Messenger and Visitor,

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Messenger and Visitor.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9, 1885.

UNION WITH THE FREE CHRISTIAN BAPTISTS.

The resolution adopted at the Convention on the important question demands more attention than the mere mention of the fact given last week. It recommends ministers, churches, quarterly meetings and associations to pursue such a course in thought, speech and action as shall tend to a better understanding between us and our Free Christian Baptist brethren, and a closer fellowship.

There can be no doubt but that a union of the two bodies would be a great boon to the cause, provided it were done with no yielding of principle on the part of either, and that the organic union were but the expression of general unity of faith and feeling. No other union than this can be a blessing. The basis of this real union, as it consists in mutual trust and sympathy, and a general concurrence in belief, cannot be laid by resolutions of Conventions and General Conferences. This can be done only in the way recommended by this resolution. Let there be general fraternization, and it will no doubt be found that we have, on both sides, magnified the differences, and minified the agreements. In this way distorting prejudices will be removed, and there be greater hope of the truth being seen and recognized by all. Organized unity secured in this way, may be more slow in coming, but it will not run the risk of shipwreck, and when it comes, it will be real and abiding.

As we view it, this movement toward union is in danger from two opposite quarters. It may be pressed too hard, and, if union be effected, it may be at the expense of principle, and be followed by internal discord, a worse thing than agreement to differ as separate people, or a reaction may be forced which will leave the denominations farther apart than ever. On the other hand, there may be a repulsive attitude assumed, which will effectually bar all progress to a better understanding. There can be no harm in cultivating a closer acquaintance in the way recommended by this resolution. It is to be hoped our pastors and churches may act in harmony with its spirit. We believe, if this be done, that union will ultimately be effected.

There can be no doubt that the only way of uniting is by denominations, and not by sections. It would be a poor union which was gained at the expense of rending the present bodies, or which was sought at the risk of rending them. This would be to make or risk the making of three denominations in the attempt to make two one.

A strong delegation has been appointed to carry the fraternal greetings of our body to the Free Christian Baptist Conference. If our Free Baptist brethren think, at that time, that it will be well to appoint a committee to confer with one appointed at our next Convention, it would forward the movement, as the next advance would naturally come from them. It will be pleasing, at least, to have the expectation of greeting a delegation from their Conference at our next annual gathering, in order to promote good feeling and fellowship.

WOMAN'S WORK.—A LAST WORD.

We hoped the discussion on this subject would have ended with Judge Johnson's letter. With this in view, we gained the consent of two other head writers on the opposite side from him to withhold their communications. We have not felt at liberty, however, to abstain from publishing the contribution on that question which appears to-day. Neither do we believe it would be well to pass by all that has been said without remark. This might be construed to have one of two meanings—disrespect for what has been advanced, or a tacit admission that it is unanswerable. We therefore take the right accorded all whose position has been attacked, to say what we trust may be a closing word. We shall endeavor to do it in a way least fitted to make a reply necessary. Foreign Mission work is so vast that it cannot be done by the scattered efforts of individuals, one doing one thing, and another another, without agreement and concert. The many must work in some organization which will combine their efforts and mass them upon the work to be done. There must be an organization of believers, then, to direct this and other work. What shall it be? is the question. We hold our Lord has established the church for this very purpose, among others. We are very loth to believe the church has so failed as to make it necessary for any part of her membership to form a distinct organization for this same purpose. We confess we do not see how Christians need have their Christian liberty restricted or handicapped in the performance of any duty they owe to Christ before or after union with the church by working under its direction, any more, at least, than by working under the direction of any other organization, which has not been directly appointed by Christ.

There is a large part of Christian work which is so well understood to be the work of the Church that there is no need of any formal vote of the Church about it at all. Visiting the sick, personal effort to lead souls to Christ, etc., are among the forms of this kind of work. In all such cases, a formal vote of the Church is as little needed as the formation of a separate society. But in organized work, there must be a vote, in order to secure unity of plan and execution. The question is: shall this vote be taken by the Church, as the directing body, or by some other body? We still prefer the Church. Neither do we think ourselves guilty of any presumption in this. We are but standing by the old; we are not experimenting with steadying the ark of the Lord. We may also say, that while we believe no one is to be forbidden to work for the Master, though he or she follow not altogether in the footsteps of the Apostles, yet we do not think our Lord is displeased when we seek to lead any one into them. So, while we would not lay a straw in the way of our sisters in the work, even though they do not, in our estimation, work in the best way, yet we do not think our Lord is anything but pleased with us for doing all we can to shew what we believe to be a more excellent way. Neither is this opinion confined to one or two on the eastern edge of this continent. As high an authority as the editor of the *Missionary Review*, believed to be the ablest mission periodical on this continent, says in its last issue:

"The Church is the one and only divinely organized and authorized missionary agency. To the Church, in the person of His apostles, did Christ give the commission to evangelize the world; not to any separate organization. * * * What is wanted in each case is, that all action taken be so taken as to be, in reality, the action of the *Church*—recognized, understood and *felt* by all and each member as the action of the Church. This is as necessary for enlisting the interest, praying and giving of each and all members of the Church, as for securing the right supervision of the missions and those personally engaged in them. * * * We endorse with all our might emphasis the principle that the Church of Christ is the one divinely authorized missionary organization, and should conduct missions in her own name and right, and under her own close supervision and especial authority and control."

We have found it easier to get into this discussion than to get out of it. We have tried to do right. God knows, whether anyone else does or not, that we have weighed our words, and sought to make them clear and yet kindly. We leave them in the hands of Him who can use what is right for His glory, and overrule what is wrong, that it do no evil.

FOREIGN MISSION REPORT.

From the Report of the Secretary of Foreign Mission Board, we take the following extracts and information. Speaking of the field we occupy, the report says:

"Within four miles of the mission house at Bobbili, Rev. Mr. Archibald reports 37 towns and villages with a population of 34,000, whilst immediately beyond this radius there are many towns of from 2,500 to 12,000 people, few of whom have ever heard the gospel. And what is true of this section holds with each of the others."

Our mission force consists of six missionaries on the field with 29 native helpers, and four at home recruiting from the strain of the climate of India and their work.

During the year 20 baptisms are reported, and our native churches number 127.

As to the prospects for the future, the report says:

"On every hand there are indications that the dawn of a brighter day is at hand, and that what has been accomplished among the Telugus south of the Kistna river, by our brethren of the American Baptist Union, and what is being done nearer to us in the Godavery district by the missionaries of the Ontario Board in the reclaiming of thousands of the people, will be repeated upon our own field." It is said, also, that beyond those baptized, "many others have signified their belief in Christ and their willingness to separate themselves from heathenism; but are held back in order that their professions may be tested by the missionaries.

Is it too much to hope that with such a grand field where myriads are reaching out to us for the gospel, with such bright prospects assured by results of mission work among the same people, with such preparations made in compounds and buildings, and with such a band of brethren and sisters devoting their lives to this work, we at home may this year give, and give gladly, the $11,000 needed to press this grand enterprise on another stage?

"Why Trouble To the Women?"

The brethren who hold that the Foreign Mission Aid Societies, as at present constituted, are, and act in violation of the principle which the Lord established in the formation of the Church, take high ground. "We hold," say they, "that our Lord constituted the church to be the body in which, and under the control of which, believers should do their organized work for him." They have not told us, however, what part of a church member's work for Christ is *organized*, and what part is *not* organized. Is the distinction their language implies well founded? Is it imperative? Is it practical? Who will draw the dividing line between the organized and the part or class not organized, so that in the performance of Christian duties one may know whether he is acting in the one relation or the other,—whether its harmonious, or in violation of the principle, it is alleged, Christ established in the formation of the Church? Instead of the bald statement of this principle by appeal to which it is sought to change the constitution and relation of the Woman's Mission Aid Societies, I should have greatly preferred to have the proofs and arguments furnished by which brethren have convinced themselves that their position is impregnable, and that they can "hold the fort" against "all comers." In the absence of what have had such sway over the minds of talented and worthy brethren, I must regard their principle as too narrow in its spirit, and too comprehensive in its claim; and the classification given or implied of a believer's work for Christ as impractical and *artificial*.

But perhaps the part that is unorganized is after all the most vital and important to the Christian's growth, developement, and efficiency, and therefore essential to the prosperity and efficiency of the church; and is it possible that the Lord in constituting the church left out of the purpose for which he formed that body the culture and development of any part of a Christian's work or duty?

Again, if "the church is the body in which, and under the control of which, believers should do their organized work for Christ," in case of a member's neglect or refusal to do his organized work for Christ, has the church any power or right to call him to account and discipline him for the offence? How can it if that work is not included in the purpose for which the church was organized?

Now, it appears to me that the whole matter of a Christian's obligations, duties, and privileges, primarily and ever centres in Christ, and should always be regarded in that light; and that no body whatever is entitled to come between Christ and the soul in this matter. When a human soul, deeply conscious of guilt and vileness and inability to escape from condemnation and sin, comes to Christ for pardon and cleansing,—accepts him as the Lord and Saviour, that soul becomes united to Christ, is made unspeakably happy and free; and is henceforth under obligation to follow and serve the Lord Jesus in all things set forth in his word;—to act to his utmost in harmony with him, and to promote the gospel and kingdom of his Grace in the world, personally confess him before men, seek to bring sinners to the Lord, and help them onward in his service.

Now, on being admitted into the church, does the believer part with any obligation, right, or liberty, which previously belonged to him as a Christian? No. He retains and carries them all with him. Well, does he receive any additional advantages? Yes: fellowship, and the privileges and help of co-operation in the worship of God, and in doing his will, in promoting the Redeemer's kingdom and the salvation of sinners, and that of looking forward hopefully and joyously to that higher fellowship to be enjoyed with the redeemed when the kingdom of Christ shall have been consummated in eternal glory.

There is nothing that he was under obligation as a Christian to do *previous* to his becoming a member of the church, that he is not now under the same obligation;—none of his duties are diminished; he carried in with him his character, obligations and privileges; and the new obligations he is under and the duties he now owes the church because of his new relations, he recognizes as derived from the law and will of Christ. His membership in the church is not designed by the Lord to restrict his Christian liberty, or handicap him in the performance of the duties he owed before and still owes to Christ and humanity.

Now, the Woman's Mission Aid Societies are only aiming to carry out what as Christians they are under the most solemn obligations to Christ to do. The spirit, aims, and efforts of these Aids are not foreign to the work of the church, but are in harmony with its Foreign Mission work. The money is collected for this work, and is faithfully delivered over to the Foreign Mission Board, for the identical purpose to which the contributions *direct* from the churches have been devoted. Shall we countenance the notion that the contributions from our sisters fall of the full measure of usefulness and of the Saviour's approval, because they lack the sanctity—the *formal* sanctity—of the church's *note?*

But though not *formally* in the church, surely these Ladies' Aids are of the church; and the churches entertain no fear or jealousy of their work, but are glad to have their zeal and co-operation in the same glorious work of promoting the kingdom of Christ among the heathen.

A few ministers and other brethren should not take alarm and press their views as though the Ark of God were in peril, and cannot move forward safely under present arrangements, and they must therefore sound the trumpet, straighten the lines, and steady the Ark. We should be careful not to take our own inferences as if they were Divine inspiration.

But the principle they lay down, implying that no member has a right, or is at liberty to do his duty, as a Christian, to the world, by contributions of his means or by personal efforts, except he has the vote or sanction of the Church for it, looks to me, I confess, well adapted to paralyze individual responsibility and effort in the cause of Christ, and to exalt the church to a supremacy and exclusive control over believers and their work similar to that claimed by the Church of Rome, which denies to the people the right to read the sacred Scriptures, and also the right to put or accept any interpretation of them, except that which the church has given or endorsed.

The principle, the application of which is to revolutionize W. M. A. S., makes a large claim in the realm of Christian work. According to it, Christian men and women anxious to work for Christ, have no right to unite to teach a Sunday School, unless a vote of the church authorize them; a church member or a Christian has no right to preach the gospel unless authorized in a similar way; Christian men and women have not the right to contribute their money to support a Christian missionary or a missionary society, unless by vote of the church; nor have they the right to unite in temperance and other moral, social or religious organizations outside the church, except by vote or consent of the church.

I hold the Church of Christ in great veneration and respect; but such assumptions, if really made by a church, may well lead one to fear that the spirit of Christianity is made subordinate to form and method; and these, too, not authorized by the Divine Master himself. What he has authorized is, of course, imperative on his followers, however distasteful it may appear.

The vote of the church might indeed be helpful in some cases, as an expression of approval, sympathy and good will; and if the object is really good and accords with Christianity, it may be presumed that a Christian church will accord these unsolicited. But it is well, after all, to bear in mind that mere votes do not often amount to much in such cases. If the object or work is right and in harmony with Christianity, the church's vote cannot make it otherwise; and if wrong, such vote, repeated a thousand times, cannot make it right or put it in accord with Christianity.

When the apostle John and his fellow apostles would have hindered one who, outside the circle of Christ's recognized disciples, was working miracles in the name of Jesus, and they would not recognize him because he belonged not to the company of those whom they regarded as possessing sole authority to operate these in regard to humanity and the kingdom of God, our Lord, with his comprehensive and perfect views and sympathies, answered with mildest but most effective rebuke: "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us." Thus Jesus rebukes sectarian and undue ecclesiastical assumptions to the end of time. And if the same Divine presence were visibly moving in the church and among the brethren now, as then, the language of rebuke which once silenced the murmurs and criticisms of the apostles on a celebrated occasion (Matt. 26:10), slightly modified as to mere number, etc., but the same in spirit, might be heard anew by startled ears: "Why trouble ye the women? They have wrought a good work for me."

GEORGE ARMSTRONG.

Kentville, N.S., Aug. 26, 1885.

Up the St. John.—The Church at Fredericton.

Did my time and your space permit, I should like to set down on paper something of the wondrous beauty of the River St. John, as seen in a trip from the fair city at its mouth to Saint Ann's of former days, the present city of Fredericton. If our people generally in the sea provinces knew the witchery of the picturesque River Saint John, this dreamland of light and shade, this magic world of leagues of still water like great polished mirrors reflecting in minutest details the glories of either bank and of cloud and sky, they would in far greater numbers than at present frequent this most attractive scenery of the Maritime Provinces. The lime cliffs clothed to their tops with the beautiful arbor vitae, commonly but inaccurately called cedar, are a sight to be remembered,—more especially by Nova Scotians who have vainly endeavored to rear this graceful tree in its perfection on their lawns. The elms, too, (*ulmus Americanus*) after the cedar cliffs are left behind, are a sight to gladden the eyes, becoming as they do more numerous and more stately until elm-embowered Fredericton is reached. And what green fields one sees on the banks, although it is the last day of August! Fourteen years ago I came up this river for the first time, and though I was somewhat weighted with the sense of the very grave and responsible duties upon which I was entering in connexion with the educational system of the province, I quickly came under the spell of marvellous beauty which rested on this wondrous water way. I said then that it was the most beautiful river, so far as natural features are concerned, that I had ever seen, and I say the same to-day. I said then that the River Saint John was the one distinguishing physical feature of our Maritime Provinces, after the Bay of Fundy, and with a wider observation and a fuller knowledge, I say the same to-day. Let no one suppose he has even an approximate idea of the glorious water scenery of our lower provinces until he has seen the Saint John, at least as far as Fredericton,—though the river has singular charms all the way to Grand Falls, and to the Little Falls beyond.

I need not state that it is a joy to look into the faces of friends on this side the Bay—teachers, and public men with whom I have laboured in days past. It is an especial pleasure to meet with the pastor and members of the Baptist church whose kindly sympathy will ever be cherished as one of the precious experiences of my life. And also while I am enjoying for a day or two the hospitality of one of its beloved members, perhaps I may be permitted to say, in allusion to the denomination to a few facts in the record of this church. It was founded January 1, 1814, more than seventy-one years ago. Its Sunday school is sixty-three years old. The first house of worship was erected in 1814, the second in 1840, and the third in 1883. The Convention met with this church in 1848, 1870, and 1878. The present beloved pastor, Rev. F. D. Crawley, is the seventeenth who has filled the office, Stevens, Porter, Spurden, Hurd, Guilford, Seely, Caswell, Elder, Hall, Bill, F. W. Miles, Robert Davis, David Harris, Charles Tupper, Theodore S. Harding, and Elijah Estabrooks having preceded him. Many ministers have been members of this church besides the pastors, while thirteen have been licensed or ordained here. The missionaries Burpee, Currie, Kelly, and Miss Carrie Hammond (now Mrs. Archibald) united with this church through baptism, as did also our esteemed brother, Professor Kierstead, of Acadia College.

The present membership is 355, about 100, or more, of whom are non-resident. During the past five years 70 members have been added to the church; $22,869 have been raised for local purposes, exclusive of certain sums in aid of the Sunday school, and $3,698, or an average of about $740 a year towards the Convention fund, exclusive of moneys raised by the Woman's Aid Society in connection with the church, and also, I believe, of the mission moneys contributed by the Sunday school. It should be mentioned that the sisters of the church have during this period raised about $3,000 in aid of the local expenditure above named. Many churches burdened with so heavy a load for local purposes, of which there still remains an indebtedness of some $6,500 on the new house of worship, would not, I fear, contribute as regularly and liberally to the several objects embraced in our Convention. In truth, there are many churches among us having much more wealth with far less local expenditure, which pay into the treasury of the Lord less than the noble band of believers here.

I have no space to speak of a charming drive up the left bank of the Nashwaak, across the Peniac bridge, and down the right bank of the Nashwaak, nor of a visit to Alexander Gibson's great cotton mills at Marysville, where we watched the rude cotton through the various processes of manufacture until it was turned out a beautiful fabric ready for the market. This drive and mill inspection derived their greatest interest and charm from the presence of beloved friends, whose kindly forethought never wearies so long as there is the prospect of adding to the enjoyment of those who share their hospitality.

T. H. R.

Frogmore, Fredericton, Sep. 2, '85.

Manitoba Correspondence.

THE FIELD AND THE WORK.

Shortly after my arrival in this country, I wrote a short and hasty sketch to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR of my trip up and the appearance of the country at that time, with a few words on the prospects for the advancement of the cause of Christ. Since that time both the country and the prospects for the cause have assumed a different aspect.

The unbroken prairie that stood like a barren of desolation, has since then put on its beautiful garments, and even Solomon was not arrayed like is now; for it is decked with the lily and the rose, and an innumerable variety of flowers spread their delightful fragrance on the breeze. The vast fields that were being seeded then are now giving prospect of a bountiful harvest. Thus, while we are pleased with beauty we are cheered with prospect.

I arrived here the day of the battle of Batoche, when the young heroes of Canada made their gallant charge on the rifle-pits and routed the enemy. Since then, they have marched to complete victory, and now "the cruel war is ended." But its effects are not ended yet. May God bless the bereaved and afflicted, and out of this scene of sadness bring light and joy and peace.

In our work for the Master, we have had indications of the Divine favor, too, and the general prospect is brightening. As we desire the sympathy of our brethren, I may be permitted to say a few words concerning the field and the work.

Of Carman City very little of interest can be said. At present it has a population of about one hundred inhabitants, nearly equally divided between Methodists and Presbyterians. The former body has a house of worship here and the latter is building one; and as the ministers of these congregations have offered to immerse those desiring it, our service is looked upon by many as unnecessary. Yet our congregations on fine days, are good, and we trust that the influence which is being exerted may be the means of leading the people to a more consistent obedience to the truth.

Campbellville is a small settlement stretching southward from the Boyne River, three miles west of Carman. We hold service here every alternate Lord's day. Although we have only one member here now, our meetings are well attended and a good interest manifested. Some are seriously seeking the Saviour, and the prospect for the cause is much better than in Carman. But in either of these places a very great work cannot be expected until there is more material, and much depends on the kind of material that comes in.

Warrington is our next station, and a few words concerning it must be sufficient at present. The name is applied generally to a large district 12 miles south of Carman. This district is thinly peopled, as this country must unnecessarily be, on account of the way in which the land is divided. But people here come a long distance to meeting and our congregations are good. We are enjoying our Father's smile, and our hearts are being cheered. One of our most influential leaders in the community has been restored to the joy of salvation and received into our fellowship, and we have been cheered by the news, to-day, that one of the most prominent men at the Morden station has been brought into the light, another has been received for baptism, and a young man, lately from England, has sent for his letter to join us; and many others are anxiously inquiring what they must do to be saved, some of whom are not far from the kingdom. So this section bids fair to become one of our strongholds.

As we come now to speak of our last main station on the field, we would strike gently on the tender chord, lest it break, and the music we would awaken stop short, or a murmuring tone return from the harshly smitten instrument. Morden is one of the most flourishing and rapidly growing towns in southern Manitoba, and bids fair to become, in the near future, a large and important town. It is situated on the C. P. R., S.W. B., 81 miles from Winnipeg, and has a population now of over 400 inhabitants, although it is not yet two years old. Being surrounded by a vast country as rich as any in Canada between the Atlantic and Pacific, and having other advantages necessary for success, it is a most likely spot for a good, strong Baptist cause. We have six members within reach and two of the above mentioned, who are soon to join us, are near by, and many others are deeply interested. We can have service here only once in two weeks, on account of the high rent we pay for a building, and we cannot afford to live at such a sacrifice of opportunity. There is only one small house of worship in the town; that the Methodist congregation drew in from a neighboring town a few weeks ago. (This neighboring town is all coming to Morden.) At the Convention held in Brandon in July, I tried to show what an open door presented itself, of easy entrance, to a great work for Christ. The brethren responded cheerfully, and without delay subscribed $400 for the erection of a house of worship in Morden. This was given on condition that I raise an equal amount, for which I became responsible. The Lord's work must be done whoever becomes responsible, and this responsibility is less than that of refusing to do what we can. Of this amount, I have $250 subscribed. We have secured two lots; one was given and the other to be only $50. The regular selling price of 25-ft. lots in Morden is $75 each. But the day has not yet come when we shall ask nothing. We do not want to be selfish, or be excluded to offer our brethren a taste of the luxury of doing good. Any amount you can send us will be thankfully received and acknowledged with pleasure. Pledges payable November 15, will be as good as cash. The house is to seat about 150, and will cost about $1,000. We expect to have it completed Nov. 15, free of debt.

God is blessing us and giving us an opportunity to accomplish a great work for him. We must not be like the boy who, fearing lest his gun would burst, delayed until his game had flown and then lamented that he lost such a chance. Brethren, this is good game, is good season, fire at once. I have never known a Baptist gun to burst yet, and their reports have been heard round the world. We have let too many opportunities pass in this country, but must not let this one. Just give us a little lift, brethren, and the work is done, and we will be happy.

Address,

H. G. MELICK,

Carman, Manitoba.

Home Missionary Notes.

I am now closing up a very interesting and useful missionary tour along the Atlantic coast, in Guysboro and Halifax Counties. I began at Port Beckerton. I would fain have begun further east, as I cherish pleasant memories of my visit to Isaac's Harbour, and New, and Seal and Fisherman's Harbours, and of the wonderful blessings vouchsafed in those places in the spring and early summer of 1884. Circumstances, however, rendered it best for me to begin at Port Beckerton. To that port I was taken free of expense from Halifax, per kindness of Capt. A. Reed, of the packet *Dolliver*. Nothing of considerable importance occurred in my movement westward, except that at Port Hilford, we had an interesting baptism, and welcomed a man and his wife to the fellowship of the church there. I enjoyed my association with Bro. C. E. Baker, and his excellent wife. Bro. Baker is planing to remove his shifter, in the course of the coming September, and Port Hilford and Queens will need a strong man.

I spent the Sabbath at the two holding Baptist sentiments at Goldenville, Liscomb Mills and Ecum Secum. At the latter place, as you have already chronicled, I baptized one person, the first ever baptized by a Baptist minister in that place, leaving this happy believer to go on her way rejoicing.

The missionary was next found at Moser River, a thriving and pleasantly situated settlement. Here the McLean brothers, late of Sussex, N. B., own a large milling establishment, and help much to contribute to the business activity of the place. Here I spent a Sabbath, April 26, and it was a high day for the Baptists of Moser River.

$500.00 REWARD