

THE RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

For the Worker.

The epistle to the Galatians, presents the writer of it, in a position by no means new to him, he had in the course of his labors, to defend himself against the prejudice and misapprehension of his own brethren and even of his co-workers and fellow apostles, many times. But in this epistle he states his case very clearly and fully, and he does it that he might prove to the Galatian Christians, that the Gospel he preached, was the same Gospel preached by the other apostles, that the Gospel they had believed, was the same Gospel that others had believed, and that he as well as they had received it from a divine source, that if it was worthy of their acceptance at the first, it was worthy of their continued acceptance, and that they could not without loss to themselves, return to the law for that salvation and blessing which only the Gospel could give.

In recording the circumstances under which he first made the acquaintance of the apostles he says, that though James, and Peter, and John had in common with others, some something in doubt of his claim to the apostleship. "Yet when they perceived the grace that was given unto me. They gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship." A friendly act, in proof of the right of Paul, to participate with them in the great work. They acknowledged him as a co-worker in the field, and as having a right to participate with them in all its trials, all its successes, and all its honors. They recognized in him, one whom the Lord had chosen, and extended to him the right hand, in token of their fellowship. Whether this was publicly done on behalf of the church at Jerusalem, or whether it was simply done by the apostles mentioned, is not clear, though I incline to the opinion that it was a simple act of these "Pillars of the church," rather than of the whole church, for he tells us that the question he had come up to submit to them, was by him presented, privately to them who were of reputation, or standing in the church and not apparently to the whole people.

The above instance of giving the right hand of fellowship, is one sometimes quoted in favour of a practice common amongst us to-day, of extending in this manner, a hearty welcome to those who have confessed the Saviour and obeyed him, and who for the first time meet with their brethren around the table of the Lord. It is never claimed for this simple and proper ceremony, that it is a divine command, nor is it supposed that because Peter, James, and John, gave the right hand of fellowship to an apostle, under some special circumstances, that the elders or brethren must do the same when they welcome a child of God to the privileges and enjoyments of the Lord's house, and to participation in all that belongs to the Lord's people.

It has however, by a very general recognition of its fitness, been commonly practiced amongst us and the hearty grasp of the hand from those who "seemed to be pillars in the church" has left a pleasant and profitable impression on many a mind which has been carried through life with them. It was a public recognition of them, before their brethren. It linked them by an act of their brethren as sharers in the joys and sorrows, in the labors and rewards of that par-

ticular congregation. It has occasionally been objected to, as a thing not commanded, and therefore as wrong. But it goes with out wanting words on the subject. That things are not necessarily wrong, because they are not commanded. No one claims divine authority for the act, but any congregation who shall choose to welcome in this or any other, orderly manner, their brethren and sisters may surely do so.

I do not write this article to claim for the custom divine authority, nor to condemn its practice because not commanded, but to make a suggestion to those, who on behalf of the church, do extend the right hand of fellowship, from time to time, and to state two objections that I have heard against it which are the result of carelessness in the doing of it.

My first objection is, that simple as the ceremony is, it is capable of being misunderstood by the world, when not properly guarded by a careful explanation of its value and design. You receive people into the church by the right hand of fellowship, do you not? Is a question that has been asked of me more than once or twice and generally with the addition to it, "Where is your scriptural authority?" My reply has always been, No Sir, we do not receive people into the church at all. "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." He and he alone can do that. We simply welcome the ones who already belong to the church of Christ, to the privileges we ourselves enjoy in this particular congregation. Now my suggestion is, that we in giving the right hand of fellowship should be careful to state that it is not a means of uniting men to the church. It is not enough to know this. I presume we all know it, but we must make it clear for the benefit of the onlookers, who do sometimes misunderstand its design, or a wrong impression will get abroad. My second objection to a careless performance of this act, is "that the young Christians themselves sometimes misunderstand its design." I have met quite recently with the case of a young person, who believed the gospel message accepted Christ, confessed him and obeyed him, who supposed that because the right hand of fellowship was not extended to her, that she had no right at the table of the Lord, and was not a member of his church. "I know I belonged to him," she said to me, "because I have believed and obeyed him." but she did not know, at that period of her life, that she belonged to his people. The result was that by a simple mistake she was hindered for a time from enjoying her blessing, since discovering that it is possible for persons both inside the church and out of it to fall into error. I have been more careful than ever to guard well the point. That the right hand of fellowship does not add to the church of Christ and is not a matter of divine command.

Uniformity of practice is I think, to be desired in matters of this kind, and if we are careful in stating the design clearly and claiming no divine authority for the act, then no objection can remain to the practice each congregation however should be at liberty to decide the question for itself without incurring the censure of others.

Ridgetown, Ont.
BEAMSVILLE.

I will not trespass on your columns by giving much detail concerning our opening at Beam-

sville only to say, the day was fine, the audience immense. Hamilton, Selkirk, Walsbet, Gainsborough, St. Catharines, Jordan and Smithville were well represented by brethren and I should include Dunnville in the list. The only difference between the three services on this occasion and other ordinary occasions, was the special collections which netted nearly \$1000. A description of the house would take up too much space, hence I will only say, "come and see" the handsomest and best house owned by the Disciples in Canada. Furthermore we are able to pay for it and it will be done. A low estimate on the property will place the value of it at \$5000. I most of all desire to give a synopsis of Bro. Carpenter's morning discourse. He took for his text a part of Luke's opening statement, "That you may know the certainty of things" etc. I said, that an opening service with him was just like any other, but as the larger concourse of people were gathered here, he thought it but just to them, to inform them of what we believe, and why we believe it, or in other words to tell them what was expected to be preached from this pulpit. He then gave a general survey of the origin of our restoration movement, and traced its unimpeded growth for 60 years, showing that our ranks have been filled up from every and all religious bodies, while it is a remarkable thing for one of our members to go over to other religious societies, and this great movement was not made up of the low uneducated, or unthinking classes, but of such men as filled the position of supreme judgeship of the U. S. government of such grand states as Ohio, and President of United States. Garfield, Bishop, Jeremiah Black, etc. he named a score of other leaders in thought. He then spoke of our institutions of learning, our religious periodicals and great missionary operations, this was introductory. He then took up our plea to the world and delivered one of the grandest sermons I ever listened to. He opened and unfolded the real difference between us and denominationalism and exposed the many misrepresentations made by our enemies. As he advanced he rose in fervor, tears of joy flowed freely down the cheeks of the many old brethren who know the truth of what he said, some even forgot where they were and were rather over-demonstrative in their sanctionings. All hearts vied together in thanks to God for the privilege of being identified with such a grand work. The house was densely packed, there being about 550 persons in the house, half as many more were turned away that could not find room to stand near enough to hear. Bro. Carpenter actually stole the hearts of all who heard him. Ample provisions were in Bro. Carr's hall near by for all. Bro. Carpenter left us on Monday and the writer continued the meeting during the week following the opening with large audiences and one baptism, on the following Sunday night the house was packed. Then the rain and dark nights set in but we have kept on with good audiences when the rain was not pouring down, and we intend to fight it out on this line if it takes all winter. We expect Bro. Scott to assist in a few days should he come, we may have something to report further before you go to press.

H. B. SHERMAN.
MARRIAGE.—At Raysville, on the 16th inst. by Elder W. M. Crewson, Mr. John Hacking and Miss Mary Bredelent both of the township of Brinnell, Muskoka.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

If I believe in the name of Jesus Christ, I must believe what He says. I must acknowledge His word and precepts, as the rule of my life. I must walk in all the commandments and ordinances. I must be loving and forgiving, self denying and temperate. I must seek different society and associations, new habits and character must be formed. I must rule and subdue fleshly desires, and bring the "law in my members" in subjection to the "law in my mind." It is a sure indication of a Christian when he "walks not after the flesh," (or "ordinances after the doctrines and commandments of men") "but after the Spirit," the teachings of the Spirit contained only in God's word, which lead to the holiness necessary to come into the presence of God. Oh! the beauty of that holiness which can be reached through Christ and His word. Who can scale its heights, or fathom its depth! The clear, bright, deep spiritual purity of a true and faithful Christian life, is essentially beautiful. How angels must delight to look upon it, yet they know not the joy of passing from death in sin, into life in Christ.

"Fears of such pure and deep delight, Oh! angels never dimmed your sight."

Angels may be filled with joy, when poor needy sinners turn to Christ, and rejoice in every "life hid with Christ in God." May delight in the Heavenly glory, and the presence of God, and strike their harps and shake heaven with the choral strain, but they know not the deep joy of being made free from sin, through Jesus blood, or the secret theme of the saints redemption song.

"They on the harp must lean to hear, A secret chord that mine shall bear." G. J. B.

THE NECESSITY OF SCHOOLS.

The necessity of Sunday School work is found in the fact, that the great enemy of souls is going about seeking whom he may ruin. And as the children have not tried the world for themselves, and learned by a bitter experience that his works and ways lead to sorrow, grief, and death, it is necessary that they be taught, to abhor that which is evil and to cling to that which is good.

The second reason for having Sunday Schools, is that found in the instruction of Christ and his disciples. "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Now if the great teacher valued the souls of children so highly why should we not gather them together on this glorious day of rest, and tell them of his great kindness and love.

How, that once he was a child himself and for that reason he is able to sympathize with the children, as he is acquainted with their joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains. It is the great object of the Sunday School to bring the children to Jesus, that they may share in the great love.

My third reason is a sad one. It is the neglectfulness of parents that makes the Sunday School a necessity. Many thousands of parents seem to think that their work was well done, when they feed and clothe their little ones and send them to the district school. Very many do not concern themselves about the progress they make, even there. Thus the intellectual and moral culture is given over to strangers

or it is neglected all together.

In cases like this the Sunday School becomes a great national blessing, for thousands have been rescued from the prison, the gallows, and the drunkards grove, through its instrumentality.

Eternity alone will make known, how many little souls, have been educated and saved from eternal death by the self-denying efforts of the Sunday School teacher.

My last reason is, the most important of all. Jesus said to his disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." This evidently declares it to be the responsibility of the church to look after the children, and that church which allows any child to grow up in sin, when it has the means of teaching and instructing them in the things that are "pure and lovely" will be judged for dereliction of duty.

How we who are interested in this good work would rejoice, if the members of this congregation would realize the importance of this good work and help to win these young hearts to Christ. Because of the lack of appreciation for Sunday School work many schools are like the boys father. The boy was asked if his father was living. The boy said yes, but he lent very living though. He has rheumatism all over his legs and back," and the schools that are in this plight are so, because the members of the church are not doing their duty.

Some one has defined the Sunday School to be that department of the church of Christ in which the Word of God is taught for the purpose of bringing souls to Christ, that they may "come into him, that finally they may be with Christ." It is not therefore a society separate from the church, run by ambitious persons, but the church at work in the salvation of children. It does seem to me that those of us who cannot occupy the more responsible places in the church, can use our gifts in the Sunday School in moulding the tender mind, and winning the childish heart to Christ.

What anguish will they endure who because their plan or theory has not been followed, wrap their talents in a napkin and bury them from human gaze. "Think how simple things and lowly."

Have a part in natures plan, How the great have small beginnings, And the child must be a man. Little efforts make great actions. Lessons in our childhood taught. Mould the spirit and the temper. Whereby blessed deeds are wrought.

The above essay was read at the 5th anniversary of the S. School in Preston, Iowa, by Mrs. E. POMEROY.

DEBATE.

In the October Worker we stated that the Harding and Wilkinson debate would be out in a few weeks, but it is not out yet. Bro. Harding informs us that the publishers ask him to agree to let Mr. Wilkinson put a lot of matter into his last speeches, to which he can reply only in an appendix, with the understanding that Wilkinson shall have the privilege of replying to such appendix. To this he cannot consent; but proposes that if the publishers will allow him to reply in the debate to everything his opponent says in the debate, he will allow Wilkinson to write an appendix, to which there will be no reply provided that no false statements are made about him. We would say to the brethren

everywhere to refuse to give an order for the book until we can inform them that it is correct and square, and when the book is published right and fair, we will encourage its sale everywhere. In the mean time it will be well to withhold orders until you can hear from us again. L. & W.

For the Worker.
Ridgetown, Oct. 20th/85.

Bro. C. W. Martz of Indianapolis paid us a short visit and preached here on the 2nd Lord's day in October, both morning and evening and in Blenheim in the afternoon. The brethren in both places were highly pleased with his visit and will be glad to see him again, being from home I had not the pleasure of hearing him, but hope to have when he comes to Ridgetown again. May his visit amongst us in Ont. be very profitable and may many be led to Christ by his instrumentality.

My visit to Stratford was one of great pleasure. I spent one week with the church there, preaching on Lord's Day and evening. Bro. Harding had just closed a gospel meeting, so I addressed the Church on matters of Christian life and duty. Much time was also spent in religious conversation from house to house during the day, and I may add during the night too, and even into the morning hours on a few occasions, so many were the questions asked and so interesting the subjects discussed. I trust it may be as profitable to them as it was pleasant to me.

I met the acquaintance of Brother E. Macklin, whom I have long known through a friendly correspondence, but it was better to see his face and grasp his hand, and talk together of the things pertaining to the kingdom. I shall be glad to visit them again and renew some exceedingly pleasant friendships I made there.

WASB AND TORONTO.—I paid a short visit to Toronto in company with Bro. C. W. Martz from Indianapolis and we were pleased to find that it being Thursday night when we arrived, we had just enough time to enquire when the brethren who meet in the west end of the city held their weekly meetings for prayer. We were guided by our aged Bro. Menzies to the house of Bro. Harris, where we enjoyed a season of spiritual refreshment. Looking over the church record, I find it contains some sixty four names, and what was equally pleasant it shows a good average attendance at the Lord's day services, an attendance that speaks well for the future of the work, there.

Bro. Barclay spends much of his time there and is greatly appreciated. There are quite a number of young Christians there from other parts of the province pursuing their studies. This latter fact should give all the brethren in Ontario an interest in the church in Toronto, for it is a matter of no small importance that when our sons and daughters go to a large city they should find a spiritual home, where they may gather strength to do battle with the evil surrounding them. One of the greatest needs of the church there just now is a house of worship, and this need ought to be met, and I am persuaded that an appeal to the church throughout the Province, would find a ready and liberal response.

J. LEDIARD.

MUSKOKA.—Bro. Stirling and Finch left for Muskoka and commenced a meeting in No. 1 school house, Macleay township on Lord's day, Oct. 25, where Bro. Stirling held a successful meeting in September. This meeting was continued 10 days, Bro. S. and F. speaking alternately for one week when Bro. S. went to Bracebridge. The meetings were well attended and three believed and were baptized by Bro. Finch. There are now about 22 brethren there. A Hall having been secured in Bracebridge, they began a meeting there Nov. 1st which was kept up for 9 evenings without any immediate results, but it may be a beginning to what may prove permanent work there yet. Bro. Finch left on Nov. 10th for Magnetawan, to hold a meeting where he started a church last year, and will stop off and visit the brethren in Macleay on his way home.