

## Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company, Ltd

Publishers and Proprietors

TERMS } \$2.00 PER ANNUM.  
\$1.50 IF PAID IN ADVANCE.

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85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Printed by PATERSON & CO., 105 and 107 Germain St.

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### The Baptists Across the Sea.

The London Anniversary Meetings of the Baptists of Great Britain and Ireland, were held April 19th-27th. From the reports of the meetings in our English exchanges, we judge that they were attended with the usual degree of interest. The statistical report appears to indicate a generally healthy condition of the body. The number of baptisms for the year was 16,899, which is larger by 94 than that for the preceding year, and that again was larger than for any year since 1894. The whole number of church members reported is 360,475, and the net gain in membership for the year, 5,000. During the year fifty-one churches and thirty-six personal members were received into the Baptist Union.

In the presidency of the Union, Dr. Clifford is succeeded by Mr. Cuff, of Shoreditch, London, a man of strongly evangelical spirit, who has given many years of devoted and successful service to the Baptist cause in the East End. Dr. Clifford spoke of the growing unity of the Baptist body as represented in the Union. He looked forward with the greatest hopes concerning the development of the life of the country through the service which the Baptist Union would be able to render in the coming time. He welcomed his successor with the utmost confidence and with the warmest affection. "We look forward," he said, "to the coming year with thankfulness that God has given us such a man to lead us, and with assurance that his work will be a far-shining success. . . . We delight in recognizing the rich record of service which our friend has made in the East End of the Metropolis. We rejoice in his robust spirit, in his cheery outlook upon life, in his fervent evangelical spirit, in his full-souled consecration."

In his inaugural address President Cuff said it was his misfortune to follow in the chair one of the most brilliant men of the time—"a man who would adorn the House of Commons, disturb the House of Lords, and make a Prime Minister worthy of this august nation. Was there ever such a Baptist in all our history as Dr. Clifford? We all admire his multitudinous gifts and graces . . . and are always sorry when we are compelled to differ from some things he seems to hold dear."

In accordance with a desire which had already found expression in several quarters through the press, Dr. Alexander Maclaren, of Manchester, was elected Vice-President of the Union. Some hesitation was felt in the matter owing to a doubt as to whether Dr. Maclaren would accept a re-election to the chair. But when it was learned that, if the vote indicated a sufficient degree of unanimity, the position would not be declined, the Union at once saw its way clear, and the result of the ballot showed a substantially unanimous vote. As it is an unwritten law of the Union that the Vice-President of this year becomes President next year, Dr. Maclaren will preside over the meetings of the Union for 1901, and as the autumn meeting for that year is to be in Edinburgh, it is considered especially fitting that the distinguished preacher of Manchester, who is of Scottish birth, should occupy the chair of the Union at that time.

President Cuff in his address, dealt with the church and the source of its power for work and service. The secret of strength and joy in the work and worship of the church was that other Comforter whom Christ promised should come and abide forever. The one great need of the hour he declared to be—"a primitive and real faith in the abiding pres-

ence and power of the Spirit in the modern church." We need the practical faith in the presence and power of the Spirit which characterized the first disciples, and to bring Pentecost down into our lives by making more room for the Holy Spirit's co-operation in our work. "The times have changed and things are not what they were; but human nature is the same, and the church in all the centres and essentials of its life is the same still. We only need the old power to enable us to draw the whole world to Christ. . . . The Holy Ghost is not exhausted, or impoverished, or impotent. The Bible is still full of everything that is divine and wonderful, human and instructive. . . . Believing the Bible with such absolute faith, we are looking for and expecting more light to break forth from its pages, more visions, more revelations of truth, more and profounder knowledge of the history and mystery of the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of the glorious Son of God." Dr. A. Maclaren is quoted as saying: "There is a mystery of correspondence between Christ and the Paraclete. Possibly that upper chamber was but the cradle of the Spirit's revelations; other and higher unfoldings and unveilings of his grace and glory are yet to follow; more signal triumphs over Satan; louder and clearer voices and visions of God; new raptures and radiances, when devout souls, transfigured in his presence, are changed from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit, as they with open face behold his supernal beauty. That coming of the Spirit may have been, like the blush of 'the conscious water' at Cana, only the beginning of miracles, wherein he showed forth his glory as a type and prophecy of things to come."

### McMaster Commencement.

Our friends in Ontario are to be congratulated upon the successful completion of ten years of history of McMaster University. The attendance has steadily increased. In the year just closed the enrollment included 193 students, of whom 145 were in arts and 48 in theology. At the commencement last week, 34 were graduated in arts and 20 in theology. Of the students in arts six were young ladies. Moulton College enrolled in the year 207 students, and Woodstock College 140. Woodstock closes its financial year with the modest sum of five thousand dollars; [compare Horton Academy]. The commencement exercises were largely attended, full of life and enthusiasm. On Lord's day, 6th inst., Dr. McLaurin preached the Pyfe Missionary sermon, and Dr. Keirstead, of Acadia, the Baccalaureate sermon. Monday the senate was in session. Monday evening the Alumni held a public meeting, at which representatives of the graduating classes spoke, and a lecture was given by Rev. Mr. Gilmour on "The Message of the Prophets in regard to Salvation."

Tuesday afternoon was given to a "Collation," which means a banquet and speeches, the time occupied being over three hours. Rev. C. A. Eaton, Rev. W. W. Weeks, Prof. McKay, Rev. J. H. King and others spoke. The tone of the addresses, as of those of Tuesday evening, was very serious and earnest compared with what is heard in most universities. Indeed McMaster seems to be very religious in all its exercises, impulses and ideals. But there is not the first suggestion of cant. The thought is vigorous and the aspiration high. Tuesday evening the degrees were conferred and addresses given by Hon. G. E. Foster, Principal Grant of Queen's University, and Dr. Keirstead. Rev. Joshua Denovan, known to our readers by his able contributions, received the degree LL. D. Chancellor Wallace is highly esteemed by the University and its constituency. He still lacks \$5000 of the \$35,000 required to erect an additional building, but it is expected the amount will soon be secured in spite of the extraordinary efforts of other departments of denominational enterprise.

Dr. Rand, the wisdom of whose leadership in the past is being more fully understood as the years pass, is, we regret to say, in a somewhat precarious state of health. We hope his sojourn on the Basin of Minas during the summer, will bring him renewed strength for his literary and university labors. He has done a great work for our body in Ontario. Dr. Welton continues to hold his commanding position as Professor of Hebrew. He is an authority in his department, and dispenses sweetness and light in abundant measure. During the vacation he will continue work on the Commentary on Genesis which he is engaged to write. It is, of course, a most difficult book to expound, and Dr. Welton's learning and spiritual discernment will be well expended in the explanation of this portion of Scripture.

Dr. Goodspeed is a tower of strength to the University as the foremost theological teacher of the Baptists of Canada. His labors are abundant and fruitful always. He will spend a portion of the coming summer in the provinces by the sea.

Rev. H. P. Whidden who is about entering upon a pastorate in Brantford, will continue in office as Instructor in Education at McMaster.

It will be seen that a number of Maritime men are laboring with our brethren of Ontario. This is all well. We need not take space to acknowledge our indebtedness for gifts of a similar character from Ontario. It may be added to these statements about the University that the ministry of Rev. Charles A. Eaton, at Bloor street, and of Rev. W. W. Weeks, at Walmer Road, contribute largely to the spiritual life of the institutions in Toronto.

Among the graduates in arts is a son of Rev. W. F. Armstrong, formerly our missionary to the Telugus, and Mr. F. R. Crosby, of Hebron.

Mr. Manthorne, of Mills Village, N. S., and Rev. J. H. King, formerly pastor in N. S., completed their theological courses at McMaster.

### Seed-Sowing and Results.

Various phases of the truth concerning the kingdom of heaven are set forth by our Lord in his parables. In studying them it is important to grasp the central truth which each parable is designed to teach. We must not expect to find everything taught in one parable, and we must be careful not to invest the details of the parables with meanings which they were not intended to bear.

In the parable of the Sower, which constitutes our Bible lesson for the current week, a part at least of the lesson to be learned is the responsibility of the hearer, the importance of giving the truth such a reception as it deserves. "Take heed how ye hear," for everything depends upon it. See the wheat-field which the sower in the springtime carefully sowed all over with good seed. Now, in the harvest time, there are parts of the field where the golden grain waves luxuriantly, but here, and there, and there are places where there is no ripened grain—only bare ground, or ground in which weeds and thorns have overcome and choked out the wheat. Wherefore is this result, or rather this lack of result? It is because in three cases out of four the grain did not find a proper seed bed. It found a beaten pathway where, lying exposed, it became the prey of the birds, or a shallow soil in which it sprang up quickly, but presently for lack of moisture withered away, or ground filled with thorns which springing up choked the growing grain and it became unfruitful.

This then is the lesson for the hearer.—The truth of the kingdom appeals to the best that is in you. It seeks the depths of your nature. It demands your heart. It must be to you the chief thing or nothing. It profits you nothing to come within the sound of the gospel, if it is to you only a tale of little meaning. If you have only ears to hear it carelessly, better not to hear it at all. If the truth is not in your estimation worthy of the deepest and best that is in you, then do not play at being religious, do not trifle with the truth. Give your heart to God, and you shall be abundantly blessed, but do not think that the seed of the kingdom will flourish in a shallow soil. A heart that is too shallow to give serious consideration to the most serious of all subjects, or that is made hard and unresponsive by the constantly passing wheels of business or of fashion, or that is dominated by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, cannot bring forth fruit for God.

But the parable carries also encouragement for the sower. It is worth while to sow the seed of the Kingdom. The most paying investment that a man can make is to sow seed and to gather fruit to life eternal. Jesus thought it worth while to sow that seed even though it must be watered with his blood. Human hearts furnish the proper soil for the germination and development of the seed. We must not think that because the parable indicates three kinds of ground which are barren of grain and only one that is fruitful, there is therefore only one in four of the hearers who really receive the gospel. After all, the wheat-field in which the good seed grows and brings forth some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold, is likely to be much greater in extent than all that is comprised in the wayside, the stony places and the thorn patches. God's wheat-field is not small nor his harvest insignificant. It is not for human thought to forecast his purposes or measure his results, but that final issue which shall satisfy the soul of the Redeemer will also satisfy the souls of the redeemed, and will give them abundant returns for every effort invested in sowing the good seed of the Kingdom.

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