

Messenger and Visitor

Published in the interests of the Baptists & nomination of the Maritime Provinces by

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Co., Ltd.

TERMS: \$1.50 per annum in advance.

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Editor

Address all communications and make all pay-
ment as 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.

LOCAL CHURCH HISTORIES.

During the past weeks and months a number of historical sketches of local churches, connected with our Association in these Maritime Provinces have been sent us for publication. None of these has yet appeared in our columns, and in view of this fact the writers of them and other persons interested, are entitled to some explanation.

It is no doubt desirable that a careful record should be kept of the organization and growth of our local churches, and that the essential facts in connection with the life of the churches should be embodied in sketches and preserved for the use of the future historian. This matter has not in the past received the attention which its importance would justify, and for this reason, no doubt, many facts which would be interesting and valuable for historical purposes have been lost. As the readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR are aware, a Baptist Historical Society for the Maritime Provinces was formed at the meeting of the Convention last August, and it is hoped that the Society may be able to perform valuable service in gathering and preserving such records and historical data as are alluded to above.

It would be practicable, and we think desirable, that a limited number of historical sketches of churches should be published in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR from year to year. But certain conditions should be observed in the preparation of these sketches. Great care should be taken to make them as accurate and complete in regard to important facts as possible. At the same time unimportant facts and unnecessary observations should be omitted in order that the sketch when given to the printer should not occupy space unnecessarily. In the third place such sketches when sent to the paper should not be in such literary form as to be suitable for publication without revision or emendation.

In order that these desirable ends may be secured, it seems to us highly desirable that any historical sketch of a local church, before being sent to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR for publication should first be submitted to the association with which the church is connected and be endorsed by that body in such a way that the paper publishing it, and its readers, shall have the guarantee of the association that it is a good and trustworthy history. The association should also see that the sketch which it endorses is in suitable literary form for publication.

Some of our associations did undertake this work in a systematic way with a view of having historical sketches written and published of all the churches connected with the association, and the MESSENGER AND VISITOR has published quite a number of sketches which were prepared in this way. We hope that our brethren in the different associations will recognize the importance of taking up this work in a systematic way and with such supervision as will secure accuracy, completeness and conciseness of statement. As the Historical Society, referred to above, is so constituted that there are three of its members in each association, these three brethren could with advantage be a committee, or at least the nucleus of a committee, to deal with this subject as far as their own association is concerned.

If the American Geographers' calculations are correct, the people of the United States spent for intoxicating liquors last year the enormous sum of \$1,242,943,218, making an average of \$18.15 for each man, woman and child in the country. This would mean a tremendous drain on even so rich a country as the United States, even if this amount of wealth were simply wasted; but it need not be said that it is far worse than wasted. If this great volume of intoxicating liquors was poured into the sea instead of finding its way down human throats it would save the nation many millions of money, besides saving much that is more precious than money. The coffee bill of the United States amounts to more than \$156,000,000 annually, the people pay for tea some \$48,000,000, and \$7,000,000 for cocoa, but all these together amount to only about one-sixth of the liquor bill of the country.

THE WATCHFUL SERVANT.

One of the lessons which our Lord teaches in the passage which constitutes our Bible lesson for the current week is that Christian life, conceived according to its true ideal, is earnest and purposeful. The servant is to be alert and watchful, expecting continually his Lord's coming and eager to welcome him in the consciousness of duty faithfully performed. The Christian life is at the furthest remove from that which is graphically pictured and eloquently condemned in the parable of the Rich Fool, in which is illustrated the consummate folly of the man who allows himself to be dominated by greed and sensuality, who, blind and deaf to the meaning of duty, service, sympathy, sacrifice, thinks only of indulging his selfish and sensual inclinations to the utmost, and is stupidly and fatuously careless in regard to the soul's highest interests. The ideal of Jesus in regard to the life which men should live is as far above that of the selfish sensualist as the heavens are above the earth. The Christian disciple is not his own master. One is his Master, even Christ, and if he keep in mind the bonds which unite him to his Lord, his service will be infinitely fuller of liberty and blessing than any endeavor to live a self-centered and independent life could be. The Christian disciple is in the world as the Lord's servant, that he may attend to his Lord's business, that he may minister to his fellow servants and that he may eagerly await the coming of Him whom he serves and in whom all his hopes are centred.

Where the relations between master and servant are right, the servant best serves his own interests who serves his master most faithfully. There are multitudes of men who fail to get on in worldly matters as they might just because they ignore this principle. The young man who, blinded by narrow self-interest and a disinclination to work, does as little for his employer as he possibly can under the contract, remains near the same low level at which he started and by and by is crowded out, while the young man who takes as genuine an interest in his employer's business as if it were his own and never thinks of sparing thought or labor where the employer's interests are concerned, makes himself indispensable, and the path of promotion is open to him according to the full measure of his ability. The same principle holds good in regard to spiritual service. The Christian servant need not fear that his faithfulness will go unnoticed or unrewarded. It is his Lord's delight to recognize and reward those who prove themselves worthy of trust. The opportunities for promotion in the Kingdom of Heaven are unlimited, and if the rewards are not to be estimated according to the standards of value which the world recognizes, they are none the less real for that. The man who carries in his breast the consciousness that he has been honored of Christ and drawn into closer fellowship with his Lord may well afford to lack many things which the world values highly.

In the wisdom of God human life has been so conditioned that advancement in any business or calling is largely dependant on being always alert, always ready to take advantage of the opportunity when it comes, always ready to meet the disaster when it threatens. So also is it in Christian service. The servant who shall win the commendation of his Lord and be promoted to larger and richer service must be *semper paratus*. There is a sense in which the Lord comes in every opportunity for service and in every trial, of faith. Happy is the servant who is found ready, alert and watchful, eager to respond to the call of his Master to some new and important service or ready to endure the trial of his faith without faltering. But sad indeed for him who is found, with "the unlit lamp and the unguilted loin," shamefully unprepared to respond to the call of his Lord.

Peter's question, "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us or even unto all?" draws from Jesus an answer which seems to mean that the parable was spoken for all who recognized and fulfilled the duties of Christian stewardship. The Lord had not committed his work into the hands of any limited number of men, that they might have all the honor and all the responsibility of administering the affairs of the kingdom. He had chosen twelve, but that did not mean that other men in whom should be found the spirit and ability for stewardship should not have part with them in this work. It did not mean that there was no place for a Stephen a Barnabas or a Paul because they were not of the number of the twelve. The matter of great significance is not one of outward designation. It matters comparatively little what a man is called. The significant question is whether in the matters committed to his trust he is a faithful and wise steward, diligently doing the work that his Lord has given him to do. It is this man who shall win promotion in that court where promotion is really worth winning.

Editorial Notes

—Rev. F. B. Meyer is quoted as saying that never a hundred years have the Free Churches of England been more richly endowed with men of commanding intellectual power, glowing enthusiasm and deep spirituality. While the church of England is dwindling for want of capable young men, the Free churches are being strongly re-

inforced. While the Established Church is being stifled by priestism on the one hand and the narrowness of the Evangelical party on the other, a free air is breathed by Non-conformists, and they are linked to the noblest causes in which spirits can thrive.

—At the convocation of Dalhousie College held last week the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon Principal Gordon of Queen's University and upon Ex-President Sawyer of Acadia. There will be general agreement that in each case the degree was most appropriately and worthily bestowed. Dr. Sawyer had previously received the degree of LL. D. from Acadia, but to his many friends and admirers this recognition by Dalhousie of Dr. Sawyer's scholarship and very valuable services to the cause of higher education will be gratifying.

"The trials of Nonconformists in England, who refuse to support sectarian education," says *The Congregationalist*, "are illustrated by the recent experience of an upright farmer of Exeter, a member of the Congregationalist church. He was sent to prison for two weeks put to picking oakum, had prison fare, was allowed to see only one visitor each week through prison bars, and had a weekly visit from the prison chaplain who exhorted him to repent and to pay the rate. On his release he was met at the prison gate by a crowd of several thousand persons, escorted in a carriage to a lecture hall and entertained at a public breakfast."

—A terrible tragedy occurred last Thursday night or early Friday morning on a first class coach attached to the train en route from Boston to St. John. The sleeping passengers were aroused by a pistol shot, and those who looked up quickly saw a man standing up put a pistol to his temple and fire a bullet into his head. The pistol first shot had been fired into his wife's head who had been sitting by his side. Both shots were fatal. It was ascertained that the man was W. E. Osgood, a well known resident of Hiram, Me. It is said that the tragedy was evidently the outcome of domestic infelicities and from a letter found on the deceased woman it would appear that this awful tragedy, like many another, originated in the husband's slavery to strong drink.

—The Dean of Ely Cathedral, Dr. Charles W. Stubbs, is of course a clergyman of the Church of England, but he does not subscribe to the theory which would unchurch all believers who do not belong to the national establishment. "In one of the Lenten lectures," *The Outlook* says, "the broadminded Dean took up the allegation of many churchmen that non-conformity to the Established Church is schism. He denied it, saying that the evil thing called schism was not in an external separation, but in discord, uncharitableness, breach of spiritual fellowship, moral disunion and unbrotherliness. While thoroughly preferring his own church, he eagerly desired communion and fellowship with all Nonconformists. Were he to regard many of Christ's own outside the national Church as outside Christ's church, though they were doing half the Christian work done in that country, not they but he would be guilty of the sin of schism. The Dean it should be added, is no new convert to these positions, which are gradually gaining adherents."

—A pleasant episode occurred in the Dominion Senate Chamber last Thursday afternoon, when Canada's centennialian Legislator, Hon. David Ward, was presented by his brother Senators with a fine oil painting of himself. The presentation was made by Speaker Power of the Senate in the presence of many members of the upper and lower Houses, also many prominent citizens of Ottawa and a number of ladies. In spite of his one hundred years, Senator Wark is said to be still in possession of quite vigorous health. His bearing is described as that of a man "who moved carefully rather than feebly and who conserved his physical energies rather than strained them." To Speaker Power's address, the Senator made a suitable reply, expressing his gratitude to his brother Legislators and those whom they represented for such an expression of kindness and friendship, and declaring his faith in a divine providential guidance of the affairs of the world and especially of the British Empire. Pleasant congratulatory remarks were made by Premier Laurier and Mr. R. L. Borden, also by Hon. R. W. Scott, President of the Senate, and Sir MacKenzie B. Hill.

—During the past week George Gee has been tried at Woodville, N. B. for the murder of his cousin, a young woman named Millie Gee whom he shot with a rifle on March 23. As was to have been expected, the trial resulted in the conviction of the prisoner, who has been sentenced to suffer death penalty on July 22nd. The plea which the defence principally relied upon was that of insanity, and that was not considered by either judge or jury to be a strong one under the circumstances of the case. Facts were brought out during the trial which go to show that conditions of a most unwholesome character existed in the community of Canaan or Holmsville where the prisoner and his victim belonged, conditions which might well give rise to such a tragedy as has occurred. The state of things existing at the house where the murder was committed was quite on a level with that which is said to prevail among the