

The Christian.

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EDITORIAL.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

A former article contended for the love of God being richly shed abroad in the hearts of Christians as essential to their union in Christ and with one another. In this article we may state the grounds all may hold without the sacrifice of any truth or the loss of one spiritual blessing.

It is on things outside of the Bible men divide, and not on things in the Bible. Men hold common *common ground* and also *DISPUTED GROUND*.

On the first all that love the Lord can unite. On the second they cannot. All Christians can agree to hold the Bible as a creed, it is *common ground*. Some hold besides the Bible a man-made creed. Some hold one such creed, others hold another. It offends a man to ask him to give up a human creed to take another of the same. This is *disputed ground* which cannot hold a united church. It is no offence to a good man to ask him to hold the Bible. He loses nothing worth holding to give up other creeds. He loves the Bible because it is God's perfect book.

Again, it is no offence to a good man to be called a Christian, or his church to be called a Christian church. Christ is the head and husband of the church, and what more proper than for his bride to have his name? This is *common ground* on which all Christ's people can unite. But there are other names of men and things which divide the people of God and constitute *disputed ground*. To drop these names and extol the name of Christ would be a spiritual blessing, and not a loss. It would be an honor to the men themselves to be regarded as nothing that Christ might be all in all. Such great men as Luther and Wesley positively objected to churches taking their names.

Baptism, which has caused so much discussion in the world, has both its *common* and *disputed ground*. Immersion is held to be valid baptism by scholars and divines in all churches, Roman, Greek and Protestant. This has been believed by leading men in all denominations from the beginning. It has never been in dispute by any body of men worthy of notice. No church will require a man to be sprinkled who has been immersed, because they consider immersion wrong. This is *common ground*.

Some hold sprinkling to be baptism, but it is not a general belief. It is in dispute, and always has been since its introduction, and will be until it is abandoned. Some say it is baptism, others that it will do instead of immersion, others deny it altogether. It is *disputed ground*. We ask all to accept the ground which all holds to be right.

The same is true of the *subjects* of baptism. A true penitent believer is held by all to be

a fit subject of baptism. No one denies this who believes in baptism at all. It was never in dispute, but held by all denominations. It is *common ground*.

Some hold infants to be the proper subjects of baptism, while others deny it. It is now, and always has been, in dispute since its introduction. Some contend that *all* infants are fit subjects, others deny this and claim that infants of believing parents only are fit. Others reject it altogether. It is *disputed ground*. Thinking men cannot be bound by that which is not so much as mentioned in the Bible.

The Lord's supper has also its *common* and *disputed ground*. It is the blessed privilege of Christians to meet on the Lord's day to take the Lord's supper in memory of his death. This is *common ground*. Some contend for doing this on every *fourth* Lord's day. Others four times a year. Others again twice a year, and some once a year. These make *disputed ground*, as no intelligent reason can be given for making the worship of one Lord's day different from that of another. The first day of the week means to the Christian every first day of the week, just as the fourth of July means to an American every fourth of July, or the seventh day of the week meant to the Jew every seventh day of the week. This is so plain that the breaking of bread on the first day of the week is *common ground*, and advocated by leading men in different communions as right, and practised by the apostles. It is not a grievous command of Jesus to thus remember his dying love every time the day comes round on which he rose from the dead; and as his death and resurrection are both so important and so closely connected, it is blessed for his redeemed followers to commemorate both in their weekly meeting.

Christians in many other matters hold *common* and *disputed ground*. While it is impossible for them to unite on the things that are in dispute, by God's grace they can unite on the things which all acknowledge to be right and stand together on *common ground* without the relinquishment of one truth of God or the surrender of a spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. But such union requires the sacrifice of all that is selfish and carnal. It is "the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace," and must be accomplished by the love of the Spirit. If love is the fulfilling of the law, how much more it has to do in the triumphs of the gospel, which is the power of God. How very necessary it is for all who desire and labor for the union of Christians to examine themselves and be instant in prayer for the Holy Spirit's help to keep them from any word or action, or even feeling that would defeat their endeavors and injure their influence for good. How easy it is to denounce the motives of those we think in error and to say, "They don't want to see differently." That may be so with honest men who are ignorantly astray. Saul did not want to see differently when he put the Lord's disciples to death.

And ever since his day honest men's minds have materially changed. It is most unkind to condemn the motives of those who differ from us. We should be as ready to have our own views examined by others as we are to examine theirs, and do to them as we wish them to do to us. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. When Christ's mind dwells in us richly we are willing to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good, and also to let go what is otherwise, and Jesus' new commandment will be very precious—love one another.

The communication of E. E. Crawford, of St. Thomas, in the May CHRISTIAN, is worthy of more than a second reading. All the Disciples in the Dominion of Canada should feel a deep interest in the college at St. Thomas and rejoice in its present success. The benefit of a college near home where many more can gain an education that will assist them to preach the gospel must be apparent to all, but this cannot be without the sympathy and support of the brethren. We have rejoiced in seeing so many young men brave every discouragement and disadvantage and gain the needed education, but for the reasons already stated we have lost their labors here. It is a favorable sign to see men come from the east in quest of knowledge, especially if they know where to stop, and then return into their own country.

We sincerely hope that the young brother who has come to Summerside will prove an encouraging earnest of what may be expected from the college, and that the brethren in all the provinces will take an active and rejoicing interest in its success.

One of the great days in our missionary calendar is the first Lord's day in June, which is known as Children's Day. It is a great day for the children. They look forward to it with interest. It is their day. On this one Sunday in the year, if on no other, the children come to the front and control the order of exercises. It is their songs, their recitations, their offerings that give character to the services of the day. This fact has vast and far-reaching educational influence on the children. The proper observance of the day and the preparation for the day, including some teaching and practice in self-denial, cannot fail to have a wholesome effect on the future character of the children.

It is a great day for the Sunday-schools. Organizations and institutions thrive in proportion as they serve some useful purpose. Children's day helps to give the Sunday-school a definite aim, a Christian purpose, in helping on the work of saving the world. An institution must have some purpose outside of itself in order to have the clearest right to exist and the highest claim for sympathy and support. Children's Day supplies this unselfish, altruistic aim to the Sunday-school, and thereby imparts to it a new dignity and value. Many who might otherwise "grow out of the Sunday-school" grow up in it, bound to it by associations sacred and tender, of lessons learned and service rendered—*Christian-Evangelist*.