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Poetry.

Lord, be with me all day long.

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Jesus, Saviour—friend for ever,
Though dost guide and keep Thine own;
And Thy holiest servants never
Dare to take one step alone.
How can I, then, doubting, fearing,
Hope to reach the Better Land,
Unless Thou with presence cheering,
Gently lead me by the hand?
See my helpless, sad condition—
Sin is powerful, foes are strong;
Hear with favor this petition,
Lord, be with me all day long.

Many times my sins have grieved Thee,
Much Thy pardoning grace I need;
And I've only half believed Thee,
Though Thou art the Truth indeed.
Make my views of duty clearer,
Take my unbelief away;
Henceforth may I feel Thee nearer,
Dearer to my soul each day.
May I, through Thy gracious leading,
Choose the right and shun the wrong;
O, regard Thy servant's pleadings,
Lord be with me all day long.

Lord, Thy heart is kind and tender
To the soul that longs for thee;
And, in all Thy kingly splendour,
Thou hast deigned to smile on me.
Joy increases, prospects brighten,
My glad heart is satisfied;
And the heaviest burdens lighten
When Thou'rt walking at my side.
Now I cannot seek my pleasure
In the world's vain thoughtless throng;
Thou art all my joy and treasure,
Lord, be with me all day long.

In affliction, pain, disaster,
May I hourly feel Thee nigh;
In the presence of the Master,
I can suffer, I can die.
And the hardest toil is pleasant,
And the sorest pain is light,
Whilst I feel Thee, Saviour, present,
Strengthening me with inward might.
Give me love that will not doubt Thee;
Make my life one sweet, glad song;
Earth is dark and sad without Thee,
Lord, be with me all day long.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.
Scripture Truth the true basis of
Christian Union.

BY REV. J. A. GORDON.

THE CIRCULAR LETTER OF THE P. E.
ISLAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, HELD
AT CAVENDISH JULY 16TH 1877, TO
THE CHURCHES OF WHICH IT IS
COMPOSED.

Published by request.

Dear Brethren,—

In our treatment of the subject in hand, we will endeavour first to ascertain: "What is Truth" secondly consider Truth as the only safe ground of Christian Union.

Amid the clash and din of modern theological disputation, and of all the conflicting creeds which profess to be founded upon Bible Truth, minds unaccustomed to careful investigation may experience some difficulty in determining which of these opposing theories possesses the most valid claim to sound orthodoxy and Scriptural support.

Were men deprived of an infallible Standard by which to test the soundness of all existing creeds and forced to the necessity of embracing that system of belief which would appear most plausible, there might be some apology for the present divided state of Christendom, such a standard has, however, been wisely provided; hence no such apology can be urged. Men who are thus stripped of every excuse, and compelled *volens volens* to acquiesce in the solemn verdict that pronounces themselves guilty of originating and fostering the unhappy discords which disorganize the Christian World.

Were the great Founder of Christianity but to visit the churches in their present condition, it is to be feared he would find little to commend and much to censure. There is the usual amount of contention about the ceremonial garment, while the body which imparts a beautiful symmetry to it seems to be a matter of secondary

importance. In the "good old time," "the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul." Now believers appear anxious to secure as many theological differences as possible, between themselves and their brethren. Then loyalty to Christ and love to His cause predominated over every other interest. Now loyalty to creed and sectarian rage, leave little space for nobler impulses. Over this gloomy chaos however, the spirit of amity may at intervals be seen to hover. A desire for a happier condition of things is slowly taking possession of men's hearts. A significant movement aiming at an acceptable settlement of all religious differences is afoot. Though this is an object devoutly to be wished for, yet it must for ever prove abortive unless it has infallible Truth, and that alone for its basis.

Just here we may proceed with the important inquiry "What is Truth?" This interrogatory was frequently propounded by the ancient philosophers in the schools with results the reverse of satisfactory. To them it was a problem too intricate for solution, and every effort in that direction only plunged them into deeper difficulties and more hopeless perplexities. Philosophy with all her boasted power failed to give satisfaction to the inquiring mind on this subject. Reason although triumphant in many an encounter with the abstruse scientific problems of the age was here forced to acknowledge herself vanquished. Truth was infinitely beyond the reach of the human intellect. Hence "The world by wisdom knew not God." But in the fulness of time the perplexing question received a glorious demonstration by One "who spake as never man spake," and who sealed with his blood that system of truth which he originated and proclaimed. Truth then seems to be nothing more or less than the Gospel of Christ—the Word of God—the only perfect directory of morals—the only unerring guide which comes endorsed with the twofold authority of external evidence and internal power.

Having defined truth, we will now proceed to inquire into its nature. Does truth readily accommodate itself to the so-called liberal opinions of the age? We think not. If it did it would cease to be perfect, and consequently cease to be truth. It is as changeless as its author. It is affected by neither time nor circumstance. It makes no concessions. It scorns compromise. "It is diamond, with sharp angles cutting everything, cut by nothing." It is rigidly exclusive, and pours contempt upon every ordinance or system of religion which is not founded upon a "Thus saith the Lord." No matter how "venerable for age, or how deeply embedded in the habits of human thought," it receives the same dignified rebuke, "Who hath required this at your hand?" Just in proportion as truth and human systems disagree, in that proportion human systems are wrong. Truth is right, all else is erroneous. The Bible demands, and will be satisfied with nothing less than supreme authority over the minds as well as the affections of men. Hence comes the language of Jehovah, clear, emphatic, imperative, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind."

We will now pass from the consideration of the foregoing question to the second phase of our subject, viz:—

TRUTH THE ONLY SAFE GROUND OF
CHRISTIAN UNION.

While it is cheering to behold the efforts put forth by the various Christian bodies for the harmonious adjustment of opposing religious systems; yet men's views as to what should constitute a satisfactory basis of agreement are many and diverse. All agree to take the Bible mainly as their guide; but many insist upon interpreting it in the light of expediency, of the times and circumstances, thus coolly arrogating to themselves the right of judging what part of God's Word they will obey and what part they will not, and exalting human wisdom as superior to the wisdom of God, and in effect declaring the creature

wiser than the Creator. Many professing Christians of learning and influence, for the purpose of bringing the Christian world into more amicable relationship, advocate the conceding of certain principles of truth which they claim to be non-essential. This is a course against which Faith itself strongly protests, and which is evidently the very opposite of teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded. We, as a denomination have not seen our way clear to step upon this broad platform of mutual surrender of principle, in order to accommodate our brethren of opposite views. Not that we love them less, but we love the truth more. Such a basis, in our estimation is exceedingly questionable. It is dishonoring to our King, to whom we have sworn allegiance. It is a presumptuous and unwarrantable mode of dealing with the revealed will of God. Further, we believe we have no right to concede what does not belong to us. This truth belongs to God and we have yet to learn that he has delegated the power to man to invalidate its authority. Men may concede what legitimately belongs to themselves, but when they effect liberality in matters exclusively belonging to another, their conduct reaches a point where it is open to criticism. To yield a particle of truth is extremely hazardous. It betrays great folly and weakness, because we can find no appropriate substitute. Hence a "union" bought at the expense of truth is obtained at too great a price. It is unsatisfactory and short-lived. Christian bodies who have united on this basis, betray every symptom of internal weakness. The results are far from commensurate with the great sacrifice made. The foundation is treacherous; it is not solid rock; it is shifting sand; we stand as guardians of the truth; we recognize no scheme, accept no overture, entertain no project that aims at union on any other basis than the Word of God. To this we cling. Let those who will unite on other bases. We will not interfere. But when they offer us a seat at their table our reply must be "First give evidence of your faith by practical obedience to the commands of Christ," then we will unite with you, until then we stand aloof. A single precept of Christ's is dearer to us than all the fallacious schemes of Christian Union in the world.

But the question may be submitted, "Can we not unite from motives of charity?" Our brethren of opposite opinions are surely sincere. Well, we will suppose their sincerity to be genuine, although the supposition itself is fraught with charity; for we cannot escape observing that their principles and practices are extremely divergent. For instance, all Pedobaptist authorities of any note concede that Christian Baptism is the immersion of believers in water; and yet a large proportion of them practise sprinkling exclusively instead. However, the fact that a body of Christians is sincere in what they do believe, falls far short of affording a sufficient reason for uniting with them. To believe the facts of the gospel is good, but to cheerfully comply with all its requirements as well is infinitely better. The Roman Catholic church is doubtless sincere in what she believes. She holds much that is scriptural, yet we dare not unite with her because she "teaches for doctrines the commandments of men."

We have been looked upon as intolerant and exclusive because we do not exercise "charity" toward other denominations. Such charity means simply sinking our own conscientious convictions in order to unite in friendly relationship with every *ism* and *ology* which presents itself. We have not so learned Christ. Charity, in our estimation, is not so accommodating a principle as men would have us believe. The greatest charity is that which tells the greatest amount of truth. Christ himself, the very incarnation of charity, was most positive and exclusive in his doctrines. In his last commission to his disciples he declares that: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,

he that believeth not shall be damned. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, writes: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached let him be accursed. Even the gentle and loving John uses language most polemic: "He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Though we do not feel disposed to embrace any scheme of union propounded by men, yet we work and pray for, and will gladly hail the consummation of that union for which our Lord so fervently prayed, "That they ALL may be one." We want a union with Christ in it, a union, the fundamental principle of which will be a regenerate church membership. The kingdom of Christ is spiritual. Christ is its life. As a centre is to the radii of a circle, so is Christ to christianity. The nearer Christians approach the great centre the nearer they approach each other.—Systems which harmonize with the mind of Christ harmonize with one another. The proposition is as self-evident in moral as in mathematical science, "that two things which are equal to one and the same thing are themselves equal."

Though we give utterance to such thoughts as the foregoing in view of the divisions existing among Christians; yet we look forward hopefully to the coming time when greater harmony of mind and affection will pervade the Christian world; when the blood-bought soldiers of Christ shall no more be subjects of discord and strife, but, impelled by the mighty principle of love, will march forward to greater conquests, and more glorious achievements, obedient to the marshalling behest of King Jesus. When the church will put on her garments of strength and salvation; her adornment will be the simplicity of truth and the beauty of holiness; she will look forth, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners. This was the prospect that gladdened the prophet's soul, as he exclaimed: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Then again shall it be as it was in the days gone by, when no schism disorganized the Christian forces. "One Lord, one faith and one baptism."

United Prayer.

For ten long years Mrs. H. prayed for her infidel husband. She knew that the Lord heard, and that He was "faithful that had promised," but as yet the answer did not come. The thoughts of her kind, indulgent companion seemed as far from her as when, in the joy of her new-found hope, she had told him how "God so loved," and asked him to join her in a life of loving service. Yet the Lord was leading her gently that she might know and do his will.

One evening at the church prayer-meeting her heart was more than usually burdened, and near the close of the service, she rose timidly and said: "For many long years, dear friends, I have longed to ask you to help me pray. It is not customary with us for ladies to speak in the meeting, and I have feared to be intrusive, but I can forbear no longer. Will you pray for my husband?"

Every heart was touched. A good brother immediately led in prayer, then another, and another took up the petition. Mr. H. was well known and much loved in the community, and they poured out their hearts before the Lord, pleading, "as one pleadeth for a friend." Last of all a colored brother led in prayer, and in humble confidence seemed to enter into the very presence of Jehovah.

Just after Mrs. H. had made her request, her husband, as was his custom, came to the church to accompany her home. Finding that the service had not yet closed, he entered, unobserved, and took a seat near the door.

"Tell me, wife," he said, as they were leaving the vestibule, "who was

the gentleman they were praying for just now?"

"He is the husband of one of the sisters of the church," replied Mrs. H.

"Wife," he said again, as they ascended the steps at home, "who was it they were praying for?"

"The husband of one of the sisters, Charles."

"Well, wife," he replied, "that man will certainly be converted: I never heard such prayers before."

Again, as they were preparing for the night, he remarked, "Those were wonderful prayers, wife. Can you tell me the gentleman's name?"

"He was the husband of one of the ladies present," replied Mrs. H., and then retired to her closet for prayer and praise.

At midnight she heard her husband's voice again. "Wife, wife, God heard those prayers; I cannot sleep wife. Will you pray for me? Can the Lord show mercy to me, wife?"

There was joy in the presence of the angels that night. When the faithful pastor called the next morning he found Mr. H. "praising and blessing God."

Blessed words of Jesus, "when two of you shall agree, touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done of my Father."—*Adv. and Guardian.*

Buying Elephants.

It is stated that the Baptist ministers of New York city are making efforts to raise sufficient money to buy an elephant for the use of their missionaries in India. That is a commendable enterprise. The fortunate elephant that gets the honors of missionary service will do more good than the poor stolen beasts that trudge through our land in the itinerant circus shows. Elephants can do service, too.

But we have known cases of investment in a certain kind of unwieldy elephants that did not pay. There are individuals, and corporations, and families, and congregations, who have elephants on their hands, and know not what to do with them.

The vain and ambitious congregation that drove off a plain and faithful pastor, and "bought" a dashing, brilliant, sky-rocket preacher, to tickle the ears of the world and to "draw," are waking up to the fact that they have an elephant on their hands, and are not able to feed or house the animal.

The "leading men" of the small church, who are determined to have as fine a place to worship in as their aristocratic and wealthy neighbors, and who now sit in cushioned pews with a fifty-thousand debt, which they are not able to bear, find that they have an elephant on their hands that proves extremely inconvenient and troublesome. Big church, and nobody to fill it. Big debt and nobody to pay it. Big conceit, and nothing to feed it. Elephant!

It is fashionable to have a costly piano in the parlor. A shoddy aristocrat buys one. There the big awkward thing stands, as if hesitating whether to go or stay. It is kept nicely covered from sight. It is dusted and cleaned regularly. But nobody knows what to do with it. Nobody can play on its shining keys. It is a huge—elephant.

A young man whose idea in life has been formed from milk-and-water novels, thinks it is time to marry. He must find an elegant lady of leisure. He finds one,—for they are very plenty! He soon makes the discovery that he got more ribbons, and silks and jewelry, and sentimentalism than anything else. His wife can't keep house, and he can't hire help. She don't know how to manage except his own conceit. Elephant!

Don't buy elephants except for mission-work or for a menagerie!—*Evangelical Messenger.*

Rotation of crops—raising nothing one year and letting it run to weed next.

Three things are necessary in running a Sunday-school: "Grace, Grit and Greenbacks."