

For the Christian Messenger.

Prayer for Colleges.

DEAR BROTHER,

Thursday the 23rd inst., will be the Day of Prayer for Colleges. I hope it will be generally observed by our Churches, and that earnest, believing supplication will be offered on our behalf. There are some tokens for good among us. Let God's people pray that there may be a prosperous issue; and especially that there may be large accessions to the ministerial band, both for home and foreign service.

Yours truly,

Acadia College J. M. CRAMP
Jan. 6th, 1865.

Christian Messenger

HALIFAX, FEBRUARY 8, 1865.

FEDERATION AND RELIGION.

THE question of Confederation is not only a political one but also one that will be considered by many in the religious aspects it presents. They will be thinking of the connection between it and the progress of religious truth, and as it appears to them likely to affect the cause of religion for good or evil, so will they decide for or against any action being taken in the consummation of the Union. Although the scheme does not contemplate any change in the ecclesiastical position of the different denominations, yet if carried into effect, it will doubtless exercise more or less of influence on religious bodies, and all the other social arrangements of the Provinces. We have no idea, however, that any immediate change will take place in the relative position they will occupy in each province. We placed before our readers some weeks since a table shewing the statistics of the different denominations in each of the Provinces proposing to be united. We do not imagine that any great change in the proportions there indicated would soon appear. We have seen some extravagant statements, as to what an enlargement would be given by Confederation, forthwith, to the field of operations for the Christian Church, as well as to commerce, manufactures and politicians, but we do not concur in them. We do not imagine that those heretofore altogether unknown to each other, will be prepared to surrender their essentially local operations for any more general and distant agencies. Some churches existing under episcopal or synodical control may have some more distinct recognition of their fraternal relationship in the different provinces, and so make a shew of combination, but we see no probability of any other union, generally, amongst religious bodies, than fraternal interchanges of delegations at their annual gatherings.

A greater degree of activity will be likely to follow in every department of life from Confederation, and, as Christian people become quickened in their business operations, they will doubtless carry their general habits into their church life, and so an enlarged field will be given for their benevolent sympathies. Coming in contact with those from distant parts of the Confederation, as facilities of travel are increased, will lead to the adoption of improved plans of procedure, and so Christians will have opportunities of making their influence felt, and thus a broader type of Christianity will eventually prevail, but we do not conceive how any very rapid change can be effected on the individual churches. Whatever of influence is exerted on Christian churches we believe will be for good and for an extension of truth and religion generally.

ONE of the members of the Canadian Legislature who visited Halifax last summer—a Christian gentleman of an excellent spirit, and one who looks at legislation as involving the highest interests of mankind,—wrote last week from Quebec, where the Provincial Parliament is now in session, to a friend in Halifax, with whom he then formed acquaintances. We were also much gratified with the brief interviews with the same gentleman which a passage from Halifax to St. John, N. B., afforded. In the course of his letter he briefly refers to the question of Federation of the British Provinces, and the anxiety felt as to the results of the proposal. We have been permitted to make an extract from the said letter, which, we believe, will afford pleasure to our readers.

We sometimes hear of the disreputable practices of some of the Canadian representatives, but are glad to be able to notice something of a different character amongst them, and what is more in accordance with the important duties devolving upon them. This extract will show that although some of the leading men may look at the question

merely from a political point of view, yet there are others of sterling piety, who regard the action as subordinate to far higher considerations than merely combining politicians in government for its own sake.

His letter is dated Quebec, January 25th, 1865. He says:

"Present appearances indicate a probability of the early completion of the Railway from my home to yours, bringing us within 48 hours travel of each other."

"My visit to the sea seems to have been very beneficial to my health. I have felt stronger and am heavier in weight than ever. My wife and children enjoy good health also. The autumn and early winter in the west were unhealthy seasons, but when severe frost set in, and the snow fell (in unusual quantity for our part of the country) the atmosphere seemed to resume its normal state of salubrity."

The following is the closing paragraph to which we have referred:

"You will, I am sure, be gratified to be informed that 12 or more of our members, who are followers of Jesus, and who recognize his authority and believe his word, feeling the importance of our words and votes at this most critical period of our country's history,—and the great need of heavenly guidance, for ourselves and colleagues,—have agreed to meet weekly for special united prayer, to ask Him who is faithful to fulfil our desires, to give wisdom and grace, to guide, to overrule, to make all plans and schemes to work together for his glory, and our country's peace and prosperity, and fidelity to Him as King of the nations. I have faith to believe we shall not ask 'in vain.' He is faithful who promised."

A correspondent of the *Witness* a week or two since made an objection to Confederation from the circumstance that there had been no public prayer in reference to it. The rejoinder received from the editor for his specious, but hollow objection, was well merited. We should greatly deprecate the pulpit of our land being turned into political platforms, and Christian ministers into party advocates; but for Christian people and especially legislators to unite in seeking Divine guidance in the matter, we think is a most favorable symptom. Christian ministers, too, in Canada and Nova Scotia, we are informed, have frequently referred to the subject in the public prayers of the sanctuary. In this case, then, there has been prayer, and we think just where it should be, and we may at least be relieved of any fearful forebodings as to the result.

PRAYER-BOOKS AND PRESBYTERIANS.

THERE has been much said of late on the propriety of a Book of Common Prayer for use in Presbyterian congregations. At length such a book has been published in Philadelphia, and now arguments are brought forth,—not in the famous Jeannie Geddes' style,—but for the purpose of shewing that there is nothing inconsistent with Presbyterianism in their adopting a Liturgy, and vestments, and ceremonies, in singing, praying, and preaching,—the latter may be either extempore, committed to memory, or "with his manuscript before his eyes." In former days the Scots rose in rebellion when episcopacy was attempted to be thrust upon them, and they combined under the celebrated *Solemn League and Covenant*, in defence of which thousands of lives were sacrificed. Things are greatly changed since then. The *Presbyterian Witness* of Saturday last in discussing this question now decides that

"They may follow a 'Precentor,' or a 'Choir,' or the 'booming organ.' National and personal tastes and traditions are allowed all the scope that is consistent with the teaching of the Word of God. Baptism may be administered with 'much water' or very little. The Lord's Supper may be administered once a week, once a month, or once a year, within the walls of a church, or under the broad canopy of Heaven."

In his admiration of this Book of Common Prayer—which is said to be "as amended by the Westminster Divines in 1661,"—he ventures to affirm that

"The Prayer Book as revised by them would at this moment suit the sentiments of the great Evangelical Party of the Church of England, and would contain nothing offensive to the consciences of the great bulk of orthodox dissenters."

"It is a very remarkable fact," he says "that the Book of Common Prayer as used for example in the Cathedral on Morris Street, Halifax, is more Presbyterian than Episcopalian in its contents. A large portion of the service is from ancient sources. The Exhortation, the General Confession, the Declaration of Absolution, Thanksgiving, are all of Presbyterian origin, while only one prayer is distinctly Episcopalian in its origin. Anglican Prelacy only imported a few bad and corrupt features from the Church of Rome."

This is doubtless a part of the Broad Church movement. Whether it will have the effect of producing a greater amount of formalism, or, of promoting genuine piety, is a question on which we believe there will be great diversity of opinion, even among Presbyterians. Its intention is doubtless to provide what has heretofore been defective, and to absorb, or, at least, to embrace Episcopalianism in the Presbyterian fold. It is, however, idle to say that if "the suggestions and emendations of the Westminster Divines had been accepted, many a sad dark year would have been saved to the Church of England, and at this day instead of ministering to a minority of the English people she would still be, in truth, as well as in name, the Church of the nation." With liberty to adopt or reject this Liturgy, we may as safely affirm that the nation would have become a nation of Congregationalists and Baptists, for there were a number of the latter amongst those ejected under the Act of Uniformity. The liberty to adopt or reject this new Book of Common Prayer by Presbyterian congregations is a concession which many of the body would not so freely accord as our accommodating contemporary. The idea of a Presbyterian Common Prayer Book will be quite a new sensation for the adherents of that body.

SCHOOLS IN HALIFAX.

By public notice under the signature of the Inspector of Schools for Halifax County, we perceive that another step is to be taken in applying the School Law to the metropolis—the Teachers are to be examined during this (Wednesday) and three following days. The first step, or action, under the Law—that of the Inspector being appointed to supercede the clerks of the School Boards—was taken last summer. Since then the city has remained *in statu quo*, probably from the circumstance of the law being altogether unsuited to the City Schools. We have had enquiries from several friends in the country, desirous of knowing why the law was not carried out in Halifax. To these we could give no satisfactory reply. It was unquestionably a serious defect in the Act that Halifax was not specially provided for, or, that it was not exempted from the operation of the law; or else that that law was not carried out fully and fairly. We are not quite sure to whom the blame belongs, but certainly it should fall on some party, either the framers of the Act, or its administrators, that so large a part of the population of the country should be deprived of the benefits it was intended to secure to the rising generation. During the present session the Legislature, we presume, will make some other enactments for placing our schools on a better basis than hitherto. What have proved so beneficial in the country—Free Schools—would of course be far more so in the city. Now that the machinery of the law is set in motion here, we hope it will obtain a momentum sufficient to keep it moving, until it brings out some of the better features—an improved system of education for the young—as well as that which is somewhat less acceptable—assessment. The amount granted to the city is sufficient to make whatever supplementary taxation is required a very insignificant affair, scarcely more we believe than what is now paid as fees.

A PROVINCIAL MUSEUM.—It is to be feared that in the consideration of the great political and educational changes which will engage the attention of our Legislators, some of our smaller but not less important concerns may be overlooked. One of these is that of a Provincial Museum. Why should Nova Scotia be without its own Museum? We who boast of our geological and mineral resources have no depository where specimens may be preserved, and from whence they may be exchanged with foreign museums. Much might be said on this subject, and it is well worthy the attention of our public men. We have Professor Honeyman partially engaged, we believe, to represent Nova Scotia at the Dublin International Exhibition. This is well. We hear that Mr. John R. Willis is about retiring from the Industrial School, where he has done good service to his native city. He is well suited for more scientific research. If the Government could secure him at once to act in conjunction with Professor Honeyman, for taking charge of a Museum in some suitable building,—perhaps a portion of the new Provincial Building,—it would, we doubt not, be an advantage to the Province generally. We hope a word to the wise will be sufficient.

OMISSION.—The signature to Rev. Malcolm Ross's account of his "Mission in Cape Breton" in our last week's *Messenger* was inadvertently omitted.

Dear Mr. Editor,—

It was No. 3 of "The New Brunswick Minstrel" that you kindly allowed me to have, "just to try," and not No. 2.

Permit me to add "another word or two." I have tried the pieces and am perfectly enchanted. I venture to assert that No. 3, of this musical publication is a decided improvement on the previous issue.

The Sea Shell Polka is really exquisite, and greatly enhances the value of this number.

The songs are excellent; among the prettiest may be named "Near the banks of that lone river" and "Just after the battle."

I sincerely wish the publisher all possible success.

Now, Mr. Editor, I suppose you see clearly that writing for publication is not exactly my "forte," but if you will be so indulgent as to overlook all defects, I will promise not to trouble you in this way again.

I am yours etc.

"A YOUNG LADY."

NEWS SUMMARY.

To-morrow our Provincial Parliament will open its Session for the despatch of business. It is probable, from all we hear, that most of the Representatives from all parts of the Province will be present.

The one great topic which is likely to cast all others into the shade will doubtless be the Federative Union of the Provinces. A few days mutual intercourse of the members will probably disclose how the question is likely to be received,—whether favorably or otherwise. It has been so largely discussed and considered in the Press and otherwise that we should imagine the public must be as well indoctrinated in the matter at issue as they well can be. All that can be reckoned on as certain, and all that is, and for a time, perhaps a long time to come, uncertain, problematical, or experimental has been so freely and so fully handled before the whole community, that we are much inclined to think that the people and their representatives must be as well prepared to cope with the difficulties of the question now, as they could be within any reasonable period to come. We trust that all whose duty it may be to deal with this great and vital measure, will come to the discussion of it, with the utmost calmness and deliberation. Happily all party views and feelings are so fully excluded from its consideration, by the very nature of the case, that we have every reason to hope that it will come before the Legislature solely upon its own intrinsic merits.

The English mail arrived on Friday last with dates to the 22nd ult. It is rumored that the Prince of Wales would be the Commissioner to open Parliament by reading the Speech from the Throne for Her Majesty. It is also said that His Royal Highness will open the International Exhibition at Dublin in the summer. The inhabitants of the Irish capital are making great preparations for the event.

A monument is to be erected to the memory of Capt. Speke, the discoverer of the source of the Nile.

A sad and fatal catastrophe occurred at Edinburgh on the 9th ult. The Theatre Royal was burnt to the ground. Adjoining was a large Roman Catholic church on which the walls fell and destroyed six lives, of persons who were either in it, or engaged in rescuing others from danger.

Notices, &c.

The French Mission.

The members of the French Mission Board are hereby notified, that a meeting of the Board will take place (D. V.), at Hebron, on Tuesday, the 14th of Feb., at 2 o'clock.

Notice is also hereby given that the Board has engaged the services of Rev. Jos. H. Saunders, to collect funds in aid of the Mission. He has already entered upon the agency, and anticipates laboring in the countries of Annapolis, Kings, Hants and Halifax. He may also visit Stewiacke, Truro and Onslow, and return by the way of Chester and Liverpool.

Bro. Saunders and his mission are commended to the favorable regard of all who are interested in the cause of Christ among the French in those places. The French Mission has a history and shall have a future, and present indications are calculated to stimulate faith and hope in the hearts of its friends.

R. D. FORTER, Secretary.

Hebron, Jan. 27th, 1865.

Associated Alumni of Acadia College.

The receipt of the following subscriptions is hereby acknowledged.

Rev. Dr. De Wolfe		\$2.00
Thomas Higgin		4.00
D. M. Welton		8.00
I. E. Bill		4.00
Dr. Cramp		2.00
A. S. Hans		6.00
David Freeman		2.00
Theodore H. Porter, Jr.		2.00
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