

Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company Ltd
Publishers and Proprietors.

S. MCC. BLACK, EDITOR.
A. H. CHIPMAN, BUSINESS MANAGER.
85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Printed by PATERSON & CO., 22 Germain St.

PLEASE EXAMINE THE LABEL ON YOUR PAPER. IT TELLS THE DATE TO WHICH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS PAID

The New Year.

Very heartily the MESSENGER AND VISITOR wishes all its readers A HAPPY NEW YEAR! We desire here also to thank our friends for their continued sympathy and support, and we on our part shall endeavor, as in the past, to do what we can to make the year a happy and a profitable one to our readers. A year ago the paper changed from the larger sheet to the present sixteen page form. The way in which the change has been received has fully justified the making of it, for though some readers found it a little difficult to recognize their old friend in its new dress, yet we believe no one would wish now to go back to the old form, and many and hearty are the expressions received in approval of the change. Our friends will be glad to know that the paper has enjoyed a fairly prosperous year. Never has it received from associations and other denominational gatherings more cordial and unanimous expressions of approval. And like expressions received privately from individuals have been many and hearty. It has closed the year with a subscription list appreciably increased, and passes on into a new year with encouraging prospect of a still larger extension of its sphere of usefulness. And if our many thousands of friends will each, as they have opportunity, say a good word for the paper, commending it to those who are not among our subscribers, it will not merely be helping the paper and those immediately engaged in producing it, but it will be helping all for which our denomination in these provinces stands, and all the Christian enterprises which it labors to accomplish. In view of the difficult and responsible duties committed to his hands, the editor would humbly ask that the Christian readers will pray for him that, in mind and spirit he may be equipped and strengthened for his work, that utterance may be given unto him and that, in the interests of truth and of every good work, he may write wisely, courageously and charitably, as he ought to write.

We speak of the new year. EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-EIGHT it is now in our calendars. Three years more, and, as men count time in Christendom, another century will be complete. But there is no pause in the revolving years. This world of ours, so great in our ordinary thoughts, so small in the thought of the astronomer, goes ever spinning on its axis, pursuing its endless journey round the sun, stopping never to celebrate a new year or to keep a holiday. And so also the generations of men go on in ceaseless procession. Forever there is birth and forever death, with all that comes between of joy and pain, of laughter and tears, success and failure, triumph and defeat, hope and despair,—the love and the hate, the wisdom and the folly, the beauty and the deformity of life. One hears the wail of the infant in its cradle, the cry of the strong man on the battlefield, the whirring of spindles, the booming of cannon, the babbling of fools, the discourse of philosophers, the bitter cursing of the anarchist, the poet's lofty song and the prophet's strong words of faith and hope. It is a strange music that all these voices make, with much that to our ears seems discord. But it may well be that to the ear of Him who hears all the voices of the universe, it is not so. For the sounds that to us are discordant are a part of the music of the spheres and in the ear of God these earthly discords blend with that music in a divine and perfect harmony. This world, with its surging tides of life, its tumultuous voices, is God's world. It is not a chaos. His voice has been heard in it, commanding

the light to shine out of darkness. He understands its babble of voices. His will controls its turbulent tides. He stills the raging of the seas, the tumult of the peoples. The world is God's, and He loves it. He has sent His Son into the world to redeem it from the dominion of sin. It is this that forbids despair and warrants the largest hope. It is this that inspires to unceasing prayer, unceasing effort for the coming of God's Kingdom in the world and the doing of His will here as it is done in heaven.

As we look abroad upon the world from the standpoint to which this new year has brought us, there is indeed much to perplex our minds and to try our faith. How far the world is yet from doing the will of the Father as it is done in heaven! And yet the light which God commanded to shine is shining. Those who love the light are walking in fellowship with God and with Jesus Christ, His Son. What is to be upon the earth we may not know. But we shall be wise to believe that truth and love are eternal principles of God. And the God of truth and love has declared and revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Therefore that name stands today and forever shall stand above every name. Let us then gird ourselves in the strength of this assurance, that our faith is not vain and our labor is not vain in the Lord, and let us go forth gladly in the service of Him who has called us. Still, as in the days of the Son of Man, Satan tempts souls in the wilderness. But the Lord Jesus,—His ministry, His cross, His resurrection, His gospel of grace and the Holy Spirit given to men are the evidence that God is in Christ, and that Christ is victor over all the powers of darkness.

The Temptation.

In our study of the temptation in the wilderness, which is the subject of next Sunday's Bible lesson, it is all-important to remember that He who in the last lesson was declared by a voice from heaven to be Son of God, was also as truly Son of Man. Otherwise there could have been no temptation for him. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Redeemer of the world took upon Him not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. He was made like unto His brethren. He hath suffered being tempted, and he is able to succor the tempted. He was born of a woman, born under the law; and what is God's law for men in general was law also for Jesus of Nazareth. For the support of his life food was necessary, as it was for other men; long abstinence brought extreme hunger, and in the hour of physical weakness Satan found his opportunity. We seem to hear the subtle mockery in the tempter's words: "Art thou indeed the Son of God? and thou art hungry! Didst thou hear a voice from heaven, declaring thee to be the beloved Son of God? And thou art hungry, ready to perish for lack of bread! Was that voice real then or only an illusion of the senses? Have done with uncertainties. Know the truth. Put thy divinity to the proof. If thou art indeed Son of God, all things are possible to thee. Command, then, that these stones be made bread to appease thine hunger." How strong in that hour was the temptation, at once to satisfy his hunger, and put to the proof his divine sonship, only the tempted One can know. But Jesus knew that, whatever that voice from heaven and the call of God to him might mean, he was still a son of man. God's law for men was the law of his life, and now, in the hour of extreme trial, he might not take any step, which was not open to any other son of man in similar straits. He saw that whatever his ministry for men should involve, it must be a ministry of fellowship and not of separation. Bread was in a sense necessary to man, because God had willed it so. But still more necessary was harmony with God's will and word. By that word man must live. His trust must be not in bread, but in God. God's word to man was not—Speak to the stones, when thou art hungry, and they shall become food for thee, but, In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread. Till the ground and sow and reap, seed time harvest shall not fail, so shalt thou live. We need not discuss the fruitless question whether at that moment Jesus possessed the power to turn the stones to bread. It is enough to know that the attempt to do so would have been fatal to the accomplishment of his redemptive work, since it would have been to ignore the divine law for man, to choose an easy path to an end which other men had to gain by toil-

some climbing. Thus he could not have become the Captain of our salvation made perfect through suffering, or our great High Priest, touched with a feeling of our infirmities because tempted in all points like as we are.

The second temptation differs from the first in that the object set before the tempted One is not the satisfaction of any physical need, or the evidence to Jesus himself of his power to work miracles, but a convincing demonstration, to the people, of his Messiahship. This, however, according to the suggestion of Satan, was to be attained by a similar ignoring of the divine law, and, as in the former case, it involved a separation from the common lot, a refusal on the part of Jesus unreservedly to cast in his lot with men and to submit to the ordinary conditions of human life. "If thou art the Son of God," says the tempter, "surely a fact of such significance must not be hidden from the people. If thou wilt not make proof of thy divinity for thine own sake, yet for the sake of thy people thou must do so. Then, from a pinnacle of the temple cast thyself down into the valley far below; and the multitudes, beholding, will know that thou art the Messiah King; and surely this at least is an accordance with the will of God, for is it not written, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning thee and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'"

The full power of these subtle temptations, none but one so supremely endowed as Jesus was could feel, and none but the Son of God could successfully resist. In these battles, unseen of man, fought out in the silent wilderness and in the consciousness of Jesus, he was indeed making proof of his divine sonship; His answer to the sophistry of Satan is—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, thy God." God had indeed promised that His angels should protect His servants in the performance of their duty, but He had not guaranteed safety to anyone who presumptuously sets at defiance the laws of his own physical being. It was not for the Son of Man to demonstrate to man His divinity by an act of presumption which in any other man would be a sinful tempting of God.

In the final temptation Satan lays aside his sophistries. Here he stands revealed. He no longer quotes Scripture, but openly calls upon Jesus to ignore the law of God and to trample upon His word, for the sake of the rewards of unrighteousness. He seems to say: "Behold, this way which thou art choosing for thyself, to what it leads! It will mean poverty, humiliation, untold suffering; it leads to ignominy and a cross. Listen to my counsels, obey my behests—and the pleasures, the riches, the glories of the world, shall all be thine. No man ever had such power and glory as thou shalt have, if thou wilt but pay me homage." We need not say how, in all ages men and women have fallen before this assault of Satan and how today they are bowing down to him. Along all the avenues of the world's life are his altars on which the people offer not their gifts merely but their own souls. In society, in business, in politics, even in the churches, the god of this world is worshipped. Thousands do not argue that what they do is right, that it will endure the inquisition of God's judgment day. But they say, "This is the way of the world, this is business, this is politics, this is life. Along this road lies success. This is the way to respectability, wealth, honor,—and unless we have these things, we reckon life a failure." That was and is forever the devil's doctrine; but Jesus, in that hour of supreme trial, judged that it was good for a man to serve God and Him alone, and accept all consequences.

Where Jesus met Satan, there He parted company with him forever. Distinctly, and once for all, he rejected the tempter's path of dalliance and accepted God's hard way, with its humiliation, its shame, its cross,—but, beyond that cross was the eternal glory of God and the name which is above every name. And the supreme question for men and women today and always is, Do you listen to Satan, or do you follow Christ?

Editorial Notes.

—On Wednesday last Mr. Gladstone entered upon his 89th year. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone are at present in the south of France. The reports in reference to Mr. Gladstone's health are conflicting. Some despatches represent him as being very feeble and almost blind.

Others say that he expects to sume his liter

—During aged and bel Mrs. Spurd and mother on Wednes

—The p Y. P. U. issue a wee their not be issue or th proper plac have the to

—On Fri St. John on he will sup Grant retu months, m We are gla ently none fore comi weeks the still deep pastor, Re Mr. Grant of the Lo highly est donald, wh got nicely Portage La at which t formal wel

—With Witness, o The editor Presbyteri we can a latter part surprise to the edito its present a season and we ar ledge enab better un family ne The edito gatherd ous years the winn the impo The edito without, thinks m celebrates with a n was impr We do t contemp provemen discover desire to ment of f as a cour light and welcome

One of and stud Baptists There is fully rep ination. the part merical a great gat and activ are lead statesme Baptist not all statesme as surel their ho political cause. of "Bap