

ner, every time they meet, and say, "How do you do, my dear brother? your presence is such an encouragement to me." If absent from meeting at any time he must be inquired after, or some one call to see if he is sick. Then he knows he is not forgotten. They think of him; they appreciate him.

Once Mr. Coaxley was teacher of a Bible class. His pastor, to help on the work for a time, used his personal efforts to aid him. He brought pupils into the class; would sometimes sit down with them; spoke of his gratification at the progress they made. Mr. Coaxley's face was radiant with delight. He was so happy that he was at his post of duty, and could do "some little good in the world." But all attention could not be given to one man, and soon he was discouraged, faint-hearted. His class was abandoned after a few months' labor.

If put on a committee, and not its chairman, he droops like a sensitive plant. There is nothing then to inspire him; unless, indeed, the chairman happens to say, "Now, brother Coaxley, you are the man to do this business; you understand all about it; you know just how to put it in shape; you draw up a report and read it for the committee." The report will be forthcoming, and very good, too. He was once elected superintendent of the Sunday school. Of course, he was gratified. The pastor and brethren used their endeavors to launch the enterprise. Attention was called to this new effort; commendatory notices were given from the pulpit; special effort was made to increase the school. Every thing seemed on the flood tide of prosperity. Mr. Coaxley was exhilarated; he worked day and night; he really did ably and well. Six weeks he held out. But two stormy Sabbaths intervened; the pastor was absent twice; ordinary vexations arose; and the new superintendent was discouraged. He resigned. A suitable amount of nursing, calls, explanations, encouragements, pledges of sympathy and aid, induced him to recall his resignation and "try it again." Three months Mr. Coaxley kept on at a halting pace, elated and depressed alternately, and then resigned again. This time his resignation was accepted.

A good man is Mr. Coaxley, but it takes too much power to keep him in working mood.—W. & R.

For the Christian Messenger.

Baptist Union.

Mr Editor,—

I was much gratified by observing in your last number, an extract from the *Canadian Baptist*, with some very apposite remarks of your own, on the subject of a more intimate connection with our Canadian brethren. The easy and frequent communication which under the new relations that will hereafter exist, in consequence of Confederation, between all the British North American Provinces, will afford the means of establishing a Union which could not fail of the most beneficial effects, in the increase of the kingdom of our common Lord and Master. The religion of Jesus Christ is one which derives a vast amount of its usefulness, as well as its enjoyment, from the enlarged and mutual sympathies of its members, however widely they may be separated by space or circumstances. But more especially the incalculable advantages which must result from christian combination, in carrying on the great work of evangelizing the waste places of superstition and heathenism, cannot be fully estimated. Some faint glimpses of them however may be conceived from the history of the Church—we mean the true Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ—during the past half century. As you rightly observe, the means of such united efforts by the Baptist Churches of the Upper and Lower or Maritime Provinces, cannot under present circumstances be brought under such an organization as to effect the great purposes of united action. The period of two or three years however will remedy the evil and remove all obstructions; and when our communications with our Canadian brethren shall have been reduced to a few hours instead of many days, we ought to be fully prepared to meet the occasion, and with united hearts and hands to enter on the unspeakably momentous work of lending our utmost help in converting a fallen world.

In the mean time much may be done in cultivating a more intimate acquaintance with our christian friends in Canada; in devising plans of usefulness, and preparing for future action.

Yours truly,
NOVA SCOTIAN.

The New Brunswick Legislature is summoned to meet for the despatch of business on the 11th of May.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, APRIL 24, 1867.

"Rebaptism."

Questions in relation to Baptism sometimes arise in the minds of individuals, as well as in the practise of churches which unnecessarily perplexes them. We have no difficulties on the score of Ritualism as such; but the same principle which develops itself in the form of a fondness for ceremonials amongst High Churchmen, exists in human nature, and, where it thus manifests itself, it is worthy of some consideration by Baptists as well as Pedobaptists. When a believer in Christ desires simply to obey the command of Christ it would appear that no obstacle should be placed in his way, but, it should be done intelligently, and in harmony with the truth as it is in Jesus. A question having some relation to this subject was submitted to us by a contemporary a few weeks since, and was met by an explicit reply without hesitation. Since then the April number of the *Baptist Quarterly* has come to hand. The first of its excellent articles is one on "Rebaptism" and devotes about a dozen pages to the question, "May the rite of Christian baptism as to its outward form be administered to any person the second time? And if so under what circumstances?" In enquiring whether there may be any thing "in connection with the first administration which would destroy its validity," the writer takes up Acts xix. 1-7, and gives it a somewhat careful examination; but—as we deem it—without any very conclusive argument to prove that the twelve disciples of John there mentioned were rebaptized. The writer states that if they were rebaptized "there must have been in the first, the absence of an intelligent profession of faith in Christ."

The writer then proceeds:—

"From the very nature of the ordinance, baptism is not to be administered to any person the second time. The repetition of the outward act is allowable, only when the first performance of it was not a proper Christian baptism, that is, did not involve a voluntary profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the general principle. It remains for us to apply this principle to the several cases which have been already stated.

1. Can any failure of qualification on the part of the administrator vitiate the ordinance? We at once see what answer must be given to this question. The character or standing of the administrator is not an essential part of the ordinance. If he is not called of God to be a Christian minister, there is an irregularity in his administering the ordinances of the church,—an irregularity which ought not to be allowed except in extreme cases, as when the service of a duly authorized minister cannot be obtained. But there is a difference between the wrong or unwarranted administration of an ordinance and the invalidity of the ordinance when thus administered. It is contrary to law for any person not specified for that service to solemnize marriages. But if any person not so specified should perform the marriage service, although he will be held answerable by the law for his illegal act, the parties thus joined would be regarded by the law as truly husband and wife. The act would be illegally performed; but when performed would be valid. So if baptism is administered in due form, by a layman, or even by a person who has no membership in any church, although he acts without authority, and may incur the censure of the great Head of the Church, and although the candidate in ordinary cases, would do wrong in knowingly seeking baptism from such hands, yet if he receives it as an ordinance of Christ, and intends by it to avow his discipleship to the Lord Jesus, it has all the essential qualities of valid baptism and should not be repeated.

2. What shall we say of baptism, administered in due form, but while the candidate is an infant, as e. g., the baptisms of the Greek Church?—Here also the answer is beyond a doubt. Such baptisms are not valid, because they are not a profession of repentance and faith. This essential element is wanting, and therefore such a person cannot be considered as truly baptized. If an avowal of one's personal discipleship to Christ is involved in the very idea of baptism, and there can be no genuine baptism without this,—then for one to receive the form of this rite in irresponsible childhood, although every particular of that form is scrupulously observed, and the words are repeated which are used in the baptism of believers, it is evidently not valid baptism.—There is no profession of personal faith.

3. A more important case to which we must apply our principle is the case of those who received baptism in an unrenewed state, and who believe that they have, since baptism, become personally allied by faith to Christ. Shall the baptism of such be repeated? The answer to this question is not difficult or doubtful. If the former baptism was received in such ignorance of its meaning as to destroy its character as a profession of faith,—if for example the candidate was a heathen, and regarded the ordinance not as an avowal of discipleship, but as a form the submission to which procures the pardon of sin, and without which there is no forgiveness,—it could not be esteemed valid baptism, for the chief element of baptism was wanting. Or if the rite was received, not in good faith, but hyp-

critically, the candidate pretending, for the time to be what he was not, either for the sake of ridiculing the ordinance, or to procure some temporary advantage, the outward form must be regarded in such a case, as a mere mockery, meaning nothing in the view of the candidate, and involving no real profession of discipleship to Jesus.

But, on the other hand, if the person who is baptized did believe himself at the time an accepted disciple, and intended to declare himself such,—if he thought he had passed from death unto life, and wished to avow before his fellow-men this belief and hope,—if he regarded the act of baptism as a solemn declaration of his allegiance to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, and intended to adhere to the consecration thus declared, he must be considered as truly baptized. * * On the supposition that he afterwards becomes convinced of his unregenerate state, and obtains evidence which satisfies him that he has at length been born again, how can he by a repetition of his baptism, make his avowal of discipleship, or his pledge of consecration any more serious or binding than it already is. Baptism is an outward act. That outward act he has performed in the most solemn manner possible, and any repetition of the scene will rather diminish than increase the moral effect of it on himself and on other men. Although his reception of the ordinance was premature, and he now believes that he was then in an unregenerate state, the vow which he assumed is none the less binding on that account, nor his obligation to abide by his own free act of dedication any the less stringent. He ought not to be re-baptized because rebaptism would imply that his first reception of the ordinance, with all the avowal and promise and consecration which it involved, goes for nothing. But these cannot go for nothing. The most serious act a man ever performs cannot be thus nullified. The avowal is remembered by his fellow-men; the promise is recorded in the book of God's remembrance; the consecration binds him through all the years of his life here and hereafter; and no subsequent abandonment of his hope can destroy their validity or impair their binding force.

Again, that baptism in such a case ought not to be repeated is evident from the consideration that if there is no valid baptism without a personal experience of renewal by the Holy Ghost, many a man will not be able to decide whether he has been baptized or not, and of consequence will not be able to decide whether he is entitled to the privileges of the earthly church. The case is by no means rare in which a Christian having attained to a much higher and fuller experience of religious love and joy than he felt at first, comes to question whether his first hope was not unfounded, and inclines to the belief that he must date the beginning of his religious life later than his baptism. Must he seek a second baptism? Or, if he is utterly at a loss, as some disciples are, to say when his christian life began must he always be troubled by the doubt whether he has truly obeyed the command of Christ respecting baptism?

Again, some Christians constitutionally variable in their temperament, after having passed from a season of lukewarmness and indifference to one of high religious joy and fervor of religious zeal, seem to themselves to have been deceived before in supposing themselves Christians, and give some reason to the church to believe that they were not before truly converted. After a season of deep feeling and active service they subside into their former condition of sluggishness and apathy, showing no signs of religious life and neglecting the chief duties of a Christian, and then, by and by, come again to the same experience of hope and joy and zeal. If, on every renewal of this hope they are to receive baptism again, the ordinance loses much of its significance and sacredness; each repetition of the rite declares that the former reception was a nullity; and it becomes an occasion for reproach and ridicule. Let the man in such a case recognize the vow he has already made, and begin without delay to live according to his profession already uttered before his fellow-men, and to fulfil the promises of that solemn consecration to the will of God which his public baptism has already announced. * *

Peter addressed Simon the Sorcerer in words which plainly indicate that he regarded him as an unbeliever, declaring that his heart was not right in the sight of God, and that he had neither part nor lot in the matter. He exhorted him to repent and pray for pardon, but gave no intimation of the duty of baptism, and this, although his uniform custom was, in preaching to the most sinful, to exhort to repent and be baptized. Nor is there anywhere in the New Testament any indication that the apostles or any one of them thought of such a thing as administering Christian baptism a second time to any person, however far he had wandered from the way of virtue, however clearly he had demonstrated that he had entered the earthly church, while still an unconverted man."

The "Wesleyan" and Inter-Communion.

We do not court controversy, but prefer, rather, to pursue what we deem our path of duty, in the inculcation of christian truth, and in placing before our readers, from week to week, the religious and general intelligence we gather from all quarters. If, however, in the elucidation of any of the matters which belong to religious journalism, our statements are called in question, we have no objection to give such defence as we may be able; and hope always to do so without forgetting in whose service we are engaged, or whose kingdom we are desirous of promoting.

We do not believe in quiet acquiescence when our views and practices are misunderstood. Straightforward christian manliness is required, and will accomplish more valuable results than any amount of compromise at the expense of principle. By the attrition of discussion light is sometimes evolved which would not otherwise be thrown on such matters.

Our contemporary the editor of the *Provincial Wesleyan* was doubtless quite in place in endeavouring to seek a better acquaintance with the position of a body of Christians with whom he differed, if he thought proper, and to make use of the opportunity presented by our articles on "Union" for this purpose. His editorial of last week, by way of rejoinder, calls for only a few additional words from us. He now "admits the consistency" of what he still terms "close communion," but says, he "cannot admire its exclusiveness." We are glad to have brought him thus far to a right view, and doubt not, if we should appropriate a little more space than we feel at liberty to do at present, we should succeed in convincing him that the charge of exclusiveness does not properly belong to us, but rather to those who would prefer that we should be inconsistent with ourselves. To this our brother would, of course, with ourselves, give an affirmative reply. We might then enquire on what ground should they be debarred from the privilege? Our reply would be, On the same ground as that on which we are led to administer the Supper, and to participate in it; and which our contemporary admits to be the consistent one, that of having accepted the Lord's requirements—faith in Christ and obedience to his command—believers' baptism. Now, on what ground are objectionable persons excluded by our Methodist brethren and others, who boast of their communion being "open," or "mixed," or whatever other term they may prefer. Our brother denies that meeting-in-class gives a passport to the Lord's table; "examples" he says "among us bearing upon this point are of frequent occurrence." We alluded to that as the rule—and we still believe it is—though not without exception. We give our readers however the benefit of his contradiction. Still as a body we believe the Methodists hold and practice no less than Baptists that 'baptism is a prerequisite' to communion at the Lord's table, and, in doing so, are, if consistent, surely no less entitled to the term exclusive than ourselves. Baptists believe the Lord's Supper to be a divine institution—the table is therefore the Lord's, and, however much they might desire to bring in converts and those they love, to participate by some other door, they dare not neglect the order of His house and the mode of discipleship prescribed by Him, when he commissioned his servants to go into all the world and proclaim his gospel.

We have no desire to trifle with the subject in hand, or with our brother's feelings in reference to it, but, when he expresses so strong a desire for inter-communion between the evangelical churches of this city, and concludes by saying: "were we permitted to witness such a service in the Granville Street Church, we should certainly conclude that the millennial day had arrived, and would be ready to say with Simeon, 'Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation:' we think he does not indulge in very elevated expectations of that glorious day.

Whether Methodist latitudinarian-inclusivism or Baptist consistency will contribute the most towards preparing ourselves and the world for that time, is a matter on which we may each hold our own opinion without injuring the other.

Our Public Schools.

The *Journal of Education* for March, contains the following Official Notice, "To Trustees of Public Schools published by the direction of the Council of Public Instruction:—"

1. "A relation being established between the trustees and the teacher, it becomes the duty of the former, on behalf of the people, to see that the scholars are making sure progress, that there is life in the school both intellectual and moral,—in short, that the great ends sought by the education of the young are being realized in the section over which they preside. All may not be able to form a nice judgement upon its intellectual aspect, but none can fail to estimate correctly its social and moral tone. While the law does not sanction the teaching in our public schools of the peculiar views which characterize the different denominations of Christians, it does instruct the teacher "to inculcate by precept and example a respect for religion and the principles of Christian morality." To the trustees the people must look to see their desires in this respect, so far as is consonant with the spirit of the law, carried into effect by the