

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.

S. MCC. BLACK Editor

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

If labels are not changed within reasonable time after remittances are made advise "Business Manager," Box 330 St. John, N. B.

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

THE IRREFORMABLE SALOON.

It will be remembered that a little more than a year ago the opening of the Subway Tavern in New York attracted a good deal of attention. The Tavern was opened under somewhat peculiar auspices. It was the enterprise of a company formed on the same plan as the English Public House Trust, and its capital of \$10,000 was subscribed largely by prominent men in the City Club of New York, with the avowed object of eliminating the worst features from the liquor traffic. Pure liquors were to be supplied and good food sold at low prices, and the expectation of the promoters was that, by these means and by discouraging the treating custom and refusing liquor to men intoxicated, as well as by other provisions for the comfort and amusement of its patrons, the tavern would be made far more respectable than the ordinary saloon and far less injurious in its effects.

Prominent among the promoters of the Subway Tavern was Bishop Potter of the Protestant Episcopal Church, who also conducted a religious service and invoked the blessing of Heaven upon the business of the Tavern on the occasion of its opening. Considering the general attitude of ministers of Christian churches in the United States toward the liquor business, the course pursued by the bishop in this connection was sufficiently remarkable to cause a good deal of surprise and to call forth a variety of comment. In view of the high character of Bishop Potter as a Christian minister and a philanthropist none but the most uncharitable could question the goodness of his motives or believe that in lending his influential support to the Subway Tavern Scheme he had any purpose in view less worthy than the moral and social betterment of the masses in the city's crowded districts. But while most were willing to give the Bishop credit for the best intentions, there were many who doubted the correctness of his judgment and who predicted that his scheme for reforming the saloon and for elevating society by means of a reformed saloon was destined to failure. And so it has come to pass.

After a year's trial it appears that the Subway Tavern is pronounced by its promoters to be both a financial and a philanthropic failure. Evidently it did not prove to be the attraction for the people that the Bishop and his friends had hoped it would be. This result is probably due to the fact that the Subway Tavern scheme attempted to unite things which are incompatible, namely, a wholesome social life and the indulgence of the appetite for strong drink. The men who go to saloons to drink intoxicating liquors prefer the places which are devoted wholly to that business, and those who want to take their wives and children to some place where they can enjoy a lunch or a drink of soda water together will prefer a restaurant which has no association with the liquor business. Accordingly, we are told, the Subway Tavern is no longer to be run on the old plan. As we understand the matter, the company with which Bishop Potter was associated resigns control of the Tavern and it passes into new hands and the philanthropic principle in its management will give place to the economic. The controlling purpose in view under the new management will not be to elevate men but to make money. To quote the words of the new manager, "the water wagon attachment will be cut out," and the tavern will be run as a saloon and a restaurant.

The purpose of the New York scheme with which Bishop Potter's name has been prominently associated is doubtless worthy of commendation. It was an effort to deal beneficially with conditions which in all cities, and in the great cities especially, call loudly for reform. All who possess in any measure the spirit of philanthropy cannot but welcome any hope of deliverance for that very considerable percentage of the population of the cities that lies enslaved and manacled under the terrible power represented in the saloon. But the failure of the Subway Tavern scheme is only an added evidence, and one which the world hardly needed, of the fact that the hope of deliverance is not to be realized through attempts to reform the saloon. As we said a year ago in connection with this same subject, we say again now, the saloon is so hopelessly bad that the only effective reform of it is to reform it out of existence.

SOMETHING ABOUT HYMN-BOOKS.

At the Convention at Charlottetown a resolution was moved by Mr. Burpee Witter, recommending the Canadian edition of the English Baptist Hymnal to our churches for use in connection with public worship. We gather from the report of the proceedings that the resolution was not adopted by the Convention, but the subject to which it called attention was referred to a committee which is to report next year. This subject of a suitable hymn book for use in connection with the public services of our churches is an important one. It is a matter in which uniformity is desirable, or if not absolute uniformity, a much larger measure of it certainly than at present obtains among us. As things are one may go to half a dozen Baptist churches and find a different hymn book in use in every one of them. Just how many different selections of hymns are in use at present among the Baptist churches in St. John we cannot at this moment say, but certainly the variety is sufficient to indicate that the independence of the local church is much in evidence along this line. One might almost conclude that each had made it a special object to secure a hymn book different from that used by any of its sister churches.

Now of course in this particular matter, as in many other matters, a Baptist church is a law unto itself, and it would be impracticable, even if it were desirable, for the Convention or any other body to determine the selection of hymns to be used by our churches. But though there is no authority to control our churches in the selection of their books of praise, there is no law against the giving or receiving of counsel in the matter. It is not only the privilege but the duty of the Convention, at proper times and in proper ways, to give good counsel to the churches, and the churches are no less under obligation to accept good counsel than the Convention is to give it. Further, this matter of the selection of a hymn-book is one in which the Convention should be able, after due consideration, to make a recommendation which the churches may wisely accept.

Among the many hymnbooks now in use in our churches some are good, others are better, and none, so far as we know, are really bad. And yet there is a sense in which a good thing becomes almost bad if it stands in the way of the best. If then there is one Baptist hymn-book distinctly better than any other, by all means let us have that. From what we know of the English Baptist Hymnal and of the satisfaction it has given to the churches which have adopted it, we are strongly inclined to believe that this hymnal with the Canadian supplement is superior to any other book for general use in our churches. In the Hymn and Tune Book edition of the Hymnal the music is of a high order, and, as we understand, has given great satisfaction to the congregations which have used it. The Hymnal is issued in several different forms, some in small type and at a very moderate price, and others in larger type and more expensive. From all we know of the English Baptist Hymnal and of other books in use in Baptist Churches we are strongly inclined to believe that the recommendation embodied in Mr. Witter's resolution is quite worthy of endorsement. At the same time, under all the circumstances and especially in view of the prospective union of the two Baptist bodies, the Convention has doubtless done wisely to give the subject ample consideration before making any recommendation. In the mean time any church

which is contemplating a change in its hymn-book, will do well, we think, to examine carefully into the merits of the English Baptist Hymnal. It should be unnecessary to say that it is a very unwise thing to let the choice of a hymn-book turn merely on its price. Hymn-books which have served their day and have been superseded by a better book may often be secured at a small price. But it is the poorest sort of economy to select a poor hymn-book in preference to a good one because the latter costs a few cents more per copy, and especially when the best may be had at so small a price.

PROFESSOR E. M. KEIRSTEAD, D. D.

At the recent meeting of the Convention in Charlottetown the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved,—In view of the prospective removal of Rev. E. M. Keirstead, D. D. to Toronto to assume the duties of the chair of Systematic Theology and Apologetics in McMaster University, the Convention places on record its profound regard, for his abilities, his character and the great and varied services which he has rendered to the denomination during a quarter of a century, as pastor, as professor in Acadia University, as Secretary for many years of the Convention, and as a devoted servant of the churches in manifold ways. The Convention would further convey to Dr. Keirstead the warmest assurances of its abiding love and its hearty Godspeed as he follows the call of God to another field of labor.

It is a kindly and not an unworthy impulse that prompts us to say nothing but pleasant things in our farewells to friends who are leaving us. It would be most ungracious at such a moment to give room to the spirit of criticism, to mention an unlovely trait or an injudicious act, or to recall anything on the part of him to whom we are saying adieu, which may have in any way qualified our regard for him. And so perhaps we need not wonder if there is a disposition to discount more or less the appreciations expressed in farewell resolutions, not indeed because they say what is not true, but because they judiciously omit some things which would need to be said if the purpose in view were to aid one in forming a critical judgment.

But in the particular instance we are noticing we can think of nothing over which a mantle of charity needs to be thrown, there is no call for reserve lest something unpleasant might be said, and the appreciative resolution adopted by the Convention will be accepted at its full face value by those who are best acquainted with the brother to whom it refers, beloved and honored of us all. The resolution declares the Convention's regard for the ability, the character and the great and varied services of Dr. Keirstead. It would be easy, but it is unnecessary, to amplify this statement. His splendid ability, the simplicity and nobility of his character and the large value of his manifold services are gratefully recognized by the Baptists of these Maritime Provinces, and not by them only, but by many in the ranks of other denominations. His going away will be felt as a very serious loss by our Baptist people, and it will be recognized as a loss to the Maritime Provinces at large.

It is not of course our purpose here to present any estimate of the character and ability of Dr. Keirstead or to speak at length of the value of the services which he has rendered to the cause of Christ and humanity. Nor do we wish to offend our honored brother by writing anything which, though set down in all truth and sincerity, might seem to his modest mind to savor of fulsome praise. We do not claim for him exemption from the limitations and imperfections which, more or less, are characteristic of human nature at its best. But we recognize in him a man of generous endowments and gracious spirit, a man of truly Christian temper who, through all the experiences of life, has kept his heart sweet and strong and who has maintained an unflinching purpose to serve the Lord and his people. Many have been strengthened and cheered by his ministry. We wish therefore to add our word in agreement with that which has been uttered by the Convention, believing that all that has been said will be most cordially and enthusiastically endorsed by the whole Baptist brotherhood of the Maritime provinces. To our brethren of the Upper Provinces, accordingly, we commend Dr. Keirstead as a man and a brother whom they may take at once and with out reserve to their hearts, a man who will never be found seeking to promote selfish and personal interests at the

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