

Messenger and Visitor

Published in the interests of the Baptists 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 Peterson & Co., 107 Gormath Street, St. John, N. B.

THE STRENGTH OF A CHURCH.

A story has been going the rounds that when a certain church was about to build a new edifice, one of the deacons was showing the architect's designs, and coming to the drawing of the steeple he exclaimed, 'There, that steeple will be 180 feet high, the tallest steeple in all this part of the country. Won't that make sinners tremble?'

Without vouching for the truth of this story, the thought of the good deacon finds expression in many of our churches, that much of the power of religion is found in externals. If a church has a large and wealthy membership, an imposing and well-furnished edifice, an eloquent preacher and artistic choir, if, in short, it is the church of the town, and to belong to this church is to 'be somebody,' we call it a strong church, without asking after the tone of its piety. On the other hand, if the members of a church are few and poor we deem it necessarily a 'feeble' church. The strength and prosperity of a church are often estimated by its social position, without regard to its spiritual power.

Ritualism is found not alone among Romanists and Episcopalians. It exists among Baptists, and Presbyterians and Methodists as well. For what is Ritualism? It is putting form in the place of spirit, in other words holding to the idea that there is spiritual power in mere externals. Now this idea is found in every church. If a fine building is erected, a large congregation gathered, and an elegant sermon delivered, a large organ played, and a well trained choir has sung anthems, we believe a great advance has been made, and run away with the idea that that is a prosperous and strong church, without stopping to ask the question how much spirituality there may be behind this stately ceremonialism. Its numbers may be kept up not by conversions, but merely by the influx which wealth and fashion will draw; it may give little or nothing to missions; the tone of its piety may be low; it may be doing very little towards building up the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men; and yet if it is externally prosperous we are apt to call it a strong and prosperous church. And regarding the 'feeble' church we may often desire for it rather the strength of numbers and of wealth than the power which lies in piety.

Now an army may be large in numbers, elegantly uniformed, with large cannon and powerful bass drums, and yet not be so strong as some smaller body of troops. And so the question regarding a church is not simply as to the number of its members, but as to their quality—not merely how well equipped it is and how elegantly it can go through its dress parade, but what it can do. Thus a small and ragged army may yet be a powerful army, and a small and poor church a strong church—stronger than its more stylish neighbor.

A church is strong and successful just so far, and only so far, as it accomplishes the purpose of church organization. That purpose is the propagation of Bible truth, and cultivation of the spirituality and spiritual power of its members. Now a man may belong for years to a large and wealthy church, and his connection with it not result in the increase of his knowledge nor spirituality. On the other hand, the members of a church may be few and poor, and yet the character of that church be such that each one uniting with it is advanced in Christian truth and in spiritual life. And if this be so, this small and poor church is a strong and successful church.

Let it be understood then, that because a church is small and poor, it can amount to nothing and is a failure. It may be nevertheless a strong church. And though the number of a church be not increasing in numbers or in wealth, if they are increasing in spirituality the church is becoming all the while a stronger church. This is the first thing to be desired regarding a 'feeble' church—not that it may become larger and wealthier, but that its character may be more spiritual. And as to the increase of its numbers, such increase should be sought from conversions.

We may wish that a few wealthy and influential brethren would move in from other places, and so the church become large and wealthy. But the gain to an individual church from immigration is no gain to the kingdom of Christ as a whole. It may be selfish in a church to desire such again.

Let the spirituality of the members of the church be increased, and the unconverted will be led by them to Christ. But suppose all that are converted should move to other places, so that the numbers of the church should continue small, it may still be a strong church for the spirituality of its members does not depend on their numbers or their wealth.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

There are three reasons, at least why Christian men should support our institutions of learning at Wolfville. The cause of Christian education demand it. Our public school system is all that we may ask for. It is complete in itself. It provides for each and all without respect to class or belief. In our public schools Romanist and Protestant stand on the same level. It is for this reason that we deprecate most strongly the establishment of separate schools in the new Provinces, to be created in the west. We do not want any system of religion to be taught in the schools provided for out of the public purse. These schools are not at liberty to emphasize Christianity, nor antagonize it.

The time is far distant when all classes will consent to a prominent introduction of Christian teaching in our public schools. The absence of such teaching however has its effect upon the schools themselves. Every argument therefore, for Christian education is an argument for our denominational schools and so an argument for Christians to give to their support.

2. Our Baptist doctrines need it. These doctrines are precious to the men and women who know why they are Baptists, and what it really is to be such. Their work is not yet done in the world. The principles for which they stand, have stood, and must continue to stand, are not yet accepted by all who are called Christians. Suppose all the educated people in the world were separated entirely from the Baptists, what would become of these doctrines? What chance would these have in the future, if all people should remain as the public school system leaves them? What would become of them in the hands of other denominations trained according to their schools? The only answer that could be given is an argument for the loyal and hearty support of our own denominational schools. If the world is to be permeated with Baptist principles they must be propagated by the Baptist denomination. Nobody else will, or can, do this.

3. The training of our future workers requires it. Every part of the organization and work of our people is now seeking men and women, not only educated, but trained in accord with the ideals and methods of these denominational schools. The churches want such pastors and the country churches are beginning to ask for them. Our schools themselves, our academies, and high schools want them for the positions which await just the kind of men and women which these denominational schools can furnish. Our Missionary Boards Home and Foreign turn their eyes towards these schools for the men to take and fill strategic centers at home and abroad.

Everything that can be urged for the strengthening of our working forces as a denomination, is an argument for sustaining our schools of learning at Acadia. Let it be borne in mind that such work tells, and it pays a hundred fold. You may give a beggar his dinner to-day and he may die to-morrow. You did a good deed, though short-lived. But when you plant a school of learning permeated with Christian ideals and pulsating with the truth as it is in Jesus you have sown a seed which shall take root, the fruit of which shall be for the healing of the nations. Help on the Second Forward Movement of Acadia College.

MINISTER'S SONS.

The old slander often comes to the front 'that minister's sons generally turn out badly. Though it has been shown often that there is no truth whatever in the statement, that it is a falsehood pure and simple, yet there are many who still believe it. A French investigator has studied this subject, and has made a long list of names to prove that the sons of ministers make up a large number of the world's great men. Here are a few of the names: Agassiz, Hallam, Jonathan Edwards, Whately Parkham, Bancroft, the Wesleys, Buehner and Spurgeons, Cowper, Coleridge, Tennyson, Lowell, Holmes, Emerson, Charles Kingsley, Matthew Arnold, Dean Stanley, Macaulay, Thackeray, Sir Christopher Wren, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Swift, Sterne, Hazlitt, Grover Cleveland, Peter Stuyvesant, Adoniram Judson, Timothy Dwight, Henry Clay, Fitz-Green Halleck, Morse (the inventor). But why string out the list, the above could be duplicated a hundredfold. As one has well said, 'It is really about time the old yarn was retired,' to which an ex-chaplain replies 'Even so, beloved,' but it won't be, it is too sweet a morsel of the devil's own for them to give it up, though the facts are against them.' There are some good men in these Maritime Provinces whose fathers were preachers and there are many others growing who will benefit and bless their fellow-men in the world.

AFRICAN CIVILIZATION.

A pamphlet entitled, 'The African Civilization Movement' has been laid on our table by the President and promoter, Dr. A. B. Walker of St. John, N. B. The message to the public is a pamphlet of 30 pages which is packed full of information as to the Negro and his present position and standing among the races of the earth and his future prospects. Dr. Walker is most optimistic in his views. He pleads for full justice, right, and equality for all mankind. He says the chief object of this movement is to bring the whole continent of Africa and the whole African race within the pale of Christian civilization according to the Anglo-Saxon plan, and he proposes to do this by founding, in some part of British Africa, not already occupied by white people, a colony of an intelligent, educated, industrious class of English speaking Negroes drawn from English-speaking countries.

The plan of Dr. Walker is excellent and if properly managed and the right kind of leaders get to the front and keep there, the movement will be a success. Whether all that the promoter has in mind will be accomplished by it is open to question. That there is a wide and open door for capable men of the African race, among their own people in America, and Africa is clear. We trust that Dr. Walker and those who are associated with him in this great enterprise may have their most sanguine expectations fully realized. For fuller information correspondents are requested to write to Dr. A. B. Walker, St. John, N. B.

Editorial Notes.

—If it be true as some one has said, that 'worship is doing business with God and preaching is doing business with men,' then it would seem to be a wise thing for men and women to get to church early enough for the devotional part of the services. That part at least which does 'business with God.'

—With pleasure we record the fact that the next issue of the paper will find the editor in his accustomed seat after a few months retirement from full work. We are all glad to know that the rest and freedom from care has proved beneficial, and that he feels sufficiently strong to take up the work which was laid down so reluctantly on account of impaired health. We are sure that all will join in wishing for him that strength which will enable him to continue in the work for which he has shown such excellent qualifications.

—The maintenance of a hearty, vigorous, spiritual life is to every church and every believer a matter of prime importance. It must begin and be carried on in the heart and closet of each disciple. It is to be supported by habitual prayer, self-examination and watchfulness, study of the Word of God and the cheerful and grateful use of all the means within our reach. Some of these are the gathering together of believers, the observance of the New Testament ordinances, and the loving and intelligent performance of every known duty. When these obtain there will be an active, earnest, intelligent church.

—Worldliness like a worm at the root of a plant is eating out the life of many in our churches. The separation from the world seems to be regarded as one of the 'lost arts.' The god Mammon is bowed down to and worshipped. Worldly pleasures and amusements are almost as eagerly sought after by those who profess to be seeking the things which are above, as by those whose affections are wedded to the earth. When the world and the flesh enter into the hearts of believers, it may be morally certain that the devil is not far off. He will resume possession if that is at all possible. In any case neither he nor the world is a friend to grace.

—The attention of our readers is called to the address on Temperance by Rev. Judson Kempton, of Muscatine, on the second page of this issue in which the liquor business is dealt with in a most trenchant manner. The address is timely. We ask our readers to thoughtfully peruse the same, and ponder carefully and prayerfully, the points which are made. We have not read a more vigorous onslaught on this, the greatest foe of human kind, for some time and are glad of the privilege of giving it circulation among the Baptists of these provinces. We hope it may prove a tonic and stimulus to some Christians.

—It is said that the late Henry Ward Beecher had among his many pictures one small engraving which he prized very highly. It represented Christ as central figure of a group. He was surrounded by the poor and suffering, the tried and afflicted. There was the mother in an agony of grief, laying her dead child at His feet. There was the Ethiopian lifting his shackled hands in supplication for relief. There was the toll-worn, grief stricken man worried and torn by the cares of this world. There were the lame, halt and blind, all gathered for help and strength, and to them all Christ was just uttering those matchless words 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' How tender! How helpful! and how fraught with comfort!

—The Sunday School Times is responsible for the following facts in respect to Sunday schools. Hannah Ball of High Wycombe, England, was one of a score