

doubted. He was one of those who thought and acted, as a servant of God:—how he became one was a needless question. Nor was it of any importance to enquire in what way he entered into the Christian ministry, after having been trained and exercised for years in a mechanical employment. The fact was, that he was conscious of powers beyond the requirements of mechanic life, and deemed it his duty to use them for God, in the great work of saving souls. That was his call, the genuineness of which was confessed by his brethren. Mental training followed. He studied some time in the University of Edinburgh, where he attended the lectures of the celebrated Dr. Chalmers. His theological instruction is said to have been obtained at the Baptist College at Horton, near Bradford, Yorkshire, then under the presidency of Dr. Steadman, who was a plain sturdy teacher, much better acquainted with the solidities than the elegancies of religious learning.

Mr. Girdwood's public ministry commenced at Manchester. He was ordained there, March 13, 1839. Thence he emigrated to Canada, in the year 1841, and became pastor of the church now meeting in this place then in St. Helen street. After a pastorate of nine years he removed to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he spent fifteen years, the most useful part of his life. A visit to his native land was followed by pressing invitations to return and settle there, but he preferred remaining on this side of the Atlantic, and in January last, took up his abode at Lafayette, Indiana, having accepted an invitation to take charge of the Baptist church in that place. He attended the missionary anniversaries at Chicago, in May, and was seized with illness there, but was able to reach home and appeared to be in a fair way of recovery. His disease however took an unfavorable turn and he rapidly sank under its power, experiencing at the same time the peace and comfort which the gospel imparts.

Mr. Girdwood was a man of fair average ability, and possessed a good share of knowledge, general and theological. He was an independent thinker, not choosing to clothe his thoughts always in the garb of customary technicality, but holding himself free to employ such modes of representation as appeared best adapted to express truth with precision. His talents were rather solid than showy.—If he did not astonish his hearers by bursts of eloquence, he convinced them by close reasoning. His addresses were neither distinguished by the dryness of formalism nor the flightiness of cant, but by the serious air of intelligent, warm-hearted piety.

His style was generally simple, plain, and unadorned.

Mr. Girdwood's theological views, which were those commonly held by our denomination, were not mere opinions, they were principles, cherished with earnestness and firmly maintained. One who knew him well, writing since his death, says,—“His theological views were clear and sound, and his manner in the pulpit was clear and affectionate. It was a privilege to hear him on some experimental subject, such as regeneration, justification by faith, christian hope. You felt that one who had studied and himself experienced the truth he was discoursing to you.”

His tender spirit and kindness of disposition and habit endeared him to all with whom he associated. He was ever prompt to obey the call of need, or sickness, or sorrow, and knew how to give practical expression of sympathy, both by personal act, and by engaging the aid of those who had it in their power to help. The poor and the afflicted held him in the highest esteem. He was peculiarly qualified to comfort the mourners—a *Barnabas*—a “Son of consolation.”

Of the weaknesses and faults of our departed brother, whatever they were (and “there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not”), it is not necessary to speak. Doubtless he lamented and confessed them before God, and “groaned within himself,” rejoicing in the expectation of full deliverance. His brethren “glorified God in him.” Christian charity would rather contemplate excellences than search out defects.

We deplore his early removal, for it may be regarded as comparatively early, since his vigorous constitution seemed to promise long life. But the Master has called his servant home and who shall grieve his sovereignty or doubt his wisdom? To the departed it was a joyful transfer, a change above all things to be desired. Now he has “attained” and is “perfect.” His whole nature is immeasurably exalted. The intellectual revels in sublimest gratifications. The emotional is excited and developed beyond all the possibility of this earthly state. The fellowship which he has joined is so sincere, so pure, so hearty, that the most fervid utterances may be indulged in without restraint, and no one fears to disclose the inmost feelings of his soul to his brother. There, the wearied ones rest

for ever, or rather, serve without weariness, as also they enjoy without satiety. No one stands in another's way or hinders another's bliss. Individual contentment and social happiness are in perfect union. Our friend has entered into that blessed state:—we grudge him not his joy, but will painfully follow him willing to work as long as the Lord condescends to employ us and to wait submissively for the discharge.

For the Christian Messenger.

Book for Church Records.

Dear Sir,—I learn with pleasure that you contemplate issuing a blank book for the use of our church clerks. This has long been a great desideratum. Few churches in the Province keep their records as they should be kept, many of them I fear, keep no record, whatever, some of them have not even a book in which to place a minute of their proceedings. I remember visiting a church a few years since, just before one of the Associational gatherings, asking the clerk for information. I was amused to see that worthy, with primitive simplicity, gathering his statistics from the back of his kitchen door, on which he had chalked the numbers who had been added during a late revival. This is no doubt an extreme case, but is perhaps an index to very general irregularity in an important matter. I am persuaded that such a book would be gladly welcomed by our Pastors and clerks, and that it would go far to obviate the loose manner in which this branch of our economy is at present conducted. Hoping, therefore, that you will soon make such an experiment, and that it may prove every way successful,

I remain yours,
D. A. STEELE.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 14, 1867.

THE BAPTIST CONVENTION of the three Provinces, will commence its Twenty second Annual Session, on Saturday the 24th. This body has charge of the Educational and Foreign Mission affairs of the denomination. The combination of these two subjects is highly suggestive—one having for its object the elevation of the intellectual standing of our own people, and providing what is needed for the future ministry of the churches, at home and abroad, whilst the other supplies the means of directly giving the Word of Life to the benighted regions afar off.

In the modes of operation on the two subjects there are very different features. Whilst the influences operating in reference to one are in some respect quite dissimilar from the other, yet both have the same great object in view—the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. A general oversight is taken of the religious progress of the body by the report on the State of the Denomination, and a recognition of the ministers and membership in the churches, yet the above are the subjects on which action in particular is taken.

In Educational matters the great necessity is to raise means for continuing, without interruption, a supply of mental aliment of the highest possible character, equal to the demands of the times; making provision for the future is essential in this department. The enlargement of the Endowment Fund of Acadia College is consequently no less an object of concern than the meeting of its annual necessities. This will require the serious consideration of the assembled wisdom at Wilmot next week. Rev. Dr. Cramp, the President, retained his position with the understanding that some more active effort should be made during the year for the accomplishment of this object. It has appeared, however, to the Governors, we understand, that the present time was not favorable for that object and it has been deferred. We trust that this matter will be shortly taken up vigorously. Our Foreign Missionary operations are assuming an interesting aspect and we doubt not will receive the serious and earnest attention of the delegates.

Ecclesiastical Combinations.

We do not think that Mr. Spurgeon's opinion is entitled to more respect than that of many less celebrated men, yet, as he is so well-known as a preacher, and as a devoted Baptist minister, the sentiments expressed by him, on many subjects, are received by persons belonging to other denominations with more favor than when uttered by other men of less

notoriety. The following article written by him, and published in the *Sword and Trowel* puts the subject of Union in a strong light but not stronger we think than the case demands, to let our Pædobaptist brethren know where we stand. They ought to understand that we love Christian Union for its own sake but are unwilling to sacrifice truth for a mere nominal exhibition of it:

OURSELVES AND THE ANNEXATIONISTS.

There is no bigotry in the world equal to the bigotry of modern liberalism. Sectarianism may be bitter, but latitudinarianism is wormwood and gall. We have been most ferociously denounced for tersely and accurately designating the action of the Congregational Union, in reference to Union Churches, as “a little dodge.” Viewing it in connection with the party who agitated the question, a little dodge we believed it to be, and at this moment we can find no better name for it; in fact, the tall talk which our description has evoked, has showed us how exactly we managed to hit the nail on the head. We have at all times endeavoured to prove our hearty brotherhood with all the people of God, not by words merely, but by deeds. Our Independent friends know that our heart is always warm towards them, and that when it has been in our power to serve them, we have needed no pressing to make us do so; on the other hand, we have no truer friends than many among the Congregationalists, with whom we enjoy the dearest fellowship, and who have again and again practically helped us in our schemes. We hope that this brotherly love may continue and increase, and we trust there will never be any emulation between the Independent and the Baptist bodies, but that of holy desire to be foremost in promoting the cause of Christ. For either body to endeavour to increase its number by offering facilities for transfer to its own ranks, and inaugurating a policy of annexation is unwise and unbrotherly. To attempt to convert men to our views is our duty, but to draft them without conversion into our body is no gain in any sense, either to truth or good fellowship. A certain company of would-be extra superfluous liberals, made up of Independents and Baptists, good enough men in their way, but thoroughly wrongheaded on this and some other points, are resolved to amalgamate the two bodies, and their first action, inoffensive and insignificant in itself, we judge from what we know of them, to be merely the beginning of the end, a stepping-stone to something more, getting in the thin end of the wedge—in plain Saxon, a *little dodge*. They would form churches and found a denomination in which Christ's ordinance of baptism would be left optional; some of them would even have a font and a baptistry in each place of worship, which to our mind, is to form churches on the principle of despising the command of Christ, and counting it to be an utterly insignificant matter what the ordinance may be, and whether it be obeyed or not. “Whichever you please, dear friends; pay your money and take your choice. Sprinkle the infant or immerse the believer, our church does not care a farthing which;” this is the witness of the model Union Churches, and would be the witness of a United Baptised and Unbaptised Congregationalism. We quite understand the testimony of our friends who hold infant baptism, as they also understand ours; but to form a denomination which regards all baptisms with equal indifference, seems to us to be a scheme traitorous to Christ and his Word. That is what has been for some time, more or less covertly aimed at, and is now the darling object of those who were at the bottom of the Congregational Union resolution, and of others who looked on approvingly, biding their time. There was much more aimed at by some than was meant by all; and we judge not only by what was publicly said, but by what is privately done. We tell these gentlemen who are so set upon fusing the Pædobaptists and the Baptists, that we hope all who think with them will avail themselves of the plank so conveniently and temptingly offered to them, but we take liberty to say again that there is one Baptist at least who will never be absorbed into the projected unity, and we believe that with the exception of a score or so whom we could well spare, there are none among the Baptists who would consider for a moment the question of breaking up an ancient and useful Christian community, for the mere sake of gratifying a morbid craving for nominal union, or an ambitious desire to form a large and influential congregationalism. We call upon our honest Pædobaptist friends to give an unmistakable utterance as to their views, for we believe that the ambitious designs of those who would swallow us up alive, are foreign to the mass of the Independents. We can go on in holy unity of spirit as two denominations, but the project of annexation is a serious injury to

brotherly love, and should be dropped at once, or carried on by a public and explicit overture. What should we think of our Wesleyans if they indulged visions of annexing the Independents, and thought those to be uncharitable who opposed such fond desires of aggrandisement? What if the Presbyterians should come to the conclusion that the Baptists should unite with them, and grow enraged because any refused to endorse their magnanimous idea? The cases are as nearly parallel as can be, for our affinities are about the same.

Some of the letters written upon the question show a very proud and overbearing spirit; mention has even been made of the word “schism,” as though the Congregational Union is to be considered as the true church, and the Baptists are to be looked upon as a set of schismatics. We take leave to say that men would not use such language if they remembered how often it has been cast at us all in turn, and how easy it is to retort. Such talk naturally emanates from gentlemen who sorely long to add Naboth's vineyard to their possessions, but it will cause a revulsion of feeling among the great majority of our liberty-loving brethren, the Independents, who are entirely guiltless of the present conspiracy, and have always shown the manliness to accord to others the liberty of association which they so worthily exercise on their own account. The Baptist body will never be absorbed into any other; why should it be? What an infinitesimal benefit would such an absorption be, and at what an expense would it be procured? In the interest of brotherly love, we hope we shall either have this matter fairly out, or never hear it mentioned again. The agitation of the scheme will create ill feelings, and its consummation, if it were possible, would create a new denomination, and so multiply sects. There would be the staunch Pædobaptists, who would adhere to their own views, the true Baptists holding to theirs, and the Unionists, with their views on views, vacillating to their heart's content alone in their glory. We frankly confess and publicly promise, that in every way we will oppose their annexation scheme, in the bud as well as in the flower, in its first as well as its last phase; not because we love union less than other men, but love it more, and believe that the evil heaven which we see at work is as hostile to true union as it is to truth itself. Not a word have we ever said against the fullest and heartiest love to our Pædobaptist brethren, but we differ from them in a point which seems to us to be very important, and we feel that we can get on better in Christian love as we are than as it is proposed that we should be. We have as much right to a Baptist Union as they have to a Congregational Union; and as we see good reason for maintaining our separate organisation, surely our friends need not be angry with us for doing so; especially as they can at any time put an end to their own separate existence, and unite with us if they think their infant baptism to be so unimportant that they can give it up, and follow our view of the Lord's command. If we should ever leave the Baptists we should quite as soon join the Free Church of Scotland, or the Quakers, as the Congregationalists; but our anchor is down, and not at all likely to be drawn up. When we mean a change, however, we hope we shall be honest enough to avow it. We should feel ashamed to be a member of the Baptist denomination, and harbour the design of carrying it over in whole, or in part, to another body. When ministers get a footing in Baptist churches, and first disown strict discipline as to baptism, and then inoculate their people with hostility to the denomination, and coquet with Pædobaptist bodies, they present to our churches a reason for enquiry into the advisability of the very first step in the descent; and they also raise the question as to the honesty of those who gain an inch with the covert view of getting an ell, when they know very well that no inch would be given if their ultimate designs were known.

We have been open and above board in our expressions upon this business, and we wish others would be. The anonymous letters in which we have been assailed we look upon as the weapons of cowards; we cannot write or speak without being known, and do not wish to do so; we believe the whole system of anonymous writing to be meanness itself when directed against public men who are mentioned by name. Put off your cloak sir, when your adversary wears none, or you will be scouted as one of the assassin's breed. Our friend, Mr. Brook, who has been even more savagely assailed than ourselves, is quite able to take care of himself, and could no doubt answer most crushingly if he cared to do so; but we blush for those who dared most falsely to say that under any circumstances the Baptist denomination could be ashamed of him—of him, a man whom to know is to love, whose