

## Messenger and Visitor

Published in the interests of the Baptist denomination of the Maritime Provinces by

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Co., Ltd.

TERMS: \$1.50 per annum in advance.

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Address all communications and make all payments to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR.

For further information see page nine.

Printed by Paterson & Co., 107 Gormain Street, St. John, N. B.

### THE FAMILY READING.

What are our young people reading? The answer to this question must have a most important bearing upon their own personal well-being and for the general welfare of the communities in which their lives are to be spent. How much depended for the interests of our own denomination upon the reading matter which was to be found in our Baptist families fifty years ago! If it had been more abundant and better than it was our denominational life to-day would have been correspondingly more vital and intelligent, and if it had been as pernicious as so much of the literature abroad to-day it would have resulted in moral and religious conditions far below the standard of the present. There is no reason to suppose that the reading of our young people of to-day has less significance for the future of the denomination. If the reading of our young people is strong and wholesome—such as will inform the mind and cultivate true ideas and aspirations—we need not fear but that their personal influence in the denomination and the world will also be strong and wholesome. But a great deal of the literature that is seeking admission to our homes to-day is neither strong nor wholesome. It is weak and elevating or perniciously exciting. Its main purpose is to please, and its result too often is to poison. It is vain to expect that such reading will result in the development of that profound Christian faith and high moral purpose which will be the need of the future as they are the need of the present.

In view of the great importance of the results involved, the duty of parents to furnish wholesome reading matter to their children is one that cannot be too strongly emphasized. In these days when good literature can be so easily obtained, and at so little expense, there is small excuse for any parent who fails to supply his family with wholesome reading matter. This is a matter, too, which demands thought and attention. The family reading cannot be safely left to chance. It is true that the boys and girls will probably obtain reading matter from some source, but unless their selection of books and periodicals is guided by more experienced heads than their own, the chances are that very much of their reading will not be of a helpful character. It is to be feared that too many parents who are anxious for their children's welfare and who make many personal sacrifices that they may give them a good start in life so far as material interests are concerned, pay very little attention to the matter of what their children are reading, and take small pains to supply them with wholesome literature. A good many parents may of course be conscious of their inability to direct wisely the reading of their children and to make the best selections of books and papers for their use. There is, however, always the pastor and other friends who will be glad to give them the benefit of their knowledge and experience.

There is one point, at least, in reference to which no Christian parent should be able to have any doubt—that is the importance of supplying his family with the denominational paper. It is worth while to be a Christian at all it is surely worth while to take a Christian newspaper. Can a man or woman be in possession of a living Christian faith and not care to know what is being done in the world for the advancement of the Kingdom of God? Can one be a Presbyterian, a Methodist or a Baptist without wanting to know what his own denomination is doing or undertaking to do, and without sharing as fully as possible in the life of the whole body? And surely he cannot do this apart from the denominational paper. Can anyone really believe in and love his denomination without wanting his children to become intelligently related to its work as well as its principles, and how is this to be unless he takes the denominational paper? We should suppose that every Presbyterian in these Maritime Provinces worthy of the name would take the *Presbyterian Witness*; we should suppose that every Methodist would take the *Wesleyan*; we should suppose that every Free Baptist would take the *Intelligencer*, knowing well the excellence of these papers, it seems to us that it would be almost a crime for any man

up his family without the aid which his denominational paper furnishes, and at an almost nominal cost. We are quite as strongly persuaded that no Baptist in these Provinces can afford to make his own pilgrimage through life or to bring up his family without the help which the weekly visits of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR can give him. The friends of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR say that it is a good paper and abundantly worthy of the support of the denomination. But if the paper were much less valuable than it is we feel sure that none of our people could afford to be without it. And yet there are Baptist families all over the country in which the paper finds no welcome. There are many Baptist people who say they cannot afford to take the paper. But a Christian man must be poor indeed if he cannot afford three cents a week for the sake of the influence which a Christian newspaper brings to his heart and home. It is indeed a question whether he is not so poor as to be on the very verge of bankruptcy. It would indeed be a blessing to some of these poverty-stricken brethren if they could be persuaded to turn the question round and ask, whether for the sake of saving three cents a week, they can afford to lose what they and their families are losing by being deprived of the paper. Of this at least we are assured, that there are many subscribers of long standing to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR who will testify that, for no material consideration, would they be willing to cancel the influences which have come to them and to their families through the denominational paper.

### THE TRUE TEMPLE

The building and dedication of the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem should suggest serious questions for the consideration of those who are disposed to deny the reality of religion and the fact of a divine revelation to men. Why, if there is no reality behind it all, should a people have so dominating a sense of dependence upon some power unseen, and why this strong impulsion to worship? What is the meaning of this fact that the hearts and minds of all peoples have turned to some power above them? Why have men in all ages and in all lands built their temples and consecrated their holy places and believed in the possibility of man drawing near to God? In view of this universal instinct to worship, this instinctive cry of the human heart after God, can we believe that all the cries of men for help, all their prayers for mercy and for pardon, all their anthems of praise and thanksgiving were but idle breath, and that to all these cries for help there has been no answer, no ear to hear, no eye to pity, no arm to save? If there were no foundation in reality for religion, then we might confidently expect that it would be a degrading or at best a futile thing. But no man whose words are worthy of consideration will venture to contend that the influence of religion has been either degrading or futile in human history. No one who is willing to face the truth can doubt that, leaving the future world quite out of the account, the effect of Judaism and Christianity has been to elevate and ennoble humanity. Tried by all the standards by which men judge of human worthiness, human society is the better and the nobler because of the influence upon it of religion, and it is worthy in proportion as the principles of Christianity have found expression in its life.

The Temple which Solomon built and dedicated to Jehovah in Jerusalem was a magnificent structure. It had its place and purpose in the providence of God and in the religious education of the world. But it has had its day and ceased to be. It belonged to the age of shadows and symbols, and now that the reality has come there is no more need of the symbol. The Temple bore symbolic witness to the truth that God reveals himself to men. It was God's House—a place where men might come into the divine presence. But the true meeting place of the divine and the human is not any temple made with hands. The real meeting place is in him whose name is Immanuel—the Son whom "the Father has sanctified and sent into the world." In him dwells "the fulness of the godhead bodily," and He also is Son of Man. He that has seen Him has seen a brother man, and he that has seen Him has seen the Father. It is here, where the divine and the human so mysteriously and so graciously unite, that the real Temple is found—man's meeting place with God. All this may be considered a common place of Christian doctrine, and yet perhaps there is scarcely any other Christian truth that more needs to be emphasized today than this, that Christ is the real temple and that it is in Him, through faith in His name, that men must draw near to God. There is always the danger of regarding the symbol as a reality and so missing the truth which it is intended to teach. To think of any place or any observance as being sacred or sanctifying in itself, apart from the presence of Christ apprehended by the believing heart, is a delusion and a snare. The meanest or the most magnificent place may become equally sacred to the worshipper who by faith apprehends the Lord's presence.

Most wonderful and mysterious in connection with the ancient Jewish Sanctuary was the bright cloud, or "glory," which filled the place. The Temple and all its furnishings, even to the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat and the cherubim, which symbolized the divine presence, were the

nessed to the mystery and glory of Israel's God was a manifestation rather than a symbol of the divine presence and thus an intimation to the people that their worship was accepted. No visible glory in cloud like form hangs now over Christian assemblies, and yet there are many who will gladly witness that they have been made conscious of a more than human presence and power in the place of prayer. "I shall never forget," writes Dr. Louis A. Banks, "a scene I once witnessed in a little country church in the far west. The people of the community had been gathering day after day for a week to offer their sacrifice of prayer and praise to God. They were seeking for the conversion of their children and neighbors as well as for renewed spiritual life for themselves. This had been going on for days, when one evening, as the incense of prayer went up from the altar, the glory of Jehovah filled the place. All hearts seemed melted to repentance and confession. In all parts of the house boys and girls and men and women were inquiring the way of salvation. . . . For years afterwards, and perhaps till this day, men talked of the peculiar way in which the glory of Jehovah filled that humble church with His presence." There are readers of this article who will recall similar things in their own experience.

### Editorial Notes.

—The first day of the present month marked Queen Alexandra's entrance upon her sixtieth year. By her queenly qualities and gracious ways, Alexandra has won a large place in the hearts of her subjects, and Britons everywhere will fervently hope that many years may be added to her life and reign.

—The *Presbyterian Witness* which was founded fifty-six years ago by the late James Barnes, and since his death in 1883 has been in the hands of his son, Mr. H. W. Barnes, has been transferred to a company with Rev. D. Styles Fraser as manager. Dr. Robert Murray will continue to edit the *Witness*, which is a guarantee of high ability in that department. The aim of the company will be to maintain and increase the influence and usefulness of the paper.

—In alluding to President Trotter's canvass last week we spoke of it as being in the interest of the Twentieth Century Fund. Most of our readers would doubtless understand that "Twentieth Century" was a slip of the pen and that the new Forward Movement Fund was intended. The Twentieth Century Fund, as we suppose everybody knows, represents the undertaking of our people in these Provinces to raise \$50,000 for Missions. The work of raising this is in the hands of a committee with Rev. H. F. Adams as Field Secretary.

—Bishop Courtney of the Anglican church of Nova Scotia has resigned to become curate of the wealthy parish of St. James, New York City. Dr. Courtney is an Englishman by birth, but had spent some years in the ministry in the United States before coming to preside over the diocese of Nova Scotia. He is a man of uncommon ability both as a preacher and as an administrator, and during the sixteen years that he has been the Bishop of Nova Scotia has won the respect of all denominations.

—From later despatches it would appear that the optimistic reports in reference to a settlement between Russia and Japan are not justified by the facts. A Tokio correspondent of the *London Times* says that the suspicion is growing among foreign residents in that city that deliberate attempts are being made in Europe to credit Russia with pacific procedures of which there is no sign visible in Japan. It is also said that Japan will firmly adhere to her foreign policy which involves a demand for the integrity and independence of Korea and the fulfilment of Russia's pledges respecting Manchuria.

—Rev. George A. Jackson, of the General Theological Library in Boston, says the *Congregationalist*, has gathered some suggestive figures from the denominational year-books showing the condition of Protestant churches in New England. In the six States there are 5,650 churches of thirteen denominations, besides ninety Jewish congregations and 1,339 Roman Catholic churches and stations. Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Universalists and Unitarians, in the order named, have 4,737 churches. Leaving out the territory in Connecticut west of the Connecticut River, less than 1,500 churches have membership of 100, with ability to pay their pastors a salary of \$1,000. There are only 245 of the whole number with a membership of 300 or over and benevolent gifts reaching \$1,000 or upwards. Of these churches 105 are Congregational, 45 Baptist and 40 Episcopalian.

—An Ottawa despatch lately reported the incorporation of Sir Frederick Borden, Hon. Sydney Fisher, Hon. Clifford Sifton, Hon. Charles Fitzpatrick and other well-known persons into a company to be known as "The Ottawa Racing Association, Limited." The racing business which this company is formed to promote is so universally connected with gambling and other vices that we are sure there will be a very general regret throughout the country that a number of our most prominent public men have lent their names and their influence to encourage it. It seems