

TERMS AND NOTICES.

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Religious Intelligencer.

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Editorial.

—Dr. Hanson, the widely-known Baptist preacher, is not satisfied that the church is being and doing all that it ought. He thinks there is, especially, a great lack of religious enthusiasm. He says, "Religion must not be kept in a cistern. Water that's kept in a cistern soon gets covered with green slime, in which only croakers can live. It is running water only that is alive." Which is another way of saying that the church whose desires and efforts terminate upon itself, will soon terminate its own existence.

—An English Methodist paper, *The Methodist Weekly*, after a career of three years, has ceased to be. The field was fully occupied when it came into existence; there was no room for it. *Christendom*, a Chicago publication, which was intended to show all the other religious papers what a paper should be, has been merged with another paper. It lived only four months. The men who think they know just how to make religious papers, and at very small cost, soon discover that more work and money are required than they dreamed necessary.

—In an ordination charge to a group of young ministers, Bishop Walden said some wise words about pastoral work—urging that when church members go wrong they must be visited and remonstrated with and counselled and encouraged in their homes, and not from the pulpit. Don't, he said, attempt to do your pastoral work in the public assembly. The preacher has no right to scold any member of his church from the pulpit. It is not preaching, it is not the proper way to do pastoral work, and it will not do anybody any good. There is nothing that will make a preacher lose his power more quickly than scolding his people.

—Pastors retiring from fields may help their successors very much; and they may hinder them quite as much.

It is not a wholly unknown thing for a pastor to feel that he is not having just as fair a chance with his new charge as he should have. He is more likely to have this feeling if his predecessor returns frequently or corresponds with members of the church he has left. Sometimes an ex-pastor may try to keep a hold on those whom he has left. He should not do so. Instead, he should not only pass the people and the work over to his successor, but should endeavour to establish him in the love of the people. Heart-burnings have been caused by a lack of understanding between the two men who precede and succeed each other as pastors. Above all men, Christian ministers should be helpers of each other.

THE CONFERENCE.

Before another issue of the INTELLIGENCER has reached its readers the 71st annual Conference of the Free Baptists of New Brunswick will have become part of the history of that body. We hope there will be a full attendance of members—both ministers and lay delegates, and that every member will be able to remain to the close, doing his full share of the work. Conference work should be done carefully. The anxiety of members to get away often prevents as careful consideration of questions as they require. It is not too much to expect that brethren who accept appointment as delegates should be willing to spend all the time necessary for careful and thorough dealing with all matters that affect the life of the body and the prosperity of its work.

While a few scores meet in Conference, the many thousands in the churches represented are deeply concerned about the doings of the Conference, and will await with interest the reports of the session. These all may help the Conference—help it more than they know, by their prayers for the Divine guidance and strength. Let us hope that in every church and home there will be constant prayer that the will of the Lord, touching all the things with which they have to deal, may be clear to the members of Conference, and that only those things be done that will most promote the kingdom of Christ.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS.

The spirit of denominational union is manifest in every part of Christendom. Everywhere denominations that are nearly alike in doctrine and polity are coming together. This union tendency, so general and so strong, is impressive. It is surely of God. The experience of those bodies which have united has demonstrated the wisdom of their union. They have avoided waste of men and means, they have developed unthought-of strength, the spirit of Christian aggressiveness has greatly increased in them, they have addressed themselves to the work of the Lord with greater courage and confidence, they have steadily enlarged their borders, and their success in every respect has been much larger than was possible in their divided state. God has clearly set the seal of His approval upon their union. What has been done by other branches of the

Church of God with manifest Divine approval cannot but be suggestive to the Baptist bodies which have so much in common, and so few and unimportant differences.

One of the great hindrances to the growth of Christ's kingdom is the division of the church, and the consequent waste of Christian forces. There are places where the number of churches is a positive evil. Their whole strength is taxed in a struggle for existence, and the life they manage to maintain is, at most, a poor and unfruitful one. Often the competition of churches is so keen that unpleasant frictions occur, making their influence in their communities everything but Christian. And these unpleasantnesses are more likely to be caused by the competitions of churches that are nearly alike, than of those which differ widely.

Divisions are the reproach, as they are the weakness, of the evangelical church. In the movement, now so general, for the removal of unnecessary lines of division the Divine purposes seem to be getting the truer expression so long desired. Christians are more and more recognizing their common love to Christ, and their common faith in Him. And these are a strong bond of union—a union which makes differing of opinions on important questions—things which are matters of judgment rather than of principle, appear the trivial things they really are.

Doctrinal differences that loomed very large a few years ago, have ceased to be. Such differences as does exist are hardly of sufficient importance to justify divisions that weaken Christian influence, and hinder the progress of Christ's kingdom. Christians are not less concerned to maintain sound doctrine, but in the fuller light of today they have a better understanding of truth, and see more eye to eye than formerly. And in the riper love of today they better understand each other, and are able to live and labour in harmony.

Is God calling us as a denomination to larger work? Surely He is. How to do that larger work is a question we must consider. If it can be better done through the agencies of the present denominational organization, and in the field possible to be occupied by it, the question of how to do it is answered. If it can be better done by a union of Christian forces—the creation of a new body composed of two or more denominations, such union would certainly seem to be the way of God's will.

Helps to answer the question may be found in a review of denominational history, in an examination of the work now being carried on, in a look at the field occupied and at that which should be occupied, and in a study of the experiences of those denominations which have united.

For the little time that is left to some of us we might, perhaps, prefer that everything remain as at present. Such feeling is natural and not improper. But personal preference does not shut out

thought of others, our successors—coming ministers and church members. And then we have to decide how may provide for them the largest—best opportunities for Christian service.

The union of two denominations is not an acknowledgment that the mission of either is ended. It is, rather, a declaration that, because of changed conditions and better mutual understanding, they can as well accomplish their respective missions together as separately, and that by the combination of their forces they can better prosecute their one great work—the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

That in the working out of the union problem there would be some difficulties no one will deny. But there are none that cannot be dealt with and adjusted by Christian good sense. The experience of the denominations that have effected organic union proves this.

Union cannot be brought about by manoeuvring. To manoeuvre, either for or against it, would have only harmful effect. The attitude of both advocates and opponents of union should be thoroughly Christian, and what they say or do should be perfectly open and brotherly.

Nor can the matter be hurried. To pay attention to providential indications, and to move only so fast as the way is made clear, is our duty. Beyond that no one should desire to go.

Think about it. Think carefully. Think thoroughly. Look at it from every point of view. Do not let personal preferences, nor local conditions, have too much weight. Look at it broadly. Think of it as it may affect the kingdom of Christ. Think of it prayerfully.

Above everything, pray. We have an abounding belief in God as the director and ruler of His people when they seek unto Him. This matter concerns His Kingdom in the world. We may safely commit the subject to Him, and pray that His will be done. And while we pray, we must put ourselves into God's hands for guidance. When we give ourselves to His ordering, He brings the right things to pass in us and by us. He defeats plans that are not wise; He removes obstacles from the way of His purposes. Let us all pray: "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done."

PARLIAMENTARY GROC-SHOP. — The Charlottetown *Guardian* calls attention to the fact—an indisputable fact, it seems—that the bar in the Parliament Building at Ottawa is open day and night all the week, Sundays included. This is astonishing. It is surely a case for pressure from the temperance societies, and from every public spirited and upright citizen. The laws of the country and the law of God ought not to be held in abeyance even for the convenience of the Parliament of Canada.—*Presbyterian Witness*.