

THE
Ontario Evangelist,
A RELIGIOUS MONTHLY.

Terms, 50 Cents per Annum, in Advance.

GEORGE MUNRO, ERIN, ONT.
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

All communications and remittances to be sent to George Munro, Erin, Ontario, Canada.

Remittances sent by Post Office Order or Registered Letter will come at our risk.

No paper discontinued without express orders, and payment of all arrearages.

In ordering change of Address be sure to give the old Post Office as well as the new.

Advertising rates made known upon application.

A red pencil mark here indicates that your subscription expires with this number. Please renew promptly.

G. A. FLEMING, NORTHERN BUSINESS COLLEGE
STEAM PRESS,
OWEN SOUND, ONT.

Job Printing of all kinds executed in first class style and at low prices.

FEBRUARY, 1890.

BAPTISTS AND DISCIPLES.

It will be remembered that the Disciples in Lobo requested the Rev. W. H. Porter, M.A., of London to lay the matter of union between the Baptists and the Disciples before the Baptist Convention in Ottawa, which was to begin its sessions Oct. 17th. Mr. Porter acceded to the request and brought the question up in due time. In order that our readers may be well-informed on the subject, we give here the *Canadian Baptist's* report in full. It will be very interesting reading for our brethren.

Rev. W. H. Porter, M.A., laid before the Convention a communication from the Disciple Association in Lobo, Ontario, asking that the question of union between them and the Baptists be taken into consideration. The Lobo Association has appointed a committee to their own Convention which will be held in June, 1890, to bring this question before that meeting. Mr. Porter suggested the appointment of a committee to meet with a similar committee of the Disciple denomination, to consider the possibility of forming such union.

Dr. MacVicar thought the only way by which this union could be effected is by the Disciple churches becoming Baptist churches and attaching themselves to the various Associations.

Rev. A. Grant said that as the Baptists are not a body there could be no question of union with societies calling themselves such. Then, too, union means compromise, and there are no points on which we can compromise. The only terms of union would be a credible profession of regeneration and believer's baptism.

Mr. Wm. Graham rejoiced at the movement, and thought it our duty to appoint such a committee as the communication called for.

Mr. Sinclair declared that the Convention had no legislative powers and could not determine such a question as this.

Rev. W. C. Weir wished the matter laid over until the next Convention, when we shall know what action the Disciple Convention, to be held in June next, may take.

Rev. John McLaurin thought that even that would be more than we ought to do. The whole matter was *ultra vires* of the Convention. We need rather to strengthen our walls than weaken them by any compromise.

Rev. Jas. Grant considered that courtesy demanded that we should encourage in a Christian spirit any gentle movement toward teachableness on the part of the Disciples.

Dr. Goodspeed had found by experience in a similar movement between the Free Will and Regular Baptists in the Maritime Provinces, that Christian bodies might be a good deal nearer than they supposed. Such a proposition as now was made might be the means of bringing Bible truth to bear upon the leaders of the Disciple body. He could not see any difficulty in meeting the overture made by the Lobo association of Disciples. The matter at the last would rest with the individual churches. He would favor a committee of their Convention.

Revs. J. Higgins and W. M. Walker heartily supported the former speaker's position.

Rev. R. G. Boville stated that in his experience of individual applications from Disciples for church membership, he had found a more than average acquaintance with the Bible. He considered that the Lord's prayer for unity would be best obeyed by meeting the Disciples in a courteous manner.

Rev. A. Grant then moved, and Rev. J. J. Baker seconded, that we respectfully acknowledge the communication, and request them to apply to the local churches in the Association as being competent to deal with the matter. The vote, when taken, decided the adoption of Mr. Grant's motion. The following were appointed as a committee to draft the letter of the Convention: Revs. Dr. MacVicar, A. Grant, W. H. Porter, T. S. Johnson, and W. C. Weir.

The reader will now see clearly that our statement made in last EVANGELIST is quite correct, viz., that there is no reasonable ground for hoping for an early union between the Baptists and the Disciples. Observe Dr. MacVicar's opinion as given above:—"The only way by which the union could be effected is by the Disciple churches becoming Baptist churches and attaching themselves to the various Associations." Our acquaintance with the Baptist people of Ontario leads us to the conclusion that Dr. MacVicar stated the prevailing opinion of his brethren. We venture nothing when we say that the Disciples of Ontario are not ready for such a change and are not seeking such a union.

Rev. A. Grant said, "Then, too, union means compromise and there are no points on which we can compromise. The only terms of union would be a credible profession of regeneration and believer's baptism." We believe Mr. Grant in those words expresses the views of the major portion of the Baptists of Canada; and they imply that the Baptists are perfect doctrinally, at least, since there are no points on which they can compromise. The second sentence contains, no doubt, an allusion to the very prevalent notion among Baptists that the Disciples do not believe in regeneration, which, of course, is an entire mistake. They may not believe about it as the Baptists do, but they think they believe as the New Testament teaches regarding it. But we are not going to discuss these matters; we wish merely to point out that if Mr. Grant, as we believe he does, represents the majority of the Baptists of Canada, there is no immediate prospect of union between them and us.

Mr. Sinclair declared that the convention had no legislative powers and could not determine such a question as this. Any one who understands Baptist polity knows that such is the fact, and it may be well to state here that our Annual Meeting has no power to act for our brotherhood in such a matter. So far as such things are concerned there is no difference between the Baptists and the Disciples. One of the speakers remarked, "the matter at the last would rest with the individual churches," this is just as true of the Disciples as of the Baptists.

Several expressions in the above report will provoke a smile:—"A gentle movement toward teachableness on the part of the Disciples,"—"Such a proposition as now was made might be the means of bringing Bible truth to bear upon the leaders of the Disciple body."

The action of the Baptist Convention should be noted: it amounts to this, if any congregation of Disciples is interested in the question of union with the Baptists, it is recommended to apply to the local Baptist church which is competent to deal with the matter.

As a people who have all along upheld the desirability and possibility of all believers in the Lord Jesus uniting, the Disciples take a peculiar interest in all efforts tending in that direction. When the question of union between themselves and some other body is raised their interest is greatly increased; and we believe they are disposed to consider the subject in a Christian spirit and ready to submit every point of difference to the authority of the Word of God. As a matter of course the Disciples would rejoice if they and the Baptists were one people. The most of them probably believe that the time will come when they will be one. The Lord prayed that His followers might be one; those that claim to be His followers should labor to accomplish that glorious end. We trust that the Disciples of this country are so laboring—and the Baptists too.

THE WORD "CHURCH."

WHAT IT MEANS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It was stated in our December number, what is quite well known, that, in the New Testament, the word "church," while frequently used, never means "a house of worship," although this is its primary signification. It is, therefore, used in a secondary sense. It is employed to translate the Greek word, *ekklesia*, in all but three of the places where that word occurs in the Greek New Testament, viz.: in Acts xiv., 32, 39, 41. In these we find the word "assembly."

Suppose, now, we should read "assembly" wherever we find "church" in our English New Testament, what crime would we commit? It might shock many good people to have the word "church" left out of the Bible; but we could get along without it, and perhaps be the gainers thereby. An assembly, as all know, is "a company of people met together," "a congregation," "a meeting." How would it do to put "congregation" where now we have "church"? We

learn that the early English Reformers contended earnestly for the word "congregation," and that it was for a long time consecrated by the usage of the common English version. We would lose nothing, but might gain much if "congregation" were allowed to take the place of "church." Suppose, again, that we were to read "meeting" where we have "church," how would that suit? Would it seem profane to read, "Upon this rock I will build my meeting?" Or, "feed the meeting of God?" Or, that Christ "is the Head of the body, the meeting?" We are not advocating such a change, but we want our readers to know that it would be entirely correct to have the Greek word, *ekklesia*, so translated. We once heard a good old sister speak of "jini' the meetin'," when she evidently meant "joining the church," and we then received from her a lesson on the way in which words take on new meanings. It may seem impossible that *meeting* should ever take the place of *church*, but it is not; it is, however, we think, quite improbable. We trust the reader has by this time, if he never had before, a somewhat clear idea of what the word "church" stands for in our English New Testament. What we want to get at is the thought of our Saviour and His Apostles. It is not what the word "church" has now come to mean. It has, in fact, many meanings in our day, as any one can see by referring to a good dictionary.

Here, then, is how the case stands. We find the word "church" in our English version of the New Testament; and we learn that it is used to translate the Greek word, *ekklesia*. Our enquiry now should be, what did the word *ekklesia* mean when the New Testament was written? We turn to a Greek-English Lexicon, and discover that it means literally, "that which is called out," and then "an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned." Some writers make much of its literal signification, and use it as a text from which to teach that Christians are a "called-out people"—called out from the world, in harmony with the Scripture, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate." One's faith in the wisdom of such application, (though the doctrine taught is sound,) is somewhat shaken by observing that in Acts xiv., 32, 41, the word *ekklesia* signifies a tumultuous, illegal assembly, in fact, a mob. And we feel that we are treading upon safe ground, in saying that the word *ekklesia*, when the New Testament was written, meant "an assembly, congregation, or meeting," without reference to its character as being legal or illegal, orderly or disorderly.

It occurs to us that some one may be asking how it happens that a word which originally meant a place of worship, or the Lord's house, came to be applied to "an assembly, congregation or meeting?" The use of the term *Cabinet* to designate the Queen's advisers, well illustrates this point. *Cabinet* originally means a closet or small room, and since the Sovereign's advisers were accustomed to meet in a closet or small room, the name of the room was in process of time applied to them. Take also the word *synagogue*, as used in the Bible. Any one can see that it usually means a meeting house; but sometimes it evidently signifies a company of people, viz., those who were in the habit of meeting in the house called a synagogue. So with the word *church*—first meaning a place or house of worship, it by and by was very naturally applied to the people who assembled in such a place or house. By the time our Authorized Version was made, such use had become so common, and had secured such a hold on the preferences of the leading scholars that *church* was embalmed therein.

In our next number we shall call attention to the light thrown on this subject by the word "congregation" so freely used in the Old Testament.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Bro. McLean's statement on the first page regarding the March collection should be carefully read. As we are asked to take up but one collection for Foreign Missions during the year, that one should be as liberal as possible. Let every brother and sister decide conscientiously what sum he or she can afford to give and then give it cheerfully. The Lord's work needs all His people can give. We cannot count ourselves His disciples if we do not do all in our power to carry out the commission to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Let us be faithful and give as we have been prospered.

NOTES.

A young Visitor came to stay with us January 6th. We trust he will continue to be a blessing.

Contributions from Ontario to Foreign Missions since last report:—

Wm. Ramsey, Acton \$4 00
John Robertson 5 00

The EVANGELIST extends a hearty greeting to Bro. Brennenstuhl and Bro. Hester, and trusts that they will enjoy living in Ontario, and that their work will be abundantly blessed.

Bro. Sheppard's name was unfortunately omitted from the obituary of Bro. Thomas Black in last number. The careful reader would also note "holder" instead of "holden" in the "Critic's Corner."

We regret to learn that Mr. E. E. Sheppard, editor of *Toronto Saturday Night*, on account of ill health has gone south for the winter. We wish him a speedy restoration of health, and a safe return to Toronto.

Bro. Thomas Black was indeed a patient sufferer. It was a privilege to visit him and a pleasure to converse with him. He delighted to speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. His memory is blessed.

The cordial response to the proposition to publish a semi-monthly is more than gratifying. Among the old subscribers in ten or twelve districts, only one, upon being canvassed, through such a paper unnecessary. And many who do not take the monthly, cheerfully declared that they would take a semi-monthly.

We do not usually refer to slight errors occurring in the EVANGELIST on the principle that "the less said the sooner mended"; but there is an odd collocation of words in Bro. Crewson's article in last issue,—"Erin, centre." Any one who has been figuring out the interpretation thereof will please take notice that what should have appeared was, "Erin, Erin Centre."

Bro. A. J. Thomson, of Erin, went to Manitoba last spring and returned home a few days ago. He says Manitoba is destined to be a great country, and that now is emphatically the time for the Disciples to put forth their utmost efforts to plant churches there upon the Divine foundation. Bro. Thomson has been in Mionedosa, and he thinks the prospects for our brethren there quite encouraging.

We regret to be so late in publishing what is found in this issue relative to the "Baptists and Disciples." One reason of the delay is that the *Canadian Baptist* still refuses to send us an exchange copy, though repeatedly and respectfully and personally requested to do so; as a consequence we did not see its report which we give now, till we had an opportunity of making application to a Baptist friend who very kindly placed his paper at our disposal. Another indication that the day of union between Baptists and Disciples is not high; is that the *Canadian Baptist*, so far as we have been able to learn, did not think the matter worthy of a single line of editorial remark.

One of the most significant and encouraging things we note among our brethren in the United States is the very marked improvement in the outward form and inward spirit of many of their papers. *The Missionary Weekly* is the immediate occasion of this remark. It is a large eight page weekly, beautifully printed, on good paper, regularly filled with profitable and interesting matter, and withal of so excellent a spirit, that one cannot help wishing that all periodicals professing to serve the Lord Jesus were altogether like it in that respect. It is published in Richmond, Va., at \$1.50 a year, and is now ten years of age; that it may see many tens with ever increasing prosperity we do most sincerely wish.

"Of course, we must preach the truth in love, but we must preach the truth, and if the time should ever come when we cease to proclaim our distinctive principles which have guaranteed to us the right of existence, with Ichabod inscribed upon our doors, it will be in order to disband and go home."—*Christian Evangelist*.

Amen and Amen to that, "and let all the people say Amen." We are reminded that we have neglected to inform our readers that

"The *Christian Evangelist*, during the present year, will contain a discussion of some of the most vital religious problems of the age, by a number of the ablest men in our ranks. It will be 'A Restatement of the Issues' which this Reformation has made with the Religious World, in the light of past experience and of the results of Biblical Research."

It would be a good thing for this timely and important series of articles to be widely read. The regular price of the *Christian Evangelist* is \$1.75 per year. We club with it for \$2.00, and will be glad to receive orders for it.