

ticular Baptist bodies. That these names no longer represent, what they were at first adopted to express, is admitted on both sides. That they ought to be immediately dropped, and the two bodies merged into one, is strongly felt, by both. But why they are not united no one that I am aware of has yet ventured fully to explain. Of course there would be some little difficulties in the way, but to earnest minds, those difficulties would be as nothing, and the advantages to result therefrom are not easily to be estimated. The want of some central body, which should represent the whole denomination, will most likely delay the consummation of this union. The Baptist Union might do it, and thereby claim a more enlarged place in the sympathies of the churches than it now receives. There are many other things, which that union might accomplish if there were more vigorous activity in the executive. I say this, without intending to depreciate the service which the Association has rendered to the cause of truth. The fact is I suppose, that looking at all these matters, from a point some distance from the threshold of office, I am apt to wish for results which possibly the societies themselves never contemplated, and which, very possibly, societies never can accomplish. When the Christian church has reached the exalted station which her Lord intended she should occupy, such entire amalgamations as I contemplate will be fully realized. Holding still to our distinctive opinions, we shall hold more tenaciously and keep more prominently forward, that wherein we all agree—and the ungodly world will be compelled to say—"See how these brethren love one another."

There is a question agitating the Old Country from one end to the other, just now, which is not denominational but really national. For the last two or three years, the question of Lords-day observance, has occupied an unwonted share of public attention. This attention, has now become a very deep excitement, in consequence of a motion, about to be proposed in the House of Commons, to open the British Museum, National Gallery and other places of public amusement after the morning service on the Lords-day. The endless variety of opinions amongst Christians, as to the origin and character of the Lords-day, is merged in the one deep conviction, that if this measure be carried it will be an unmitigated calamity to the country. Hence all sects and sections—almost of religious persons, are engaged in lecturing, preaching, writing, and petitioning against it. I suppose scarcely ever has Premier received such a deputation, as invested Lord Palmerston's house on the subject, the other day. Almost every Society that can be named, having connection with the religious interests of the community, was represented. His Lordship received and listened to them courteously, but I should judge, from the report, left an impression that their request did not command his sympathy. There is a very strong public movement in favor of this motion. Several large public meetings called by the friends of the observance of the Lords-day, have been overpowered and resolutions against them, most decisively carried. The contest is and will be a trial of strength, such as the religious interests in this country have not had for very many years. I believe at present the feeling is one of fear amongst Christians, for the issue. It will most probably turn upon, whether the government, see in it, any danger to their seats. If they do, they will oppose the motion, and thus it will be thrown out. If they do not oppose it, I fear, it will be carried. Our hope is in the Lord our God.

This agitation derives peculiar importance from the fact that in Paris, and some other continental cities, associations have recently been formed to induce the governments to secure the Lords-day as a day of rest. And it is understood here, that, at least in France, the authorities are decidedly favourable to the movement. England giving up her Sabbath and Paris, trying to get it! What is the meaning of this strange anomaly in the moral aspects of the age?

Another question which is likely ere long to make, we hope, as great an excitement, is just about to be initiated, viz.—the disendowment of all religious parties in Ireland. Mr. Miall the well known editor of the Nonconformist, has given notice in the House of a motion to that effect. No man could handle it better. The subject is his own, and there is little doubt that if they will give him "a House," he will present the Anti-religious-endowment argument before them and

the country, as it never yet has been presented in parliament. He will get a minority to vote with him, and thus will be opened, the question of the age.

Permit me in closing this letter to congratulate you on the very decided improvement you have effected in the Messenger. I think I observe also, that the improvement is progressive. I hope the circulation is in accordance therewith.

I am dear sir, yours very truly,
H. S. E.
Feb'y. 13, '56.

For the Christian Messenger.

Past and Present.
CONFERENCE MEETINGS.

Among the various orders of christian worshippers, each has its own mode of fellowship; some bodies of christians meet frequently, some but occasionally, and others meet not at all for edification, conference, and mutual benefit; Baptist churches have considered it *useful* to hold stated meetings once a month just previously to receiving the Lord's Supper on the Sabbath, to confer together on the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. On special occasions these meetings are held more frequently, and are designated *conference* or *church meetings*, more generally the former. Scripture precedents seem ample to warrant such associations of the church; but it would require no great research to arrive at the conclusion that express commands, for the "assembling of the disciples" are found in the New Testament,—the Charter of the churches' rights and privileges.

When our Saviour was on earth his meetings with his disciples were frequent and no doubt sweet *conference* was had, and strength imparted for future duties. After our Lord's ascension his little flock continued to meet to relate their trials, speak of their joys, and confer in relation to future duties and prospects. The church of 120 had met often if not daily during the fifty days occurring between the Crucifixion and the day of Pentecost, and we may imagine their meetings were seasons of familiar and delightful conference. Some have objected to conference meetings on account of christians there assembled, telling their religious feelings, or relating their past *experience*. But the objectors are not numerous; and it must be expected that within the pale of even Baptist churches there will occasionally be an individual found who possesses so little sensibility that he is stoically unmoved by events passing around him, and therefore having no daily *experience* of trials and joys, of doubts and hopes in the divine life, would have none to relate, and would therefore feel no pleasure in a meeting of the kind alluded to. But such members form the small *minority* of our independent churches. The great majority of church members look upon these meetings as highly necessary and delightfully interesting. The Baptist church is a *peculiar* family, acknowledging one head, governed by one code of laws, bound together by like obligations, pursuing alike one object, and looking forward to the same consummations of their hopes. Having to do with the world, whilst not of the world, having their souls grieved by its wicked practices and often their hearts pained by its insults and reproaches; how unhappy their position if not permitted to meet occasionally in their *father's house* to recount their trials, express their fears, enumerate their mercies, and exhibit their joys. What are David's Psalms but a relation of his pious feelings? And what a loss we should sustain had these been suppressed. And even in our day the suppression of pious emotions are injuriously felt by the children of God. Who that has read the Acts of the Apostles and their Epistles does not remember how frequently Paul related his *experience*—his *conversion*. How he liked to talk of it *years after* it took place and how his intense feelings were continually bursting out in expressions like "I could wish myself accursed for my brethren &c." But alas! since Paul's time many look upon it as indecorous to express sentiments in relation to sinners around them, or deep feelings of christians in relation to the church of Christ.

Yet how beneficial to the Pastor of the church, as well as to its individual members, are conference meetings. He too often is left to toil *alone* from week to week; his members are busy one with his farm, and another with his merchandize and he scarcely meets them except on the Sabbath; often he feels that he is labouring for nought, and like Elijah seeing so little activity in the church, is ready to conclude that he is left

alone. But the conference arrives, and he witnesses a godly number from far and near arrived to confer together on the things of God, and as he listens to one and another as they speak of their deep and anxious feelings through the month, and talk of their daily prayer for a revival of God's work in the church, he feels he is not *alone* and that God has left many under his charge who have not bowed the knee to Baal; and when a pious sister stands up and tells of the longings of her soul in relation to his ministry being blessed to her children, and another with joyful feelings praises God that some member of her family has been converted under

his preaching. Does he not also rejoice, that though his sowing was with tears, now he begins to reap with joy; separated, the church feels impotent and weak, associated, it feels resolute and strong; renewing their covenant engagements, they determine to go forward conquering and to conquer. But a retrospective glance would convince any one acquainted with the Baptist churches in this province for twenty years that our conference meetings are not what they were formerly. Then, the whole church or a large majority were expected to be present and brethren and sisters communed together of the things of Christ's Kingdom, and thus they felt their faith strengthened and their minds prepared to appreciate more fully the blessings of the Lord's Supper on the Sabbath following; if any was prevented attending, he was enquired for, and if unavoidably detained he would embrace the opportunity of expressing, before the communion on the Sabbath, his regret, or give his reason for absence and mention his union with the church. The churches then walked in *strength*, and results, in copious and frequent revivals were experienced. Now, the difference is manifest. Instead of a large majority going to conference, the church is represented by a *few*; and instead of lively and free interchange of christian feelings, too often but little is said, and that in a formal manner; the sisters are in some churches *excused* speaking, and in others it is considered an *impropriety* for them to do so. But results follow, and these are evident in the *formal intercourse of christians one with another*; the want of interest felt in each others welfare, and the infrequency of revivals. Let the church arise in this matter and return to former action, let each member feel it a *privilege* as well as a *covenant engagement* to let no small excuse prevent his being present at the stated conference; then will Zion arise; then will formality and coldness be banished from our midst; and then will we see our sons and daughters coming for admission to our temple gates.

HINT.
For the Christian Messenger.

Donation Visit.

MESSRS. EDITORS,
The design of our churches in making their Pastors donation visits, is, I presume,

- 1st. To relieve the Pastor and his family from pecuniary embarrassments, which his salary in many cases is not sufficient to do.
- 2nd. To give a united expression of their attachment to him who breaks to them the bread of life, and labours to bring their children to Christ.
- 3rd. To express the union which exists among themselves.

These objects were accomplished by a number of brethren, sisters, and friends of the third Baptist Church of Yarmouth, in a donation visit to their Pastor and his family on the 5th of February. The weather had been stormy for three days previous, and the roads were very much filled with drifts; but this only acted as a stimulus to those whose hearts were warm, and who felt that their overcoming these difficulties would express more fully the affection and regard they had for those they designed visiting. The day was spent in free conversation on different subjects of interest, in which all appeared happy. At 7 o'clock the friends all-partook of a comfortable tea prepared by the ladies, after which a short time was spent in singing, and conversation on that science. The brethren delivered warm addresses expressive of their desires for the prosperity of their pastor, spiritually and temporally, and contrasting the state of affairs with them now, and when he came among them, referring to the improvement that had been going on gradually both in the church and congregation since that period; and how much they had been benefited by the gospel he had preached. They referred to some of the strange and unscrup-

tural notions they had been led to renounce during the time of their union, assuring him that their regard and esteem were greatly increased, and that this visit was designed as an expression of the same.

To this the Pastor replied, expressing the exceeding pleasure he had in meeting his dear friends and that he felt an increasing attachment to the people of his charge, he felt grateful to God for the union and peace that existed among them, and that if the Lord had owned his labours in the salvation of souls, and in instructing and leading them into the truth as it is in Jesus, to God be all the glory.

He also expressed the blessed effects produced on his own heart while he witnessed his people willing to contend with winds and storms to express their unabating regard for him.

I am sure Messrs. Editors it must be the persons that are warped with prejudice or controlled by selfishness, that would deprive themselves of the privilege of uniting in reviving the drooping heart of their pastor; and surely the heart of the minister must be revived and cheered, when he meets the members of his church and congregation, led by his Deacons in a visit of this kind.

I am persuaded that if the Deacons and leading members were engaged in awakening the spirit in the churches, there would be more activity and union among themselves, and more aid afforded the ministers. May the Lord enable those who have been remiss to redeem the past. After singing the Union hymn and prayer by the pastor, the friends retired, much pleased, leaving with the pastor's family the sum of £11 9s.

ONE PRESENT.
For the Christian Messenger.

Obituary Notices.

MR. EZEKIEL F. PIERCE,
Son of the late Mr. James Pierce, of Lower Aylesford, died on the 2nd day of August, 1855, aged 35 years.

It appears that the mind of Mr. P. was seriously exercised in reference to his spiritual welfare about sixteen years ago. These impressions, however, as is too frequently the case, in a great measure passed away. But during the gracious work which God wrought here in the spring of the year 1854, he was again mercifully arrested, and brought to bow to the sceptre of Christ, and to obtain a joyful hope in Him. Our Methodist brethren shared in this Revival; and Mr. Pierce was one of those that united with them. The change in him appears to have been thorough and abiding.

On the 24th day of May, 1854, he was united in marriage to Miss Maria H. Condon. She professed religion about the same time that he did, and belonged to the same society. They were pleasantly situated on a place which he purchased on the western boundary of Aylesford. Their prospects seemed in all respects cheering.

But, in the mysterious arrangement of Providence, disease soon invaded their happy dwelling. Early in the autumn that succeeded their marriage, he became seriously indisposed. His illness proved to be a fatal consumption. Under it he lingered, with slight alterations, for ten months.

True religion is valuable at all times, and under all circumstances. Its value, however, is peculiarly manifest in times of trouble. It was so in this case. The writer repeatedly visited our valued brother, and found him composed, resigned and steadfast in his reliance upon the great Redeemer. Amiable by nature, and rendered submissive to the Divine will by grace, it is stated by a constant attendant, during his long continued illness he was never known to utter a word of complaint. He was graciously enabled to commit both soul and body, with those most dear to him, to the Divine disposal, with cheerfulness and confiding trust. The sting of death was extracted: and he passed quietly over the swellings of Jordan.

An appropriate funeral discourse was delivered on the occasion of his burial, by the Rev. Christopher Lockhart, under whose labours he had been brought to Christ.

Brother Pierce has left a widow, and an infant daughter, at the age of six months. It is indeed a painful stroke to her who is so soon called to give the parting hand to him who was the beloved object of her ardent affections. She is, however, consoled with the unwavering confidence, that he is removed from all the ills of mortal life, and received to the mansions of endless joy.—Communicated by Rev. C. Tupper. [Wesleyan will please copy]