

## Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company Ltd  
Publishers and Proprietors.

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25 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Printed by PATTERSON & CO., 25 Germain St.

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### The First Sunday in December.

In last week's issue we called attention to the action of Convention asking the churches of these provinces to observe the first Lord's day of December as "a day for review of God's dealings with us during the year, for thanksgiving to Him for all His manifold mercies, for humiliation for our lack of earnestness in His service and for prayer that the incoming year may be marked by the outpouring of greater blessings than any that have preceded it."

We desire once more to urge, with all modesty but with great earnestness, that this request be complied with. The Convention asks us to offer thanksgiving for God's gifts to us as a denomination. And how manifold are these gifts! He has given us a faithful, laborious, self-denying, Godly ministry, and the value of this gift human arithmetic is unable to compute. He has given us a large number of devoted, intelligent, zealous workers in our churches, who witness to a present Christ. He has bestowed in large measure the fruits of the Spirit to the thousands of our members in their trials of faith and labors of love. He has given us a place among them who are seeking to glorify Him on the earth. We may well be thankful for His blessings to us as a people.

And viewing how far short we come of exhibiting the life of faith as set forth in His Word, and how little we have done for the establishment of His Kingdom, we may well feel some sense of humiliation at our small attainments. It is not so common as in years gone by, if we believe reports, to have deep repentance in the sense of humiliation for sins. But we still mourn that our unbelief so far makes the best gifts impossible to us.

Then we are asked to pray for the year to come that it may be the best year in our history. And why should it not be? God's power is not yet exhausted. A great preacher says, "The world has not heard its best preaching yet." Why should it not be that all our preachers should preach better in the coming year than in any previous year of their ministry?

Why should not every trace of disunion in our churches, whereby the truth is hindered, disappear? These differences must vanish some day, why should they not depart now? And why should not the Word of the Lord have free course and be glorified in the conversion of thousands in the coming year? Brethren let us pray; let us pray for the conversion of men in large numbers, for the increase of the fruits of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and let us pray for one another.

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### Self-Seeking Rebuked by the Example of Christ.

The passage from the epistle to the Philippians, which forms the Bible lesson for next Sunday, is exceedingly rich, in the truth presented and suggested. Paul's purpose was to exhort the church to a firm and affectionate unity, that, being one in purpose, in love, in fellowship and endeavor, they might prove strong and faithful in the day of trial, and not be affrighted or overcome of their adversaries. There appears to be evidence in the epistle that this admonition to unity was not delivered wholly on general principles. A little farther on we hear the apostle

giving personal exhortation to certain individual members of the church to be of the same mind in the Lord. It seems to be not an unreasonable inference that there were some in the Philippian church not wholly at one in purpose and effort. It is not unlikely that, as a matter of fact, some things were being done in a spirit of faction, and some things in a spirit of vain-glory, and that there were a number of persons each of whom esteemed himself or herself as about the most important member of the church at Philippi. And it is possible that there are pastors who have met with a somewhat similar condition of things in these modern times. One need not go far in these days and in this country, we fear, to find churches—Baptist churches, which are greatly vexed and cursed by this same spirit of faction and vain-glory. Such a spirit is just as great an evil today as in Paul's day, and deliverance from it is just as much to be desired.

It should be highly instructive to observe how the apostle deals with this matter. He does not begin by flinging a stinging rebuke into the faces of those whose inordinate self-love and ambition may have led them to promote factional interests in the church. His voice is very tender and persuasive, full of love and solicitude for his brethren, as he presents the motives which should make for unity and fellowship among them. He reminds them of the divine grace of which all are partakers,—the comfort which they have in Christ, the consolation of His love, the fellowship of the Spirit; and then he sets before them the example of Him, who, though He was in the form of God, emptied Himself that He might accept the conditions of human life, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself to a servant's place and the most shameful of deaths, that He might accomplish His divine ministry in the salvation of the world.

An appeal on such grounds could not fall dead upon the ears of any whose hearts had been moved by the love of Christ and who knew aught of the fellowship of the Spirit. And here we should learn that it is far wiser and more effective, in any effort to reform or to educate men, to appeal to what is best in them, and on the ground of the highest fellowship with truth that they acknowledge, rather than, by a direct and violent attack upon their sins or inconsistencies, to antagonize their prejudices and provoke them to argument in defence. After having so magnified the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit, as he has done in the body of his epistle, Paul could say at the close, with a tenderness and force which surely no Christian heart could resist, "I exhort Euodia, I exhort Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." Too often there is a reversal of Paul's method, and consequent failure. First there is a keen rebuke of some evil thing which is disturbing the church's peace, and, though no names are mentioned, yet "Euodia" and "Syntyche" very well understand that the rebuke is meant for them. So prejudice is aroused, the spirit of faction is strengthened, the wisest counsels fall unheeded, and the evils which it was sought to heal are perhaps but aggravated.

That life of humility and self-sacrifice to which Christ calls and leads His people is not a vain and fruitless thing. It links the human to the divine and glorifies it, even as humanity is glorified in the person of Jesus Christ. Nothing is surrendered for which there is not infinite recompense. When the Son of God became Son of Man it did not mean the loss of His divinity. When the Son of Man took a servant's place in the world, and a malefactor's place on the cross it did not mean the loss of the dignity and value of His manhood. It was through humiliation and suffering that He was perfected; it was through this utmost sacrifice of love that He received the name which is above every name and the right of Lordship over all. And the life to which the apostle points us means fellowship in Christ's sufferings and in His glory. Every knee bows to Him. No one can see the Christ whom Paul declares and not acknowledge His kingship and His right to rule. They who in His name are giving themselves to the service of God and humanity are following the truest and noblest ideal which the world has seen.

### Editorial Notes.

—The readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR will be interested in the information which is given in another column, by a correspondent writing from Fredericton, concerning a baptism of recent date in that city. The Cathedral clergymen are to be congratulated on this heroic attempt to get for once in line with their prayer book and the New Testament in the matter of baptism. The fact is edifying, though so much cannot be said about the *modus operandi*.

—The measure of respect that is entertained for law in the State of Georgia may be judged from the fact that a candidate for Congress has declared himself in favor of lynching, on the ground that it is necessary for the protection of Southern houses. Several members of the State Legislature are said to express similar sentiments. It is not surprising to read, in the same paper which gives this information, an account of the lynching of two negro men in Georgia; the charge against one of them being that he had stolen a mule. It seems only a short step now to shooting a negro for the crime of having a black skin.

—Residents of Boston and vicinity, says the Congregationalist, will have several opportunities to hear Dr. Cheyne, of Oxford. His course at the Lowell Institute on Jewish Religious Life After the Exile, begins Monday, Nov. 29, and will continue three weeks on Thursdays and Mondays. He will give the same course at Andover on successive Fridays, beginning on December 3rd, lecturing at eleven and at four o'clock each day. In the meantime he will be fulfilling a similar engagement at Brown University. G. P. Putnam's Sons will publish the volume containing his lectures.

—Alluding to the Chicago Congress, the Boston Watchman, whose editor was present at the meetings, says of the Congress, that, it "has always been recognized as a platform for the freest and widest discussion. It acts as a kind of safety valve for the brethren who must express themselves or burst. This was the idea upon which the Congress was founded. The Chicago papers as a rule grotesquely misconceived the Congress and the denomination. One of them gravely conjectured that the Congress would enact a new creed for the denomination. Another thought that when Rev. Dr. O. P. Gifford asserted that he did not think that baptism was a prerequisite for the Lord's Supper, the Baptists had nothing else to stand for. Of course Dr. Gifford was not guilty of the egotism of supposing that he was the denomination, and we have not heard of anyone who maintained that the relation of the ordinances is the sum of the distinctive Baptist doctrines. Others thought the very palpable evidence which the discussions afforded to the fact that the Baptists had a right and left wing, was the sure token of coming death. Of course it takes a right and left wing to fly with. The denomination could not rise to the heights of truth without those two wings."

—The latest news received from the Klondike country intimates that there will be great scarcity of provision, if not actual starvation among the gold seekers at Dawson City, before the opening of navigation and the arrival of food from outside sources. This is altogether probable. It appears that great numbers of men have crowded into the country, bringing with them but a small quantity of provisions, and trusting that steamers would be able to get up the river with sufficient supplies for the winter. In this they were disappointed, and when it became evident that the choice was between starving to death at Dawson, or getting to some region where food could be had, a large number embraced the last chance that the season's navigation offered to get away. The exodus has made the prospect for those who remain so much the better, but still the probability is that there will be great scarcity.

—One of the subjects discussed at the recent Baptist Congress in Chicago, was the relation of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The discussion served to make prominent what was well known before, that the denomination in the United States is not wholly

—At the annual  
ation Fund, he