

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches composing the New Brunswick Baptist Association.

Dear Brethren,—Why is it that we often feel constrained to deplore the low state of personal piety which prevails in our Churches? What is the reason of the spiritual declension which we have experienced in ourselves and witnessed in others? There is no general dearth of preaching—the truths of the Bible possess the same sanctifying power now as in the age of the Apostles—the promises of the Lord are not rescinded, nor is there any inadequacy in his grace—the energy of the Holy Spirit remains undiminished—all power still belongs to Jesus Christ; why then is our piety so stunted in its growth? Among the many causes that may contribute more or less to keep our christian graces small and feeble, there is one to which we would confine our observations in this Letter, viz., our neglect in failing to carry our religious principles into every action, every duty, every relation, every event of life, even the most minute and seemingly unimportant. We keep our religion for the sanctuary and the season of devotion—we overlook its claim to regulate our thoughts, feelings, discourses and actions, by the domestic hearth, in the office, behind the counter, upon the farm or in the woods. If we are occasionally controlled by christian principle, there is no systematic endeavor to bring it to bear upon our family duties, no well defined effort to shape our mercantile, professional or other pursuits on earth by the directory of heaven, no sustained watchfulness over our temper, no habitual government of the thoughts.

This neglect arises partly from want of consideration, and partly from mistaken views of the connexion subsisting between the faith we cherish in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the many duties which the existing state of society justly demands at our hands: for let allegiance to Christ and service to man be regarded as necessarily hostile the one to the other—let religion be viewed as something too ethereal in its nature to mingle in the ever recurring avocations of life—let divine truth and heavenly hopes be wholly dissociated from worldly engagements and temporal aims, and such mistakes must inevitably prove highly detrimental—the vigor of spiritual life must be impaired as by a canker, and piety decay for want of exercise. Worldly-mindedness cannot fail to gain an ascendancy over the man who is constrained to pass his time in worldly engagements and yet does not season those engagements with the salt of sincere unaffected piety; the conduct cannot be secured from inconsistency when the grand moving, restraining, fortifying power is suffered to lie dormant.

The scriptural view of the life of every christian is that expressed by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians—"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." With this state-

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