The Protestant

AND EVANGELICAL WITNESS.

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."—1 Thes. v. 21.

Vol. 1. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Saturday, July 30, 1859. No 4.

The Protestant,

AND EVANGELICAL WITNESS,

is issued every Saturday Morning, from Haszard's Printing Office, South Side Queen Square,

BY

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TERMS:

Annual Subscription—Twelve Shillings, in advance, otherwise Fifteen Shillings will be charged.

Advertisements inserted at the usual rates. [To prevent disappointment, all advertisements should be sent to the Office before 3 o'clock on Friday.]

THE DARK VALLEY.

Onward I walk, and feel no fear,
Because I know my Saviour's near;
The Light of Life dispels the gloom
That shades the pathway to the tomb.

I trust thy righteousness divine—
I plead no other name than thine;
And on thy all-sufficient grace
My full reliance calmly place.

Thy gracious arms encircle me,
Weary and weak, I cling to Thee;
Though every hostile power combine,
They cannot sever Thee and mine.

When fainting 'neath the load of pain,
Thy words revive my heart again,—
Thou tell'st me, with a gracious smile,
'Twonly for "a little while"—

"A little while," and sin shall cease
To stain my soul, or break my peace;
This wandering heart no more shall rove,
But rest forever in thy love.

In the bright land of endless joy
Thy praise shall be my sweet employ,
While rend'ring in these realms above,
The service of unwearied love.

[Reported for the Protestant.]

Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia.

Wednesday Morning, June 29.

Continued from the Protestant, July 16.

The Rev George Sutherland spoke in substance as follows:—Moderator, I cordially concur in the fraternal salutations which have thus been expressed. I regret that our whole deputation is not present. A combination of circumstances have prevented it. But in these present you have a representative of those who have in years past borne the burden and heat of the day, and also of the rising native ministry of our Church. Though but of yesterday under our present designation we claim a long connexion with the past. As the Free Church of Nova Scotia, we have been in existence but fifteen years; and yet our numbers have been tripled. We appear before you as the representatives of at least 35 separate congregations, and number some 34 ordained ministers, including two Professors, the superintendent of Education, and one Foreign Missionary—In the records of the past we trace our connexion with the Church of Scotland, Free—a Church honored by Christ in contending for some of the noblest principles of Christianity, more especially the right of Christ to rule and reign supreme and alone in his own house. But not only with the third Reformation—the Reformation from Erastian control—but with the second, the Reformation from prelatic supremacy, in which the Glasgow Assembly of 1638, with the famous Alexander Henderson at its head, took so large a part, and whose noble conflict on that occasion did honor to the Scottish church and Scottish nation; and still further back, with the first, the great reformation from Popery, in which Knox and Rowe and their companions, the champions of liberty, figured so largely, do we of the present day claim connexion. To the same noble ancestry may this Synod, which we have the honor to address, trace in great part its origin. As descendants of such, God has entrusted to us a great work. We are called to contend for sound doctrine, and for that scriptural form of church government which secures harmony and liberty to the whole body of Christ. Yet I cannot agree with the statement fallen from Mr Stewart, that the Church of Scotland is the mother of all the Presbyterian churches in the world. For I behold in the Alpine mountains—the Church of the Waldenses—a Presbyterian Church claiming connexion with Apostolic times; the Swiss church also,—the Protestant church of France,—the church of Holland, all Presbyterian; and the German and Scandinavian churches essentially so. Some of these churches have fallen from their purity and efficiency, and hence there is the greater necessity to contend earnestly for the faith and liberty that have been bequeathed to us after great sacrifices. And is it supposed that in effecting this union, we are to furl the banner that has so long maintained its ground against all opposition. Far from it. We are to unite to maintain more firmly than ever those grand old doctrines,—to establish Presbyterianism on a more permanent basis, and to stamp our doctrines and principles on these wide spread Provinces. I am glad to observe that the Basis of union secures intact these doctrines. That Basis asserts that the united church shall be free from all foreign jurisdiction. This I hold to be an inherent right of every church of Christ. The Free Church of Scotland, or the United Presbyterian Church may plant a Church in these Provinces; but so soon as it is established, it is under law to Christ, and to him alone. The second article of the Basis declares that the great object of the union shall be the glory of the Redeemer. What object more worthy! Every redeemed soul thrills with gratitude to his Redeemer, and feels that glory and honor are justly due to him. Then there are subordinate objects: the advancement of piety, zeal, godliness; and a united testimony against every species of error. These results I believe may be obtained by the union. Your time will not allow me to dwell upon these points; but as popish error is mentioned, a remark may be allowed on it. Popery has compelled us to stand on the defensive. It has striven to rise to such a position and influence that its practices might be carried out in all their latitude, and that it might dictate terms to other denominations.

By the blessing of God on the faithful and resolute efforts of Presbyterians especially, the tide had been turned, and the encroachments repelled. A lesson had been taught that would not soon be forgotten. In P. E. Island, the Presbyterians were more numerous than all the other Protestant denominations united, numbering at least 24,000. Were they united in one, their influence should and would be felt in moulding the character of the population, and guarding and promoting the interests of that fair and fertile Island. The third article announces the standards of the Church. Perhaps in point of logical arrangement, this might have come first; but its position here is not without advantage, as some explanations had to follow. These standards are the famous Westminster standards. Far from regarding them as the cause of dissension, as has been stated, I look upon them as the great rallying point for all Presbyterians. Around these admirable documents we may all take our stand, as occupying a firm and admirable ground of union. On their interpretation we are now agreed. We have come together and stated our opinions firmly and freely, and after calm and clear and close consideration, we have found each other to be of one mind. With the explanations of the section of the Confession regarded as doubtful, I am fully satisfied, and feel that these are terms on which we may form a union without dubiety, and on a firm and judicious foundation. Apologizing, Moderator, for occupying so much time, I feel happy in conveying to you, and through you to the Synod, the fraternal salutations of the Free Church, and their sincere desire that through the blessing of God a union may be effectual between the churches that shall maintain and extend the Kingdom of the Redeemer in these lands.

Rev Prof. Ross, at the desire of the Synod, responded in a few remarks. He was only expressing the sentiment of the whole Synod, when he said they were delighted to see a deputation from the Free Church in their midst. It was a treat to which they had now become familiar; and every time that they saw them, christian affection seemed to increase, and the prospects of union were brightening. They had now agreed upon the more important points. He believed that there should be a large amount of unity of sentiment upon doctrinal matters. The Confession of Faith contained a great amount of doctrine upon the most important scriptural points. Upon all these he might say, they were now all at one. There might be a difference of opinion about the meaning of a single passage or two in the Confession of Faith; but in what it ought to teach they were all agreed; so that he might say there was no real difference of opinion amongst them. The point on which a small difference did exist, was never likely to become a practical question in these Provinces. He might state for the information of the Free Church brethren, that the Synod had had their correspondence before them, and had agreed to all with very slight alteration,—only a few words. The difficulties had been successfully overcome. The prospects were bright. There were difficulties yet, but they hoped that these would melt away. They found strengthening affection, and reciprocal attachment and kindness. Such unity was highly desir able. There was every reason to believe that when the proper time arrived the parties would be fully prepared for union, but one of unity of sentiment on all important points, on church polity, and of affection leading to unity of practice. The effect of such an union on them could not be computed. The prospects before them were very bright; and they had good reason to thank God and take courage.

Rev. Mr Sedgwick felt constrained to make a few remarks. He did not think he was much of an optimist; but he was sometimes tempted to indulge a little self-complacency. He alluded to the circumstance that in the Providence of God, he had initiated the proceedings in this Synod relating to the union now nearly consummated. He would always regard it as a notable chapter in his ecclesiastical and spiritual history, that in this his adopted country, he had been called to initiate such an important matter. He would adopt the language of Professor Ross that they should thank God and take courage. What had been done indirectly through their action? Why, they had created history; material for writing a most interesting chapter in the ecclesiastical history of this Province. What had been done more by their action? Why, it had excited the attention of churches over the world. He had seen notices of their action, not in religious periodicals only, but frequently in other newspapers published in Great Britain. What a striking fact that was. He believed most distinctly, that their action had had an effect on the churches of other countries; for he believed that they had entered on the subject before the churches of Canada and Australia. He believed that their action had regulated and stimulated the action of those places. He looked on this as a most extraordinary effect. Then look at the good which their proceedings had done among themselves. Deep searchings of heart had been the result, and that too upon the most important subjects. He was sure that even though the union should never be consummated, which he despaired, he would not like to have lost the pleasure and enjoyment which had been derived from the reciprocated and kindly feelings which had characterized all the deputations which had come and gone between the two Synods. Nobody could tell the good resulting from that source. Next, look at the benefits likely to accrue to the church and to society from the union. He would not speak at present on the influence which a united church would bring to bear upon the cause of missions. Neither would he dwell on the subject of education, especially secular education; nor on the best system of ecclesiastical polity which the church had seen—that church, the Presbyterian, which he called a golden mean between other systems of church government. It had secured all the rights and privileges which belong to us; and the greatest amount of ecclesiastical and spiritual liberty to the ordinary members of the church, which it was possible for them to enjoy. He then alluded in a happy and forcible manner to the advantages likely to result to the Province in a political point of view from the contemplated union of Presbyterians. Much good had already been done in this respect, and it doubtless would be much augmented. Looking at all these features of the subject, ought they not to thank God and take courage on account of all that had been done? He thought that all this indicated that, in a very short time, the two Bodies would be one and one in the hand of the Lord; and that with that one stick they would thrash down some ecclesiastical mountains which had been standing in the way of their civil and ecclesiastical progress. He concluded by saying that he hoped this would be the last deputation of this nature, and that their brethren would not come in that character again.

Rev Mr Chisholm said—After the interesting address which had been delivered, it would be out of place to occupy much time. Yet he felt as if it were a proper occasion for taking an hour's retrospective view of the action of this Synod, and of the operation of the principles in the Protestant world which were leading at present to unity. At the time at which they were congratulating themselves, here was a drawing together of nearly all who bear the Protestant name. He had taken notice that that feeling had been spreading throughout the world. By uniting, they were just moving with the tide of the present day. The union, he trusted, would be consummated. He rejoiced that their example had been copied in other places. He rejoiced also to know that the evident outpouring of the Spirit of God, at the present day in the Protestant world, was leading to union. That was the result. He believed that what was going to be effected now, would go still farther in uniting those who were of one faith with themselves. Throughout of the same opinion as some other bodies, yet he did look forward with hope to the day when the different denominations that professed faith in Christ and bodiance to him, would be so drawn together that they would constitute a far more important army, and do more for the glory of God than could be effected by Presbyterians; although he believed that their principles were nearest to the standard of God's word. Probably the present movement would lead other denominations to inquire how far there was a difference between them and ourselves. He believed that others in different denominations were rejoicing that union was being promoted, and seeing that there should be more co-operation—a bringing about of that time when the Christian Church would exert that influence which it had been appointed by the Head of Zion to effect. Had it not been for the influence of the Spirit of God leading the two bodies together, their principles would never have effected it. Only let them be faithful to themselves, and to their principles, and they might venture to hope that God would crown their efforts with success; and that Presbyterianism, which had been threatened in many places, would gain strength and go forth to that warfare which was waging, that the kingdom of grace might be strengthened, the kingdom of Christ advanced, and the kingdom of glory hastened.

Rev Mr McCulloch would make one remark. Mr Sedgwick had referred to his connection with the union. He (Mr McC.) would say nothing on that point. But now, when they saw the union so near, they should look back a little, and see whatsoever had done in this matter. He believed that the late Mr Trotter had initiated this movement. On on occasion he said "I live in expectation of seeing this union consummated;" but he was taken away a few days afterwards. He thought the chief honor was due to the indefatigable labors of Mr Trotter.

After a few additional remarks, the Moderator, on motion, and in the name of the Synod, addressed the Deputation as follows:—I have great pleasure in expressing to you the gratification which we feel in seeing you amongst us, and the pleasure we experience in hearing your excellent and very weighty and appropriate addresses. Your visits at all times have afforded us great pleasure. We have had great satisfaction in hearing the observations made by your brethren from time to time, more especially as connected with the interesting prospect which we have in view. As an individual, I may be permitted to say, I am strongly in favor of the union. I have great faith in the power of Presbyterianism. I have long waited and desired to see all the Presbyterians in the Province united together firmly and cordially; and I hope—though I may not be permitted to see it—that that will soon be the case. This union is encouraging; and I trust it will be the precursor of them. You will see that I am requested likewise to say, that you are to mention to your brethren the satisfaction which we experience in hearing their Deputates, and our hope that the union in prospect may be speedily accomplished.

The Moderator the, in prayer, commended the brethren present, and he ministers and people of both Synods, to the gracious care of the Head of the Church—when the Synod adjourned.

After meeting again, the subject of Union was further considered, whereby whole management of the Seminaries was remitted simpliciter to the Committees, no Synodical action appearing necessary for the present. The Clerk was directed to acknowledge courteously the the offer of the Synod of the Free Church, that our Students attend the Ion Church College.

Thursday, June 30th.

The Synod met at the usual hour, and was duly constituted, and the minutes of last meeting read.

The Committee on Union was reappointed; and the basis of union, together with the formula, were ordered to be sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions for their careful consideration, to report to the Synod at its next meeting.

Foreign Mission.—The Report of this mission was read by the Rev Jas. McGillivray, Secretary of the Board. The Report contained full particulars, and remarkably interesting account of the present position, the prospects and encouragements of the six missionaries on the New Hebrides. It also contained an account of the moral condition of the Islands of Aneiteum, and other Islands. Family worship is also universally kept up on Aneiteum, and its inhabitants are improving in education, and rapidly rising in the social scale. The report abounded in facts highly encouraging, and admirably adapted to stimulate the members of the Synod and of the Church to fervent prayer and increased efforts on behalf of missions, and to lead them to offer grateful thanksgiving to God.

It was unanimously agreed that the Report be received, and the diligence of the said highly approved; and that 3000 copies of the Report be printed for circulation. The Synod also agreed to record their grateful acknowledgments of their obligations to ministers and members of our church in aiding, for their support, to the mission. A motion have been made that the Synod render their devout acknowledgments to God for the manifold tokens of his favouring on the mission from its beginning, and particularly during the past year, the Moderator called on Rev John McCurdy, who in a very fervent and appropriate manner led the devotions of the Synod.

While the Report was under consideration, Rev Mr Bayne read a letter which, at the reading of the Report, he had received from Gordon, giving information of the welfare of Mr Mrs Gordon, and of the other missionaries, and carrying the gratifying intelligence of the improvement in the health of Mr Matheson.

The Synod agreed to invite Y John Inglis to visit the churches under their charge on occasion of his visiting Great Britain. Arrangements relating to the departure of Mr Johnston, who the Board have accepted as a missionary, were then be made by the Board. It is expected that will leave about the middle of October next. The and was reappointed, with additions—Adjourned whenpr.

Afternoon Sederunt.

The Committee appointed to examine the contributions of the congregations generally to the different schemes of the Church, exhibited their Report. The returns from some congregations showing that they did not contribute to some of the schemes, the Moderator asked the pastors present the causes of the deficiency, which elicited answers, for the most part satisfactory. It was agreed that while the Synod regret the number and amount of the contributions made so, upon the whole, encouraging, they would recommend Sessions to give a due share of attention to all the schemes of the Church.

Temperance Question.—The Committee appointed to examine and report upon the replies of Presbyteries and Sessions to the question of excluding from the communion of the Church those who are engaged in the liquor traffic, presented their report. It showed that two Presbyteries—that of Halifax and of Pictou—had both given their opinion against exclusion and in favor of the Synod's resolution of 1855. The Presbytery of Halifax was against proceeding further for the present; whilst that of Pictou recommended the Synod to recognize more distinctly the right and duty of Sessions to exclude from the communion of the Church those who persist in the traffic. Out of the two Presbyteries, twenty-five Sessions had reported. Eight of them recommended exclusion unconditionally, and five conditionally; while twelve were against exclusion. The Report was received, and the diligence of the Committee approved. The subject was then discussed till the time of adjournment.

Missionary Meeting.—This meeting, which was held in the evening, was addressed by the Secretaries of the Seminary, Home Mission, and Foreign Mission Boards respectively; who gave a full and lucid account of the proceedings of each Board during the past year, and stated some facts relating to their proper sphere of action. Rev J. McKinnon, and Mr C. T. Johnston, Missionary, also spoke at considerable length on the Foreign Mission.

Friday, July 1st.

Temperance Question.—During the forenoon sitting, the Synod was principally occupied with the discussion of this question. Several resolutions were proposed on the subject; but the discussion turned principally on the views contained in the two following, on which finally the vote was taken.

Rev Mr Murdock moved, and Rev Mr Bayne seconded, "That this Synod re-affirm the principle already set forth in their resolutions respecting Temperance; and would solemnly impress upon the minds of the people under their charge the duty of refraining from the use of intoxicating liquors, and enjoin upon Sessions to use diligence in pointing out to each of their members as are engaged in the traffic the impropriety of their conduct, in order that they may be induced to forsake it;—and that a pastoral letter be issued by the Synod on the subject."

Rev George Patterson moved, in amendment, and Rev Mr Walker seconded "That the Synod re-affirm the resolution of 1853: 'That as the ordinary traffic in intoxicating drinks is one involving the most destructive consequences, the Synod are of opinion that in these days of light, those who follow it pursue a course inconsistent with the solemn engagements and important nature of a Christian profession, and that Sessions be directed to use diligence in bringing the Church to a state of purity in this respect;' and whereas doubts have been expressed as to the extent to which the Sessions under this resolution are authorized to exercise discipline, declare that the Synod hereby recognize it to be the right and duty of Sessions to exclude from church fellowship, after faithful dealing, those who persist in the practice."

In favor of the motion, it was strenuously maintained that, as sessions had decided against the principle contained in the amendment, the Synod ought to allow the matter to drop. The passing of a resolution by the Synod, enjoining practice in opposition to the decision of the lower courts of the church, was characterized as popish and tyrannical conduct, and utterly repudiated. Some speakers were strongly opposed to placing further obstacles in the way of some who might wish to join the fellowship of the church; while others were of opinion that the practice recommended in the amendment would have an injurious effect on some congregations. It was also maintained that if the Synod decided to exclude from the fellowship of the church those who engage in the trade of intoxicating drinks, they ought also to exclude those who use them.

In favor of the amendment, it was maintained that though a majority of the Sessions were opposed to the measure, yet, as the Synod had taken a stand on the subject, they ought to advance, and not retrograde. The traffic was productive of injurious consequences to the temporal, and especially to the eternal welfare of men; and therefore ought to be decidedly opposed by the Synod, as a church court. How could they consistently petition the Legislature to pass a Prohibitory law, when they refrained from exercising the authority which they themselves possessed.

By such arguments was the discussion kept up almost continuously till the hour of adjournment. After a few additional remarks, in the afternoon, the vote was taken, when the amendment was carried by a majority of 8—22 voting for it, and 14 for the original motion.

Rev Mr Murdock protested against the decision, in his own name, and in the name of all who might join him, for reasons subsequently to be given in writing.

The Synod was afterwards principally employed till the hour of adjournment, in hearing the reports of those who had been appointed to visit congregations in behalf of the Special effort for the Seminary.

Some matters of minor importance chiefly occupied the attention of the Synod during the evening. Rev Prof. Ross was appointed to act as Professor of Divinity during the next Session of the Theological Hall. Adjourned with prayer.

Saturday, July 2d.

The Synod resumed business at the usual hour. On motion, it was agreed that the Trees Presbyteries be empowered to supply Tyrrell Bowbich, to ordain Mr S. F. Johnston, as a missionary to the New Hebrides, and that the Board hold such farewell services as they may think proper in any of the other Presbyteries; and the Trees Presbyteries were directed to meet and make their arrangements accordingly.

The Rev George Patterson, from the Committee appointed to prepare a memorial of Dr Rice, to be inserted on the minutes, reported a draft, which was approved, and a copy ordered to be sent to the widow of the late Professor.

The Presbyteries of Pictou and Truro were authorized to supply Prof. Smith's pulpit each two days during the Session of the Hall.

After notice given, Mr Sedgwick moved that the Synod reap and approve of the arrangements made for celebrating the Centenary of the Reformation in Scotland, in May, 1860. The Synod approved of the object, and agreed to appoint a Committee to correspond with other Protestant bodies to secure united action in the celebration.

On motion by the Rev P. G. McGregor, seconded by Rev Mr Sedgwick, it was resolved—"That the Synod recognized, with devout thanksgivings to God, the various tokens of the Divine presence manifested in our congregations during the past year, and would affectionately urge upon our people to pleead in earnest prayer for more abundant displays of the power of the Holy Spirit, in the conversion of souls and revival of the church."

The Report of the Synod's Treasurer being read, showed that there were about £400 in the Foreign Mission Fund, about £40 in the Home Mission, and about £20 in the Seminary Fund.

After some arrangements were made respecting the periodical of the church, and the usual items of Synod expenditure were voted, the Synod adjourned, to meet in Prince-street Church, Pictou, on the 3d Wednesday of June, 1860.

Treasury.

The Touch-Stone of Gospel Light.

When the mind is fully possessed with, and that habitually and firmly into, the model of the notion and doctrine of Gospel truth about the full and free forgiveness of all sins in the blood of Christ, then to be able to keep the heart always in a deep, humbling sense of sin, abhorrency of it, and self-abasement for it, is a great effect of Gospel wisdom and grace.

This is the real and touch-stone of the Gospel light:—If it keep the heart sensible of sin, humble, lowly, and broken on that account,—if it teach us to water a free pardon with tears, to desire forgiven sin to watch diligently for the ruin of which we are yet assured shall never ruin us,—it is divine, from above of the Spirit of grace.

If it secretly and insensibly make men loose and slight in their thoughts about sin, it is carnalness, selfish, false. If it will be all, answer all ends, it is nothing.—John Owen, *D. D.*

The Sending of the Son.

"God, sending his own son." The three persons of the Godhead are all represented as engaged in the salvation of sinners. God the Father sends His Son to redeem; God the Son comes and finishes the work given Him to do; and God the Father and God the Son send the Holy Spirit to apply the redemption purchased by Christ.

The appellation Son when applied to Christ does not imply inferiority of nature to the Father, for as a son of man is one, so the Son of God must be God. He is not then called the Son of God, as angels and men are called sons of God, by creation or adoption; nor is He called His Son on account of His resurrection, although His resurrection gave a glorious manifestation of the fact; but because He sustains an eternal and ineffable relation to the Father, which in some general respects resembles that of the relation of sons among men. It designates His divinity; for speaking as the Son He could say, "I and my Father are one." By Son here then is to be understood the second person of the blessed Trinity: "very God of very God."

"The greatness of the gift and the urgency of the necessity are therefore presented in the strongest light by these few words:—"God sending His own Son." Will it not astonish the sons of the highest intelligences who are nearest the throne of the Eternal should be sent to raise our ruined race out of its miserable condition? No! An archangel's energies are not equal to the enterprise. The disease is too desperate for any such physician—the case is too desperate for such an advocate—the redemption of the soul costs too much to be paid by any finite or created being.

Mark, then, the free love of God: when there was none to save, He sent His own Son—His only begotten! That very God whose law man had broken—whose authority he had contemned—whose wrath he had justly merited—consecrates Himself as the author of a second scheme of life. Infinite love here manifests itself exclusive of the merit of redemption—nay, as the very fountain of redemption itself; for it was in view of man's condemnation that God sent His Son. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."—*British Mag.*

Comments to the Penitent.

It is good to shed tears of sadness, thinking on your sins, but shed them looking on Christ crucified. It is good to pray, and to pray more and more earnestly, but you ought to pray, trusting only on the merits of Christ. It is good to do the good works of faith and love—it is good in instances more and more in fortitude, purity, and meekness; but see you don't put any confidence in your own works. Put all your confidence and hope in the perfected work of the holy Son of God. Confidence in your own works will bring to you condemnation and death. Faith in the death of Jesus Christ will make us partakers of the merits of his death, and consequently of the blessings of his conversation. It is good if necessary, to suffer persecution, shame and death itself, for the sake of Jesus. But we ought always to remember that it is not for the sake of our personal sorrows and sufferings, but only for the sake of the sufferings which Christ endured, that we are saved.

In Christ we have redemption through his blood the complete forgiveness of our sins. In Christ all things are ours. Out of Christ we have nothing. Do you wish for pardon and peace?—go to Christ. In Him you will find all you want. Do you wish for light and wisdom—do you wish to understand more the meaning of the Word of God?—go to Christ. He will send you the Spirit of light and truth. Do you wish for growth in grace and in holiness, more faith and strength to overcome sin within, and the world without?—go my brethren, go again and again to Christ. Christ has for you all the gifts of faith and strength, and grace and holiness. Anything you want, either for the soul or for the body—for the life which now is, or that which is to come—go to Christ: all things are found there in Christ. Christ is ready to give you all things abundantly. To be far from Christ, is to be far from light, from