

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

Ira, N. Y., 24th Dec., 1852.

DEAR BROTHER OLIPHANT :—I have read a number of your paper during the past year, and have now received the December Number, the last for the year; and I have now concluded to write you and send what will answer as an equivalent for the Numbers I hope to receive from you for the ensuing year, which I hope will enable you to write with pleasure to yourself and profit to your readers.

I would inform you that most of us enjoy good health; but some are soon going to reap the reward of their labors. Brother Birch and sister Noble are failing. Brother J. M. Shepard is quite feeble, and the prospect of his recovery not flattering. In view of these things, having received precious promises, we endeavour to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting our consecration in the fear of the Lord.

But I have other matters of which to speak. I have been for many years endeavouring to learn what the apostles teach on all subjects relating to our present and future enjoyment. For that purpose, in addition to the Bible, I have for more than twenty years read the writings of one Alexander Campbell with admiration and delight, and in whose teachings I had entire confidence; and I had, or thought I had, learned this fact "that all persons believing in the Messiah as the Son of God, and being immersed in his name into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," were substantially and formally members of the church of Christ. In this I may have erred, inasmuch as new doctrines are taught by some of our brethren, and we (the Disciples) are fond of new things. We have recently been taught that the baptism of John, and the giving the right hand of fellowship to his disciples on the day of Pentecost, were equivolant to being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins; or in other words, they were thus constituted members of the Church of Christ, and that there is no authority in the church or out of it that can put them out.

I am thus writing to you with the expectation that you will enlighten us in this dark corner of the world and give us "the form of sound words" which Peter or some other person used when he gave the three thousand the right hand of fellowship on the day of Pentecost. I see in the December Number of the *Banner*, that some have followed Peter's example, but have not given us the form of words which he used,—which is a matter of much importance to some of us who wish to practise right; and I am not quite certain who it was that gave the right hand of fellowship, or whether it was the common practise to do so on the first day of the week to those who were baptized during the previous week. But I am inclined to think that it was on the first day of the week; for I find it stated by Luke, that the disciples came together on that day to break bread, and it is reasonable to suppose that they could add to the church the saved when they came together. But I will not insist, but wait for more light.