

"The true devotional impression is destroyed by whatever is introduced into the sanctuary of a purely technical or artistic character, whether appealing to the eye or ear."

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, APRIL 3, 1867.

It may be that the editor of the *Provincial Wesleyan* does not intend to misrepresent the sentiments we expressed a week or two since on "Baptism in relation to Union," but if so, he has signally failed in his last issue. There he would lead his readers to suppose that we have "essayed to vindicate the close communion practice of Baptist Churches." We are sorry that our brother could not perceive that we had a far higher object than that in view. The practice of Baptist churches needs no vindication. Their practice with regard to communion does not really differ from that of others. Christian churches generally, with scarcely one exception, demand that persons shall be baptized before they participate in the Lord's Supper. This is simply the ground taken by Baptists. So our very ingenious brother need no longer nurse that prejudice against the Baptists. If our contemporary were prepared to advocate communion without baptism and so altogether ignore the initiatory rite of the church, then we should differ from him; but we believe that Methodists, who, in some places are very accommodating, with regard to this ordinance, and in many cases find it necessary, although unwillingly, to administer it by immersion, have not generally given up so much as to amount to an entire renunciation of baptism in some shape.

Our object was to shew what we believe to be one of the chief causes of separation among Christians. Infant Baptism in the various views taken of it, and the influence it exerts over the minds of Christian professors, we believe, is, more than any other, the principal barrier to a greater degree of real Christian union. Not so much is it a barrier between Pedobaptists and Baptists as between Pedobaptists themselves.

It may be convenient for our contemporary to endeavour to divert his readers, and fancy he can do so at our expense, but we imagine that there are some of them even who will see that he has sought rather to misinterpret our statements, than to meet them.

Our friend strangely brings forth a number of Christian acts in which Methodists and Baptists do frequently unite, and then with an affectation of candor, he asks with reference to communion: "Why should this one barrier to Christian union still remain?" From his own statements it is no barrier to Christian union.

Is our contemporary so anxious to unite in church ordinances with Baptists, or to have Baptists unite with Methodists? Would he like to have open class-meetings, and have the subject of Baptism there examined. Surely there must be something very lovely in Baptists that their Methodist brethren are so anxious for them to enjoy open communion. Possibly they would like to break down the visible barrier—believers' baptism—which Christ placed between the church and the world. We cannot perceive that Infant Baptism is a substitute for it, or we might consent.

Our neighbour does not appear quite satisfied with our statement, that whilst Baptists hold that the proper mode of baptism can be but one, yet they regard that as only a secondary question to the one of Who are the proper subjects. We were, perhaps, not sufficiently explicit. Baptists regard a converted church membership as far more momentous than an immersed church membership, although of course, they deem immersion in water essential to Christian baptism. A willingness for baptism may exist without the evidence of faith in Christ; not only do they believe that there must be a knowledge of the way of salvation, but they hold that there should be evidence of the person being under gracious influences, or he is not a proper subject of Christian baptism, or of church fellowship.

Whilst Methodists think that any person who expresses a desire to flee from the wrath to come, is eligible for membership in their society, and Presbyterians state that believers and their children are members of their church, Baptists hold that believers in Christ alone are the materials of which Christ's church on earth should be constructed. Faith may be weak in some cases and Christian character but imperfectly developed, but if there be evidence of its existence the convert, whether old or young, is entitled to ask, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" The only requirement being, "If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest." Our contemporary somewhat unceremoniously

introduces an interrogation which he probably thinks an insurmountable difficulty to us, and one that, by the answering of which, we may somewhat involve ourselves. He says, "How would it be in the case of a Christian believer baptized by immersion, but baptized by a Pedo-baptist minister? Would his baptism be regarded as sufficient? If not what evidence is there that the mode is held to be but secondary?" To this we reply, We do not hold that any sacramental efficacy passes from the administrator to the recipient. The act of submission on the part of the "Christian believer" so baptized, is an act of faith. Whilst we think the Pedo-baptist minister who will administer immersion to "a Christian believer" has more charity than consistency, yet in such case the believer's baptism, although somewhat irregular, yet is to all intents and purposes "sufficient."

Our worthy brother knows well enough that Baptists are no more entitled to be styled close communion than Methodists, and perhaps not so much, for whilst the former are merely retaining what they believe to be the proper order of Christian practice: faith, obedience, privilege, or last, reception of the truth; 2nd, following the Saviour; 3rd, fellowship with Him at His table; the latter—Methodists—at any rate in places where their proper discipline is observed—make attendance at class-meeting the prerequisite for a participation in the Lord's Supper. Another barrier to this species of Christian union would also exist in the Methodist churches—the necessity of kneeling at the altar before the officiating minister. There may be no priestly assumption in this but it is so regarded by some, even in their own body. It has more resemblance to Rome, whence it was derived, than to anything in the New Testament. Our brother had better arrange with his Pedobaptist brethren the terms of his open communion first, he will then be better prepared for the broader platform he seems to covet. He will have to ascertain whether his Episcopal brethren are ready to give up Confirmation and unite with those who have not had the episcopal hands laid upon them. His Presbyterian brethren too, will have to decide, if their desire for open communion will allow them to kneel before the administrator for the reception of the sacred elements. When these minor points are decided, our Methodist and other Pedobaptist brethren may be in a better position to charge others with close communion.

Mic-mac Mission.

Rev. S. T. Rand has favored us with a copy of his Report of the Mic-mac Mission for the past year. It shews that the aborigines are in some parts of the province making great improvement in their social as well as their religious life. He mentions some instances in which there have been evidences of spiritual good having been received by those who have departed this life, and adds;

"Others among the living might be mentioned concerning whom we have good reason to hope. It is much that the Scriptures may now be read to them everywhere, and evangelical instruction imparted, without let or hindrance. It is more that some of them can read, that the number that can read is increasing, that such portions of the Bible as we have been enabled to publish in their tongue, viz., Genesis, Psalms, Matthew, Luke, John, and Acts, are eagerly received, prized and read by them, and the desire for instruction on a larger scale has been awakened, and must be satisfied. The improvement too, in their social and domestic habits, is a matter of no small moment. So manifest is this improvement, especially along the Annapolis Valley, as to arrest the attention and awaken the astonishment of even careless beholders. Indian houses are rising in all directions throughout the Province, and their wigwams in winter are assuming the form of comfortable cabins, having floors and windows, doors and cooking stoves in them. Indian men appear well clad, sober, industrious and clean. The women also, in some places, have abandoned their half savage costume, and appear in the garb of civilized life, and some of them are industrious, intelligent, tidy and modest. I am acquainted with Indian women to whom Solomon's description in Prov. xxxi. 19, 27, will literally apply. 'They look well to the ways of their households, and eat not the bread of idleness'—they are industrious and never beg. 'They seek wool, and lay their hands to the spindle.' The 'warp' of their own buying and the 'woof' of their own spinning, is taken to a white neighbour to be woven. The long 'piece of cloth' is in due time brought from the weaver's, the weaving promptly paid for, and their husbands, their brothers, and their children are clad in comfortable homespun, both the cutting and making of the garments being the work of their own hands. In Pictou town, Indians supply the market in summer with fresh fish, caught and brought in sailboats of their own. On Cape Breton they till the land, own cattle and horses, and instances of the same kind may be met with in Nova Scotia. I have seen very well written letters, in intelligible, though broken English, that were written by an Indian girl of the Annapolis valley, to her white

"sisters," and have seen a respectable specimen of that same girl's oriental painting. I do not of course pretend that all this improvement is to be ascribed directly to the Micmac Mission; but I am satisfied that a large portion of it is to be ascribed to this source. And sure I am that where the Bible is received and read by them, there they are most free from priestly domination, and there the improvement is most rapid and striking. Disguise it as they may, or account for it as they will, the abettors of Popery have never aimed to promote learning and civilization among the Micmacs of these Provinces. They have discouraged and dissuaded them from all attempts of the kind; they have thrown, and continue to throw, all possible impediments in their way. What has been effected therefore, has not been done by them, but in spite of them. Directly and indirectly the Micmac Mission has under God accomplished much for these people. The friendliness and sympathy shown them, has had a humanizing effect. And our zeal may have "provoked" many "others" to aid them.

Following up the train of our remarks in our last, on the subject of the Confederation of the Provinces of British North America, we do not think we have any cause whatever to apprehend any serious misunderstanding between Great Britain and the United States. Still, looking at the great instability of all political relations between independent Governments, no one can reasonably believe that such may not sooner or later arise. In such a case the absolute necessity of Union between the Provinces can, we think, scarcely be doubted. In fact on such a Union, of interest and of action, our future safety as an independent people, must chiefly depend.

But we will pass to other considerations of little less moment, connected with our subject. Without the Confederation the great object of the Intercolonial Railway could scarcely be accomplished. It is one, however, upon which the material wealth and progress of this Province must greatly depend. In our present circumstances, and with the liabilities we have to meet, it would have been quite impossible for us single-handed to have undertaken our share of the enterprise. It is now however assured to us by the terms of the Union, by which England undertakes to guarantee our credit, thus enabling the United Colonies to have the work accomplished, upon highly favorable terms, within the shortest possible time, and affording an ample period for liquidating the debt. Another object of the utmost importance to our future growth and welfare will be the abolition of inter-colonial revenue duties or conflicting tariffs between the several Provinces. This has always been more or less a subject of injury and annoyance to our interests, and to the free intercourse which ought to subsist between subjects of the same general Government. We remember at one time heavy duties being levied, in New Brunswick, upon produce from Nova Scotia, which is only a very few hours sail to St. John, across the Bay of Fundy. To be sure, the exaction was so vexatious and even preposterous, situated as the two Provinces are in regard to each other, that it was shortly removed. But it proves how easily the commercial intercourse and welfare of the different Provinces may be seriously affected by hasty and partial legislation. It has been said that all this might be avoided by mutual agreement and uniformity in fiscal arrangements between the colonies; but any one who at all understands the nature of independent Legislatures, and the merely temporary motives that often govern them, would have small faith in the prospect or stability of such measures. One of the great objects of the Union is to effect at once the equalization of all duties and tariffs between the several Provinces, and thus open a free trade between all its constituent members. The great benefits that must result cannot but be speedily felt. Much has been, and is still said, about our becoming a mere vassal of Canada, and subjected to numerous evils that as far as we can see, with a single exception, have never been distinctly stated. In truth in most that has been said or written against Confederation, such assertions have, as far as we can judge, been held up as mere scare-crows to alarm the ignorant and unwary. Looking at the working of Unions in any respect similar to our own, and at the general community of interests that must of necessity prevail among the different branches, it is the most improbable of all things that such a conflict should ever arise. The welfare and prosperity of the one must be so evidently the welfare of all, that no one branch of such a Confederation could possibly entertain a policy so suicidal as the one referred to.

But in reference to the only objection which has been plausibly, but without any foundation in truth, advanced, and to which we have above alluded, that we shall be immediately subjected to the heavy taxes in existence in Canada, and which it is asserted are vastly more burdensome than our own, the case, as far as we have been able to inform ourselves,

is the reverse. The public taxes of Canada after all their vast expenses incurred in carrying out their great Railway, Canal and other public works, and calculated upon the latest official returns of the revenue of the Province, are, to a small extent, less than our own. Thus it is stated in public prints, which we believe are every way worthy of full confidence, that the average taxes of Canada for the past year, based upon the official returns of the revenue, to the Legislature, are only two dollars and twenty two cents per head, while a like calculation, founded on the returns of our own revenue, gives two dollars and eighty cents. The grand result of Confederation is of course untried and future, and it cannot be expected that so important a measure will not, especially before it gets into thorough operation, meet with some difficulties and inconveniences, but, be that as it may, we are quite convinced that it is one which, looking to our own safety and prosperity, and our lasting connection with our great Parent Country, could not be much longer dispensed with. As regards our own Province, small in its proportions to the vast territories that lie in our rear, but with all the advantages which our noble maritime coast, and its harbors afford for unlimited commercial purposes, our exhaustless fisheries, and scarcely less exhaustless mines and minerals, and with its commanding position in respect to the rest of British North America, it may safely be pronounced impossible that we shall not enjoy our full share of importance and influence in the new Confederation.

THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS shews that department of the public service, to be in a highly satisfactory state. The regular increase of proceeds has nearly doubled itself since 1859. The gross receipts of the year being \$199,739.19, whilst the whole expenses were \$165,591.89, giving a net revenue of \$34,147.30; being an increase of net revenue, for the year, over that of 1865, of \$9,282.36.

The whole number of passengers carried during the year is given at 160,953, or an average of upwards of 500 per day. We regret that our space will not permit us to make large extracts from this important public document. The Pictou line is expected to be opened through its whole length next month, and it is believed that this will attract a large amount of traffic to and from Prince Edward Island, and the Eastern parts of this Province.

The statements in the Report concerning the extension to Annapolis will, we doubt not, afford satisfaction to all parties. After explaining the difficulties which have caused some delay, Mr. Longley adds:

I think I may say this: that the people in the western part of the Province may rely upon some means being found to push on the work with vigour during the ensuing year. The Government is virtually committed to the undertaking, and will not see it abandoned.

NINTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE is before us. From it we learn that 42 patients were received into the Institution in 1866, making the whole number for the year 192. Thirty-five have been discharged. The mortality rate has been 3.4-5 per cent. for the year; the death rate since the opening of the hospital has been 5.1-5 per cent. The necessity for enlargement in the building appears to have caused great inconvenience. The present extension, now nearly finished will effectually remedy this and will afford large increase of accommodation,—room for 90 additional patients as well as a separate building for each sex.

The thirteenth Annual Report of the committee of the Young Men's Christian Association is received. Our notice of it was crowded out last week. This report indicates that the Association is in a flourishing condition, as it well deserves to be. The number of members is 235. Prayer Meetings are held every Thursday evening, from 8 to 9 o'clock, and on the first Sunday in the month at ½ past 4. Bible Classes meet every Saturday evening from 8 to 9 o'clock, and on each Sunday afternoon, except the first in each month, at ½ past 4. Membership \$1.00 per annum.

Harper's Monthly Magazine may be obtained of M. A. Buckley. The No. for April is received.

Notices, &c.

The usual Monthly Prayer Meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association will be held (D. V.) on Sunday, April 7th, in the rooms of the Association, at ½ past 4 o'clock.