

MESSENGER and VISITOR.

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S. M. C. BLACK, Editor.
J. H. SAUNDERS, Business Manager.

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Messenger and Visitor

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 30, 1891.

THE CHURCH'S CHARACTER.

Every church, like every man, has its character. When the members are organized, take on a name as a church, and engage in Christian service, it will not be long before distinct outlines of purpose, consecration, intelligence, will be seen. That character the church will probably keep. There may be some change, upward or downward, but the consciousness of the body will gradually become so fixed that the church will try to be consistent with itself. The minister who goes from one church to another will find that he must study each church as he studies each man. He cannot bring a full knowledge of what the church is, but must study its character closely, patiently.

And not only has each church a distinct character; it has also a distinct reputation. For the methods, doings and standing of each church soon come to be known abroad. The church is set on a hill indeed. Often that is matter of rejoicing; but it is cause for serious thinking as well. Some churches have a good reputation. They are known through the denomination as setting a high value upon the ministry; they are not changing their pastors every year or so. They stand by well-directed effort of their leader; they cooperate with one another; they maintain a good name in the community for their godliness; they are active, enterprising, benevolent. Their very names are sweet and helpful. We have such churches, though not so many as we could wish! They are pillars in the denomination and in the religious life of the country; they represent Christ's truth in the world; they are living epistles. There are others that have no such reputation. When the settlement of a pastor is recorded no one expects him to stay settled for any length of time; no one thinks of any steady work by the church after the novelty of having a new minister has disappeared. It is not supposed that this church will occupy itself with anything more serious than admiring or criticizing the pastor. The number of this class is also probably small. Between these two classes we have all grades. There is the quarrelling church; it is always in a quarrel; the old people go against the young people, or more likely some of the old people are against some others of the old people. If the minister suits one party, that is a good reason why he should not suit the other party. When a minister is to be chosen, we are told that he must be a man who can unite "all parties," just as the leader of a political party must be found who can unite all sections of "the party." It is recognized apparently that "these parties" in the church must be. Long before the church itself knows what a reputation it has for a character like this, it is talked about far and wide, and known in its true character all over the country. If such a church would hear (it cannot what is said of it, how its ears would tingle. Then there are churches that have a reputation for meanness. They give their pastor a small salary; they do everything in a similar way. And our churches are not peculiar. The Presbyterian elders in some congregations will quarrel as well as some Baptist deacons. Even the early churches had their disputes. It is pretty clear that they had different parties in the church at Corinth. And Paul's letters to the churches show that each church had won for itself some kind of a reputation. So it is now.

A church, then, ought to be careful of its reputation. For its standing involves the standing of Christ's cause in the community where it lives and far beyond its territorial limits. The members of the church who are careful of their own standing should have an anxiety that their branch of Zion should be well spoken of. Quarrelling and heresy and indifference and worldliness ought to sting every member's conscience as a wound to his own honor; for the honor of Christ's cause is at stake.

DOCTRINE.

Teaching or exhortation, which?

Avoid doctrinal preaching and give us the Gospel, is not an uncommon remark. Timid souls are never wanting who look with disfavor upon any style of preaching that may disturb the serenity of sensitive friends. Let the preacher deal in delightful generalities, let him make frequent and protracted exhortations into the realms of literature and art, let him occupy himself with scientific or philosophic niceties, with an occasional exhortation to correct living thrown in, and all will be well. But if he should be so indiscreet as to preach plain New Testament doctrine he is at once regarded as a sinner above all that dwell at Jerusalem. Whence comes this strange shrinking from strong invigorating truth? Is it from heaven or of men? Surely it is not a healthy sign when God's people manifest uneasiness under the plain preaching of the Word. Surely, if any living man should speak fearlessly and faithfully, it is the preacher. He, of all others, should be the last to pander to a perverted taste. If he does not preach doctrine there is nothing else for him to preach. He is false to his commission and faithless to his Lord. The simplest invitation of the Gospel involves cardinal doctrines. Faith and obedience are fundamental truths. Has the time come when faith and obedience should not be preached? Pastors should give more attention to basal facts and principles; they should lead their people into a closer study of those truths that mould, enrich and fortify character. No man can acquire spiritual fire if he is condemned to subsist on theological sweetmeats. Religion is something more than emotional experience. There must be an assimilation of truth before there can be any intelligent sympathy with it. Hortative preaching has its place, but it should not be exclusive. People will weary of it and grow weaker under it. They should be frequently braced up by a wise presentation of those doctrines that have made us what we are.

ARE WE BAPTISTS?

There has been such a vigorous crusade of late against denominationalism, and such a triumphant exaltation of breadth and liberality, such hurrying to bow down before the charming goddess of Union, such a general touting down of points and rounding off of corners, that we are disposed to call a halt and gravenly ask just where and what we are. There has been so much apparent eagerness to get together—so much seeking to find common ground, so much strain and bustle to embrace somebody else and get embraced in turn, that we need for breathing space to enable us to pull ourselves together and ascertain whether we are ourselves or somebody else. But after all these mellowing and refining processes, after all these interesting and long-continued religious flirtations that form such a curious page in recent denominational history, we are gratified to be able to announce that we are still Baptists, and for aught that can be gathered from present indications, we are likely to remain Baptists for a good long time to come. Nothing, in all that has taken place, has altered our allegiance to historic beliefs. We are still what we were, in faith and practice; and before we abandon our position there must be some better excuse for it than to gain a reputation for liberality, or to smooth the pathway to general denominational wedlock. We are not of yesterday. Our history is venerable with age, and enriched by the deeds of men of whom the "world was not worthy." Our existence is not an impertinence. Truth demanded just such uncompromising, consistent advocacy as we have given it. Unhampered by ecclesiastical or political control; beyond the charge of borrowing form or ritual from an effete hierarchy; wedded to all that the Bible teaches in faith and practice, the Baptists have been able to do for Christ and His cause what no other Christian body could accomplish. We are satisfied to their particular ideals, and carry out lines of policy for which they may be best adapted. We hope we will not be charged with exclusiveness if we claim the same privilege. We hold ourselves ready for union at any time, but it must be union on the Bible. We are shy of man-made beliefs. Attempts in the line of denominational union have not been so encouraging in the past as to lead us to be over-anguine regarding their future success. We have a history and a policy. Let us be true to the one and fearless in carrying out the other, and the result will be all that any Christian body could desire.

THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE met Monday morning. Prayer was offered by Rev. J. A. Ford. The following ministers were present: Revs. C. H. Martell, W. J. Stewart, E. Hickson, J. A. Spencer, G. A. Hartley, S. Walton, A. E. Ingram and J. A. Ford. The following pastors reported additions to their churches: Rev. G. A. Hartley, two by baptism; Rev. J. A. Ford, two by baptism and two by letter; Rev. C. H. Martell, two by letter. Rev. W. J. Stewart gave an interesting address on young people's societies. Discussion of the subject was deferred till the next meeting.

Teacher and Taught in the Sunday School.

The Sunday-school teacher is in a unique position. To define his place and relation to his class is the object of this paper.

From the outset, his work differs from that of all other instructors; not in essence, but in that it exceeds it in aim and extent. The secular teacher is satisfied when the pupil has intelligently grasped the part of the subject presented. This is only a fraction of the Sunday teacher's work. Through the mind he must reach the moral nature, breaking up all resistance by the strong impetus of the indwelling Spirit of God. There is a task worthy of all effort; for his direct result, and its reaction upon him who attempts it. The teacher in the Sabbath-school, then, should be a kind of lever to raise his pupils Godward; power acting through him, but coming only from one source.

Thus the bond between teacher and taught is an intensely personal one. Mathematics may be learned from a book; religion is the gift of a Divine person. Read the Bible till our eyes ache, strain the mind to devour all the thought food there, perceive beauty and goodness—yes, and truth in the Word; yet it is incompetent to bring any from death into life unless God wills to work by its agency. But there is another channel through which the Creator sends, the life-current of the soul, and that is humanity. It is a fact that a man, and often a poor specimen at that, can get the helm of another's heart more quickly and mysteriously than any other created thing. So the teacher, when he faces his class on Sundays is not merely a machine for stuffing brains with knowledge, sausage fashion; nor a photograph to roll off endless platitudes at; but not into the listless minds before him; but he comes in his God-given capacity as a living soul, who must by all the art of the teacher get so close to the dormant natures of his pupils that they, too, shall glow with the warmth of the new life. Just here is where we fail. We may teach ever so well or ill; the results are indifferent unless Christ burns along our thought. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. A class may be interesting, the teacher possibly brilliant; but when a chance word or gesture of his reveals a heart which is a throbbing muscle and no more, pupils are chilled, and the cold is very deadly. It is the Spirit that quickeneth.

A Sunday-school teacher does not preach. His work is to introduce the Word of God—not a sermon—into the most fertile part of the soul; and he is in possession of means for this which make preaching superfluous. By skillful questioning he can set the mind a-quiver with intelligence; then let him drop the seed. When by a sympathetic, delicate manipulation of his class he has gained their confidence, and brought them out of that snail-shell of reserve in which so many ensconce themselves, he has a possibility of influence that is grand or terrible as he has been set on fire from above, or has nothing but ashes or flameless wood where God's altar should stand.

What, then, of results? Black failure most frequently attends our effort, even when we think we have made some impression, and feel that God was not far off. What is the key to the success that must follow close on the right exercise of such a power? Must it follow indeed, but when? Resurrection means death first. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it bringeth forth much fruit," said Christ. It is that no word becomes a power until it has been forgotten. True, a word may prompt to immediate action; but our nature is responsible for the act rather than its apparent motive, for if we were not what we are, such a thing would not move us at all. Iron attracts the compass needle, but iron has no effect on a bar of brass or zinc. So words that are at once acted upon only show that there is something responsive deeper down in the soul that determines its action under given circumstances. This something we call character; and it is character that we want to reach, not the weather-vanes that only mark the direction of the soul's current. Only a fool tries to change the wind by climbing to the steeple. But when the seed-thought has dropped clean out of sight into some deep crevice of the soul, then there is a certainty that it will become truly active in forming character. So, when all seems most quiet, we know that beneath the surface there may be changes going on, which shall by and by be manifest in some volcano-burst or mountain-fold of action. "My Word shall not return unto me void," says the Lord; but He does not guarantee the seed to germinate and grow in a day or a decade. We all know something of what one day may be to God, and we also know how often He takes the thousand years instead. Thus we gather that pater is our labor without effect of some kind; if it be in the Lord it is also in vain. Success, if we can read it aright, attends all right effort as inevitably as though the Omnipotent Himself were working. As though?—I am the vine; ye are the branches,"—it is Christ in us, the hope of glory for ourselves and our

pupils. Not but what we may be handicapped by indifference, or partly fail through lack of skill to greatly move those whom we would lift, but as much as we have of Christ, so strong are we.

We are sometimes urged to magnify our office. Better tell us to open our eyes and see the greatness there already,—just that. In the last analysis we do not teach the Bible or anything else exterior, directly; but we teach ourselves to our classes. The truth that we can press through into the core and substance of a pupil's heart is the truth that has entered into our nature. We have become assimilated to it, we know it, live it, and therefore we are in a position to drive it home as a salient point of our own personality. We go for sympathy to one who knows pain; they can impart knowledge only who know; the motive with which I would inculcate my pupil must be one that incites me, or I'm wasting breath and wronging my both. Christ spoke as never man spoke—how was that? He spoke with authority, with words that were in thought and diction His own, and He was the Great Teacher. He was indeed the Word made flesh, the acting out in a man of God's truth; so when He taught He did not deal in abstractions or casuistries, but preached Him; self, not a system or a philosophy, "I am the truth." What we want, then, is to bring dead souls into contact with the living Christ. If we are teachers in fact we can bring our own souls into contact with others. If we are Christians, we are members of Christ—not shrubs formed after the pattern of some model tree, but branches of the overshadowing presence Himself. Need we express the conclusion? We cannot save, neither can a sickle reap; but men use a sickle and God uses us.

There is much that is commonplace about Sunday-school teaching. Hence there is need of idealization. "And in this case the ideal is the real. Back of all the weary work and unresponsive classes are facts—not fancies—enough to stimulate to the most earnest effort. It is possible to be deadly practical, even in teaching living truth. Men drill rocks with diamonds, nor hesitate to use the jewel for a tool. Ours is more than hand-to-hand work. Pupils are not won at arm's length. We must draw close and put off that breast-plate of distance which we guard our sensitive silver in society. It's a cool handshake with gloves. Naturally in this unprotected state we are open to injury. Many a stab the teacher receives when he lays bare his heart to his class. But only he that loathes his life shall find it. If we never receive pain from our pupils we cannot be in a condition to do more than exercise their minds. Peter's denial hurt Christ because He loved Peter. A deep regard for the most recalcitrant scholar must be the sentiment of every teacher who sees things as they are.

Christ said: "All power is given unto Me." There is no might method; teachers and their modes of instruction are simply channels through which the taught are brought into communication with Him in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell.

J. EDMUND BARRS.

N. B. Southern Baptist Association.

(Continued.)

MONDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

After the usual opening exercises, the moderator called attention to the fact that Rev. C. E. Pines, who has been laboring in these provinces for several years past, and has just closed a three years' successful pastorate at St. George, is about to leave these provinces. It was unanimously resolved that Bro. Pines be given a letter of commendation, signed by the moderator and secretary, to sister churches, wherever in the order of God's providence he may be called to labor.

The discussion on Education was introduced by Rev. Dr. Hopper, and continued by Revs. J. Combs, S. Walton, H. G. Mellick, Dr. Sawyer, Rev. A. C. Co-hoon, Milton Addison, Lie, J. A. Ford, and C. W. Williams, who introduced the following resolutions, which were seconded by Rev. W. J. Stewart and passed:

Whereas, The St. Martins Seminary had last year 100 students, and a graduating class of 17; and

Resolved, That the institution be burdened with a heavy debt, and a vigorous effort be made to pay all indebtedness in full; therefore

Resolved, That the association give its hearty endorsement and approval of the good work it is doing; and further,

Resolved, That we urge as a pressing and primary claim upon our benevolence the effort of this board of directors to raise \$15,000 for immediate use.

The following resolution was then moved by Rev. S. Walton, seconded by Rev. J. E. Pines, and passed:

"That the increasing prosperity of education at the institutions at Wolfville should awaken devout gratitude for the blessings of the past, and should stimulate the members of the churches represented to cherish a deeper sympathy with these institutions and to make enlarged contributions for their support."

The committee on nominations presented their final report, which was adopted.

Rev. J. A. Ford, W. J. Stewart, S. Walton, W. C. Goucher, and G. Howard

were appointed an advisory committee for churches to consult with in reference to the ordination of ministers previous to the calling of a council.

The Rev. J. A. Ford was appointed to preach the next Associational sermon. Rev. G. Howard to be his alternate.

To write the circular letter, Rev. C. W. Williams.

To locate the Association: Revs. C. H. Martell and A. E. Ingram.

It was resolved that all future reports of committees to this Association be presented in writing.

Revs. Dr. Sawyer, G. A. Hartley, and

Jat. Spencer, Wm. Peters, Esq., and J. J. Batwick, Esq. were invited to seats on the Association.

MONDAY EVENING—EDUCATION.

After the appointment of committees, &c., the order of services was resumed. The Rev. A. Co-hoon read the Scriptures and led in prayer. Rev. W. J. Stewart presided.

The Rev. Dr. Sawyer was introduced and discussed the theme, "The Relation of Intellectual to the Religious Life." The very nature of religious truth is such as to appeal to the reason. The Epistle to the Romans demands thought to master it. It is more difficult to master than mathematics. The church at Rome must have been advanced in literature and strong in intellect.

Peter's and John's epistles were designed for a thoughtful people. Some say Christ brought down His teaching till the common people heard Him gladly, and yet He taught unfathomable truths. So in the Old Testament. All demand strength of intellect. If the Bible is to be our guide, Christians should be cultured and thoughtful. Then the nature of the work of the church demands intellectual culture; its work demands sanctified thought, as it does not in social service. The church is to be the guide of work in the world. The grandeur of the office to which the church is called is not fully considered. This is a thinking age. Shall the infidel do the thinking? The Holy Spirit uses means. We must keep in sympathy with the instincts of the times. We should prepare to meet those requirements that God makes upon us.

Dr. Hopper spoke on "Academic Education." It is taken for granted that education is a necessity. Because Baptists in these provinces are engaged with more than any other people in academic education, it must not be thought that they are indifferent to the common school system. Our papers advocate it. Rome calls our common school godless, because in deference to Rome we left the Bible out of our schools. How are you going to teach morality without the Bible? In the family the Christian element must be supplied. In advanced schools you want religious influence. The State has no religion, and it cannot teach what it has not. Church and State have been separated by Baptists. Roger Williams was the great apostle of this doctrine in America. In this originated religious academies. The fruitage has been good. Christian men are needed in the pew as well as in the pulpit. In St. Martins the Bible is a text book of history and ancient literature. A taste is formed for Biblical study. Christian evidences are taught. The kind of Christian schools needed is not denominational, but Christian. This is the character of our schools. For St. Martins Seminary we need \$3,000 inside three months. We have pledges for \$12,000. Advise the young men and women to come to us and then go to Acadia.

Rev. G. A. Hartley: As a Free Baptist I may say our people are not as much interested as they should be. Early prejudices prevented. Changes are coming and we hope for better things in the future. Education must begin in the young life, and the education must be general. Head and heart culture must go together. These schools are exerting a wonderful influence to-day. Men should be cultured for two reasons: 1st, For society is what we make it. The institution which gives good men to society gives great wealth. 2nd, For good of the individual. The Alumni are the best friends of our institutions—as leaven in the community.

Mr. March: These Christian schools are the necessity of our day, and not in any way antagonistic to the common schools. The Bible is not a text-book in the common schools, but it is the privilege of the teacher to read it every day with his pupils, also to open the school with the singing of Christian hymns and prayer. Academic schools have a useful place in our system. As scholars leave home they need religious influence which our Baptist academy supplies. Much yet remains to be done. The demand will still be increased and must be provided for.

The Association resumed business. The following resolution passed after some discussion:

Resolved, That this Association now proceed to appoint two persons as members of the Board of Directors of the Union Baptist Seminary.

Bros. Geo. Titus, of Norton, Kings Co., and James S. May, of St. John, were appointed in accordance with the foregoing resolution.

The treasurer was authorized to pay over the monies in hand to Rev. Dr. Day, the treasurer of the Convention Fund.

The chairmen for the various groups of churches were appointed as follows: St. Martins group—Rev. C. W. Williams; St. John group—Rev. H. G. Mellick; St. Stephen group—Rev. W. C. Goucher; St. George group—Rev. J. A. Ford.

A hearty vote of thanks to the friends at St. John for kindly entertainment of delegates was passed. Also a vote of thanks to the several railway and steamboat companies for reduced fares to delegates. After reading of the minutes and prayer, the Association adjourned to meet on the third Saturday in September, 1892, at 10 a.m., at such place as the committee on location shall decide.

Of the 43 churches comprised in this Association 35 sent letters, from which the following statistics are gathered: Baptisms, 154; received on experience, 48; restored, 10; received by letter from churches in the Convention, 99; from churches elsewhere, 10—making a total increase of 322. Decrease: Died, 62; dismissed to churches in the Convention, 79; dismissed to churches elsewhere, 67; excluded, 18—total, 226. Showing that the net increase in the churches within the bounds of the Association to be 95, or an average of two to each church.

Associations and Mission Churches Visited.

After diligent search we succeeded in finding the N. B. Western Association, not at New Salem, as advertised (there is no such place in that region), but at Blissfield, with the New Salem church. This is the central church of a group of five churches, stretching along the beautiful waters of the S. W. Miramichi for about 40 miles.

In former years this field was much isolated, but the opening up of the Canadian Eastern Railway, as it is now called, between Chatham and Fredericton, has removed in large measure this isolation.

For many years Rev. W. M. Edwards, who, during the last year of his life his field included the three upper churches. They are all pastorless at present, but the probabilities are that Rev. J. A. Porter will be invited to take the oversight. Several were added to the churches during the past winter, and the indications at the closing meeting of the Association lead us to hope that others may soon be brought in. At the earnest request of some of the brethren we consented to have General Missionary Union remain for special work.

On Monday evening we visited the Ludlow church, at the upper end of the group. This church was aided for some years, since our taking the Home Mission work, and it affords us much pleasure to meet them in their next place of worship, and to learn that two well-attended prayer meetings are kept up every Sabbath when they have no one to preach to them.

On Tuesday evening we met the Underhill church, at the lower end of the group. This little church of 17 members, is on ground where we had but one or two families a few years ago. They have a meeting house up and expect to finish the outside this autumn.

Scarcity of men and means seem to make it necessary that one man should care for this large group for the present. But two good men must be placed on the field shortly. There is uncultivated ground both on the upper and lower end that should be cared for.

On Wednesday evening we met with the brethren at Newcastle in their regular prayer meeting. A good season was enjoyed. The three churches of this group require more labor than Bro. Crabbe is able to perform, and Bro. Atkinson has been sent to the Little South-west and North Esk churches.

Weldford station, on the I. C. R., in Kent Co., was reached on Thursday and a service held in the hall in the evening. The members of this church live for the most part out of the village, but do not seem to mind driving five miles to be present at an evening meeting. After meeting we accompanied the clerk of the church to his home in Gangville, a new and promising farming settlement about five miles from Weldford. These people went into the forest a few years ago and took up government land, and now have the making of fine farms. They are about all Baptists.

Luts's Mountain was reached on Friday, but the storm prevented our evening meeting. This is the home of the 2nd Moncton church, seven miles from the city of Moncton. The situation is pleasant, and the farms compare well with any to be seen in the province. They have a good church home and should very soon become a strong church to this field, will very likely take charge of this and the Weldford church. St. John was reached on Saturday, the meetings of the Southern N. B. Association attended, and plans laid by which it is hoped some four or five more men may be brought into the work of caring for our destitute churches.

A. COHOON, Cor. Secy.
Hebron, N. S., Sept. 24.

We greatly regret to learn that Rev. H. M. Barry, of New Glasgow, has felt compelled to resign his charge on account of ill health.

Among the Churches.

Having been advised to leave them for having been furnished the flight in the shape of notes, I took my departure with all speed to the Moncton. This being for P. E. Island, in company of others, and landed

in due time. Twenty

left this field of labor in Nova Scotia. Time has been full changes. My thoughts of the days of labor and prayer meetings in Bro.

house, where we had Master's presence as well for the divine blessing of Summerside, and so each other in the good I try to locate that but many other buildings around the spot. I would house, where we were the Word, is standing

services were held in the requested to abdicate allowed the use of the notified that our presence desirable. There seemed no room for Baptists in however, though difficult was obtained for a co-

the time came when we to say, "We must be own, if it be but ten how grandly the friends idea! A beautiful home funds are secured through of Bro. Sillicker and neat structure is com-

dated to the worship of time they have had g-tors. Bro. Cahill is among the people.

personage at Bedeque labors a portion of his This place I hoped was a real disappointment "so near and yet so was my first pastorat-ed; here we witnessed saving power. Some-ers have gone to their continue to aid their with their counsel.

Among these are Schurman and Br-names in the church whom has given a-our pastors, and two ministry. According arrangement we have on the Gulf of St. L-shore, more than this terrible storm, things

troyed, and many liv-too, it was my privilege see the little band of tised believers increas-able to form a church of worship for them-

of our small church year 42 members, but inconspicuous place. No pastor goes from plain of their neglect support, as it too often

peals that have com-ed had generous respon-er shown a commens-their contributions for of the denomination

Last year they count of more than three do Fairview is a part of its history is full of a good illustration of of the gospel. T-churches is doing fa-Lord is blessing him

is our next resting place has the satisfaction people loyal and church has had her as well as times of fire, literal and fig- heartened her. Sh-snowed her strength a substantial brick

portions; the inter-tinctive, with no ne- Its acoustic proper- fact. Never did our thing then in respon-

came to them for h-dering ruins of the writer and his peo- bricks that have go- and he is glad to been placed so we-

criticism that metm that soon the hou- as it is not easy for pews. It is a mat-many of our church of proprietorship

The result is the pr-many from the pri-ary. A place that by the owners of crowded will induc-

ment church h-where he must tal-gre. Every man feel as independent around him. Under our meeting houses

be so large. comes next. This formerly called Th-