

Messenger and Visitor

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THE CONVENTION AND THE UNION QUESTION

This week's issue of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR may be regarded as a Convention number. We were able to give last week a report of Saturday's proceedings and a brief account of the Sunday services. In this issue the report is resumed with the opening of Convention Monday morning and carried through to its close. As was expected, the question of union between the two Baptist bodies occupied the Convention at considerable length. The interest in the discussion of the question was very keen, and in view of the importance of the subject and the general and deep interest with which, doubtless, it is regarded throughout the denomination it has been thought well, in our report of the Convention's proceedings, to give the discussion special prominence. A verbatim report was of course impracticable, but we believe that the gist of what was said in the course of the discussion has been fairly given, and we feel that we may congratulate our readers on the fact that the duty of reporting this historic session of the Convention was in the hands of one who possessed the rare faculty of accomplishing so difficult a task with so full a measure of success.

As the MESSENGER AND VISITOR has from the first favored and advocated the proposal for union, it is of course very gratifying to us that the proposal met with so cordial and unanimous endorsement in the Convention. It is true that as adopted by the Convention the basis of union was amended in respect to two of its articles, that is to say, omitting art. 11, and changing the form of art. 16. It can hardly be possible, we suppose, that any Free Baptists would object to these changes, and indeed it would seem to us altogether probable that the basis as amended by the Convention would be generally more acceptable to Free Baptists, as well as to Baptists.

No doubt a considerable number of brethren in both denominations, who have been deeply interested in promoting the union, would have preferred that the Convention should adopt the basis without amendment, since any change in the basis involves the necessity of opening up the question again in the Free Baptist Conference, and of course it is possible that Conference might not vote as unanimously for union this year as it did last year. Such a result, however, would seem altogether improbable, and if the Conference should decline union it certainly could hardly be on the ground that the "basis of union" was not acceptable. It would rather indicate that, apart from questions of doctrine and polity, a sufficiently strong sentiment in favor of union had not yet been developed in the Free Baptist body. But there appears to be good reason to believe that there is really a prevailing sentiment in favor of union among our Free Baptist brethren, and that the response of the Conference will be as heartily favorable as that of the Convention has been.

If the Conference shall endorse the amended basis of union, that of course will not mean that the two bodies will be, by virtue of the action taken, organically one. But the action of Convention and Conference would be fairly interpreted as indicating that throughout the two bodies there is a desire for union sufficiently general and strong to justify the taking of measures to bring about an organic union between the two bodies without unnecessary delay.

Convention Notes.

We think it well to print the following outline of the scheme presented by the committee, through Dr. Gates, for the uniting of the two Baptist bodies and the organization for associated work of the churches. It was not a part of the report and was read as a tentative plan for use in case the basis of union should be accepted by the two bodies.

New Brunswick, would if the plan found favor have ten district meetings. The churches in these would form an association. The ministerial members of the association would form a minister's conference.

In applying the scheme of union the following points might be observed:

1. The members and officers of the churches would pre-

serve their former status or rank in the united denomination

2. The relief funds of the two bodies would be amalgamated on a basis that would give one footing to the participating ministers of both parties.

3. The bodies would preserve their present covenants.

4. Contiguous churches of the two bodies would be free to unite as they pleased.

5. Questions in regard to the redistribution would be settled by a joint committee.

6. The titles to property would appertain to the same churches and boards as they now do.

8. The general funds of both bodies would merge in a common general fund.

9. No board would be required to withdraw funds from any object to which it was now applying it.

10. The corresponding women's societies and boards should amalgamate.

11. The young people's societies would federate in a maritime union.

12. The titles of the presiding officers of the district meeting association and convention would be respectively, chairman, moderator and president.

The united Maritime Baptist body would have a biennial convention. In closing he said the Baptists would then enter upon a new era of success.

The discussion of the union question was for the most part in good spirit; but there was not time enough for all to speak who desired to do so. As the evening advanced the question was almost forced to be taken when brethren who wished for further consideration of the subject had no opportunity to speak. It would have been better if the subject had been placed earlier on the programme. But it is much easier for a committee of arrangements to see after the event what would have been desirable than it is to know in advance what to do.

The Convention was more careful than usual to vote on reports of the auditors and to discuss these reports. As auditor of the report of the treasurer of the board of governors, Bro. John Nalder affirmed in words what he had written. Convention appreciates Bro. Nalder's services.

It was a great addition to the services to have Mrs. Hill at the organ to lead in uplifting music and singing of hymns. The opening session was of a more worshipful character than it has often possessed.

The meeting on Sunday afternoon addressed by Rev. A. J. Vining and Rev. H. F. Adams was considered of great power. Convention has an ear to hear these brethren. Bro. Vining is welcome to these provinces. We understand he will soon visit England where we bespeak for him a cordial reception and such assistance as friends may be able to give for the work in the North West.

A large number took part in the discussions. It has been impossible to report all that was said. Probably a considerable number of brethren who took part have not been named in our reports. But their words have been effective all the same. Among the ministers present were: Rev. J. J. Armstrong, Rev. T. A. Blackadar, Rev. F. E. Bishop, Rev. I. M. Baird, Rev. H. Boof, Rev. A. Chipman, Rev. S. H. Cornwell, Rev. O. N. Chipman, Rev. H. Carter, Rev. W. E. Carpenter, Rev. F. D. Davidson, Rev. F. O. Erb, Rev. J. T. Eaton, Rev. Ward Fisher, Rev. P. R. Foster, Rev. B. S. Freeman, Rev. J. W. Gardiner, Rev. M. C. Higgins, Rev. C. H. Haverstock, Rev. W. H. Jenkins, Rev. A. E. Ingram, Rev. R. B. Kinlay, Rev. E. E. Locke, Rev. G. A. Lawson, Rev. J. A. Marple, Rev. E. B. McLatchy, Rev. C. S. McLearn, Rev. W. J. Rutledge, Rev. F. E. Roop, Rev. W. A. Snelling, Rev. J. S. Spidell, Rev. H. S. Shaw, Rev. E. L. Steeves, Rev. C. S. Sterns, Rev. W. S. Ledford, Rev. L. J. Tingley, Rev. A. H. Whitman, Rev. C. P. Wilson, Rev. F. M. Wilson, Rev. F. M. Young.

A number of the brethren preached on Sunday to churches, of which they were formerly pastors. Dr. Gates preached at Windsor, Rev. W. F. Parker and Rev. H. F. Waring at Emmanuel church, Truro; Rev. M. W. Brown preached at East Mountain, North River and Nuthy stations on the Onslow field on which he labored successfully several years. Professor Keirstead preached at Onslow west and Belmont, where he spent a college vacation. It is pleasing to note the continued interests of pastors in their old churches and of churches in their former ministers. The reporter of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR was besieged with enquiries about the health of the Rev. Dr. Black, editor of the paper during the last fourteen years. Dr. Black's absence from Convention was regretted by all. Testimonies as to the value of his writings are abundant. The reporter was able to assure enquirers that Dr. Black is under competent medical treatment, that he is availing himself of the best that modern science can prescribe for the ills to which flesh is subject, that he has the great care of a good wife, and that it is hoped a little time will restore him to the physical vigor needed for his onerous and influential service.

Regret was expressed that no Baptist Institute was held this year. The brethren want an opportunity for discussion of speculative and practical questions relating to the life of the body. It was explained that the committee of the Institute tried to get some distinguished men from abroad. Correspondence extended over so long a period that sufficient time was not left to arrange for lectures by Maritime men. It is felt by many, however, that we should not rely on foreigners, but respect ourselves and give our young pastors the task of leading discussions on great questions as

they lead their flocks into green pastures and beside the still waters.

Truro is a good place for Convention. It is central in position, easily reached, a compact pretty town, is full of good people possessed by the spirit of good fellowship. Members of sister denominations live on good terms with the Baptists and are ready to give more than "three loaves" to their friends for refreshment of visitors whether the call comes at noon day or at midnight.

The members of Convention were very regular in their attendance. They did not go off sight seeing but attended to their duties. The MESSENGER AND VISITOR would like to think this was due to what we published on this subject. But we are a little afraid to feel too happy over it. Probably the elopence of the large body of learned men present and the general attractiveness of the programme accounts for the full house.

Certainly the members did not attend the meetings because there was no other place to go. Beautiful drives, parks, mountain scenery, educational institutions, experimental farms, and other attractions were all there, but they were not seductive enough to entice the faithful from the Baptist Parliament.

The women had a large and enthusiastic meeting of their own at Halifax. Nevertheless large numbers of them could not keep away from the meeting at Truro where the men had things their own way. Did they wish to learn from their husband's, father's and others in Convention? Or did they merely wish to see what was going on so as to secure accuracy of their future judgments on "Men and things" or was it their pure unselfish generosity that made them willing by their presence to dispense "sweetness and light"? Any way, brethren who were accompanied by their wives seemed to say "What would Convention be without them?" Has any philosopher noted what a number of brilliant devoted charming women the Baptist denomination has among its adherents.

E. M. K.

Convention.

Continued from page 1.

Baptist Union of Great Britain such a procedure would create a precedent. But our method probably shows more personal interest in the board's work than the other methods exhibit. And the officers seem ready to be questioned for the questioners get increased interest by getting more details. Often, however, the discussion of details, especially when carried on continuously by the same persons grows very wearisome. Several sections were discussed by Dr. Gates, Rev. D. Hutchingson, Mr. C. S. McLearn, Bro. Soley, Rev. I. W. Porter, Rev. G. A. Lawson, Rev. H. H. Saunders, F. M. King, Rev. H. G. Colpitts, Rev. J. H. Brass, R. N. Beckwith.

Bro. E. D. King asked if it is the policy of the Board to encourage special gifts to special objects. Dr. Manning said it would perhaps be better to have no special gifts for special objects; but we must take things as we find them and be glad to get gifts in any form.

The subject of Missionary Conferences for discussion of Missionary subjects was discussed by J. Parsons, Rev. H. G. Estabrooks, Rev. I. A. Corbett, Rev. J. H. Jenner and Rev. W. H. Jenkins.

Rev. H. F. Adams spoke of the good results of a conference in Truro in 1898 when Rev. Dr. Barbour, Dr. Manning, and others gave addresses. He said the first Truro church is the banner church on the Twentieth Century fund, being pledged for \$1200 to this object. (Applause.) Some of the brethren expressed their desire for the assistance of representatives of the boards on their fields. The Rev. S. Langille, however, suppressed all further remarks of that kind by saying that for his own part he does the work so well on his own field that there is no need for the visit of a secretary!

Rev. W. F. Parker asked about the use of the Twentieth Century fund. The subject was discussed by Dr. Gates and later by President Cummings.

Inasmuch as a large part of the receipts of this fund are used for current expenses the question becomes pressing as to how the expenses are to be met when the fund has been closed.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON.

Dr. E. M. Saunders read the report of the annuity board. This fund obtains no money from the Twentieth Century fund, nor is it allowed to make special appeals. It will however, soon ask the permission of the body to make such an appeal. A request of \$2,000 has been left by the late Mrs. Allison Smith for this purpose. It will be paid in due time. The fund should be increased. Ministers' wives should see that their husbands are on the fund.

THE BAPTIST UNION QUESTION.

At 3 o'clock the report of the Committee on Union with the Free Baptists, consisting of Rev. G. O. Gates, D. D., Rev. W. E. McIntyre and Rev. H. F. Adams, was read by Rev. Dr. Gates. The report will be found in another column. Dr. Gates moved and Rev. W. E. McIntyre seconded the adoption of the report. In supporting his motion Dr. Gates gave a full account of the history of the movement, he believed that the changes in the basis of union made by the Free Baptist Conference at its meeting in October last do