

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To the Churches composing the Western New Brunswick Baptist Association.

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST—Our object in this letter is, first, the glory of God; and second, your highest spiritual welfare. We address you, therefore, this year, on the following subject, viz. :—

Carnal amusements incompatible with the Christian religion.

"Dead in trespasses and sin," is the fearful condition of every soul before being raised to spiritual life by the almighty power of God; therefore, to desire or have any capacity whatever, for spiritual pleasures while in that state, is utterly impossible. Carnal pleasures and carnal amusements to the most unlimited degree, are the chief and only desires and delights of the unrenewed soul; because the understanding is darkened, the will depraved, and every power hostile to God and godliness. The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to his laws; neither, indeed, can be. To look, therefore, for the pure and peaceable fruits of righteousness from such individuals, would be as unreasonable as to look for health and life amidst the desolations of death.

But though man is thus estranged from God, yet the burning beams of an all-sufficient revelation reveals to us a system by which we may be brought nigh unto Him; a system by which we may be united to Him; a system by which we may be made partakers of His nature. That system is religion. The religion of Jesus Christ, which is mighty in transforming our whole nature, however depraved, into the likeness of God.

That religion, dear brethren, you have professed to experience, with all of its regenerating, purifying, and ennobling influences.

As the Christian religion, therefore, is a system of holiness, it must necessarily exert a counteracting influence to every thing offensive to God. Hence the injunction, "As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter, i. 15.); and again, "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (1 Thes. iv. 7.) We are also exhorted to possess our vessels in sanctification and honor. The apostle, in giving these instructions to the churches, conveys the idea that it was disgraceful for that person who had professed the pure and holy religion of Jesus Christ, and whose soul, once the abode of darkness, had become the home of the light of God, to be enslaved by his passions or animal inclinations, and permit himself to act contrary to his high calling, and thereby have his mind polluted or unfitted for religious enjoyments.

We present you with two or three reasons why we believe carnal amusements, such as the theatre, the ball-room, the circus, the horse race, the gambling-saloon, the convivial circle, &c., to be incompatible with, or irreconcilable to, the Christian religion.

First. They are contrary to the dictates of God's Word, which is the only infallible rule of Christian life.

There the thoughtless, godless multitude is found; and we are expressly forbidden to follow the multitude to do evil. The Christian should tremble at the thought of being found where the footsteps of his Divine Redeemer cannot be traced. Nor where their ears hear not the word behind them, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it." We are commanded to acknowledge God in all our ways; and also, "whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God. The Christian cannot, certainly, acknowledge his Creator and Redeemer in the way of merriment and folly; nor associate with the lewd, the dissipated and the profligate, who oppose religion and its divine author, to glorify Him. Neither is it in accordance with the spirit of the Psalmist, when he said, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Second. They destroy spiritual strength and heavenly-mindedness. If by such indulgences we stood stronger, as Christians, in the principles of religion, and had clearer and more distinct views of the great cognate truths which centre in the cross of Christ, and could comprehend more readily and