

## Messenger and Visitor

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### The Matter of Union

A short article which appears in another column from the pen of Judge Johnston, evidently expects some editorial reply. Alluding to an editorial note which appeared in these columns some weeks ago respecting the desirability of a union between the Baptist and Free Baptist bodies in these Provinces, our correspondent agrees with us that such a union is highly desirable, provided it be a union in spirit as well as in name, and that it can be effected without sacrifice of principle on either side. In this Judge Johnston believes—and no doubt correctly—that he voices the general sentiment of the Baptist body in Nova Scotia. But he is disposed to question whether such a union of the two Baptist bodies could be effected, since he apprehends that union might involve the surrender by one or both of something in creed or practice which they hold to be essential. We are, therefore, asked to say what it is we expect to be sacrificed in order to union.

Now it appears to us that, provided that each body is really desirous of union, there should be no serious difficulty in finding ground upon which they could unite without any sacrifice of principle. The points upon which there is any difference as to creed or practice are very few and are not of a character to interfere with Christian fellowship and active co-operation in Christian work. It is probable that the greater number of Baptists hold to the Calvinistic view of Christian doctrine, and the greater number of Free Baptists to the Arminian view. But the distinction between the two views no longer has the significance for church relationship that it once had. The acceptance of Calvinistic doctrine is not now, if it ever was, a condition of admission into a Baptist church, and we suppose that no Christian would be in any danger of exclusion from the Free Baptist communion because of being a Calvinist.

If any difficulty were experienced in harmonizing the views of the two bodies sufficiently to admit of the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship it would probably occur in defining the relation of baptism to the Lord's Supper. While Free Baptists are in entire agreement with Baptists as to what constitutes New Testament baptism, they dissent from the Baptist view that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to Communion. But their difference on this point, we believe to be more theoretical than practical. It is well known that in many Baptist churches—perhaps the majority—the custom which formerly prevailed of giving an invitation to the Lord's table in terms which by inference excluded all but members of regular Baptist churches has been discontinued. It is not, we suppose, that Baptist ministers are generally less pronounced in their view of the proper relation of the two ordinances, but they consider that if members of other denominations wish to partake of the Lord's Supper in a Baptist church, and if, knowing the Baptist position, they are willing to take the responsibility of doing so, it is no part of the duty of the minister of the church to deny them the privilege. Just what the custom in the F. B. churches in respect to this matter is—whether any invitation is given or not—we do not know, but probably the number of persons of other denominations present at Communion services is not much larger in Free Baptist than in Baptist churches. We should not, therefore, expect that at this point there would be experienced any friction sufficient to disturb seriously the harmony of the united body. The difference of opinion on this one point, and, as we have indicated, it is the only point on which there is any difference which can be regarded as important, ought not, as it seems to us, to stand in the way of a union which for many and obvious reasons is to be desired.

It will be remembered that some twelve years ago this question of union was seriously considered and indeed seemed upon the point of consummation. A joint committee, appointed on the one part by our Maritime Convention and on the other by the F. Baptist Conference of New Brunswick, formulated and adopted a basis of union. This basis was submitted to a large and representative meeting of the two denominations in St. John and was approved by the almost unanimous voice of the meeting. It was subsequently submitted to the Baptist Convention, and with a few amendments, which, however, were not considered to be of a radical character, was adopted. When the basis was presented to the F. B. Conference, it failed to obtain the endorsement of that body, but this, perhaps, was owing more to other reasons than to any difficulty felt respecting the conditions of union. However that may be, it was evident in 1887 that the time for the Union of the two bodies had not yet come. Perhaps it is not sensibly nearer now, and we certainly have no desire to press the matter unduly. But we feel sure that the Baptists of these Provinces are quite as ready for union with their Free Baptist brethren now as they were twelve years ago.

### The War.

The subject of absorbing interest in Canada today, as in the Motherland, is the war in South Africa. The interest of the people of Canada in the war has been greatly quickened by the setting out for the scene of the conflict of a thousand Canadian volunteers. These men represent the flower of Canadian manhood, and great is the enthusiasm which their going has aroused. Nowhere has there been a more enthusiastic demonstration of popular feeling than in St. John. Seldom, if ever, has the heart of this city been so strongly stirred as it was over the departure of about a hundred of our young men who, last Wednesday evening, bade farewell to home and friends that they might go forth to uphold the honor of the nation's flag on far distant battle fields. One cannot think, unmoved, of our brave Canadian youth, the choicest bone and sinew of the land, full of youth's adventurous spirit and of patriotic fervor, going forth from happy homes and the peaceful pursuits of life to the stern and awful business of war and the terrible experiences which war involves. And when one thinks of how much each soldier's going means to dear friends left at home, how many ties are rudely wrenched, how many there are who in the weeks to come, with trembling hands and apprehensive hearts, will scan the news from the scene of conflict, one may be pardoned if he desires to be assured that this war is absolutely just on Britain's part and that the cause of righteousness and the honor of the nation's flag demanded the sacrifice of so much of the best blood of the nation. No doubt the Transvaal Government has pursued a policy most narrow and unreasonable. The Boer position as represented by President Kruger and his government was an absurdity and an impossibility at this stage of the world's history. But still, it is to be asked, was war the only or the best remedy? War is a terrible method of settling difficulties, and the worst of it is that when it has been applied the condition of affairs may not be greatly improved. It is evident that there are a very large number of intelligent Englishmen who believe that, with honor and with great advantage, their nation could have avoided war at this time with the Transvaal. But whatever may be the truth as to that, the time for conciliation is past, the presumptuous folly of the Boer Government has precipitated the conflict and the British nation is practically a unit as to the course to be pursued. Since President Kruger has made the appeal to arms, the question must be settled, so far as it can be, at that terrible tribunal. The war must be prosecuted with the utmost vigor, that, as speedily as possible, its issue may be reached and a foundation secured upon which government may be established in South Africa in accordance with the British principle of full and equal liberty to all classes of citizens.

### Editorial Notes

—The S. S. Sardinian, bearing away from our shores the one thousand brave Canadian lads who have so promptly responded to the nation's call to fight its battles in South Africa, sailed from Quebec on Monday evening. They were given a royal send off, and the old French-Canadian city joined enthusiastically in the patriotic demonstrations. The going of the Canadian regiment is significant of much—for those who go, for the homes they leave, for the country, for the empire and for history. God bless our soldier boys, and keep them safe from those perils of war more to be dreaded than all the artillery of the enemy.

—Intelligence of the death of Deacon George W. Chipman, senior deacon of Tremont Temple church, Boston, will have been heard with regret by thousands of Baptists all over New England and Canada. Deacon Chipman had long been one of the spiritual pillars and chief financial supporters of the Temple. He was also a member of the Board of the Missionary Union, deeply interested in Sunday School and Mission work, and a promotor of many philanthropic enterprises, a man of unselfish purpose and strong, effective character. Mr. Chipman fell dead on Tremont Street, just in front of the old Granary Burying Ground, nearly opposite Tremont Temple, on Tuesday of last week. It is stated that he was 79 years of age.

—We desire to call attention here to the note which appeared in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR of Oct. 18,—and which we reproduce in this issue—from Rev. F. H. Beals, chairman of the Convention's Committee on Temperance, suggesting to the pastors and churches of the denomination the propriety of observing Sunday, Nov. 26, as Temperance day, with certain suggestions as to the means by which, in connection with the services of the day named, this important subject may be pressed upon the attention of the people in our churches and the younger folk in the Sunday Schools. We trust that Mr. Beals' suggestion and his remarks in connection with this subject will not pass unheeded. It is certain that the words of Dr. Cuyler, quoted by Mr. B., are not inapplicable to conditions in this country. Our people need to be educated from their childhood up, in home and day school, in Sunday School and church, as to the baneful effects of alcoholic drinks and the tremendous evils of the liquor traffic. A prohibitory law effectively enforced would be a great thing for the country, but we can expect such a law to be so enforced only when it is supported by a strong and intelligent public sentiment which is the result of wise and persistent education.

—One of the lessons which our Bible study of the present week should teach us is that which our Lord impressed upon his disciples by a parable—"that men ought always to pray and not to faint." For the pious Nehemiah the outlook seemed most discouraging. The cause of God was at a low ebb. The powers which opposed seemed tremendous. Little apparent success had attended the efforts of those who had attempted to rebuild Jerusalem. To one whose thoughts dwelt upon the dark side of things it might appear that the true religion was perishing from the earth. But Nehemiah believed in God and in his faithfulness; therefore he prayed. His attitude before the mercy-seat is not that of one who esteems himself holier than his brethren or who would call down Heaven's vengeance upon the unfaithful. His people's sins rest upon his heart, he identifies himself with them and confesses their transgressions as his own. Nehemiah's prayer had its answer. Such supplication can never be in vain. And such grace of prayer and supplication the church needs today more than the most profound thought, the most eloquent speech or the largest bestowment of worldly goods. There are many who can point out and deplore the evils of their day, there are many who can criticize, and denounce the sins and unfaithfulness of Israel, many to utter forebodings of evil. But all this does little enough to build up the walls of Jerusalem. We need more praying Nehemiahs, who can so fully identify themselves with the cause of Christ that the sins of the people of God are felt and humbly confessed as their own personal transgressions. When the spirit that breathes through Nehemiah's prayer pervades the prayer meetings of a church we may be sure that showers of blessings are about to come.

—Mention has previously been made in these columns of Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, of London, who has been with Mr. Moody this summer at the Northfield meetings and has since accompanied him on an evangelistic tour in Canada and the United States, in the course of which they have visited Montreal, Toronto, Detroit, Chicago and a number of other cities. Within the past few weeks they have held meetings in Boston and New York. It was the writer's privilege to be present at two of the meetings held by the evangelists in Tremont Temple, Boston. Mr. Moody had general charge of the services and introduced Mr. Morgan as the chief speaker. The contrast between the two evangelists physically, as