

The Christian Messenger.
Halifax, N. S., December 10, 1884.

"BAPTIST UNION."

The following is from the *Christian Visitor* of last week:—

BAPTIST UNION.

The *Intelligencer* in referring to our remarks last week about union said substantially, "We are ready to enter upon the search for a fair and honorable Scripture basis of union nor do we think it need be a very difficult matter to find it."

In the present article we wish to present a few thoughts on this subject, which are merely suggestive, and such as may draw out from the friends of the union some friendly criticism, enforcement, or modification that may result in the end in some practical result being secured.

1. The Free Christian Baptist body in this Province and the Baptist body are essentially one people, and in many instances it is simply a matter of which of the early fathers in the two denominations first visited a given locality, that determines whether the people in that section are Baptists or F. C. Baptists. In both denominations there are members not a few who hold Calvinistic and Armenian views. The difference is not essentially one of doctrine although perhaps the majority of one denomination is what is termed Calvinistic, and the other Armenian. It came out in the Conference on this subject recently had at Fredericton, that in an intelligent community the people said when they wanted to hear a Calvinistic sermon they went to the F. C. church, and when they wished to hear an Armenian sermon they went to the Baptist church. The fact cannot be disguised that there are moderate Calvinists among the ministry and people of the F. C. Baptists, and there are quite pronounced Armenian ministers and members in the Baptist body. We believe no great difficulty would be encountered in formulating a short, compact doctrinal statement to which the vast majority of both bodies could give a general assent.

2. The difficulty that most feel lies in another direction and has reference to church practice. In order to meet this difficulty we should begin at the beginning. How do F. C. Baptists and Baptists begin christian work and carry it on in the planting of churches? Both denominations send out their ministers to a new settlement; these ministers, preach that men should repent of sin, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then be baptized on a profession of faith. When a sufficient number of baptized converts have been made they are organized with the sanction of sister churches, into a church, and then at the first fitting opportunity the Lord's Supper is observed. In all this work up to this point there is no difference between the usage of the two bodies. The difference obtains in the subsequent history of the churches thus planted. The F. C. Baptist as to the supper gives what is called an open invitation. The Baptists give either no invitation at all, or one to "baptized believers walking in the fellowship of the gospel," or one to "members of sister churches of the same faith and order in good standing with their respective churches." We suppose that each church, whether it gives an open or close invitation, or none at all does so in harmony with what it believes to be either good scripture inference, or consistent logical deduction from scripture teaching. As a fact the scriptures are silent to all invitations either open or close. A church which gives no invitation cannot be confronted with any dogmatic statement of Scripture which is violating in merely observing the ordinance without anything more than the mere announcement of the fact. Evidently then there is some reasonable ground for the liberty which churches take in this matter to manage the ordinance as they do, so long as no direct teaching of scripture on the subject is violated.

3. One of the bottom planks in Baptist belief is soul liberty for the individual, and liberty of the church to manage its affairs independent of all outside coercion save the authority of Jesus and his Word. Then, why on this matter of the observance of the Lord's Supper, not give in the Union each church the right to say what shall be its practice. It will take it whether it be conceded or not. In the statement of faith or creed let it be stated that we believe the gospel is to be preached, that men are to repent, believe, be baptized, be organized into churches, and observe the Lord's Supper.

4. As to questions of church policy, so long as the independence of the churches is conserved it would be well to take into the Union all the best things of both denominations. To this there could be no reasonable objection as we conceive.

5. We ask now, whether in harmony with these views it is not possible for both denominations to come together, giving a hearty assent to a brief evangelical creed, or statement of faith and practice, in which the liberties of the churches will not be stridged, and the consciences of members will not be violated, and the independent status of the churches will remain, working out the best results in a polity that shall combine the best features of the two bodies as at present organized. We have merely outlined what might be a possible basis, with a view to friendly comment. Any body can tear down and pick to pieces. The criticism of such we don't invite, but all who pray that we may be one, are asked to give us in the spirit of the Master, who prayed for christian unity, their views to promote the happy realization of an object that lies near the hearts of many of the best men in both denominations.

WHITHER DO WE DRIFT?

We cannot say that we were much

surprised to see the above editorial in the columns of our much esteemed brother journal, the *Christian Visitor*, for we knew that this was to be the policy of the *Visitor* before we withdrew from it.

The union referred to between the F. C. Baptists and the Baptists, has from the first deeply interested us; and we have heartily rejoiced over every ground of hope that it would be finally successful. The F. C. Baptists have given undoubted proof that they have confidence in their Baptist brethren. No other interpretation can be put upon their entering into union with the Baptists in founding the Seminary in St. John. Having gone thus far in the matter of identifying themselves with the Baptists, it is all important that nothing should be said or done to cause them to recede. Retreating would be attended with great loss on both sides. It is just as evident that the union, in the nature of things, cannot remain at its present stage. It must go further. All reflecting minds must see this; and it certainly involves grave as well as grand possibilities.

Here we may say that our heart's desire and prayer to God is, that all the Baptists of these Provinces may see eye to eye and be perfectly joined together in one judgment. If they can become one in judgment and organization, by the blessing of the Head of the Church, they can do a great work for God both at home and abroad. But should a union in name alone be effected, better far that the two bodies should remain distinct, and endeavour to accomplish their respective missions on these lines.

We further say that it is far safer to postpone any attempt at union than to propose, as our beloved neighbour, the *Christian Visitor*, has virtually done, the entire destruction of our solid, old platform, on which at present between two and three millions of Baptists on this continent stand; and from which, as a basis of operations, they are doing a marvellous work for Christ in the world.

A glance at Baptist History leads us to this conclusion. Well nigh a century ago the Baptists of the United States, through ordeals of discussion, made thorough by the talent, the learning and the leisure of those who led in it, found their way to the ground now occupied. On these principles and policy both North and South stood till about twelve years ago. We write from memory. At that time a number of men of ability and learning, and a few churches were carried from their moorings by a succession of waves of so-called union and liberalism. This raised the question anew. To use the words of Dr. Wheaton Smith, then of Philadelphia, and now of Montreal, "The war raged all along the lines." The world knows the result. Not a plank was taken from the old platform, not a letter was changed in the old policy. The eloquent and strong men who struck out on the so-called liberal course have either gone into the Pedobaptist ranks or in some other way have disappeared. Not one of them to-day has any power to influence the public mind of the great Baptist body of the United States on any new question. Here certainly is a lesson for us. The denomination in the Republic has preceded us. They are our seniors. By them a way has been blazed through the forest for Canadian Baptists.

Before knocking our creed to pieces, and before throwing away our church polity, we would do well to look back upon our own history. The time was in these Provinces when all acquainted with our history know that we were in doctrine and church polity thoroughly mixed. Baptists and Pedobaptists, Calvinists and Armenians and Communionists, consistent and inconsistent, were found in the same churches. This hostility of doctrine and church polity found, after wearisome and heated ventilation of all beliefs and notions, a solution in the present state of things. Guided by the experience of their brethren in the New England States, our fathers studied the Bible and reached the conclusion that fidelity to truth and consistency required of them a plain declaration of FAITH and PRACTICE. This was made. All who could unite on this platform came together in local churches and in Associations. All who could not, went other ways;

some to the Congregationalists and some into new organizations. A few remain who recollect the visit of the Rev. Thomas Ainsley to Yarmouth, and its results. Our fathers gave this ground thorough examination, and committed to us a most sacred trust! Now before we shall even suggest that these old foundations shall be torn down, we shall need to see reasons for so doing, not even the shadow of which has yet appeared.

WHAT IS THE CONSISTENT COURSE IN MOVEMENTS FOR UNION?

If care is not taken we shall find ourselves acting upon the principles of Synodical government! Our Associations are coming to be regarded as meetings by delegation of the churches of which they are composed. Sentiment in regard to the Convention drifts in the same direction. The way is now open for the discussion and settlement of the question of union with our F. C. Baptist brethren in these assemblies. Here we should pause—here we should look to our foundations. We are not now occupying ground obtained by chance. If ever a body examined every superficial and solid inch of its standing ground the Baptists certainly have done it. If so, and it cannot be doubted, then it should not be necessary to seek a way for the admission of another body of Christians to our fellowship. Our organization ought to provide a way so plain that no question need be asked. We think it does this. Indeed this has been recognized in the admission of the Colored Baptist Association to our Convention. That body asked for admission. They gave proof that they had adopted the faith and practice of the Baptist Associations and churches represented in our Convention. That is one way open and plain in our ecclesiastical polity by which another body can unite with us.

Our constitution provides still another way. If it is not a denomination, but a church that wishes to effect a union, then let that church apply to the Baptist Association on the geographical territory of which it resides for admission. So soon as this Association is convinced that the Church in question has adopted the articles of faith and practice on which the Association has come together, then it will be admitted.

Here are the two ways—ways open and plain—for our dearly beloved F. C. B. brethren of these provinces. If they wish to still hold together in their Associations, then let them first try the adoption of our Articles of Faith and Practice. If they can do this as Associations, then a simple application to the Convention will admit them. They will still, in this way, preserve their existence as Associations. If, as Associations, (we believe they call their organizations Conferences, the name does not matter) they do not wish to become united with the Baptists, then as individual churches they can adopt our articles and apply for admission to the Baptist Associations in whose territory they may live. As we have understood the Baptist faith and church polity, these are the provisions, existing in the nature of our structure, as a denomination, whereby the question of union is provided for.

The proposals made by our esteemed contemporary, the *Christian Visitor*, strike us as revolutionary in a radical sense. If we, at this day, propose to cast away our articles of faith, and unite with another denomination in the formation of new ones, that says, as plain as language can say it, that our body has become dissatisfied with its belief and wants to unite with another body in forming a new creed. This is the first intimation that we have had of the existence of such a state of things.

A suggestion that the practice of our churches on the communion question should be liberalized, so that each church may in practice adopt any view of the question, is simply a proposal to put that matter outside of the creed of the Baptist body, as a matter involving nothing of moment,—nothing of positive belief.

Evidently we have come to a stage in this question of union with our brethren, when haste should be made slowly, and in patience and love.

Our devout prayer is that the Holy Spirit of God will guide both the Baptists and F. C. Baptists in this important movement; and that the love and

harmony of the two bodies may be preserved, whatever may be the issue of this question.

We need not assure our contemporary that it is only a calm and affectionate sense of duty which leads us to decline endorsing the line of policy indicated in the editorial re-published in our columns to-day.

EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

In the Fiftieth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, recently issued, the number of elementary schools reported as receiving grants, less than a year ago, was 7,752. The number of pupils on the registers were 666,115, and the average daily attendance was 467,704,—a decrease of 1,488 as compared with the previous year. The Irish teachers are strongly in favor of compulsory attendance, but many persons of authority and influence are determined on giving proposals of the kind unending opposition.

The religious difficulty has given considerable trouble. Still, the 'conscience clauses' work exceedingly well.

The establishment of Denominational Training Colleges is certain to give a great impetus to the work of education. Our readers may not be aware that in Ireland, from the introduction of the system of national education in 1832 up to September, 1883, there was but one Training College, which was an exclusively state supported institution. In March, 1883, Mr. Trevelyan, Chief Secretary for Ireland, pointed out to the Commissioners of education, that of the 7,097 Roman Catholic teachers, only 2,142, or some 27 per cent., were trained. The Commissioners were requested to turn their attention to the establishment of training colleges, based on the English system. At present there are three new training colleges in working order, two under the management of Cardinal McCabe, and one in connection with the Episcopal Church.

Special subjects are not receiving much attention in the schools of Ireland, and the teaching of Irish, of which we hear so much now and then, is an evident failure. Forty pupils, of whom twenty-five passed, were presented for examination in the vernacular, during the year. Even in Ireland the dreams of visionaries have had, in this instance, to give place to the cool logic of practical reality.

The Irish teachers have something to boast in the pension scheme which their persistent and well-directed efforts have secured for them. By the investment of the £1,300,000 obtained for this purpose out of the funds of the late disestablished church, there is a clear annual income of £39,000. This is supplemented by the very moderate stoppages from the salaries of teachers, and by the income arising from the investment of unappropriated balances. The gross yearly sum available for superannuation is about £50,000. The total amount expended in the payment of pensions and retiring allowances in 1883 was less than £20,000.

OUR BENEVOLENT FUNDS.

Four months of the Convention year have passed. Our missionary operations and the work of our educational institutions are being carried forward by the several Boards in full reliance upon the timely co-operation of all the churches. The members of the Finance Committee resident in the three provinces have not, we understand, thus far received contributions sufficient to meet the current expenditures. December is the month in which people are accustomed to ascertain and settle outstanding liabilities, if such exist. Let every one enquire also whether his obligations have been duly discharged in respect of our benevolent funds. The undertakings we have in hand as a denomination are of untold importance. Each of them are capable of development, and our work will not have been satisfactorily performed unless these enterprises attain a first place in our affection and sympathies, and a commanding and ever growing importance in our gifts and prayers. If any church has not yet duly provided for the collection and forwarding of means for the support of the objects of the Con-

vention, we trust the pastor or deacons or clerk of such church will not longer delay the adoption of all necessary measures in this behalf. Systematic effort will give surprising results. There are many Christians who fail to deny themselves in order that they may give, simply because stimulating objects for the exercise of their benevolence are not placed before them. It should never be forgotten that those churches which are not trained to give of their substance for the work of the Lord, not only in their own midst but also abroad, are failing almost entirely in the mission of grace to which they have been called of God. Giving not only promotes the welfare of others, but blesses ourselves.

We have spoken more particularly of churches; let us add a few words respecting individuals. December is a time when one thinks of tokens of affectionate remembrance for one's friends. Are there not individuals among us, many of them, whose means will permit them to remember at this time one or all of our great benevolent objects, with a special donation? We know that a note of enquiry of the Secretary of the Home-Mission Board, or of the Foreign Mission Board, or of the Treasurer of Acadia College, or of some of the Professors, would at once result in placing before such enquirer objects of surpassing interest as worthy of his benevolence. Try it, dear reader, and find anew how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. Let every department of our work be remembered specially in our Christmas giving.

A LETTER from Miss Wright under date London, Nov. 21st, states that she and Miss Gray were expecting to leave that city on the following day for Birkenhead—Liverpool—whence the steamer "Clan Matheson"—the same line as that in which Rev. I. C. Archibald went—would depart in the evening. By this time they have probably passed through the Red Sea and are crossing the Arabian Sea. They ask to be remembered in the prayers of the sisters in their W. M. A. Society meetings.

REPRESSION OR CULTURE?—It is quite possible for an earnest minister to assume so many duties and labors in connection with the church over which he presides, that he fails to develop the energies and gifts of the members. The secret of church life is found in the wise employment of the varied talents of its members. All may not be able to pray or speak to the edification of others, but there are modes of activity adapted to stimulate and call forth the powers of each member. Whoever can most successfully set his people to do the Lord's work, will at the same time accomplish the most for their growth in the divine life. Ministerial activity may take on a form which results in the repression, rather than the culture of the gifts of the members of the church. It is often easier to do work oneself than to devise ways and means by which others may do it, but the latter may be necessary in order to secure the end in view.

I am sorry to learn that our brother, Rev. David Freeman, has been bereaved of his excellent wife, on whose account he had just removed to Florida for the winter. Many of the friends in Halifax, where he was the pastor of the Granville Street Baptist Church when they were married, have ever since held both in the highest esteem, and will deeply sympathize with the sorrowing family. S. SELDEN.

THE REV. FRANCIS BEATTIE has resigned his pastoral charge of the Aylesford Church. Any one of our vacant churches would do well to correspond with brother Beattie. Our brother is a most energetic and successful minister of the Gospel.

THE REV. MR. LAMSON, who has kindly given us an original article, wrote the obituary notice of Dr. D. Banks McKenzie. Mr. Lamson says one of his members when urged to take a religious paper, said he preferred the *Christian Messenger*, and Mr. Lamson has generously volunteered to act as agent among Nova Scotians, who have such preference. We often get magnanimous expressions from brethren in the New England States. This from our brother is of that kind.

We tender Bro. Freeman, his children and the relations of Sister Freeman, our heartfelt sympathy in their sore bereavement. All the comfort the gospel has to give, is offered to them. Mrs. Freeman was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. The thousands who enjoyed her acquaintance knew her to be amiable, sincere and saintly. She was the daughter of the late Deacon Parker, of Berwick, and sister of the Rev. D. O. Parker. She is now at rest with her Saviour, and has met those dear parents whose abundant hospitality and Christian friendship so many hundreds enjoyed here on earth.

Brother Freeman has promised us an extended obituary notice which thousands will read with the deepest interest.

News from the Churches.

NOTES FROM JEDDORE.—We had a visit from Bro. A. Whitman last Sabbath, who in the morning preached to a large and interested congregation.

The carpenters are at work on the inside of the new church on West side, and expect to finish it in a few weeks.

The brethren at Head Jeddore intend making some repairs and addition to the outside of their church, the inside of which was finished two years ago.

The frame and some other material for the new church to be erected on East side has been landed near the site this week. Work will be commenced on the foundation at once. The intention is to have the building erected and covered in next year. The brethren intend to move along, and, if possible, by earnest effort, close economy, and friendly aid, pay as they go.

When the East side church is finished, which we hope will be in two years, or early in 1887, Jeddore will have three strong, well built comfortable churches. But our brethren in more wealthy communities can know nothing of the strenuous effort our hard-working fishermen have to, and do, put forth to accomplish this work for God and his cause. Talk of giving "our tenth!" If friends wish to know that more than that can be done, let them come to Jeddore and see as I have during the past four years, what is cheerfully given for minister's support, supply, new churches, repairs, grave yards, benevolent objects, outside calls, current expenses, and for Sabbath schools.

Welcome contributions in answer to the circulars sent out from West side have been received. Many thanks kind friends, continue!

The help that friends of economy and effort may be pleased to give to the East side brethren can be addressed to Capt. Wm. Arnold, Lower East Jeddore, and will be thankfully received, and duly acknowledged. The committee would say, "Our number is small. We are doing all we can to help ourselves. We will be as economical as possible. Remember us kindly, and God the giver of all good will reward you."

The brethren at Head Jeddore we are glad to say, do their own work, pay their own bills, and kindly help their neighbors.

Yours,
H. E. S. MAIDER.
Jeddore, Dec. 3, 1884.

LOWER ECONOMY.—Rev. W. R. Waters writes Dec. 1, 1884.—I am glad to tell you that the brethren of the two churches here have received me with warm hearts. The unanimous call from them I have accepted and we are now looking for a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The harvest truly is great, the field is wide and, under the Divine blessing, a great work is possible.

I feel deep interest in the work the Master has given me to do and am looking forward with great hope for accessions to the church.

ONSLOW.—After the Sabbath School Convention was held at Belmont four weeks ago Rev. P. S. McGregor remained and assisted the pastor and other active workers in some special meetings. The truth was presented powerfully by our brethren, and God blessed it to the Salvation of souls. Yesterday 13 men and women were baptized into the fellowship of the Onslow Baptist Church by the pastor. It was the first time the ordinance had been administered in that community by the