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THE

CHRISTIAN BANNER.

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."
"This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

VOL. XI. COBOURG AND BRIGHTON, DECEMBER, 1857. NO. 12

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION, NO. 3.

NATURE OF PUNISHMENT.

THE caption heading these articles may be an unfortunate one, especially now that we are all learning to reject from our religion all philosophy and to be content with simple fact and faith. All that is meant, however, by the expression is, to indicate that the principles of religion are all in harmony with those found in nature and sound reason, and that christianity is capable of being *illustrated* by admitted facts in the world around us. This method of instruction was a favorite one with the Great Teacher himself as shown by all his parables. The remote reasons of things, why anything is as it is, we can afford to leave to those who are fond of speculative philosophy. But it should be regarded as a matter of some importance, now-a-days, to show, particularly in respect to sin and its punishment, that there are analogies in nature and admitted principles in human society, that bear out the bible, in the face of infidels and half-instructed believers, in all its terrible denunciations against transgressors.

In No. 2, we spoke of the many distorted views of the nature of future punishment held by many a well-wisher for the truth, and of their ill effects upon community. Not a few seem to regard punishment as an unnecessary, angry infliction of pain, because the Almighty feels

insulted and wishes to satisfy a vengeful feeling, which pain might be otherwise averted without any jar in the order of the universe, or interruption in established sequences. But we hope to make it apparent that punishment is a natural and necessary result attached to the violation of God's law, to a want of harmony with the Divine arrangements. For, since there is a right and a wrong way in the world, the Lord wishes to lead us in the path that will ultimate in our happiness. And if he create man at all, he must create him on *some plan*; and this plan involves the truth, for example, that no man can, in the commission of known sin, have a good and peaceful conscience. Is our Lord to be complained of because the gambler, all his life, is destitute of the peace that "passes all understanding?" Happiness is inconsistent with such a *character*; and since his character remains the same after death, on what principle can his *future* unhappiness be considered severe or unjust? If a man live ten years with the heart of a defrauder, is it strange that he should be inwardly unhappy for ten years? or for fifty, or eighty years, is not the principle the same?—And if half of this punishment be felt in this world and half in the next, is the latter half less just than the former which all grant to be right? As long as the heart is impure it will be miserable whether he live one hundred years, or as long as Methusalah. It is quite possible for a man to commit as much sin during the first thirty years of his life as Methusalah did during the corresponding period of his life, and if the penalty is never felt after death, this patriarch endured the inward pain for his youthful sins more than nine hundred years longer than most men of modern times. Now if it was just that this antediluvian should suffer all he did in heart and conscience, be it much or little, it is also just that a like sinner should suffer as much if not here, hereafter. If Methusalah had a wicked heart, (and it seems he had, for he died the same year that Noah entered the Ark, and was probably "condemned with the world") and if he had died three hundred years sooner than he did, would the *nature* of his punishment be changed because he was removed from one prison to another? Would it not still be the natural result of sin?

There is no more injustice nor cruelty in future than in present punishment, for both are the inevitable and constitutional production of the violation of law. Every sinner, in this life, bears the weight of his own sins until his character before God is changed, or until he is converted and pardoned through Jesus Christ; but if he never become

reconciled to God, why should he not feel the same sting for ten, one hundred, or ten times one hundred years, or forever? It is the *state of mind* that is unhappy whether it be found on this, or the other side of the grave: and until some one can prove that man loses all consciousness of sins at death, or that the *grave* is to be a kind filter to strain out all impurities from his soul and give him a good character that shall be worthy of the "*well done,*" we shall be compelled to believe with the poet, alluding to an expression found in Solomon's writings,—

Just as the tree cut down, that fell
Northward or southward, there it lies;
So man departs to heaven or hell,
Fixed in the *state* wherein he dies.

Some even have not scrupled to present the insane suggestion that time heals over the wounds of the soul—that the spirit has a recuperative energy in itself that like the body will outgrow almost any gash made upon it. Even if this analogy were correct it would prove nothing, for the body cannot be crippled without a loss of time with all its advantages; but who ever thought of a thief being any the less a thief or a murderer any the less a murderer who had escaped the hand of justice twenty years than he was one year after the deed had been committed? Is a debtor the less a debtor who has been insolvent ten years, or who has for such a time defrauded his creditors? Or would he not rather become the more involved by the accumulation of interest? The crimes of the ungodly are not diminished by time but rather intensified, nor is the nature of his punishment changed—only the degree of it. Just as the indolent student will feel, as he grows older, a keener sense of the folly of his youth in neglecting his opportunities for mental culture as he gradually wakes up to a deeper sense of the need of education, so may the reprobate's punishment be intensified hereafter, but it will be of the same kind and will rush upon his soul on the same old principle of cause and effect—nothing arbitrary, nothing tyrannically vindictive on the part of his Judge.

The nature of this punishment in time and eternity is doubtless the same. It consists in a wicked state of heart as opposed to God and his reign, and in the abnormal and wretched state of all the affections. Such at least are its beginnings on earth in the breast of every sinful man, and the future world is but a continuation of the present. If the soul do not enjoy God and godliness here, how could it there? God

has made us to sit in heavenly places, but if the little of heaven that we have on earth is not palatable, what a disrelish would the sinner feel for the full-orbed righteousness of heaven itself? Take the thief, the drunkard, the reveller, the seducer, &c., all to the New Jerusalem, and invest them with the crown of Life and garb of Righteousness, let them see God and the Lamb, let them hear Christ's best choir perform heaven's most rapturous song, and even there, their hearts yet full of vipers' blood, hateful and hating one another, heaven would soon be blackened into hell, for none but the pure in heart can ever be happy in heaven or on earth.

O, sinner ;
 Repent, thou hast a soul to save,
 Thy sins how high they mount,
 What are thy hopes beyond the grave?
 How stands that dark account ?

Remember that when thou liest down to sleep with a guilty conscience, it haunts thee like a busy demon at thy first waking breath. And art thou willing to lie down in death an enemy to God, and let the dawn of Eternity rise upon all thy secret sins, and wake thy memories of long forgotten crimes, when thou shalt feel in thy profoundest soul "that the harvest is past and the summer ended?" Remember that heaven will not oppose thy entrance there if thou art willing to go unaccompanied by sin, but the contraband wares of the kingdom of darkness can never be smuggled into the port of the city of our God. Be free from sin through the blood of the eternal covenant, and thou shalt be free from its punishment, and shalt have a seat in the grand orchestral throng when—

Nearest the throne and first in song,
 Man shall his hallelujahs raise.

T. M.

UNION—AN INTERESTING DIALOGUE.

CHAPTER XI.

WORD had been circulated that on New Year's Day, the six ministers and their churches, in the town of *Unity*, would unite, and henceforth be but one church. As might have been expected, there was a large assembly consisting of all classes, with the six preachers and the

members of their churches in attendance. The following was the closing scene :

Pres. Brethren, as we have met on the Lord's day and the first day of the year, to take a very important step, I think it but reasonable, that we give our fellow-citizens a brief outline of the reasons that have led us to this step.

1. I satisfied myself that the authority of God required us to unite. The Lord prayed that we should be one. The holy apostle commanded us to be perfectly joined together and that there should be no divisions among us. In looking over ancient history, I found that there was but one body—one church, or as we have been wont to say—but one denomination—in the apostolic age, and that when any persons took steps likely to result in a separation, they were condemned as carnal, heretics, schismatics, etc., or as Jude expresses it, "sensual, having not the Spirit." From considerations like these, I have become satisfied, that making and keeping up these divisions, is what the Bible calls *heresy*, and that we are living in the clearest and most manifest disobedience, and cannot expect the blessings of heaven.

2. I inquired for the object of *union* and found a most forcible answer in the Lord's own words. He prayed that believers might be one, that the world might believe. I saw clearly from this, that in the estimation of the Lord, division was directly in the way of the conversion of the world, and that the Saviour did not contemplate the conversion of the world till believers were united. Knowing this, I could not, with any confidence, pray for the conversion of the world, without making an effort to remove out of the way an insurmountable barrier.

3. I became satisfied, that all who are truly Christians, *can* unite, for the Lord would not require an impossibility, and pray for it to be done, that the world might be converted. If all Christians cannot be one, then, when the Lord prayed that they might be one, he not only prayed, knowing that his prayer could not be answered, but made the conversion of the world depend on the answer of a prayer that he knew never could be answered. This, I am well assured, is not the case.—When the Lord prayed that believers might be one, he not only prayed for what *can*, but what *will* come to pass. Then, we may expect the world to be converted.

4. I am well satisfied that there is no Scriptural basis for union but the Bible. It was the only law, the only creed, the only basis of

union with the first churches. It contains all things necessary to life and godliness, and is able thoroughly to furnish the man of God to every good work. It is the only rule of faith, and we have all, from the beginning, admitted it to be better than all our creeds. We read it to the sick and quote it to comfort the dying. We all admit it to be perfect, and the *only perfect rule*. We all claim that we love our doctrine because it is like it, and that the creed the nearest like it is the nearest right. This could not be the case, only upon the admission which we all make, viz: *That the Bible is precisely right*. This admission all must make, and no man who does make it can show a good reason why he does not take it as his only creed.

5. I am satisfied that we should abandon all religious names and titles not found in the Bible. No matter what names we have been willing to submit to, we have all the time been willing to be called "Christians," or "Disciples of Christ." We, at any time, would have been insulted if any one had declared that we were not Christians, or not Disciples of Christ. But our former circumscribed names are repudiated and rejected by all, except the little party that has adopted each one. No one of these names is venerated, or held in the least regard except by that party that has adopted it. But it is not so with the name *Christian*. It is held in high esteem by us all, and we all feel that we are dishonored, if any man denies that we are Christians. When we come to die, it will be worth more to be a *Christian* than everything else. Here we are safe, for we can unite upon that which is equally dear to us all.

6. I am satisfied that nothing is Scriptural, safe and undeniably baptism, but *immersion*. I cannot deny that sprinkling is doubtful, controverted, and has always been in dispute ever since it existed, and that it leaves a large number of those who receive it, as well as those upon whom it is imposed, in doubt whether they have obeyed the command of the Lord. I have tried to satisfy such that it *would do*, which I really could do. I grant then—I am compelled in honor to grant—that it is right, to practice that invariably which is indisputable, and never fails to satisfy those who receive it. I am weary with controversy, and do not intend to practice that which is always in dispute, and always involving persons in doubt.

7. I saw the unhallowed work that our divisions were making in our beautiful village, in dividing it off into some six parties. I saw the divisions we were making in some families, separating them into

three and four parties. I was compelled to confess that our efforts to convert our citizens amounted to a failure, and that we never could succeed in our present attitude.

8. I was compelled to see the intolerable expense we were imposing upon our citizens, in building so many meeting-houses, and supporting such a number of preachers, and I could not avoid confessing upon my knees before the Lord, that we were wasting the Lord's money.

9. I had to admit that we wasted a large amount of our time in combating each other, that would all be saved, if we were all united. For this, I was satisfied, the Lord would call us to an account. I was not willing to continue this.

10. I became satisfied that our peculiarities that separate us, and distinguish us as parties, were not the Gospel, and that we tacitly admitted such to be the fact all the time, because we admitted persons to be Christians who did not believe these peculiarities, which we could not do if those peculiarities were Gospel. They are not the Gospel or Christianity, or no man could be a Christian and not believe them.—All that which men may think as they please about, and still be Christians, is no part of Christian faith, and no man should be required to believe it. But here, brethren, [holding up the New Testament], no man can be a Christian and not believe this. I believe this Holy Book and I love its blessed Author, and I love all those who believe on, love, and follow him. I am willing to give myself wholly to him, to obey and serve him forever, and I am ready to unite not only with these brethren, with whom I have had so many profitable meetings, but with all who love Him and will promise to keep his commandments, upon this Holy Book.

Meth. Brethren, I never saw my way so fully open before. I can see no reason why we may not invite the whole world to come and go with us. Here we can enjoy the ever blessed God, our glorious Saviour, the Holy Spirit, all God has given to us and done for us, with all who love him. Here we can all come with all who are near and dear to us, and engage in one common cause alike dear to us all.

Eap. Brethren, this is a happier day than ever I expected to see in this world. It fills my heart with inexpressible joy, to think of our all being one. Will not all the children of God unite?

Ep. I am fully satisfied on all the matters of our various meetings, and am happy beyond expression, that we are about to consummate so glorious a union.

Lu. I perfectly accord with all that has been said, and am unable to express my gratitude to God for the work accomplishing in our midst.

Chr. Brethren, I cannot believe there is a good being in heaven or upon earth, that will not rejoice in the work in which we are now engaged. The benefit resulting from this move in our own town, will be worth the labors of a lifetime. Whenever we meet, from this time forward, we are to meet as *brethren*, in one common faith. Religion will not be driven from the family circle by division. When we meet as neighbors, the subject of religion will not be kept back on account of disagreement. When we start for the Lord's house, we shall all go to the same house, to serve the same Lord, and the Lord's prayer, that we may be one, will be answered, so far as we are concerned. May we be enabled to keep, with the utmost fidelity, the everlasting covenant upon which we now enter! While we sing, let us extend to each other the hand, in token of our *union*, and as a *pledge* that we shall maintain it and extend it, if possible, from the rivers to the ends of the earth. Sing the words—

“ Best be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian Love ;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.”

When this interesting ceremony was performed, a brother rose and said :

Brethren, we have the means now to give as much to the support of the cause as we did before our union, and I hope the will to give much more. I therefore propose, that we sell all the meeting-houses belonging to us except one, and that the proceeds be constituted a poor fund, and sacredly kept for that object ; and, as we have now five preachers more than we need constantly with us, we constitute them *some Missionaries*, and sustain them to preach the glorious Gospel throughout the whole land.

This motion unanimously carried.

☞ When a man has just religion enough to make him hate those who profess a different faith, he is not more than half converted.

☞ It is with ideas as with pieces of money, those of the least value generally circulate the most.

A DISCIPLINARY ESSAY.

From the Christian Baptist.

They greatly mistake who expect to find a liturgy, or a code of laws in the New Institution, designed to govern christians either in their private or public relations and character. This may be found in the Old Institution which the God of Abraham set up amongst the children of the flesh. The nation of the Jews afford both demonstration and proof that man cannot be governed or controlled either in piety or morality by any extrinsic law, however excellent or spiritual. The former institution was an institution of *law*—the new an institution of *favor*. Christians are not now, nor were they ever, under law, but under favor. Hence argues the Apostle:—"Sin shall not lord it over you; for you are *not under law*, but *under favor*." A single monosyllable represents the active principle, or law of subordination and of practical morality which it unfolds. That monosyllable is *LOVE*. "*Love is the fulfilling of the whole law.*" The glad tidings of the divine philanthropy is the instrument or medium of the inspiration of this principle. The New Institution writes upon the hearts, and not on marble, the governing principles or laws of all religious and moral action. This truth recognized and apprehended, solves the difficulty which has puzzled so many minds, and so generally distracted religious society. Many christians have read and rummaged the apostolic writings with the spirit and expectations of a Jew in perusing the writings of Moses—Jews in heart, but christians in profession. They have sought, but sought in vain, for an express command or precedent for matters as minute as the seams in the sacerdotal robes, or the pins and pilasters of the tabernacle.

The remote or proximate causes of most errors in disciplinary proceedings may be traced either to the not perceiving that the distinguishing peculiarity of the New, or Christian Institution, is this—that it aims at governing human action without *letter*, and causes its votaries to "serve in newness of spirit," and not observing that the congregations which christianity forms are designed rather as schools of moral excellence, than as courts of inquiry possessed of judicial authority.

To look still farther into the genius of the New Institution is yet prerequisite to just conclusions on this subject. The New Institution, governing religious and moral action by a law or principle engraved upon the heart, proposes certain acts of private and public edification

and worship. These are stated in the apostolic writings, and conformity to them is enjoined upon disciples from the new obligations which arise out of the new law. The precepts found in the apostolic epistles and those found in the Pentateuch or writings of Moses, have one differential attribute which cannot be too clearly presented here. The precepts found in apostolic epistles originated or were occasioned by the mistakes and misdemeanors found in Jews and Pagans, recently converted to the christian faith. But the precepts or laws found in the Pentateuch were promulgated before the people began to act at all, as a part of the institution itself. Hence it was an institution essentially of *law*—the New essentially an institution of *favor*. All the actions of the former were prescribed by law; but subordination to the latter is implied in the gracious promulgation itself.

The relation established between God and Israel was a different relation from that established between God and christians. As all duties and privileges arise from relations, if the relations are different, the duties and privileges are different also. Now God made himself known to Israel simply as their God and deliverer from Egyptian bondage, and as their King in contra-distinction from the kings of all other nations. Upon this fact, as the grand premises, as the Old institution proclaimed. Thus it began:—"I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of bondage. Therefore you shall acknowledge no other God besides me," &c. But the premises upon which the New institution proceeds are of a much sublime and exalted character. Relations more sublime than national and temporal relations, enter into its nature, and lay the foundation of the New Economy. He is the God and King of christians upon *higher considerations*—and more than simply their God and King—he is their Saviour and Redeemer from worse than bondage; their leader and guide to a better inheritance than Canaan; and their Father by a new and glorious provision which the national compact at Mount Sinai knew nothing of.

The relation of Master and Servant is a very different relation from that of Father and Son. This is rather an illustration, than a full representation of the difference of relation in which Jews and Christians stand to the God of the whole earth. The relation of Creator and creature is the natural relation existing between God and all mankind. But besides this he has instituted political and gracious relations between himself and human beings. These flow from his own good will

and pleasure, and as such, will be acquiesced in by the wise and good. The natural and first relation in which mankind stand to each other is that of fellow-creatures; but besides this, a number of other natural, political, and gracious relations have been either necessarily or graciously called into existence—such as that of parent and child, husband and wife, and the whole table of consanguinity and affinity; besides all the political relations, and those found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Now the relation between God and christians, or the relation which the New Institution develops, is the most gracious and desirable which can be conceived of; and therefore presents to the human mind the loftiest and most comprehensive principles which can excite to moral action. As in physics, so in ethics there are principles or powers more influential than others. But christianity discovers principles of action which no political, moral or religious relations hitherto known, could originate. These new relations, and these new principles of action, are stronger than death, more triumphant than the grave, and lasting as eternity. The discovery of a new, gracious, spiritual, and eternal relation, and correspondent principles of action, moral and religious, is the basis of that association called the christian church or congregation. It is called the Reign or Kingdom of Heaven, because of the high and sublime nature of the relations, principles, duties, and privileges which it develops. All the political, commercial, and temporal relations of what nature or kind soever, which human passions, interests, partialities, or antipathies have given rise to, are weak and transient as the spider's thread compared with these. Hence the superlative glory of the New Institution. The world knows it not. It knew not the founders, and it apprehends not the institution. The light shines in darkness, but the darkness reaches it not.

These premises merely stated, not illustrated, suggest the true reason why, in the discipline of the church, so much is to be done before a member is to be severed from her embraces. In the politico-eccelesiastical relations of schismatic corporations the ties of consociation are neither very binding, nor the relations very endearing. They are not much stronger than the purse-strings of the treasurer, nor more durable than the paper on which is written the shibboleth of their Magna Charta. Members may be, and often are, separated without a pang or a sorrow. There is none of that tenderness of reproof, of correction, of admonition, of dehortation, of persuasion, known in such confederations as that which the New Institution enjoins upon the citizens of Heaven.

The first effort which the genius of the New Institution enjoins with respect to offending brothers, in similar to that notable regulation concerning private trespasses, which, all who have read it remember, aims at gaining the supposed aggressor or delinquent. Hence the characteristic feature in all congregational proceedings in reference to those who sin, not so much against Christ, is that *condescending tenderness* which aims at the conversion of the delinquent or transgressor. The dernier resort, when all means fail, is separation. This tender solicitude and earnestness to gain a brother who has fallen, is, in some cases, where the nature of the case does not forbid, extended even beyond exclusion. So that although public good, as well as that of the subject of censure, does require his exclusion; yet even then he is not to be treated as an enemy, but admonished as a brother. The lesson of all others the most difficult, and the most important to be learned on the subject of this essay, is that which the preceding considerations suggest, and that is briefly that every part of the proceedings in reference to an offending brother must be distinguished by every possible demonstration of sympathy and concern for his good standing and character in the sight of God and man: and that final seclusion from the congregation must not be attempted until admonition, reproof, and persuasion, have failed to effect a real change in his views and behaviour. Though I neither hold Lord Chesterfield nor his writings in much esteem, yet I cannot but admire his happy use of the "*suaviter in modo*" and the "*fortiter in re*," so much commended in his letters. If the sweetness or gracefulness in the manner of doing, could always accompany the firmness in the purpose, or in the thing to be done, it would be no less useful than ornamental even amongst christians in all their congregational proceedings relating to offenders.

REVIEW OF DR. SHEPARD.

[The following article was laid away with other unpublished documents; but the writer gives us proof that he is still convinced that our readers ought to have it. Being very liberal with communications, and those who send them, we now lay it before our readers.—D. O.]

For the Christian Banner.

I resume my pen again for the further consideration of Dr. Shepard's address published in the Christian Banner for December last. In a former article I endeavored to show some things the church had

authority to do, in opposition to Dr. S. who said the church has no authority. We have had I do not know how many articles about evangelists in the pages of the Banner within the last six or eight months. The first of these (in the Oct. No., 1856) signed T. F., contains valuable matter. It should be read, re-read, and read again. T. F. and Dr. S.'s articles are in direct opposition to each other upon a most important point, namely, whether churches or evangelists are highest in authority.

T. F. maintains that the churches have authority to educate, choose, call, appoint, or ordain, and send forth evangelists; in other words, churches have authority to make or consecrate evangelists. Dr. S. on the other hand says the church has no authority. He represents evangelists as a *superior order* of men, having the sole power or authority to make churches, in other words to form and organize churches, choose and ordain overseers and deacons, also authority over churches even so far as publicly to reprove elders. He also constitutes evangelists a court of appeal for settling differences arising between members of the same church. See his address. Now, although these contradictory statements have found their way into the pages of the Banner, without any remarks from our editors, they cannot be both scriptural. If the one is right, the other is wrong. It is for the reader to examine and judge for himself. As I agree with T. F., I shall now attempt to prove that he is on scripture ground, and if I succeed it will necessarily overthrow Dr. Shepard's position.

I now proceed to prove T. F.'s position, viz; that churches have authority to choose, call, appoint, and send out evangelists, missionaries, or messengers, I care not which of these names be given them. By turning to the book of the Acts, chap. 8, we find that a great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad except the apostles. Those scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Some traveled as far as Antioch; the hand of the Lord was with them; many believe and turned to the Lord. Here we have a swarm of evangelists: (evangelists, did I say? Yes, reader, evangelists. The term evangelist means neither more nor less than a preacher of the gospel, and these were preachers, and successful preachers too,) without call or ordination, preaching the best way they could and their labors abundantly blessed. Tidings of these things came to the ears of the church of Jerusalem, and they (the church) sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch, Acts 11: 22. Now observe, this was a *deed* of the church at Jerusalem, and this one passage proves all we proposed; the church calling, appointing, and sending an evangelist and limiting his mission to go far as Antioch.

Again, the church at Antioch consecrates and sends Barnabas and Saul forth as evangelists, Acts 13: 1-4. Again, this same church sends messengers to Jerusalem about circumcision, and the Jerusalem church, including apostles and elders, sends back messengers or evangelists to Antioch. Let the reader now consult Acts 15: 2, 3, 4, 22, 23,

and he will see that the sending of these messengers was the deed of these churches. The sending of messengers or evangelists seems to have been a common thing among the churches in those days. In 2 Cor. 8: 19, 23 we read of the messengers of the churches, chosen by the churches to travel with the apostle. Epaphroditus was the messenger of the Philippian church to assist Paul in his missionary laborers, Phil. 2: 25—4: 18.

I now feel confident that I have proved T. F.'s position, viz., that the churches have authority to choose, call, and send evangelists, messengers, or missionaries, and that the first churches exercised this authority while the apostles were still with them, and that I have overthrown Dr. Shepard's assertion that the church has no authority. The man who will not be convinced by the evidence I have produced, it would be useless to reason with him, as he is proof against evidence.

The following is respectfully submitted for consideration, as evidence that churches are superior in authority to evangelists. It is a general rule that the party that sends is superior in authority to the party sent. The apostles were the servants or evangelists of Jesus Christ. He *sent* them; they were his servants when *sent*. The evangelists being sent by the churches must then have been the servants of the churches. Again, T. F. says, when speaking of the education of evangelists, that the church is the only theological school on earth to educate evangelists. See October No. of Banner, 1856, pages , 298. Now if this is true, (and I ask, who will deny it?) would it not be strange that the *pupil* after receiving his education would turn round upon the seminary that instructed him, and attempt to exercise dominion and lordship over it? Such an idea is not to be entertained even for one moment.

I should suppose that the excommunicating of a person from the church of God on earth is the most solemn, and that which requires the highest authority to perform, as it deprives the person thus dealt with of the privileges of the house of God. I ask, then, to whom has the Head of the church given authority to execute this solemn task. I answer, to the church, Matt. 18: 17; 1 Cor. 5: 4, 5. It is the peculiar duty of the church to purge out the old leaven. The punishment of exclusion from the church can only be inflicted by the church, 2 Cor. 2: 6. The church is the only power that can *restore* upon repentance the party excluded, 2 Cor. 2: 7, 8, and from the rights as decision of the church there is no appeal, Matt. 18: 18, and this clearly proves that the church is the *highest tribunal on earth*, as its decision is not subject to be appealed from, neither reviewed by any court on earth. No evangelist or company of evangelists can exclude the least member of a christian church; upon the contrary, a church can exclude an evangelist if he acts an unworthy part and refuse to be admonished and reform. And this authority the churches in these (Lower) Provinces have exercised on several occasions, and if it was my present business to enter into these things I believe nine-tenths of the readers

of the Banner would say the churches did their duty, and could not consistently do any other thing.

I give it as my humble opinion that any man who says the church has no authority, or that evangelists have authority over churches, manifests a degree of ignorance in scripture knowledge that is very surprising, and no title of Dr. will be sufficient to give such a man the character of an able minister of the New Testament.

I shall now make a few remarks upon the term evangelist, for there seems to be some mysterious ideas attached to this term. The term evangelist occurs three times in the common version of the christian scriptures. Evangelists are one of the gifts given for the edifying of the body of Christ, Ep. 4 : 12. We read of the work of an evangelist, 2 Tim. 4 : 5. Phi. ip. (one of the seven) is the only man named in scripture who is actually called an evangelist, Acts 21 : 8.

Morison in his Bible Dictionary defines the term a preacher of the gospel, or proclaimer of glad tidings. Elder A. Campbell gives the same definition. T. F. agrees with this ; and even Dr. S. admits this to be the meaning of the term. The above authorities seem to be sufficient to settle the meaning of the term. It simply means a preacher of the gospel. The "Christian Baptist" says that christian mothers who make known to their children the glad tidings, are most worthy of the name (evangelist) of any persons now on earth, page 300. This work agrees with T. F. that a church has authority to send a preacher to those who stand in need of his service, page 586. Shepard (if I understand him) maintains that evangelists are continually needed to move among the churches to ordain elders, organize new churches, and correct any disorder that may arise in the churches. Elder Campbell on the other hand says, the office evangelist as a proclaimer of the gospel was always contingent ; he was needed in some places ; he compares him to the prophets of old occasionally needed, and he adds, "But when christian congregations cover the country and walk in the instituted order of the new institution, such persons will not be necessary any more than a standing army in time of peace."

Experience proves that evangelists have their faults like others, and it appears to me that it is not only unscriptural but extremely imprudent to give evangelists such power and authority as is claimed for them by brethren Shepard and Errett.

JAMES SILLARS.

Although we fail to see that the preceding adds the least strength to brother Sillar's general argument against friend Shepard, it is willingly inscribed upon our pages, seeing that he regards it as of importance.

We are very much gratified that the address published a year ago relative to evangelists and evangelizing is making a stir. Good will grow out of it. Truth fears neither investigation nor opposition. None of us would ever learn anything if we gravely convinced ourselves that

we had already arrived at the perfection of knowledge. The leading positions of Shepard's address last December are clearly and strongly stated. They are either true or not true, scriptural or anti-scriptural. In our judgment they are entitled to a fair and full investigation; and after the other scribes have emptied their ink bottles or drained their pond of thought upon the topic, we shall, though not among the aged, also show our stock of reflections. In the meantime those who differ upon the subject have the free use of these pages to argue and bring forth their power *for* and *against*. We do not say and dare not say that all articles sent to us will have utterance, for all have not the merit to edify, but we will give the fullest liberty to those who are pleased to take different sides to make their cause as strong and convincing as they are able.

As brother T. F., as he appears in an essay of last year, is greatly applauded by our brother Sillars, we trust he will not repudiate T. F. as he comes forth in the Gospel Advocate in a late Number, when he says:—

“Evangelists should have the general supervision of the churches. . . . The Evangelists planted the primitive churches, set in order what was wanting, ordained the older men or elders to oversee the respective flocks, and then these Evangelists traveled abroad again to plant and put into active service other churches. Whilst also they were the ministers or apostles of the churches, and were careful to report to the congregations that recommended them for the labor, they always not only felt that it was their duty to see that bishops and members acted well their part, but that it was a part of their labor to see that the churches were kept in order. Hence the Apostle Paul speaks “Of that which cometh upon him daily, the care of all the churches.” (2 Cor. xi, 28.) Evangelists should now feel that the care of the churches, to some considerable degree, rests upon them. Their eye should be over shepherds as well as flocks. The true Evangelist is one who has all the members to perform their appropriate labor, but he never thinks of taking the office from any one.”

—Let us review all these things calmly and patiently, and if we then dissent from one another, let us as brethren do it genteelly and with christian courtesy.

D. O.

. What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—PAUL.

PRAYER.—No. 1.

“And when thou prayest thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray *standing* in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou when thou prayest; enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee *openly*.”

Our present subject is the utility of secret prayer. We shall not attempt to exhaust it; we shall only briefly notice and illustrate some of the most obvious benefits which result from this part of Christian devotion.

1. The first of these is the cultivation of our own spiritual nature. If it is a law of the human constitution, that all its powers and susceptibilities are developed and strengthened by exercise, then what can be more beneficial than the devotions of the closet? There is no other place beneath the heavens, that is so favorable for the legitimate exercise of our moral faculties. Even in the religious assembly, the attention is often arrested, and the heart made to wander, by some improper display of the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But from the closet, all such evil influences are excluded. There is no motive to deceive or to make a vain display of our persons, our dress, and our good works. But there the mind turns in upon itself. There the conscience is awakened. There we see ourselves in the light of Heaven. And there, under the deep, solemn, conviction, that we are on holy ground, and that the eye of God is upon us, we are almost compelled to be humble; to repent of our sins; to forgive our enemies; to sympathise with the afflicted; to adore our Creator; to love our Redeemer: and to exercise all the powers of our souls in harmony with the will of God.

An hour in the closet may, therefore, do more to rectify and strengthen our religious impressions and moral faculties, than many days of ordinary service in the public congregation. And hence all the great moral heroes of the world, have been distinguished for their devotion to the closet, and for the consecration of much of their time to the duties and privileges of secret prayer.

2. It forms a habit of close union, communion, and fellowship with God. The law of habit is well understood. All men live and act under its influence. The man who frequents the theatre, the ball-room, the drinking or the gambling saloon, soon feels that he is by an invisible and almost irresistible influence drawn to these haunts of idleness, vice, and dissipation. He may see poverty, disgrace, misery, and wretchedness before him; and he may feel the awful forebodings of an awakened conscience within him; but the force of habit overcomes all his fears and feeble resolutions. Under its still increasing power, he visits and revisits these charnel-houses of iniquity, till a dart strikes through his liver, and by his own folly he seals forever the doom of his eternal infamy.

But the man who begins his course of life on the ascending scale ; who forms habits of industry, frugality, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and philanthropy, will soon find no difficulty in ascending to the mount of God. These habits become to him the secondary laws of his nature ; and he hungers and thirsts after righteousness as the weary hart pants after the brooks of water.

The habit of secret prayer is no exception to this general law. In no other religious exercise, are we brought so near to God : in no other, can we be so familiar with the Creator of our bodies and the Father and Preserver of our spirits. And, as it is a law of our nature, that we form attachments to those with whom we associate ; and even become assimilated to them in the elements of our character ; it follows that no other acts of devotion are so favorable for the cultivation of godliness, and for the formation of those other virtues, the tendency of which is to draw us nearer to God, as the only immutable, eternal, and unwasting fountain of life and happiness. And hence those who have been most devoted to the closet, and who in this way have formed habits of intimacy, communion, and fellowship with God, have always been the happiest of men.

This is no merely theoretical or speculative conclusion. It is sustained by the history of all past ages. The prophets, the apostles, and the martyrs were all remarkable examples of the truth of this hypothesis ; and so are the spirits of the just in Heaven who cease not day nor night to " worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and to cast their crowns before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, O, Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

3. It preserves us from many evils. Our worst enemies are our own lusts and passions. But these may all be subdued by and through the influence of secret prayer. How, for example, can any man cherish a feeling of pride in his heart, when, concealed from the world, he pours out the desires of his soul in humble supplication, to the God who rules in Heaven and who does what he pleases among the inhabitants of the Earth ! How can he cultivate a spirit of revenge, while imploring the forgiveness from that Being who has said " Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord !" How can he indulge in anger, wrath, malice, or any of the other works of the flesh, while seeking the aid of that Spirit, whose fruits are always " Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and temperance !" Prayer, when properly offered, must always have a soothing influence on the affections. Its tendency is to allay the passions, to promote the virtues, and, to harmonize all the powers and faculties of the soul. It subdues the will of man, and makes the will of God the supreme law of the universe.

4. It also secures to us much positive good, by fulfilling a condition on which God can and does bestow his blessing on fallen man. It is a great mistake to suppose that the influence of prayer is altogether subjective ; or at any rate, that it never extends beyond the narrow limits

of our own earthly associations. It reaches God himself : it moves the very throne of the universe.

I know some have ridiculed the idea that the prayers and entreaties of fallen, sinful, rebel worms of the dust should in any way affect the Divine administration. But this is only to expose our own ignorance of the moral government of God. If a father finds it consistent with his dignity ; with the regulations of his government ; and with the best interests of his children, to bestow favors in answer to their petitions, why may not the Almighty Father of the universe, act on the same principle ? If this is a wise and prudent regulation in the government of a family, why may it not be so in the economy and administration of the universe ?

Surely this is not a proper subject for ridicule. If we cannot understand it, let us humbly confess our ignorance, and seek for more enlarged and comprehensive views of the Divine government. To many persons, it would appear just as absurd that the pen in my hand should have an influence on the most remote of the fixed stars, as that the prayers of a poor, penniless, and despised follower of Jesus Christ, should excite the sympathies of Heaven, and effect the purpose of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

But these two problems have both been solved. Newton obtained an answer to the one, and the Holy Spirit is the great demonstrator of the other. The question then is forever settled with those who regard the Bible of paramount authority.

The following illustrations from the Holy Oracles, may serve to stir up the minds of many by way of remembrance on this important subject. We quote first from Moses, Numbers xiv : 11, 20, " And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me ? and how long will it be before they believe me for all the signs which I have showed among them ? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and I will make of thee a greater nation and a mightier than they. And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, for thou broughtest up this people from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land, for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou wilt kill this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swaro unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. *And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word.*"

The testimony of the apostle James on this subject is altogether conclusive. "Confess your faults," says he, "one to the another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the Heaven gave rain, and the Earth brought forth her fruit."

Our space will not permit us to make any additional quotations; but, as an antidote to the skepticism that now exists on this subject, we commend to our readers, and especially to the young, the study and careful examination of such passages as Gen. 19: 17—21; Num. 11: 1—2; Deut. 9: 18—29; 1. Sam. 12: 10—19; 2. Kings 20: 1—6; Job 42: 7—8; Psa. 18: 6—15; Daniel 2: 18—19; Jonah 3: 1—10; Luke 18: 1—5; 1. John 3: 22; all of which illustrate the great efficacy of prayer; and its influence even on the will and purposes of Jehovah. As long, then, as it is written, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," it will be in vain to speculate and philosophise against the utility and propriety of secret prayer. The rational and well-grounded conviction, that, by a solemn appeal to our Heavenly Father, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we may obtain the free and full pardon of all our sins, gives more peace, joy, comfort and consolation to the soul, than all the honors and wealth of this time-perishing world.

5. It enables us to promote the good and happiness of others. This it does in several ways: In the first place, it is, as we have seen, the means of securing the favor of God in their behalf. The prayers of Abraham were worth more to Lot than all the riches of the plain; the entreaties of Job were full of blessings to Eliphaz, and Eldad and Zephar; and the intercession of Moses saved the nation of Israel.

Who, then, can estimate the amount of good that has been secured to mankind, through the humble, earnest, and penitential applications of the closet? Who can recount the various individual, social, ecclesiastical, and national blessings that have been poured out of the windows of Heaven, in answer to secret prayer? Who can tell how many poor wandering prodigals have been brought back to their Father's house, and made heirs of immortality and eternal life, through the earnest and repeated prayers of a pious brother, or sister, or mother?

Why, then, do we not all thus pray? Why do we not more frequently retire to our closets, and pray more earnestly for the salvation of immortal souls? How much more parents might do in this way to promote the present and eternal well-being of their children, than they can by constantly laboring to secure for them a large supply of the riches, and the honors, and the pleasures of this vain world! Let us, then, endeavor to appreciate more highly the great value and efficacy of secret prayer, as a means of securing to others the rich blessings of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Another way in which our private devotion may have an influence on the life and destiny of others, is through its effects on our own character, temper and disposition. There is a fitness in all the arrangements of creation, providence and redemption. The iceberg never promotes the growth of vegetation. The frosts of winter do not cause the bud and the tender flowers to spring forth. And the heart that is filled with envy, jealousy, and revenge, has no power to win souls to Christ. But the man whose evil passions have been subdued; and whose love, mercy, and benevolence have been excited and strengthened by the devotions of the closet, is a savor of life unto life, wherever he goes. He is a living illustration of the power of the Gospel on the soul; and must always have an attractive, as well as a transforming, influence on the minds and hearts of others.

If, then, we would be good, and do good, and glorify our Father who is in Heaven, let us not forget the duties and privileges of secret prayer; let us often retire to our closets, and when we have shut the door, let us pray to our Father who is in secret, and our Father who seeth in secret will surely reward us openly.

R M.

PRAYER.—No. 2.

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on Earth, as touching any one thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matt. xviii: 19-20.

All the advantages of secret prayer, belong also in some degree to social prayer. It is true, that the latter is not so favorable for self-examination; for the free, full, and open confession of our sins; and of an humble, contrite, and devotional frame of mind, as the former. It is not so free from those popular and worldly influences that serve to cherish in our hearts a vain, proud, and ostentatious spirit.

But it has, nevertheless, some peculiar advantages. Man is not altogether selfish. He is a social being. And he needs the influence of sympathy, as a means even to the right cultivation of his own nature.

"Oh, there is a need that on men's hearts should fall
A spirit that can sympathise with a.l."'

Where, for instance, can we find another place so favorable for the cultivation of our paternal feelings, as the family altar? Around it meet and cluster a thousand tender and sacred associations. There we see, in the most interesting light, our relations, duties, and obligations to our own offspring. There we are made to sympathise with them in their joys and their sorrows; in their hopes and their fears; in their trials and their temptations; in their fortunes and their misfortunes; and there we are led to think most seriously, how awful a thing it is to be a youth; to be a man; to be a candidate for immortality, and yet to be opposed by all the evil influences of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. There we feel our common dependence on God for every good

and perfect gift. There we feel our mutual need of a Saviour's blood, and of the comforting, sanctifying, and sustaining influences of the Holy Spirit. And there, if ever, our souls yearn over our children, while the very fountains of our being are stirred up in thanksgiving, and praise, and supplication to Him who is the Father of the whole creation.

The same principle will also apply to the other relations of life. If we desire to sympathise deeply with our fellow mortals, we must associate with them; we must pray with and for them. We must go to the house of mourning; we must not forget the prayer-meeting; and we must often kneel in the great congregation.

But social prayer is a benefit not only to ourselves; it is also a powerful and divinely appointed means for the conviction, conversion, sanctification, and salvation of others. This is especially true in the family. The relation of a parent and child is one of the nearest, dearest, and most interesting on earth. And hence it involves an influence that is peculiar to itself. The example of the parent, is to the child, during the most impressible period of its existence, the standard of all that is right, noble, and magnanimous. Its greatest effort, therefore, is to imitate him. What he says and does, it attempts to say and do also. If he swears, it swears; if he prays, it prays; but if he neglects the throne of grace, it will neglect the throne of the universe, and Him that sits upon it.

For the proper exercise of this influence over the child, the parent is, of course, responsible. Wherever much is given, much will also be required. This is a law of the universe, from which none are exempted.

What an awful account, then, will some parents have to render, concerning this part of their stewardship, when every man shall appear before the great white throne, to receive his sentence according to the deeds done in his own body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. To be able, on that day, to stand on the right hand of the Supreme Judge of the universe, and to say, Behold here also are the children which thou hast given me, would, methinks, be joy enough to fill the heart of any ransomed man.

But who could bear to stand on the left hand of the Judge, and there to hear the accusations and criminations of his own offspring! to hear a doomed son or daughter say, Father, *you* have brought me to this end! You never taught me to read and to study that Book by which I am now to be judged! You never directed me to the Lamb of God that once took away the sin of the world! You never taught me to pray to Him who once said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you!" You never led me to the sanctuary, to the house of prayer and praise! You taught me to swear! to profane the name of God! to seek pleasure at the theatre, at the ball-room, and at the card-table! But you never taught me either by precept or by example, to seek happiness at the fountain of life! You never taught me to seek forgiveness at a throne of grace! and now,

the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are compelled to stand on the ill-boding side of the throne of judgment.

Courteous reader, where will you stand on that day? And, if you are a parent, where will your children stand? This is the proper time to answer and to settle these questions. If you have no delight in the worship of God here, do not flatter yourself, that you will delight in it hereafter. If you do not teach your children to pray in the world that now is, they may never be permitted to pray in that which is to come.

I know some heady, heartless, nominal Christians will hear ask for a specific "Thus saith the Lord," before they will consent to bring together the members of their respective families, once, twice or three times a day, to unite in the social worship of Jehovah. This class of men are always anxious to know how little they may serve God, and how much they may serve the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and yet reach Heaven at last. If they can only escape the torments of Hell, and just barely squeeze through the gates into the eternal city, they will be abundantly satisfied. And hence their constant inquiry is, *Must I read my Bible? Must I often retire to my closet? Must I pray with and for my family? Must I attend the prayer-meeting? Must I, on every Lord's day, commemorate the death and resurrection of the Lord of life and glory?*

But the sincere followers of Him who esteemed it more than his meat and his drink to do the will of his Father in Heaven, use a very different vocabulary. They humbly and earnestly ask, *May I do all these things? May I worship Him that made Heaven and Earth? May I approach a throne of mercy? May I in the closet, in my family, in the prayer-meeting, and in the great congregation, presume to make known my requests, and pour out the desires of my heart to the King of kings, and Lord of lords?*

The tenor and spirit of these two classes of interrogatories differ as widely as the judicial accents that will forever settle the destiny of the righteous and the wicked on the day of judgment. And they indicate states of mind and heart, of thoughts and feelings, that are just as different, *in kind*, as the thoughts and purposes of the loyal and of the rebel angels. There can be no compulsion, no constrained service in the kingdom of God. "Thy people," said the Holy Spirit, by the inspiration of David, "shall be *willing* in the day of thy power; in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth."

If, even then, there had been no altar of incense in the tabernacle of Moses; if Solomon had never said, "Train up a child in the way he should go;" if Paul had not added, "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," if there were not in the whole Bible, a single precept or example, bearing directly on the subject of family prayer, it would be enough for the man who has a right conception of his own wants, and of the wants of his children, to know that it is his *privilege* at any

time, and at all times, to lead them to the mercy seat, and there with and for them, to implore the mercy, the protection, the sustaining grace, and the all-comprehensive blessing of Him who has said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

And hence the most pious have been the most regular and constant in their family devotions. Indeed, we have never seen any very strong indications of vital piety, where family worship has been neglected. We have known many parents who could very eloquently discuss and analyze the mint, the anise, and the cummin of Christianity; who could philosophise and speculate very learnedly on some favorite theory of the Christian Institution; but we have never known a man of high reputation for practical godliness, who lived in the habitual neglect of any department of social worship. And in the very nature of the case, this is practically impossible. Piety is one of the most active and diffusive elements in the moral universe. And, therefore, as long as prayer has a favorable reflex influence on our own hearts; as long as it is a means of awakening the conscience, refining the moral feelings, and sanctifying the life of our children and associates; as long as it is a condition on which God has promised to bestow his blessings on mankind; so long will every sincere Christian seek to maintain in his own family, and in all the assemblies of the saints, the social worship of the Lord.

I know something of

"The various hid treasures we meet
In coming to a mercy-seat."

But these should only excite us to greater earnestness and zeal in all our devotions. We have all much to do, and the time is short. The day is far spent, and the night is at hand, when no man can work. The character, too, of the enemies with which we have to contend should also greatly alarm us. "For we have to contend not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenly regions."

While, therefore, we put on the whole armor of God, let us not forget to pray always with *all prayer and supplication* that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having overcome all, to stand. For

Restraint prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright,
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.
Have you no words? Ah! think again;
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature's ear,
With the sad tale of all your care.
Were half the breath, thus vainly spent,
To Heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oft'ner be
"Hear what the Lord has done for me."

B. M.

DO THE LORD'S PEOPLE NEED A MISSIONARY SOCIETY ?

ARTICLE SECOND.

Upon the claims of the missionary society of the Disciples we have proposed no controversy. We seek and have sought to investigate, not controvert.

In the first issues of this monthly for the current season, 'it seemed good to us' to write four brief letters to the Secretary of the Cincinnati missionary society, the intelligent brother Leos, in response to his missionary circular which he courteously sent to this office; and these letters were written for the purpose of expressing with brotherly frankness some of our reflections pertaining to the character and tendency of all societies of this sort, and to invite or induce deliberate and impartial investigation of the whole question with the pages of inspiration wide open before us. The brother who was to investigate with us, was pleased to decline the investigation, even after assenting to the propriety of it, and therefore the largest portion of our reflections and gleanings from the oracles disfavoring such societies has not yet been brought out; but as we are not in haste, and as we have no object to subserve save the ascertainment and enforcement of our Lord's will, we cannot regret that a providential pause has occurred.

In entering upon a review of "our" missionary society in January last, it was very deliberately calculated that our efforts would issue in one of three results: Our attempt, from various causes, might be passed over in total silence; or the brethren might notice what we affirmed and enter their dissent; or the religious friends whom we love and with whom we labor in the Lord, might possibly in good part agree with us. Still, whatever the result, we very cautiously and conscientiously reduced the effort to a single point, expressed in one word—*TRUTH*. For seven or eight years we had silently and shall we say candidly watched the workings and sleepings, the framework and patchwork, the overwork and no work, of 'our' missionary society; and assuredly believing that God never authorized and never wanted such a structure, in any age or for any purpose, it was in our heart to lift up the voice of remonstrance somewhat after the order of the faithful watchmen of old, whether the chosen people who are dear to us would have ears to hear or have ears not to hear—meantime being fully resolved to cultivate as fine a specimen of brotherly affection as our spiritual soil and climate would permit. It seemed to us then, and it appears to us now, that it was

and is our duty to compare the proceedings of the disciples between the years 33 and 36 with the proceedings of the disciples between the years 1840 and 1857 relative to evangelizing, as well as all things else; and to speak with freedom of the contrast.

The responsibility of teaching 'with pen and ink,' as the inspired John says, rests with us in the presence of God—the responsibility of receiving or rejecting what is taught rests with readers.

Up to this date, no one has offered a direct response to the Banner's strictures on the Cincinnati missionary society excepting brother Franklin. He wrote and sent a brief epistle, which was published in the February Banner. It still remains unanswered. Our respects would have been paid to it ere to-day, but we desired to give time for other documents and objections to appear, in order to do a wholesale business in considering them.

The chief if not the only main position taken by the intelligent Franklin (see Banner for Feb., pp. 58 and 59) is expressed in one sentence. Our brother says that certain matters pertaining to the church are matters of human discretion, and that the missionary society at Cincinnati being of this discretionary order, it is in brother Franklin's judgment a proper society. This, if we understand him, is the pith of our brother's epistle. We admit the premises—the conclusion is not admitted. That there are things which concern the church that may be set down as purely discretionary, or dependent on human prudence, will be conceded by every intelligent preacher and editor in America; but we are not willing to class the nominating, the service, and the maintenance of evangelists in the department of human expediency. So far as yet advised, we must consider it maintainable that there is a divine model for evangelizing the world; and where there is a divine pattern by which to work, 'we do greatly err' (do we not!) if we work according to the grace of human discretion. While therefore joyfully agreeing with our brother at Cincinnati that "there is a clear province for the human understanding, or for human discretion," we feel at liberty with all courtesy to protest against creating a new 'society' under the wide patronage and general grace of human prudence, since the very things which this modern 'organization' proposes to accomplish were accomplished far more efficiently by our brethren whose labors are recorded upon the inspired pages, who wrought by a policy grandly superior to that which Messrs. Human Expediency and Fleshly Wisdom can originate or dictate.

Still, while setting down these things thus tangibly, let us not be understood as occupying a dogmatic position; for if, when he has heard us, our usually clear-headed brother can show us 'a more excellent way,' most cheerfully will we press along it.

But in brother Franklin's zeal to maintain things discretionary he has employed an argument which we must think has the quick consumption. Let us sound it and see. He intimates that "revelation does not decide who the churches shall employ to preach"—that "revelation no where names brother Oliphant to preach, nor brother Franklin." Leaving ourselves out of view, we are quite sure that brother Franklin ought not to preach unless revelation says that he ought. If our brother's faith, hope, love, zeal, fellowship, gifts, knowledge of the apostles' doctrine, purpose, manner of life, &c., are what we take them to be, we say without reserve that we shall be perfectly satisfied with the same revelation concerning the missionary society that we can produce in evidence that brother Franklin has the approbation of Jesus Christ as a preacher. But if human discretion has made and brought into the field evangelist Franklin—if human discretion has formed and established the congregation at Cincinnati,—seeing that neither the name Franklin nor Cincinnati can be found in the scriptures,—then we do not acknowledge the one to be a preacher of the gospel nor the other a congregation of the Lord.

Were we to assume that the church at Cincinnati was founded in human prudence, and that it could not be proved to be a church of Christ because not named in revelation, what would be our brother's response? What would any brother respond? Would he not open out the oracles and show that all who believe the one gospel, acknowledge the one Lord, and are united in the same divine bonds, irrespective of place, nation, or age, are the Lord's chosen people—are members of the pure family—are a part of the body of Christ?

The capital positions against "our" missionary society, then, remain in due rank—thus:

1st. The churches of Christ, in the first age of the gospel, were taught not only to edify each other in the heavenly faith, but to herald the tidings of salvation to sinners.

2nd. In these churches of disciples, in divers places, there were persons fitted both by natural and gospel gifts to announce the good news to sinful men, and to show them the way of life in the name of the crucified and exalted Jesus.

2d. These workmen, called evangelists, were servants of the churches as well as servants of the Lord, and were duly employed and sustained in the work for which they were qualified.

4th. These workmen labored among the churches and away from the churches—converted men at home and abroad—giving themselves wholly to the work.

5th. They were called to the work and sustained in it without the assistance of an ‘organization’ or ‘society’ specially created or contrived for these ends.

6th. If the disciples in 1857 desire to be ‘of the same faith and order’ with the disciples in 35 and 60, no state or national missionary society is required.

7th. The existence and services of a missionary society among cotemporary disciples, are proofs (☞ to us ☜) that our religious relatives are, practically, though we sincerely hope unwittingly, quite as much in favor of modern human prudence as of the old-fashioned infallible prudence.

But we do not anticipate that our good brother Franklin will let his friends hear us upon these matters. Judging from the past, he will administer to us the same medicine that partyist editors administer to him, telling his reading friends, without one line or sentiment from us, that we are opposed to the missionary society, and, impliedly, that we are against evangelizing: for it has already actually come to pass that some among us have attained to such ‘missionary’ zeal that they cannot understand how any man who stands aloof from the missionary ‘creations of the brethren’ can be on the side of the Saviour who asks his people because they are his people to evangelize the world!

Will our brother call this complaining? It is not in our heart to complain. Personally, we have no cause, no desire to utter a fault-finding word. If our beloved brother’s course in publishing his positions against us, without publishing our positions, will issue to the edification of the brotherhood and the advancement of the cause of our sovereign Master, we shall share in ‘the joy of all.’

Our strictures, it would appear, lean a little the other way, according to the plumb-line of our excellent brother. We are willing. Seeing that so many strictures incline several degrees toward the citadel of popularity, we cannot in the meantime object that ours should lean a little the other way.

Let us however have another look to see the bearings and leanings of persons and things. Here is the zealous brother Franklin, in the latitude of Cincinnati, standing before 'a creation of the brethren,' named and surnamed a missionary society; and taking a fair look at it our brother deliberately says—"I see no danger to the cause in our general missionary society." But brother Oliphant, instead of standing at Cincinnati, hastes away to the peak of mount Zion, and surveys the rude and unpopular brethren who work in the Lord's service for their own salvation and the salvation of their fellows;—they have the one, true, pure, divine society to save themselves and save the world; and this model of labor is recommended by said Oliphant. Who depends upon guess-work here? Who looks from the safe stand-point? Who stands erect? Who leans the other way? Let the students of the living oracles and the humble adherents of the ever-blessed Prince of Life examine and decide.

With sincere love to brethren Franklin, Pendleton, Errett, and Elley, and with a promise to re-hear these noble and acceptable workmen again, if the Lord will, we take our leave of this topic for the current year. Great peace and prosperity to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

D. O.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Knowing that it will be pleasing to the brethren generally to hear of the success of the cause in this region I would inform them that since the conclusion of the annual meeting in June there have been twenty one added to the church. Nine of which have been added lately by the joint labours of brethren Sheppard and Kilgour. A fair prospect remains for gaining other additions to the Lord's saints here.

J. B. jr.

Brother H. Greenlaw, writing from Deer Island, New Brunswick, Dec. 5th, says, "Brother Garraty, from Gardiner, Maine, has been with us some ten or twelve days. Ten have obeyed the gospel and been added to the army of the faithful. To God be the praise."

Several epistles, designed for publication, among them an epistle commending our recent essays pertaining to the Holy Spirit and modern conversions, are laid over for the beginning of a new year.

D. O.

CANADIAN BAPTIST REGISTER.

This pamphlet for 1858, containing an Almanac, and a great variety of useful items of information relative to the Baptists in Canada and America, has been sent to us through the courtesy of R. A. Fyfe, Minister, who is Pastor of the Bond Street Baptist Church at Toronto. The Act to incorporate the Canadian Literary Institute at Wookstock, a Baptist institution, is given in the Register; also the Constitution of the Institute; and the Articles of the Society lately established by our Baptist friends in Canada for the relief of the widows and orphans of deceased Baptist ministers. We design giving the number of churches and ministers at another time.

D. O.

CONGREGATIONALISTS IN CANADA.

In Canada East and West the Congregationalists number 3,135; number of churches reported at the last Congregational Union, 69; number of ministers 66. For all purposes, these 3,135 members contributed during the year the sum of \$12,540.—over \$4 for every member.

D. O.

DESTRUCTION OF BETHANY COLLEGE.

It is with great regret that we hear that the main building of Bethany College was destroyed by fire on the morning of the 10th inst. From a letter written by the President, Mr. A. Campbell, we learn that it is supposed to be the work of an incendiary. The Faculty have made arrangements to fit up a portion of the Steward's Inn for College purposes, and therefore there will be no interruption in carrying on the regular routine of the College.

D. O.

HILLIER AND ATHOL.

We visited these congregations last month. The friends in Hillier appeared to be prospering, and it was encouraging to be assured that a faithful few were meeting regularly in Athol. Brethren Trumpour and Werden deserve praise for doing their part toward edifying the brethren.

D. O.