

The Christian Messenger.

Halifax, N. S., December 17, 1884.

UNION OF BAPTISTS IN CANADA.

The public is already informed that within the limits of the Baptist Convention, a general desire has been expressed for the Union of all the Baptists in the Dominion in such work as can best be done by united action. The Conventions of these and the Western Provinces have appointed committees to take the subject into careful consideration, and report to the bodies appointing them. What are these Committees doing? The Baptist public is deeply interested in the matter. It is one of great moment, and will have much to do with the success of the body in the Dominion.

The consecrated liberality of Senator McMaster sent a thrill through Baptist hearts from sea to sea. It was the touch of a master hand on the chords of kinship. The music evoked is that of faith, fellowship and fidelity. The Baptists from Vancouver's Island to Nova Scotia were like those who dream pleasant dreams. Drawn by a hallowed desire to be one, they found themselves united in the Theological Hall at Toronto, erected by an intelligent and large benevolence. Time has been given for reflection. Now all feel that God was in this still small voice. The movements were rapid; and some naturally hesitated. But it is all plain now. The good brother referred to has no pleasure in hearing and seeing his name in connexion with this Institution, founded in the interests of Christ's kingdom; but an overflowing gratitude to God for this mercy will not permit silence. Therefore in this matter of union the Committees may feel assured that they are not called upon to go through a difficult and tangled wilderness. The Lord has gone before them. All they have to do is to follow the plain leadings of Providence.

But a good Providence had also anticipated and prepared the way for this great enterprise, now in successful operation. Paul was hindered from going to one place, and forbidden by the Holy Spirit from going to another. God had plans made, but not yet revealed. East and West the Baptists were forbidden to continue in subordinate co-operation with their brethren in the United States in Foreign Mission work. They were not disobedient to the heavenly vision manifested through their intelligent convictions. We of these Provinces were not permitted to settle according to our first instructions in the kingdom of Siam. The all-controlling hand of God led our missionaries to the land of the Telugus. There they were received by brethren from the West, who had preceded them. Thus joined together they have been sending for years past the thrilling appeals of their united hearts through the Churches of the Dominion. The way was thus prepared for Senator McMaster's great plan of Union in theological work. In mission work all hearts are united, as we judge, both at home and abroad. The demand is now for a channel through which this current of union may freely flow. Organization is all that is needed. We trust the Committees will have wisdom given from above, by which a perfect arrangement may be by them recommended to their respective Conventions. While the heart of the body has been moved to jointly work for the salvation of the heathen, a loud call comes to all the Baptists of the Dominion from the brave pioneers of the North West and the Pacific Coast. This, added to the calls long heard, and feebly responded to, emanating from the French population, are quite sufficient to convince us that there is a work for us to do unitedly in Home as well as in Foreign Missions and theological education. Religious literature of the Baptist stamp has a claim upon the common resources of the denomination in Canada.

The committees will take all this into account, and their deliberations and findings will be in accordance with these patent facts. It will also occur to these brethren that questions of general and public interest may arise in the future calling for the views of the Baptists of the country. There is the possibility of some organization which, in addition to serving other good ends,

might voice the sentiments of the Baptists on questions of moral and religious importance. We may name for instance the irrepressible temperance conflict which now demands in the thunderings of Sinai a solution in the Family, in the Church, and in the State. A great work is now on the hands of this Committee. To them is committed the duty of outlining a course for a people destined to grow in numbers and influence in the Dominion of Canada. It is our earnest wish and prayer that these good true brethren may have wisdom and strength from God to enable them to discharge these grave responsibilities, so that unborn generations at home and in now heathen lands shall thank God for what they did.

THINGS TO REGRET AND THINGS TO HOPE FOR.

When we in the good providence of God put our hand to the *Christian Messenger* a consuming zeal took possession of us to do all we could to uphold the hands of our brethren in the ministry in their labours to build up their respective churches, to lead the tens of thousands of unconverted within the reach of their ministry to Christ, to develop the resources of their congregations, to advance religious education, and to spread the gospel in the heathen world. Now the question of a reconstruction of our well organized body has been mooted for the purpose of union with our Free Christian Baptist neighbors. This may cause the diversion of the minds of the ministers and churches from the one great work of prayer, preaching the gospel and leading souls to Christ. Brethren in the ministry and out of the ministry in all our churches will be, we feel sure, greatly grieved that public attention should be turned in the press to this unsettling question. Better that it should be discussed and acted upon at the Associations and Convention.

Last year the Lord greatly blessed a goodly number of our churches. Our dear Bro. Wallace, wrought so hard and so long that his bodily forces refused to endure further taxation. We looked forward hopefully to this winter. It is to be deeply regretted that anything should have occurred to call away the solemn thought and holy yearnings of soul from the work of saving the lost. All things are ready. If the churches would bow themselves before God in a continued prayer of faith, converting grace would most certainly descend. The ministers of the word would preach with more than usual power, and great things would be done in the name of the Lord. This extraneous question should not be allowed to touch the mind of the body, except on the surface. Every believer should be all ear to hear the wailings of perishing humanity; all eye to see the distress in the world, and all heart to feel for those lost in sin. We see with pleasure that the devoted Evangelist, Bro. Young, is again in the Western part of Nova Scotia giving himself up to the work of saving sinners from eternal ruin. This is a great and holy work.

In all our churches there is much converted talent. The enemy would have it remain unused; but the Saviour calls upon every labourer to go into the vineyard and work. Mercy drops are falling in several parts of the field. This is encouraging to the brethren in parts where darkness rests upon the minds of God's people. We trust our brethren in the ministry will promptly report any tokens of divine favour that they may have in revival movements. This will encourage others. Those who may feel weak and depressed will become strong when they read the good news; and will give themselves afresh to the Lord.

The subscribers to *The Christian Messenger* will please bear in mind that all past dues, advance payments and new subscriptions, should be sent to E. M. Saunders, Christian Messenger Office, Halifax. Orders can be left and moneys paid at the office.

All in arrears are urgently solicited to forward the amounts due as soon as possible. Receipts of sums received will be sent by mail to all who forward money. If no receipt is received, a Postal Card should be sent stating the fact.

MISSION WORK.

A very pleasant and profitable hour was spent in one of the class-rooms of Acadia College on Friday afternoon last, in listening to a conversational address by Rev. G. F. Currie, returned missionary from Tuni.

Some twenty-five or thirty ladies and gentlemen were present by invitation of Dr. Sawyer, among whom were the professors and teachers of the institutions. Miss Hitchins added to the enjoyment of the hour by singing "Not a sparrow falleth." The following are the more important questions submitted to Mr. Currie, with a condensed report of his replies:

1. A considerable part of mission labor is devoted to the training of children in schools. As these children grow up, do they constitute a distinct class, or are they absorbed in the mass of the community, or what becomes of them?

Different policies are pursued by different missions in regard to educational work. Some make a specialty of education. Others keep it always secondary and subordinate to evangelistic work. Under the former policy high-class schools are established with one or more missionaries on the staff of instructors. Usually about an hour each day is given to instruction in the Bible; and the remainder of the time is devoted to the teaching of secular subjects, with the view in some cases at least of fitting the students for matriculation in one of the Government Universities; while it is hoped that the scriptural instruction given will promote their spiritual welfare, and have some influence, more remotely, in advancing the interests of Christianity in the country. The students at such schools are usually high-caste Hindus, and conversions rarely occur among them. The large majority are absorbed in the mass of the non-Christian community; and it is very questionable whether their influence, as a whole is favorable to Christianity or the reverse.

The other policy indicated above, viz.: that of making school work subordinate to evangelistic work, is followed by very many, probably a large majority of Indian missionaries, and is coming to be more generally regarded as the true educational policy. In accordance therewith schools are established in villages where native Christians live, for the special benefit of this class. These schools are taught by native Christians, under the superintendence of the missionary who has charge of the district in which the schools are located. In many cases heathen children attend, and some such are converted as the result; but the chief object of such schools is the education of Christians and their children. And as a rule, they amply repay, in a missionary point of view, the money and effort expended on them. As the great mass of the people of India are illiterate, nearly all our converts are such at the time of their conversion. A few years of training makes a marked improvement in their minds and manners, and fits them for exerting a better influence among their countrymen than would otherwise be possible. As embraced by this general policy may be mentioned Station boarding schools and Theological Seminaries, both of which yield good returns, spiritually, for the expenditure involved.

2. How large is the Eurasian element in our mission field, and what is its influence on mission work?

The number of Eurasian people in the northern half of the Telugu country is proportionally very small; probably not more than two or three thousand in a population numbering six or seven millions. This is but a rough estimate, based on a published statement that in 1871 the number of Eurasians in the Madras Presidency was twenty thousand, and may not be correct; but it cannot be far astray.

As to their influence on mission work, it is rather difficult to say whether it is on the whole favorable or unfavorable. They are all, or nearly all, nominal Christians. Many are members of churches, and some are most excellent and worthy people. But it must be admitted on the other hand that many of them are not very profitable members of society. Much has been done for them, in an incidental way, by missionaries all over the country, and they readily respond to earnest effort put forth for their conversion. An increasing interest in their welfare is felt by the Anglo-Indian community, and the leading men of their own class are seeking to improve the condition of their fellows by infusing into them a spirit of greater thrift and self-reliance. What their future position and influence will be, it would be difficult to predict. On this point opinions differ. At present they are not sufficiently numerous to be either very much help or very much hindrance to missionary work.

3. What are the opportunities for bringing the knowledge of the Gospel to the women of Telugu-land, and if married women accept the Gospel, what special difficulties are there in the way

of their becoming members of Christian churches?

In regard to non-caste women there is no special difficulty in bringing the Gospel to them. They are not secluded; and move about out-of-doors with as much freedom as the men. The same may be said of Shudra women, though with some qualification. They do not perhaps appear quite so freely in public as non-caste women. But the women of the higher castes are kept in zenanas, and no man other than relatives, and by consequence no male missionary is ever allowed to see them. By special favor lady missionaries are admitted to some zenanas, and the number to which they have gained admittance has greatly increased within a few years. Zenana missionaries in many cases find it necessary to teach needlework in the zenanas which they visit, in order to win confidence and pave the way for instruction in the Bible. Many hundreds of zenanas are now open to this kind of effort, and the number will probably rapidly increase as education and enlightenment spread through the country.

When zenana women are converted, it is impossible for them to unite with Christian churches in the ordinary way, as they cannot leave their homes to receive baptism. In addition to this, the husband or father in most cases, would strongly oppose any change of religion on the part of the women of his household. The question has been raised as to whether it would be allowable for lady missionaries to administer baptism to women converted in zenanas, but the suggestion has not met with much favor. In their case it would almost seem that their peculiar circumstances justify the omission of baptism; as its observance would involve expulsion from their homes, and leave them to be supported by the missionaries.

4. If the Gospel for the most part makes converts only among the low caste people, how is it to be brought to bear through them on the upper castes?

This question is rather difficult to answer. It is in fact the chief problem connected with mission work in India. It must be admitted that not very much progress has been made thus far towards its practical solution. Probably no better way can be found than by the low caste converts letting their light shine. Christianity among the low caste or non-caste people greatly improves their condition. This brings them nearer to a level with their caste neighbors, and makes them more respected and influential in the community. The change in their condition is noticed, and has the effect of recommending Christianity to the caste people about them. This seems to be the divinely established order. Our Saviour himself appeared among men in the humblest ranks of the people; and the first converts to Christianity everywhere are generally from among the poorer classes. God is able to use the lowly Christians of India to extend the truth among the higher classes. We cannot doubt that His wisdom and power are sufficient to accomplish that which to us appears so difficult.

5. By what agencies does it seem most probable that the system of caste will be eliminated from the social life of India?

Partly by the spread of Christian principles among the people, and partly by the influence of European civilization, as exhibited by Anglo-Indians of the official and mercantile classes. Christianity is directly opposed to caste. The two cannot exist together, and in so far as the former prevails the latter must disappear. As caste distinctions are not regarded by Government, the exigencies of the public service and of railway travelling frequently bring men of different castes together in such a way that strict adherence to caste regulations becomes very inconvenient. Under such circumstances caste rules are violated every day, and they are fast losing their binding force. The overthrow of caste will be a work of time. An institution which has so long held the people in its iron grasp cannot speedily be destroyed. But its fate is sealed, and it must eventually yield to the advancing power of Christianity, and the spirit of modern progress.

The *Morning Herald* in referring to the proposed union of Baptists makes the following sensible statement:—

"The *Christian Visitor* last week, however, proposed as a basis of union to allow each congregation to act its pleasure about free invitation to the sacraments. This is liberal, but if carried out would only remove the difficulty from the general conference to the congregations. For in case of a union many congregations would contain Close Communion Baptist and Free Baptists. The former would go in for free invitation; the latter would oppose it. Thus the question would be fought out on a hundred battle fields instead of one."

The *Herald* also says the principle advocated in the *Christian Messenger* "is after the mind of Dr. Saunders," and it should have added, about three millions of Baptists in America.

CONVERTED.

Not long since our esteemed contemporary, *The Canadian Baptist*, editorially advocated the policy of State Colleges, fed by denominational Academies. In another place we called attention to this fact, and said we should look with interest for its practical results, adding that the Baptists in these Provinces hold a very different opinion on the subject. We are more than glad to see in this paper of the 11th an editorial following the question, "What is a Christian College?" which takes the ground of the Baptists-by-the-Sea, and we may say of the Baptist body on this Continent on this most important question. This editorial is clear and forcible from beginning to end. By it the *Canadian Baptist* wheels into line and gives no uncertain sound. We congratulate our contemporary and welcome it to the fraternity of journals in America which advocate and defend the sound doctrine of Christian Colleges.

"The proposed Union between the Baptists and Free Christian Baptists of the Maritime Provinces is calling into notice the close communion principles of the former body. The *Christian Visitor*, of St. John, thoughtfully asks: "Why, in this matter of the observance of the Lord's Supper, not give in the Union each Church the right to say what shall be its practice? It will take it whether it be conceded or not." This proposition our nearer neighbor, the *Christian Messenger*, at the conclusion of a long editorial on the subject, regards as "revolutionary in a radical sense." Union, on the basis proposed by the *Messenger*, would be only absorption."

The above is from our kind friend, the *Wesleyan*. "Union on the basis proposed by the *Messenger* would be only absorption." So says our neighbor. Well let us look at the question in a practical light.

The Baptists hold that communion should not extend beyond Scriptural baptism and Scriptural discipline. Free Christian or Freewill Baptists are a large body, doing a good work for Christ in the world. They do not confine the Communion to the baptized and those under their discipline. Now there is a proposal to unite two sections, one of each of these Baptist families. If the Baptists should accept the views of doctrine and practice of the Free Christian Baptists, then the Baptists, to use the language of the *Wesleyan*, would be absorbed by the Free Christian Baptists; and the newly formed body would be known as a part of the Open Communion Free Christian Baptists. On the other hand, if Free Christian Baptists should accept the doctrine and practice of the Baptists, and become a part of them, then they would certainly be absorbed in the Baptist body, and would be a constituent element of that denomination. Again, suppose both branches should lay aside their formulated views of divine truth and church practice, and in mutual conference form a new creed and a new order and practice for the united churches, then there would be a new branch added to the Baptist family in America; and this new order of Baptists would need to be called by a new name.

The above we think is a fair and impartial forecast of the result of any union that might be effected. In case of union the Baptists will either absorb the Free Christian Baptists, or the Free Christian Baptists will absorb the Baptists, or there will be a new denomination formed.

Now, are the Baptists of these Provinces prepared to be absorbed, or to be disbanded for the purpose of forming something new? Will they not rather choose to stand on the old platform, and welcome all who may unite with them? and wish well to all who cannot adopt their views of doctrine and practice?

We feel persuaded that the Baptists are content to remain where they are, and to continue loving and respecting all who hold different views, while they preach Christ and Him crucified.

that I must go there to spend the winter at least."

We shall be glad to hear of our brother's success in his chosen field, and trust that ere long he may be found over one of our large churches. Our readers are indebted to this excellent brother for several interesting letters.

"The *Christian Visitor* is advocating the Union of the Free Will and the regular Baptists on the basis of each congregation (or church) deciding for itself as to the practice of open or close communion. We may remark that this has been practically the way with the Presbyterians for many years, with an ever increasing tendency to open communion, so that now a close communion Presbyterian Church or congregation is not easily found."—*Presbyterian Witness*.

We most sincerely, on behalf of the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces, thank the *Presbyterian Witness* for giving us the benefit of the experience of the Presbyterian body in the experiment of the *do as you please* policy. The Baptists will not fail to see that its tendency is, as judged by them, to looseness and disorder.

A most interesting series of meetings has been held by Mr. Moody in Toronto. He received the cordial co-operation of the ministers and churches of that city and the results have been of a gratifying character.

"A PASTOR," wants to know when he may expect the BAPTIST YEAR BOOK. We are not informed. Better apply to the Publication Committee.

THE HYMN BOOK COMMITTEE are actively engaged in preparing the new Hymn Book for publication. From what we have learned the book will be one of the handsomest and at the same time the cheapest that has yet appeared. Much time has been expended by members of the Committee in collecting and collating hymns from old and more recent books so as to take in all the best and reject those seldom or never used. We hope there will be no delay in putting the book to press.

We expect to be able next week to make announcements respecting the future of the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

DR. READ has written several able letters for the purpose of showing the propriety of appropriating the unused portion of the High School for girls so that they may have the benefit of High School teaching as well as boys. Dr. R. is an active member of the Halifax Board of School Commissioners.

THE WILKIE MEMORIAL must not be forgotten. The arrangements of the Halifax Evangelical Alliance are that a meeting shall be held on the occasion in St. Matthew's Church on Tuesday, 30th inst. It should be largely attended.

THE death of V. J. Gibson in a gambling house is not easily forgotten. It is well that it should continue to be heard until all its solemn lessons are taught.

Literary.

THE JANUARY CENTURY will have its War Series papers describing the naval engagements at Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Memphis, and Island No. 10. The next paper in the series, after General Grant's "Shiloh" in the February number, will be an account, in the March CENTURY, of the battle between the "Monitor" and the "Merimac."

ANOTHER of Huckleberry Finn's adventures, by Mark Twain, entitled "Jim's Investments, and King Sollermon," will appear in the January CENTURY.

The importance and value of Johnson's *Anodyne Linctum* to a family cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. It is both for internal and external use and will prevent and cure diphtheria and all dangerous throat and lung troubles.

A one-cent revenue stamp is about all the value there is to the large packs of horse and cattle powders now sold. If you want a strictly pure article get Sheridan's. They are immensely valuable.