

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

VOL. X.

TORONTO, NOVEMBER, 1863.

No. 5.

MUTUAL WATCHFULNESS.

“Come in, beloved of the Lord,” should be the greeting given by every church of Christ to those added to its membership. The new-comer should be sincerely welcomed to the cordial and tender sympathy of the whole brotherhood. Additions are not made merely to swell the list of names on the church book; it is to the loving, earnest, and spiritual work, ever advancing in the hallowed circle of those who love Jesus, that they are admitted. Mutual watchfulness and tender care are promised in the very nature of the connection formed—“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good.” “Fellow-helpers” should be the common appellation of all within the sacred enclosure. To leave any brother to isolation, strikes at the root of the social feature of church fellowship, and to pass him by in cold neglect is a death-blow to love. Within the sacred precincts the atmosphere must be genial, tending to life, and avoiding a tendency to freeze on the one hand, or to go to sleep on the other. It is neither an ice-house nor a dormitory that is entered, but a home—a spiritual home, where love reigns, is enshrined, sings in its glad mission, and prepares to carry out its gracious ends in bearing one another’s burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. A home feeling is produced, and grows by all that is done in the house of God. There it is not asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” A care that watches over the best interests of the brotherhood is awakened, and shared in by all. “Keep him at arm’s length” is no law there, but “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” The glowing affection of the new nature rejoiceth with them who rejoice, and weepeth with them who weep. Critical is the position of a ship surrounded by islands of ice, and no less so is the soul cut off from all Christian sympathy and love, and constantly meeting cold-hearted indifference. As the wandering bird mourns for its nest, the yearning of the spiritual life is for rest in the fellowship of kindred minds. Brotherly love is a real bond of union in a church of Christ, and this implies mutual watchfulness and help.

“We share each other’s woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathising tear.”

Under the broad ensign of love, a holy brotherhood, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Tell us, then, how this love is shown. Is it not in a great degree by mutual watchfulness?