

## Messenger and Visitor

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### THE BAPTIST UNION.

The Spring Assembly of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland was held in Flossbury Chapel, London, the last week in April. In the importance of the subjects discussed and the ability of the addresses delivered the recent meetings of the Union would appear to compare very favorably with those of previous years. There was some talk last year of discontinuing the Spring Assembly, but the proposal did not meet with general favor and those who advocated it seem now to be quite content that the spring assemblies shall continue to be held. *The British Weekly* says that it is generally acknowledged that the meetings of 1904 were among the most successful ever known. A writer in *The Baptist Times* alludes to the spirit of cheerfulness which characterized the meetings, and the evidence that the Union had thrown off the feeling of depression, which many things in politics and religion in recent years have had a tendency to produce. "The first session of the Union made it abundantly clear that if we had been at all cast down the Lord had affected by us one of his blessed substitutions and had given the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, the thrill of energy for the timor of weakness." The writer quoted, concludes, however, that the irrepressible cheerfulness of the meetings was due in part to the splendid weather which made London a city of delight to a crowd of happy visitors.

The retiring president of the Union is Alderman George White, M. P., who is quite a thoroughgoing Baptist and is said to have shown himself one of the most sagacious and statesmanlike presidents which the Union has ever had. Mr. White is succeeded in the presidency by Rev. John Wilson of Woodwich. He is described by the *Baptist Times* as a plain preacher to working men, and his election is said to have been a surprise to many. But Mr. Wilson appears to have filled the important position with great satisfaction to the Union. His introductory address was on the subject of "The Prophetic Ministry of the Christian Church," and occupied seventy-five minutes. *The British Weekly* says: "The address was full of common sense and practical wisdom. It bristled with side thrusts, it was alive throughout with humor, and saturated with spiritual power, and its telling points were received with eager and unflinching response from beginning to end."

The Union chose as its Vice-President Judge Willis who, in accordance with the usual order, will probably be the Union's next president. "In Judge Willis," says *The Baptist Times*, "we have a leader who was ever a fighter, whose convictions have stood the test of professional distinction and worldly success, who is a Puritan in theology, a little child in worship, whose acknowledged obligations to the Baptist ministry ought to be an incentive to every preacher among us, and who is pledged by frequent protestation and life-long habit to be the friend and helper of our village churches."

Among other addresses delivered in connection with the meetings of the Union may be mentioned those by Dr. Whitley, Rev. G. P. Gould and W. V. Fullerton. Dr. Whitley's theme was "Baptist Witness." It is characterized as a brief review of the Catholic theory of baptism as the channel of salvation, leading up to a statement of the Baptist view which, in the words of Dr. McLaren, is that "baptism is a declaratory symbol; an act of obedience to Christ; and it is nothing more." Mr. Gould spoke of "Literature as an Instrument of Denominational Extension," and he emphasized in this connection the importance of the religious and denominational journal. Mr. Fullerton set forth the "Lessons from the Religious Census Returns." His address is spoken of as a brilliant effort which carried the audience with enthusiasm. An address by Rev. F. B. Meyer which had for its central idea the "Great heart" of Bunyan was heard with great appreciation. An excellent and suggestive paper on the Ethics of the Pulpit was read before the Minister's Conference by Rev. Wheeler Robinson, M. A.

A number of resolutions in the interests of moral and

political reforms were adopted by the Union. There was a resolution, moved by Mr. George White, M. P., protesting against the sanction given by the Government to indentured Chinese labor in the mines of South Africa. The Union reaffirmed its unabated and determined opposition to the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, and expressed its regret and indignation that the Government has now introduced a coercion Bill for compelling the Welsh people to pay for sectarian education in Wales instead of withdrawing a measure against which the whole principality has protested. There was also a temperance resolution condemning the licensing proposals of the Government contained in the Bill now before Parliament, and appealing to the members of the denomination "to resist by all means in their power proposals which have had their origin in party exigencies and have no regard to the real interests of the nation."

The adoption by the Assembly of a scheme for consolidation in Home Mission work is regarded by the *Baptist Times* as perhaps the most important business transacted during the meetings. The Baptist Union Home Mission Fund in the past, it is said, has been "scandalously disproportioned to the immensely important business which it essayed to compass," and this is attributed in part to the confusion and belittlement caused by multiplied and competing appeals. It is believed that great advantage will result from the claim on behalf of the Home work being made single and commanding like that on behalf of the Foreign work. In this effort for consolidation Rev. J. H. Shakespeare has been the leader and is said to have managed the matter with remarkable ability.

### BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT.

Strange and significant beyond all that the eye of the casual observer could have discerned were those scenes which our Bible lesson for the week records, enacted in the Roman Judgement Hall in Jerusalem. The Jewish Council had pronounced judgment upon Jesus and had delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor as a culprit worthy of death. Pilate sits enthroned as judge, chief priests and elders and scribes are there to accuse and to demand that the death sentence be pronounced, and the multitude is there to give emphasis to the accusations and demands of the Jewish leaders. Jesus stands before Pilate, alone and silent, to be accused, mocked, scourged and finally condemned to the Cross. Weak and forsaken he seems in the presence of his enemies. He is as a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers, dumb. His enemies are the judges, and he is condemned; they triumph and he suffers defeat. So it must have seemed to those who looked on. But things are not always what they seem.

As we look back to that day so significant in the history of the world, to that Judgement Hall and the scenes which were enacted therein, it must be plain to us that, however terrible was the suffering which that day brought to Jesus, it did not bring defeat. On the contrary we know that it was a day of decisive victory for the Son of Man. It marked the completion of the work which the Father had given him to do. It has been made so plain that all who will may read that it was not Jesus who that day was judged and condemned. He was, as he is eternally, the judge of men, and according to their attitude to him all men are justified or condemned. As it was impossible that the Son of God should be holden of death, so likewise it was impossible that he could be judged of men. It was the priests and the elders, the populace and the Roman Governor who were judged and who forever stand condemned according to the record of that day.

And the process of "sifting out the souls of men before his judgment-seat" goes on. It is by Jesus Christ that every generation is being judged. There are men in this generation who think, just as the priests and the elders and the Roman governor, thought, that they are competent to pronounce judgment on Jesus Christ. But it is they, not he upon whom the judgment is being pronounced.

"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" asked Pilate who thought in his ignorance and pride of authority that the fate of Jesus lay in his hands. How blind it is possible for a man to be in reference to the great possibilities of life! And yet perhaps Pilate was not altogether blind and insensible to the real significance of the scenes in which he was that day an actor. Perhaps the Roman Governor knew in a half-conscious way at least that it was not the man whom they mockingly called king of the Jews, but Pilate himself who was being judged—that the man who pretended to hold the scales of justice was really being weighed in the balances and found wanting. If Pilate had befriended Jesus that day how different it might have been with him in the day of final account. The love of that silent man might have been worth to him more than the favor of a thousand Caesars. In that friendless man who seemed so helpless before the Roman judgment seat there was power and grace to lift Pilate's name out of the depths of infamy and make it shine as a star forever and ever. But like so many another Pilate permitted his cowardice and his greed to blind him to his supreme opportunity. We cannot indeed blame Pilate for not at once recognizing Jesus for all that he was the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world. What we must blame him for is that knowing Jesus to be an inno-

cent and falsely accused man, he did not defend him with all the power at his command but basely yielded to the malicious threat of the Jews and condemned the innocent to the cross. If Pilate had followed the light that he had we cannot doubt but that he would have received more light, if he had treated Jesus as an innocent man had a right to be treated, he might have found in him his Saviour. The question which Pilate asked—"What shall I do with Jesus?" must press itself on many in this Christian land and in this generation. Men must have to do with him who was crucified whether they would or not. Men may refuse to have him as their Saviour, they cannot choose but have him as their judge. He stands before them as he did before Pilate and their attitude toward him determine the judgment wherewith they are judged.

### Editorial Notes.

—On our obituary page this week will be found notice of the death in Boston, Mass., of Mrs. Susan L. Hill, widow of the late Rev. Dr. Ingram E. Hill, who was for so long one of the foremost leaders in our denominational work in these Provinces and whose character and work are held in kindly remembrance. Mrs. Hill also is affectionately remembered by many friends in this Province.

—The General Assembly of the Presbyterian church of Canada meets this week in St. John, the initial meeting being held on Wednesday. The Assembly will bring together a large number of ministers and leading laymen from all parts of Canada, and many of the meetings will be of great interest to the church-going public. The evangelical churches in the city we understand, will generally be supplied next Sunday by ministers in attendance upon the meetings of the Assembly.

—Remarks frequently made at certain quarters would seem to indicate an apprehension that the law and practice of the Puritan Sabbath in all its severity is to be revived. No thinking person needs to be told that there is no tendency in that direction. The danger is all the other way. If however the precept and practice which is endorsed in some very respectable quarters shall prevail generally we shall soon be in easy reach of the continental Sunday. And if the only choice were between the Puritan Sunday and the Continental Sunday which is not the case—can there be any doubt that we should be wise to choose the former?

—Another case of death from diphtheria under Christian Science treatment is reported from St. Thomas, Ont. A young girl, named Kennedy, having been seized with the disease was treated by a Christian Scientist, and a physician was not called until the child was unconscious and past hope of recovery. Evidence was given by physicians at the inquest to the effect that if a physician had been called in time and anti-toxine administered the child would have recovered. Another child of the family died from paralysis of the heart, after having apparently recovered from diphtheria. It seems altogether probable that both these lives would have been saved under proper medical treatment.

—Owing to the pressure of public opinion, voiced especially by the New York Evening Post, the Western Union Telegraph Company has discontinued the collection and distribution of news in reference to race horses. The conclusion of the Western Union Company with race-track gamblers had become a scandal, which the directors of the company, many of them men of high reputation could no longer ignore. It is said that the race track and pool room business of the Western Union Company was worth a million dollars a year. How much it was costing the people who were thereby being duped by the gamblers no one can tell, but no doubt it was enough to make it very profitable for the gamblers to pay this million dollars to the company for the purpose of advertising their nefarious business. How closely the gambling and horse racing are associated is shown by a remark of the New York Independent, which referring to the effect of the Western Union's action on the racing business, says: "We do not see how the race tracks will stand it and continue to do business, for nearly all of them apart from certain high horse races, depend for their support on the gamblers."

—Catholic rulers may not, with permission of the Pope, pay official visits to the king of Italy, such an act being construed at the Vatican as in some sense an endorsement of the action of the Italian Government in depriving the Pope of his temporal sovereignty. The recent visit of President Loubet of France to Italy was accordingly followed by a formal protest from the Vatican. It appears that the note embodying this protest was sent not only to France but to other Catholic countries, and that the protest addressed by the Vatican to the various Governments contained a passage, omitted in that addressed to France, as follows: "In spite of all the Papal Nuncio remains in Paris, it is solely on account of grave motives of an altogether special character." The French Government it is said, had at first decided to take no action in reference to the Papal protest, but when it was discovered that there had been a threat of withdrawing the Papal Nuncio at Paris, there was much excitement in France and a vigorous demand for retaliation, and accordingly Mr. Nisard the French Ambassador at the Vatican has been recalled. The