

for our rule; the Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide to lead us into all truth; and Christ alone, as exhibited in the Word, for our salvation; that by so doing we may be at peace among ourselves, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

The union movement inaugurated by Stone and others was, during this period, gaining friends and adherents every day. Their proposition was to take the Bible as containing a faithful record of God's revelation to men with a childlike faith, and, studying it with prayer, believe its doctrine, obey its commands, rest in and enjoy its promises, and so become and be disciples of Christ—Christians.

Little by little immersion, as the original and divinely authorized baptism became the general, though not the exclusive, practice of these organized Christian congregations until, as to the administration of this ordinance, they were in practical harmony with the teaching and usage of the Baptist churches. The custom of the Baptists in those days and in that part of the country of requiring subscriptions to a humanly constructed statement of doctrinal belief in order to church and associational fellowship prevented a full identification with this excellent people. The creed question was the chief point of difference.

The Campbells and their independent union evangelical church became members of a Baptist Association, for Thomas and Alexander Campbell and their friends, without correspondence or acquaintance with Stone and his adherents, had on the subject of baptism moved in the same direction and for the same or similar reasons. Their union with the Red Stone Association of Baptists was but temporary. From its membership they voluntarily withdrew. The creed question was a cause of continual irritation.

Having become acquainted with the union movement in Kentucky, after much correspondence, principally with Mr. Stone, the Campbells found that his and their purposes, fundamental principles and methods were substantially the same. A formal union was in due time consummated. In 1827 the movement, which hitherto had been more or less tentative and chaotic, assumed a distinct form, since when the growth in numbers has been something quite remarkable. There are now more than six thousand congregations, known only as churches of Christ, embracing at the lowest estimate 800,000 communicants, ministered to in holy things by probably 5,000 pastors and evangelists.

Thus originated, and this in a very general way is the aim and method of the people known generally in current speech and literature as Disciples, Disciples of Christ, and in many parts of the West and South as simply Christians. This account of the genesis and general character of the Christian people with whom I am especially identified seems to me to be necessary before telling the readers of *The Press* why I am a Disciple.

I choose, then, to be especially identified with the Disciples in church fellowship and ministerial work because of their position on the subject of Christian union.

I say especially identified, for I feel quite at home with almost any company of evangelical believers. But so important is it that there should be a most intimate spiritual unity and visible union among Christians that I prefer to have particular fellowship with a people who in teaching and in conduct, who by word and deed, give emphasis to this thought.

It would be difficult by any possible collocation of words to exaggerate the importance, alike to the Church and the world, of such a unity and union of believers as that for which Jesus prayed and as existed in the early years of His Church. The Master prayed that all who would believe on Him through the words of His apostles might be one, as He and His Father are one, and this that

the world might believe that the Father had sent Him. As important, therefore, as it is that the world shall be turned to God, so important is it that the disciples of Christ shall be united, for the two are related as cause and effect. Without unity and union among those who believe in Jesus the world will not receive Him as a messenger from God. This is the teaching of the Son of Man in his prayer of intercession written in the seventeenth chapter of John's testimony to the Christ. Such a union as is here contemplated existed in the beginning. We read in Acts of Apostles that "the multitude of them that believed" in Jerusalem, the birthplace of the Church of Christ, "were of one heart and soul;" and it was during this period that daily additions were made to the new born Church, and that "a great company of priests were obedient to the faith." When discord began to disturb the Church of God in the city of Corinth its human founder besought the "brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," to "all speak the same thing," "that there be no divisions" among them, and that they be "perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." He assures them that their tendency to division was an evidence, not of spirituality, but of carnality. The same man had such a horror of divisions among the Lord's children that in his epistle "to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," he wrote: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned, and turn away from them, for," he continues, "they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly." Paul wrote an essay on Christian union. It is called "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians." In it he exhorts "the saints which are at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus" "to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace." When he was a prisoner in Rome Paul wrote "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and deacons," to "stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the Gospel." The Holy Spirit, in the New Testament, condemns diversions among Christian believers as exceedingly sinful. Sects are catalogued in the Epistle to the Galatians, with the works of the flesh. Schisms are placed by the side of idolatry, witchcraft, murder, drunkenness and adultery. The man of God closed his terrible enumeration of the works of the flesh, of which division is one, with the statement that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Schism in the Church of Christ is then a damnable sin. Divisions among the disciples of Jesus ought to be repented of and turned from as any, as every, other sin ought to be repented of and abandoned. An intense abhorrence of strife and discord, divisions, among the professed disciples of the Great Teacher, with an unquenchable desire for such a unity and union as would lead the world to faith in Him as the Son of God, on the part of a few devout men in the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in the first years of the present century resulted, as has been above set forth, in the large and rapidly increasing community of redeemed men and Christian congregations known as Disciples of Christ or Christians. Their organized congregations are usually known in legal documents and in letters of dismissal, introduction and commendation as Churches of Christ, without prefix or affix. The proposition of the Disciples from the first, but never more honestly and earnestly made than in this year of grace 1891, is to restore the lost unity of believers, and so of the Church of Christ, by a return in doctrine, ordinance and life, to the religion of the Man of

Nazareth as He gave it to the world in person and by His inspired apostles, and as it is definitely outlined on the pages of the New Testament. The Church of Christ at the first was a visible unit; it ought to be a visible unit now. The original and only divinely authorized platform of unity is found in the teaching of Jesus and those whom he called, qualified for their work, and sent to the nations with the command to preach His gospel to the whole creation. The creed of the people composing the Christian communities named and described in the New Testament, communities, composed of men and women in the way of salvation; and under the direct pastoral supervision of inspired men, was a simple belief in the heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ the Son of the living God. On this fundamental truth of the Christian religions our Lord said that He would build His Church, and the gates of Hades would not prevail against it. When we read in the earliest authentic history of the Church of Christ that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul," their creed, their belief, was this brief, simple, but far reaching and transcendently sublime proposition. In our attempts to solve the problem of Christian union to-day there is no necessity to formulate a creed. This has been done for the ages by Him who is the Head of the Body—the Church. This creed is personal; not doctrinal. "I know Him whom I have believed"—not what I have believed—is a declaration of the chiefest apostle of the Christ. On this, the original Apostles' Creed, Christians can unite; they never will, they never can become one, as the Father and Son are one, on any other creed basis. But this contention is, so far as I know, peculiar to the Disciples.

(To be continued.)

News of the Churches.

ST. JOHN.

Bro. Capp and family left April 20th for Springfield, Mo., by way of Boston and New York. A large number of the brethren and sisters were at the steamer to wish them good-bye.

Last Lord's day (April 19) one united with the church and was given the right hand of fellowship by Bro. Capp.

Lord's day (May 3rd) Bro. Henry W. Stewart, of Butler, Ky., is expected to preach for us. He is en-route to his home on P. E. Island.

The brethren were greatly satisfied with the work of Bro. H. Murray who was with us during Bro. Capp's absence. Bro. M. did a grand work for us at our quarterly.

Bro. Cooke is still laboring at Vateboro. We have not heard any particulars of his work, but we learn the people are interested and much good will result from his labors.

MILTON.

Bro. Murray reports two confessions. The brethren are holding a series of meetings.

LUBEO, ME.

Bro. Minnick writes: "That the work in the Lubeo churches is in a very prosperous condition, seventy-four have been added since his return from Virginia." A new church building is also talked of, and no doubt will be built in the near future. These good brethren and sisters have made great sacrifices for the cause, and God is now blessing their efforts.

WESTPORT.

On the evening of the 16th of March our house was taken in charge by a number of the brethren and sisters for the purpose of carrying into effect their own desires. We did not say a word, but let them manage the business. An enjoyable time