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Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia and the adjoining Provinces.

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137, *iv.*

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Christian Fellowship.

At the request of the Members of the Royal Protestant Institution," Wallace, the Rev. George Harper, A. M., our Missionary recently stationed there, delivered a Discourse to the Scotch Church, on Saturday, the 12th inst; being the occasion of the Anniversary of the Association. We are glad to be able to present our readers with the following copy of his sermon, which Mr. H. has kindly loaned, at our request, for the pages of the Monthly Record." It was founded on Matt. xiii. 13. "And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity."

The preacher commenced by observing that the chapter from which these verses were taken has always been admired, no less for the grandeur and dignity of its style, than for the noble and elevated strain of its sentiments, which all will admit to be truly noble and God-like. On reading it, the dullest and most prosaic mind cannot avoid catching some portion of its enthusiasm of its inspired and highly original author. The flow of its language is rich and graceful in the extreme; no word could be so happily placed, nor could another be substituted without marring, in some degree, the harmony that pervades it. It has been well observed that there is not to be found in any ancient or modern, a passage of equal grandeur at all to be compared with it. But qualities such as these embrace only its outward beauties, which taste and learning may dwell upon with admiration. Its inward charms are far superior to any of these, for it is its own excellence that it describes its real things. In the ideal sketch, this thirteenth of the chapters—no imaginary picture, but a vivid and truthful representation of the noble feelings of the advanced Christian, whose soul is habitually under the influence of God's spirit. Such were St. Paul and St. John, and many others who have attained the Godlike height of Charity here so fully described by one who was a living illustration of its truth.

We would now endeavor briefly to explain the meaning of its truth. In the first place, it would be remembered that, at the time when St. Paul wrote the epistle, miraculous gifts prevailed in the

Christian Church; and men naturally preferred the more distinguished to the more useful gifts. The Apostle exhorted them to "covet earnestly the best gifts;" and he goes on to tell them that there was something more excellent than all the gifts after which they aspired. The preacher next, after defining the scriptural nature of faith and hope, proceeded to speak of charity, remarking that it was wrong to suppose it as here used, to be limited to giving to the poor. This was only one of its many manifestations. It here means love—love in its highest degree, including love to God and love to man. Faith, hope and charity are abiding graces. Contrasted with miraculous gifts which have long since departed, they abide. They are permanent graces, constituting the highest ornament of Christians in every age. Moreover, Charity is greater than faith and hope—not because it can perform their functions, but because it makes us approach the highest public standard of excellence; it makes us resemble Him whose name is Love. This is the essence, the glory, the perfection of God's character. Faith and hope cannot carry us beyond ourselves, but charity opens wide its arms to embrace mankind.—All that is lovely or of good report in the world may be traced to the influence of charity. It was the charity of the gospel which brought down from heaven the Son of God, that sent forth the Apostles and animated the hearts of the confessors and martyrs of old. It was the charity of the Gospel, which fired with heroic zeal the great souls of Luther, Calvin and Knox, to whom we are so much indebted for the enjoyment of our Christian privileges. It is the charity of the Gospel which prompts the institution of Bible and Missionary societies, which build hospitals, opens asylums, and devises every species of association for the good of man. It is true men who can lay no claim to this virtue do much good for the world sometimes by their wealth and influence, but still it cannot be denied that, in general and for the most part, it is the charity of the Gospel which prompts to such liberal and philanthropic deeds.

To understand aright the value of Christianity as a principle for associating mankind in the bonds of love and fellowship, we would do well to consider the state of the world before Christ's advent. The Jewish nation, from which he sprang, were all along most bigoted and exclusive in their ideas, counting themselves

the peculiar favorites of heaven, and despising all other nations, whom they regarded as their inferiors! The rest of the world were, in their own way, as bigoted as the Jews. They had each their own national and deep rooted prejudices, which nothing but divine grace was sufficient to counteract. The wise and good among them, as well heathens as Jews, felt, under such circumstances, an intense longing for the appearance of One, who should reconcile all these differences and contradictions, and introduce a heavenly Kingdom, whereof all men might become subjects—a GRAND ASSOCIATION of the families of the earth, of which, Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, might be qualified as members. And now this Association is gradually being formed throughout the wide world. It is the Church of Christ. All local societies and institutions, based upon Christian principles, are but faint copies of this great and glorious Kingdom. In proportion as they possess more or less of its spirit they will be useful and prosperous.—The preacher said he agreed with the remark under the "general declaration" of the Society that such fellowships are, under certain circumstances, both "natural and proper." At least, he for one could see no good reason in the Bible, why such Associations should not be formed. Indeed he regarded it as one of the greatest evils of the present day, and the surest index of the low state of vital Christianity amongst us, that there was so little practical union among protestants; that for example, Churches which, upon the main points of faith agree, do not more frequently co-operate—are not more closely allied in practical fellowship. Around us, there was too much popery in the disguise of Protestantism, and hence so little of the genuine fruits of Christianity appeared. But there was a spirit abroad which would soon call on all such deceptions to give an account of themselves; and already their coffins were preparing and their burial-ground marked out.

In the early ages of the Church, how different a spectacle presents itself! It was then a proverbial observation of the heathen, "Behold how these Christians love one another." But since those days things have been very much changed. And here again he entirely agreed with the language of the general declaration of the Institution, which says—"It is by division that the benevolent objects of true patriots" (meaning thereby, as he understood