

The Christian Helper.

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"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." II. Cor. 1: 24.

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"THE CHURCH."

Who or, what is "THE Church"? We suppose there are but two claimants presumptuous enough to arrogate the title to themselves in this Canada of ours. The Roman Catholics say, "we are the church." Nay, rejoice the Episcopalians, "we are the church." And both are wrong. Each of these bodies, like all the other religious societies of the country, constitute a church; but it is arrant phariseism, or it may be culpable carelessness, when any one of them seeks to unchurch the rest and to monopolize the title. It is just on a par with the self-complacency of the United States people who call themselves Americans, as if Canadians were not also Americans. No better definition of "a church" can be found than in the nineteenth article of the Church of England, as rendered from the Latin original by Archbishop Whately: "A visible church of Christ is a society or community of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things which of necessity are requisite to the same." Call the churches, the Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, in such and such a place. No valid objection can be made to this, because it represents the fact that there are societies of Christians existing in the same neighbourhood not in conformity as to their views of doctrine, order, discipline or ecclesiastical government. But in the present divided state of Christendom "the church" cannot be found in any one isolated community. Parts of it exist here and there among the different denominations. Perhaps no Christian will quarrel with Hooker's definition of "the Church," as consisting of "all those who acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour of mankind, who give credit to His gospel and who hold His sacraments in honour."

THE ST. JOHN'S FIRE.

So much has been written about the St. John's fire, that every one of our readers must ere this have become thoroughly acquainted with the details of the terrible conflagration. The philanthropic hearts of both the old world and the new, have gone out in kindly sympathy to the sufferers; and from every direction we hear of cities, towns and villages, striving to excel one another in a generous rivalry of good deeds. Much has been done to relieve the pressing needs of those homeless ones, but much still remains to be accomplished, and we trust that those among us who have already given of their abundance will not rest there, but continue in well doing until they fully realize the "privilege of giving." To the Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, this sad calamity appeals with more than ordinary directness, as it has given us a chance of shewing our brethren in the maritime provinces that we are not only *one* with them in faith and practice, but in everything that concerns their prosperity. We have now an opportunity of shewing them that, not only do our intellectual and spiritual natures *chord*, but that our *oneness* is so complete as to affect our purse strings and make us cheerful givers, in spite of the stringency of the times.

Most of our readers are aware that the two finest Baptist churches in the city (the Leinster and Germain St. churches) were among the buildings burned in the late fire, and that although they were pretty fully insured, the great losses sustained by the individual membership, will make it impossible, for some time at least, to carry on the regular work of these churches without liberal outside aid. The question has been mooted, whether it would not be advisable to curtail Baptist operations in St. John's by amalgamating the four churches into two. We think it would be a mistake for the Baptists of St. John to take any steps backward; and the moral effect upon the prospects of the denomination in that city would be felt for many years to come, as they endeavoured to re-occupy the ground they ought to go up and possess at once. Rather let them go *forward*, trusting in the Lord. Let them rebuild at once, even if the churches be less costly and preten-

tion than formerly; and we feel certain that He who looketh even after the sparrows will not suffer His own cause to lack assistance. In this matter, these prostrate churches may fairly look to their brethren throughout the whole of the provinces, not only for their prayers and sympathy, but for their *practical co-operation* as well. The suggestion has already been made that every Baptist church in the Dominion take up a special collection for the furtherance of this object. The suggestion is a good one, and the sooner it is taken hold of by our pastors, the more freely will the denomination be inclined to give. It would be a reproach to the whole denomination in Canada, if the cause in the commercial metropolis of New Brunswick should have to be contracted to half its former dimensions. Let us avoid this by making one grand, united effort of both pastors and people, and by our freewill offerings place these desolated churches again in a position not only to rebuild their structures, but to do yeoman's work for the Master.

SHALL WE WEAR MOURNING?

In walking along the streets of any of our cities, one can hardly fail to be struck with the great number of ladies attired in the sombre garb of mourning. Whether or not those so dressed are all genuine mourners we shall not now attempt to decide. We will take it for granted however, that they are so, and simply proceed to the consideration of the much discussed question which forms our caption: "Shall we wear mourning?"

From a practical point of view we should say decidedly "no," as it is not only expensive and unserviceable, but in this hot weather, exceedingly uncomfortable to the wearer. We think, as a rule, that if those bereft of friends consulted only their own tastes, they would content themselves with sober colors, and eschew altogether the follies commonly known as fashionable mourning. But just here the tyrant Fashion steps in, and insists that the bereaved ones shall have as elaborate an outfit in which to portray their sorrow, as the trousseau of the bride is supposed to be indicative of rejoicing. Indeed, if mourners were to follow blindly the dic-