotism while I make the announcement, that I feel deeply interested in the spiritual welfare of our beloved Zion. In many places where Churches are located, they are entirely destitute of the ministry of the word, (at least of their own order.) This destitution arising from the want of means to sustain the gospel amongst them. The results are, some go back to the world, some join other religious bodies, while some churches become invisible. It is a glorious fact that the Church of Christ (Catholic) cannot fail; but individual churches have failed. Witness the seven Asiatic Churches, the many Churches in Europe and Africa, yea we might add many of the North American Churches: once flourishing but now no longer visible. "Thy servants think upon their stones, and it pitieth them to see them in the dust."

Churches should be strictly conservative bodies as it regards the doctrines and the ordinances of Christianity; and hence the desirableness of uniformity. But in the Divine economy, in the appointment of the ministry, "he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

Now we want for our Baptist Churches in this Province, a modified system of itinerancy. First, that all our efficient brethren in the ministry, should have an opening to exercise their proper gift from Christ. And secondly, that no Church may be entirely destitute of their own ministers; this is not the time, nor the place, to enter upon a plan which might recommend itself to the notice of the Churches and the Associations in general. But this sketch is intended to call forth such views from ministering and lay brethren, as shall call into action such remedial measures, as shall effectually remove the evils of which we complain.

Until the Churches in this Province, become so consolidated as to be able to sustain their respective pastors, until the members shall have increased from 12 and 20 to 50 and 60. When instead of contributing 20 or 30 dollars for the support of the gospel; they will be able to sustain their minister, with even a tolerable support. Till then, let those weaker Churches be supplied with a minister; once a fortnight, or once a month. These hints, are no way intended to interfere with the independence of the Churches; which is our glory, and

our boast, we do not, we cannot, recognise any ecclesiastical body, that would dare to rule over God's heritage. This power must abide with those who have a legitimate right to it.

We do earnestly call upon those men who influence their respective Associations, those delegates from the different Churches, and the different Churches themselves, to engage heartily, and perseveringly with God, that he might so influence us in a matter of such vital importance as to leave no doubt as to the course to be pursued. Now that and ministers of our order in this Province are led to meet for mutual good to themselves, and their respective charges, why may not this very important question be mooted. "What can be done to better the condition of our denomination throughout the Province?"

In conclusion, I desire to say that if the above remarks should call forth able minds to write on this subject, so as to arouse the energies of the Baptist body in Canada, I will rejoice and give God the glory, but if any individual should deem it his duty to repudiate a plan to better the spiritual condition of our people, I take this opportunity once for all that I shall read and weigh his remarks; but respectfully decline any collision which might cause a breach of charity. May the God whose we are, and whom we profess to serve in the gospel of his Son, come and make the way plain before our face, revive his "work in the midst of the years, and in wrath remember mercy."

WM. FREEMAN.

Beachville, 7th April, 1851.

MISSION AT OWEN SOUND, &c.

To the Editor of the Christian Observer.

WOODSTOCK, April 19, 1851.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am happy to hear you have no back numbers of the *Observer*. Last church meeting at this place, I brought before our friends the duty devolving on them to support your journal, and, I am happy to say, there was a cordial response. The list of subscribers is not yet made out, ready for present transmission, but will be during next week.

I want, once more, to appeal to the Baptist churches in Western Canada, respecting the station for a mission at Owen Sound, so frequently mentioned in our public meetings and religious transactions. At our last meeting of the churches, belonging to the Grand River Association, a committee of three persons was appointed to look out a fit minister to be sent as a missionary to that region of country, to be supported for two years by special subscription. A deputation engaged to visit the region, consisting of Elders Duncan and Cleghorn. The committee consisted of Deacon Beam, and brethren Charles Kitchen, and A. Shearer. The deputation did not go up owing, I think, to the failure of Elder Duncan's health. I had often said, that if no effort was made by the churches, I would go up and visit the country on the shore of the Georgian Bay; as I was impressed with the full conviction that it is destined to become one of the most important parts of our Province. That con-

viction is now fully confirmed, by the arrangements of the Crown Land Department, in deciding to sell there one million of acres of land for the support of common schools, according to the provisions of Mr. Price's school bill.

In the beginning of the month of August, last year, I went up to the Sound, in company with brother McDougall, at our own charges; and we were gone better than four weeks; and although brother McDougall was taken sick, and had to be attended by a doctor, we had a very agreeable visit with the people of Sydenham and the adjoining country. We preached in the Methodist meeting-houses on the Sabbath, and lectured on Temperance on the week-day evenings. Sydenham is a rising little town, and has a safe harbour during all winds, and will in fifty years be a busy, populous place. The land on the Garrafraxa road, leading from the south, is not so good as other parts both east and west. A new road is being made from Sydenham to the mouth of the River Saugeen, striking Lake Huron, where another harbour and port is about to be made. If the government act wisely in selling the million of acres of school land by keeping it out of the hands of land sharks and fixing it at a low rate to actual settlers they may make that part of the Province a very fine country, capable of supporting a large independent population.

We found in the Town of Sydenham, and vicinity about sixteen Baptist people most of them having credentials of good standing and nearly all of them having families. I would have removed to the Sound last fall in preference to settling at this place, but the health of my wife had completely failed. Some of my friends thought I was too old for the bush, and bush labour. I came here when elder Landon started for Jamaica, and find the people to be very kind indeed, and ready to do anything for us they can do. Affliction has been my lot during the greater part of the winter, as well as my partner. Elder Landon has regained his health, and is labouring in the City of Kingston, Jamaica, with the church formerly under the care of Mr. Tinson; he is happy and useful. Something must be done for Owen Sound right off, without any further delay. There is land reserved for a Baptist Chapel, in a good situation which, at the upset price fixed by Government, may easily be purchased. I have engaged to beg money to pay for the land, and one of the Baptist men there, a New Brunswicker will put up a good Meeting House fifty by thirty feet, and finish all but the painting for 600 dollars, pews and all. I hope Deacon Beam and some others of our rich friends will see to have the House put up as soon as possible.

I had a letter, a few weeks ago from Elder Fraser, formerly of Breadalbane in Glengary, who is at present living in the Township of Kincardine, on Lake Huron Shore, thirty miles north of Goderich, who contemplates moving from the place where he now is to some one more eligible for gospel usefulness. He can preach in the Gaelic tongue and it is probable the country lying between Nottawasaga Bay and Lake Huron will in future years receive thousands of Highlanders, as the region is suited for them exactly. I have pressed him to go forthwith to Owen Sound, and form a church