

TERMS AND NOTICES.

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**Religious Intelligencer.**

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Rev. Joseph McLeod, D. D., - - Editor.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 1904.

—The minister who is not so moved by the abominable iniquities of the liquor traffic that he is its avowed and active enemy, has mistaken his calling.

—The Moderator of Conference, Rev. Abram Perry, and Revs. D. Long and Jos. McLeod, who, as members of the Conference Committee on Union, were present at the Baptist Convention, were very cordially received.

—The weakness of many professing Christians is not due so much to doing positively wrong things, as to leaving undone the right things to which by their relationship to Christ they are called. Neglect of active Christian service is fatal to Christian life.

—This is for those who remain out of the church because of the alleged imperfections of some church members: "It is strange that some people prefer to remain with a few spears of wheat in a field of tares, rather than to have the company of a few tares in a field of wheat."

—It has been arranged to have the first joint meeting of the committees of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches in Toronto, Nov. 10th. The separate committee of each body will have a meeting earlier. The work of these committees will be watched with eager interest by all Christians in Canada.

—The triennial session of the Free Baptist General Conference of the United States will be held at Hillsdale, Michigan, beginning on Tuesday of next week. There will, doubtless, be representatives present from all parts of the field occupied by our brethren. Among the questions likely to receive consideration is that of Baptist union. In the west, especially, there is apparently a growing feeling favorable to such union. We trust our brethren may have a good meeting in every respect, and the divine guidance and blessing may be given them in fullness.

—The Congregational Union in England is showing a marked tendency towards a more effective government by centralization. It is proposed to establish a General Assembly with authority to deal with many matters hitherto left entirely to the individual churches, or not done at all. Congregationalists have been great sticklers for the unrestrained liberty of the individual church; and their almost slavish adherence to the theory of church independence has cost them heavily in many ways. Much that has been left to the action of the individual church can be better done by collective action, properly directed. Baptists of all branches are, also, learning that a degree of centralization of authority is necessary to the best service in the larger enterprises demanded of the Christian Church.

—A writer in the *British Weekly* discusses the question whether confession of sin should be made to man. He quotes Spurgeon, than whom few have breathed so deeply as he the air of the New Testament. Mr. Spurgeon's counsel is to make the confession to man general, "I am a sinner;" and the confession to God particular and entire. In the case where the innocent are suffering from an unjust charge, the guilty should plainly confess and relieve the sufferer. Where this is not the case no good can come of confession to man, and often a vast amount of evil. There is always need of confession to God, and of reparation and restoration to man when that can be made. Confession to man cannot expiate, nor blot out the past, nor give peace to the conscience. But there is a return to God, and the laying down before him the whole burden. And to man there is the living a humble, faithful and loving life.

—The census reports continue to declare that there are no Free Baptists in the town of Marysville, N. B. Early in 1903 the attention of the Census Commissioner was directed to the gross error in his announcement concerning our people in that town. The enumerator there had done his work faithfully, and the blundering, or worse, was done by Mr. Blue and his Ottawa staff. This, in effect, he acknowledged in a letter to us dated March 21st, 1903, in which he admitted that, at least, 472 of the people of Marysville had been returned by the enumerators as Free Baptists. But for some reason he has failed to correct the error he acknowledged, and the census reports now being distributed contain the same false statement as at first.

And this is not a thing of one town or parish, but of many, causing the injustice to the denomination of an official statement of its numerical strength in this province of several thousands below its real strength. The same thing occurred in Nova Scotia, to the extent, apparently, two thousand or more, but our brethren there said nothing about it.

At least one-third of the counties of New Zealand have already voted in favor of prohibition at local option contests.

BAPTIST UNION.

Another step has been taken towards the long-agitated union of Baptists and Free Baptists. The question came before the Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces last week, and the Convention voted unanimously in favor of the proposed union. We are glad to believe that the action of the Convention has brought the movement to a place where the consummation of the union ought not to be difficult.

The history of the later steps towards union, briefly stated, is this:

At the Baptist Convention last year, having reason to believe that the time was favorable for the re-opening of negotiations for union, appointed a committee "to meet with a like committee to be appointed by the Free Baptist Conference to consider the question of union, upon the basis which was agreed upon by a joint committee of the two bodies, and ratified by the Baptist Convention in 1887."

The Free Baptist Conference, at the session in October, 1903, considered the Basis above referred to, and adopted it with slight modifications in two sections. The Conference also appointed a committee to confer with the committee of the Baptist Convention.

The committees met jointly, holding two all-day meetings in St. John, and gave the whole matter most careful consideration, with much prayer for divine guidance. They were in perfect agreement that the proposed union is most desirable, and they formulated a plan of organization to be submitted to both bodies. The Baptist committee decided to recommend to the Convention the acceptance of the modifications of the Basis of 1887 made by the Free Baptist Conference.

At the Convention last week the committee presented a report, in which was given a full history of the union movement from 1884 to the present, and proposed the adoption of the amendments made by the Conference.

The consideration of the report occupied several hours. Every phase of the subject received attention, and there was a manifest desire to reach ground that would be absolutely fair to both bodies. There was, of course, a diversity of opinions as to the best form of expressing the common ground. In a Convention of over three hundred members that was to be expected. But no one listening to the discussion could fail to be persuaded that our Baptist brethren heartily desired union, and desired it on terms that would be as honorable to our people as to themselves, conserving all the sentiments and interests dear to both. The only question was as to how most wisely and truly to do that. The amendments made by our Conference met much favor. The only objection to them was the possibility of misunderstanding, and the same objection held against the original sections. It was, therefore, decided to abandon both the sections as adopted by the Baptist Convention in 1887, and the amendments of them adopted by our Conference last year. The sections on Perseverance were struck out, and for the sections on Communion the following was substituted:

"The Lord's Supper is an ordinance

of Christ, to be observed by the churches in the manner indicated by our Lord in Matt. 26: 26-27."

The non-acceptance of the sections as amended by our Conference, and the abandonment of their originals adopted by the Baptist Convention in 1887, were because of the belief that a simpler statement than either, less liable to be misunderstood and cause confusion, and affording the truest liberty to all, would be better.

The Convention unanimously voted approval of the plan of organization prepared by the joint committee. The plan recognizes and preserves the essential features in the polity of both bodies. The Convention's approval of it is an additional evidence of the desire to have a union which shall, in all respects, be fair to both uniting bodies.

While listening to the Convention's discussion of the union proposals we wished our Conference and all our people could have been within hearing, and also that they could have seen their brethren of the Baptist body, and felt the spirit of Christian fellowship that was so manifest. Fears entertained by some would surely have been removed, and there would have come to many a deepened sense of both the rightness and the feasibility of the proposed union.

We believe there is now an opportunity—the best that has been, and we cannot conceive of any better likely ever to be—for a union perfectly fair and honorable to both bodies. Neither in the Basis nor in the Plan of Organization is there anything that can be construed as attempted absorption of one by the other. There is no purpose, nor even thought, of such a thing, but of an honest Christian union in which every interest dear to each is properly conserved.

We publish in another column the proposed Plan of Organization. Next week we will print the Basis again.

THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST.

The Annual Meeting of the Disciples of Christ of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia was held at Burt's Corner, York Co., Aug. 18-21. It was a representative gathering, and all the meetings were of much interest. Twenty-three churches reported, leaving only three not heard from. The total membership reported was 1,713; the gain for the year being 105. The value of their church property is \$54,025; the amount expended in local work, \$7,529.21; in home missions, \$953.66; foreign missions, \$479.47. At one meeting during the session \$150.00 was pledged for home missions; and in another meeting over \$100.00 for foreign missions. A resolution concerning Christian union was adopted. It recognized with gratitude the movements in various religious bodies toward union, and said:

We believe that the Bible, which we accept as the inspired Word of God, is the true basis of such a union. To this end we plead for an unqualified return to primitive Christianity, both in faith and practice. We believe all churches and professing Christians should go back of all ecclesiasticisms, denominationalism, human creeds and party names, and take their stand among the apostolic churches and adopt their