

## The Christian Visitor.

Saint John, N. B. May 21, 1879.

## Why?

"And Old Disciple," writing to the London Baptist urges some points of consideration upon our English Brethren, that are exceedingly pertinent. He asks why are American Baptists so much more blessed in their home and foreign mission work than English Baptists. We have no desire to throw stones, as Arthur Mursell did at our communion table, saying that we chained a hell dog to it to bark at intruders, but we would kindly and earnestly suggest to our English brethren, may not the reason of our greater blessing result from a more logical and scriptural holding of the truth in respect to the ordinances of the Lord's house. It seems to us while our English brethren are as firm Baptists as ourselves on the baptism question, they concede their vantage ground when they stop short of the scriptural order, and hold the Lord's Supper to be an ordinance for the unbaptized as well as baptized. Many of our English brethren seem to us to make a great deal of baptism, and also to make nothing of it. The Lord's Supper, and in many instances the church itself is open to any one who avows discipleship, but rejects the baptism Christ commanded. As a matter of fact, the Freewill Baptists of the United States who are open communion, like most English Baptists, do not approach the Regular Baptists in numerical increase. Our close communion, so much spoken against, and written against, does not seem to hinder God's rich blessing from descending upon us either at home or abroad. Mr. Mursell and others like him ought to note this fact and be careful what they say. May not our greater blessings as American Baptists result from our more loyal and literal following of the plain order of the ordinances as found in the New Testament. To us this seems to be the case, for English Baptists hold as loyally as ourselves to the great doctrines of grace. The question propounded is worth thoughtful and prayerful consideration.

## The Baptist Union

Of Great Britain and Ireland has just held its annual session in London. The retiring President, H. S. Brown, gave a brief resume of the work of the year, and then introduced his successor, Rev. George Gould. The Secretary, Rev. S. H. Booth, read a gratifying report of work performed. The churches each year are more fully co-operating with the Union. A library of some 4000 vols. has been gathered, among them are many rare books, that will be of great service to the future historian of the denomination. The statistics show 2,451 chapels, 1,028,000 sittings, 276,348 church members, 40,216 S. S. Teachers, 369,317 scholars, 1,879 pastors, and 2,652 evangelist and lay preachers. The chapel accommodation has been increased by 20,000 new sittings at a cost of £145,000. The sum of £16,996. 14s. 2d. was raised for Home Mission work. A large amount of work has been done by pastors who for a few weeks have gone out under the direction of the Union as Evangelists. The report closes with a political paragraph which we give to show how our English brethren look at politics:

"There is also much in the political world to cause deep anxiety to every lover of his country. With wrong-doing, whether in the man or in the nation, we can have no part nor lot. We repudiate aggression; we would cherish good will among men; we denounce the sacrifice of life, and the impoverishing of national resources in an unrighteous cause; and there much being done to-day, in England's name and with English blood and treasure, for which no righteous cause has been shown. It seems sometimes as if this fair world of ours were given over to Satan and his angels. But it is not so. Right shall not always be overborne by might. Be watchful, each of you; and when the time comes—and there are gleams of its coming—act, and do your best to set free our country's voice to speak once more for truth, honor, humanity, freedom, and peace throughout the world."

The President's opening address abounds in many excellent practical suggestions. He styled it "Our Present Outlook," and some of its paragraphs we shall give in another issue.

Dr. Underhill proposed, and Dr. Angus seconded that the Rev. Frederick Trevellick be invited to accept the Presidency next year, and it was carried with great enthusiasm.

Considerable time was spent in the adjustment of the annuity fund matters.

The great meeting of the series was that of the Foreign Mission Society at which Rev. T. J. Comber, and three others were present prior to leaving for Africa to plant a Mission on the banks of the Congo, at and beyond San Salvador. An extract from Mr. Comber's speech will give a tolerably fair idea of the land and people:—

Ten months since, acting upon the instructions of the committee of the society, Mr. Granfell and he (Mr. Comber) had the honor of being appointed to the work of going to the Congo district for the purpose of examining it with a view to occupying it in the future for the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Their aim would be to annex that territory for the King of Righteousness, whose right it was to reign, and whose reign was righteousness and peace. They left Cameroon and set out on a long, and in some respects, difficult journey. Consul Hopkins, her Majesty's representative on the coast, said, "Well, certainly try; but I do not think you will ever reach San Salvador." They took three days journey on the strong current of the River Congo, and then eight days rough walking over hills and valleys and through the rough grass. At last they reached that mountain upon which San Salvador was situated. They were well received by the king of Congo, and after staying at San Salvador for three weeks they set off towards the interior, and, after meeting many difficulties they at length reached Makuta. Many people had asked whether they were not molested by the people and whether dangers of the journey were not very great; but when he told them that the greatest enemy they encountered was a little insect called a "jigger," not quite so large as a pin's head, and which burrowed into their feet, they might imagine that their enemies were not very great. They found in the first place that it was a healthy country. The great desideratum in that respect which missionaries in Africa had longed for so many years they had found in the Congo country. He had no trace of sickness all the time he was there. He had found the weather in England during the past month or two, far more trying than the climate of Congo. The people everywhere were peaceably and kindly disposed. He and his comrades had no reason to fear them. When the natives saw that he and his friends went among them with confidence, and with scarcely any weapon, having only two or three guns for sporting purposes, they would not be likely to molest them, so they had confidence in them. He was everywhere hospitably received and sometimes enthusiastically welcomed. They everywhere gave food in return for the goods which he took with him, and he was able to travel peaceably among them. The opposition of the people was not offered as it had been in Cameroon. He found that the condition of some of the people was very hopeful. At San Salvador for instance there was little superstition. The natives were very intelligent and very desirous to learn, and they were looking forward with great pleasure to his return amongst them.

The missionary party is already on its way, having left Liverpool in the steamship "Volta." Earnestly have our brethren prayed that Ethiopia may stretch out her hands unto God.

The Christian at work make some sharp hits at a kind of preaching which is becoming far too common. The truth we are to preach to-day is the same as that preached and recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The same as our Fathers preached who so faithfully followed Apostolic example. Modern pulpit lights have added nothing new to the quantity and quality of truth. Whatever addition has been made it is a misnomer and a fraud. A weighty responsibility is being incurred by men who to-day stand in pulpits and think their mission to be the drawing of the masses by the setting forth of "some new thing," or the exhibition of a set of pulpit pyrotechnics. Let such beware and if not past redemption, return to the old paths and walk therein. We need solid doctrinal preaching in this age perhaps more than ever before. The Christian at Work referring to this evil says:

"It is in this way that there is being developed a generation of jelly-fish Christians who know little or nothing of doctrine, and are positively without theological substance. They somehow believe in a superior kind of Being whom they call God, but of whose attributes—beyond a dim conception that he is the essence of love—they have about as much of an idea as the grasshoppers on the plains, or the wild bushman of Zulu. They believe, indeed, that Christ died a shameful death on the cross; but how that great sacrifice availed for them—if indeed it is of avail—or why Christ should have died such an awful death at all, is to them a conundrum. Ask them concerning the imputation of righteousness, the covenant of grace, the covenant of works, the doctrine of the Trinity, regeneration, the mediatorial office of Christ—nay, even ask them about the cornerstone of the Christian doctrine, justification by faith—whose mighty progress gave the Christian world its glorious Reformation—touching all these they are as dumb as the oyster; for how can they speak of that which they know nothing of?"

## Editorial Notes.

The Vermont Baptist is enlarged and improved. It is a vigorous aspirant for place and recognition.

The "Visitor Bible Lessons," International series for June are now ready and we hope our schools generally will order and use them, as we claim them to be unequalled by any now being used in the Provinces. The "Youth's Visitor" for June will be ready next week and will contain two good illustrations.

Rochester Theological Seminary has lately been the recipient of \$150,000 which will provide a much needed Library Building, Library, endowment of the chair of Hebrew, Eloquence, and Corresponding Secretaryship. If our Theological Department at Acadia is to flourish it must speedily have an endowment. Who will devise and execute liberal things in its behalf. It should be made worthy the patronage of our rising ministry or abandoned.

The Disciple is the name of a new paper published at Newport, N. S. monthly. It is a well edited sheet, advocating the doctrines of the Christian (Campbellite) Church, and will doubtless meet with the encouragement the enterprise demands. We have long thought that it would be better for the different sections of the Baptist family to be united, and we hope that time will bring about the desired consummation. The Disciple will earnestly plead for immersion as the only baptism.

Dr. J. Wheaton Smith, of Philadelphia, who is almost a New Brunswicker, being born in Calais, is reported as follows in an address before the ministerial Union.

"He censured the meretricious methods of attracting an audience. He did not think that the pulpit was waning in ability. The best preaching does not always draw the largest audience. Men are not drawn to the gospel and the ministry as they used to be. One reason is because there are so many gatherings and excitements through the week. When he came to the city twenty-six years ago, there was no public hall except Musical Fund Hall on Locust Street. An announcement of a meeting there, with two or three ministers to speak, would fill the hall."

Also, instead of standing out in contrast to all this week-day world, we have aped it, trying to imitate the Lyceum. We make too much of the sermon, as the Episcopalians make too little of it.

Also there has been a lack in doctrine. Salvation has been made too cheap. This notion, "only believe" "just now," "just when you please," is erroneous and harmful. There is little to be saved from in our modern preaching. The love of Christ stands out in its native sweetness only where we recognize it as saving from hell.

Now is the time to subscribe for the CHRISTIAN VISITOR. We will send it to the close of 1879 to all new subscribers for \$1.00 cash. Eight months for \$1.00. Let our pastors and friends make known the offer, and send us in several hundred names. Secular papers may be had for a dollar, but no religious paper in the Dominion as large as the VISITOR, or approaching it, is less than two dollars. And further, no good religious and denominational life can be built up by taking secular papers and excluding the religious. Brethren, if you wish the new members taken into your churches to be thorough-going Baptists, induce them to take and read the CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

## Errata.

DEAR EDITOR,—

I will not swear at the "Proof-reader," because my own head is bald with the curses heaped upon it on that account. But I will ask you to please correct a couple of misreadings in my article "Charity run Mad," of last issue. In 10th line line for "Varnished Liberalism," read "Vaunted Liberalism." In 32nd line for "Modern House," read "Wooden Horse." (This last I had thought was a good point, but that "Modern House," Oh! — I am thankful the compositor did not put it "Women's Hose.") In second line from bottom for "Your Preaching," read "Our Preaching." TRUTH.

P. E. L., May 10, 1879.

Our compositor says if "Truth" had written with ink in a legible hand, and less crowded, those "errata" would not have occurred. Other correspondents will please take the hint.—ED.

Our Sunday School paper, the YOUTH'S VISITOR, was issued last week, and specimen numbers have been sent Sunday School Workers, whose co-operation in introducing it into all our Sunday Schools is earnestly desired. It is illustrated and printed on good book paper. Price 13 cents per year postage paid. Any number of copies supplied, and for any time at the same rate. Address VISITOR Book Store, 99 Germain St., St. John, N. B.

(For the VISITOR.)

## "Case Hardened."

Dr. Talmage has been tried for falsehood and deceit. The Brooklyn Presbytery by a vote of 25 to 20 has rendered the Scotch verdict of "not proven." Dr. Talmage exults and declares his intention of being still more sensational. His followers of the Tabernacle add scenic stage effects to pulpit theatricals and make a travesty of the doctrine of Sanctification by trial, by floral decorations, representing purification by fire. If evidence were wanting of the demoralizing effect of Mr. Talmage's course of sensationalism and extravagancies it is supplied here. "One would suppose that his trial would have chastened him and his followers into decorous quiet and that the shadow still hanging over his name and fame, would have caused him and them to be sorrowfully silent. Not so. His career seems to have begotten a moral obtuseness in all concerned, even in the Presbytery who gave him doubtful absolution by a bare majority, and then commended him to men's confidence and God's favor! The lesson is obvious; it is that systematic extravagance "case hardens."

(For the VISITOR.)

## A Timely Move.

We notice that the Southern Baptist Convention which met at Atlanta, Ga., on the 8th inst., passed a resolution providing for the preparation of a Catechism "containing the substance of the Christian Religion, for the instruction of children and servants." This action of our Southern brethren is wise, timely, and worthy of imitation. We wish our own Convention would either recommend the adoption of some catechism already in existence, or cause one to be prepared for use in the families of our denomination. Such action is not beyond the sphere or beneath the attention of that body, but bears a close relation to our Home Mission and Educational work. Other matters may have more seeming, but not more real importance.

No one familiar with the home and church life of our people, can doubt that the systematic doctrinal instruction of the young is sadly insufficient. The parents who regularly instruct and catechize their children are few in number. The International Lessons, so generally adopted, fail utterly to supply the deficiency. Their fragmentary and interdenominational character makes this their great defect. The pulpit cannot fill the void. Nothing can meet the felt want but early, simple, and systematic training of the young in the truths (doctrines) of the Gospel, and in this a well digested catechism is an indispensable aid.

The want is real and the danger pressing. Teachers in Sabbath Schools confess the lack of Biblical knowledge on the part of even the older scholars. The ministry deplore the want of doctrinal knowledge and stability among the membership of the churches. The fault lies in the insufficiency of rudimentary instruction in early life. The matter is worthy of our earliest and best attention and were our Convention to speak out on this matter, as the Southern Convention has done, a hearing would be given to it and good results follow. We may learn from Rome's policy and success, not to neglect the young, and the stability and steady growth of Scotch Presbyterianism, so largely due to catechetical instruction, teaches us the same lesson.

(For the VISITOR.)

## The Prayer Meeting.

Too often when we step into the prayer meetings we find them cold and dead. Every member of the church seems to be waiting for his neighbor to take part before he does, and the solemn "tick, tick," of the clock hung upon the wall, tells how the minutes are slipping by unimproved. One by one they go until the hour is gone, and only two or three have taken part, and they only because duty demanded it. Now it is a solemn and lamentable fact

that many of the prayer meetings conducted with our churches, are just in such condition as we have described. The reason is obvious. There is not enough importance attached to the prayer meeting. Too many members look upon absenting themselves from the prayer meeting as a trifling matter while they would think a fearful thing to be absent from a preaching service. When the evening of a prayer meeting comes round, one will excuse one excuse, and another another, and thus the numbers decrease, and with the decrease of numbers, there is a decrease of interest until it is reduced to absolute coldness and indifference. One has said "the prayer meeting is the pulse of a church," and upon giving the subject some meditation we are inclined to think there is a great deal of truth in the remark. Of one thing we are certain, that where there is a healthy and flourishing prayer meeting, there will be found a healthy and flourishing church. We are not so sure—indeed we have very serious doubts as to whether a healthy and flourishing church can be found anywhere that is not connected with it a good live prayer meeting. A good interesting prayer meeting is a source of "growth in grace" each member of the church, and the pastor—who, by the way, is apt to get a little cold and discouraged sometimes when his labors don't seem to be rewarded with souls—is often cheered and encouraged by his work, and is enabled, by the strength and benefit which he receives from hearing his brethren and sisters talk of the goodness of God toward them, to preach with more effect to the unconverted. Brethren, make the prayer meetings interesting and attractive, and you will feel better yourselves, your minister will feel better, and he will preach better, and his labor and yours will be rewarded by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the conversion of souls.

## Anecdote of Hall and Foster.

In a conversation between John Foster the Essayist, and Robert Hall, on one occasion, Mr. Foster was deprecating the fact that almost every form of heresy that had sloughed off from the Christian faith, such as Unitarianism, Universalism, etc., clung to immersion as the only baptism. He seemed to regard it as a kind of stigma upon us (the Baptist) denomination, and he felt it very keenly. Mr. Hall responded in his happiest style: "Why, brother Foster, there is nothing strange in this. Our denomination has such rich pastures that our neighbors cannot resist the temptation to graze on it." Now, what the eloquent preacher said in a half playful way has no little of truth in it. There being no intermediary between us and the Word of God to cut, and square, and adjust its teachings to a creed previously formed, gives a freshness, a vigor, a power to our doctrines and practices, which command the affections and confidence of spiritual-minded people. Nothing so impresses the human mind as a "thus saith the Lord," direct from the fountain-head of all truth. Certainly it is not presumption for us to say that a denomination that adopts the Word of God as its "only rule of faith and practice," that allows no Assemblies, Conferences, Consistories, Diets, Councils, and the like, to "square the Scriptures to the creed" before they will risk that Holy volume to speak for itself; that utterly refuses the dicta of every ecclesiastical court that has assembled from the "Council of Nice" down to the present, which are contradicted by even one "verily, verily I say unto you" of our Lord—we say it is not presumption to aver that such a denomination, standing in such proximity to divine truth, is more apt to hold in its purity "the faith once delivered to the saints," than if that faith came down to them through such channels as would dilute it with human philosophy, color it with sectarian prejudice, and pervert it to meet dire emergencies—thus emasculating it of its inherent power. No wonder so many concessions have been made to our faith and practice even by our opponents.

(For the Christian Visitor.)

To the Women's Missionary Aid Societies of N. B.

As so many of our Societies failed to remit to the Central Board during the year 1878, and somewhat fearing that it might be so this year, we have decided to make a special call upon them through the columns of the CHRISTIAN VISITOR. This year there will be great need of all trying to do what they can, and a little effort on the part of even one member in