

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.
For further information see page nine.

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

Thanksgiving Day.

Thursday of this week, the sixteenth day of the current month, has been appointed by the Government of this country as a day of public thanksgiving to Almighty God in view of the blessings and mercies of the year. To give thanks to God is a right and becoming thing; only the impious and atheistical mind will question that. It is a good thing that the individual man should recognize his daily dependence upon God and should respond in grateful thanksgiving and praise for the constant bounties of His providence. And it is a right and a seemly thing that families, communities and nations should recognize the Divine goodness, and, so far as may be practicable, give united expression to their gratitude for the blessings received from heaven. The people of Canada are certainly the recipients of great and countless blessings. If they desired to declare and speak of their grounds and occasions for thanksgiving, they are more than can be numbered. The current year is not less rich in mercy and in blessing than its predecessors. In view of what may be called the negative side of the account—the preservation of the land from great disasters and calamities—there is abundant reason for devout thanksgiving. Neither famine nor pestilence has appeared within our borders. There have been no earthquakes overthrowing our cities or volcanoes pouring out a tide of desolation and death. There have been no great destructive floods and conflagrations, and no hostile power has molested the land or threatened its peace. And when we compare all this with the experience of many other lands where blight and famine, plague and earthquake have wrought their desolations during the year, we must feel that the people of this country have large cause for thankfulness in view of its exemptions from such calamities. But when we turn to the positive side of the account, and consider how large and manifold are the gifts bestowed by the "Parent of Good," we may well experience the profoundest sense of gratitude. The harvest, taken as a whole, has probably been one of the most abundant in the history of Canada. There has been marked activity in all the departments of the country's industry. There have been at least fair returns from its mines, fisheries and forests. The country's manufactories were never so active and so prosperous. Those who wish employment have little difficulty in securing it with fair wages, and in some places there are complaints that the men and women needed for the necessary work of the country are not to be found. The resources of the country and the opportunities they offer to capital and industry are being more widely recognized abroad, and peoples from other lands are being attracted to Canada in larger numbers than ever before. So far therefore as temporal and material advantages are concerned, Canadians can have little cause to envy the peoples of other lands, and in view of the abundant harvest and the numberless blessings which the year has brought, every devout heart in this Dominion must feel moved to grateful acknowledgement of the manifold goodness of God.

In view therefore of the great blessings in which the people of Canada are this year so generally participating, it seems in the highest degree fitting that there should be a general recognition of the Divine favor and a public expression of thanksgiving to the Giver of all good. How gracious and how seemly a thing it would be if all the people of this broad and goodly land—from Atlantic to Pacific—should, on the day appointed, gather to their

several places of worship and, with one accord and in one spirit, unite in paying the tribute of their thanks for Heaven's bounty and in lifting their voices in grateful praise to God! Could anything be more worthy of us as a people and a surer pledge of continued and increasing blessing for our country? It is not pleasant to think that a good many men in Canada will value Thanksgiving Day principally as an opportunity for getting drunk, that many more will interpret its whole significance as a day for feasting and amusement, while many others will have no ears to hear of Thanksgiving Day at all—no time to lift hands or eyes from the mudrakes with which they toil unceasingly for things that perish with the using. But surely the Christian people of Canada may well esteem it a high privilege, as well as a religious duty, to meet in their houses of worship for devout acknowledgement of the goodness of God and prayer for His continued blessings upon the land.

Those Plans.

In our last week's issue, page 9, there appeared a communication from the Nova Scotia Finance Committee for Denominational work. This communication presented the substance of the Report of the Committee on Denominational Finances adopted by the Convention at Yarmouth. And on page 3 of the same issue that Report was printed in full. We hope that both the Report itself and the statement of the N. S. Committee, showing what steps it has taken to assist the churches in carrying out the provisions of the report, will receive a careful reading. The Finance Committees appointed for the other Provinces are no doubt also giving attention to the duties intrusted to their hands. It will be seen that as an alternative to the Convention Plan, so called, another, known as the Wheel Plan, is presented. Probably no better alternative plan could be presented, and though it would be desirable from some points of view that all our churches should have the same plan for promoting the denominational work, uniformity of method in this matter is not essential either to harmony of spirit or to excellent results, and it seems wise under present conditions that each church should feel perfectly free to choose whichever plan seems best adapted to its circumstances. The recommendations which the Nova Scotia Committee has made for the benefit of those churches which may adopt the Wheel Plan seem to be well considered, and well adapted to the ends in view. We observe that the Grande Ligne work does not appear in connection with the list of objects to be presented. This is no doubt an inadvertence, it being intended, as we suppose, that Grande Ligne should be one of the four subjects grouped together to be presented at one time.

It will be observed that the Committee to which particular reference has been made is careful to say that it is acting in this matter by way of advice and recommendation simply, and not at all by way of dictation. This of course is true, not only as to the action of the Committees in the matter, but also as to the action of the Convention itself. The way the matter comes to us is this. There is no question but that, for the spiritual good of the churches themselves, as well as for the promotion of the important Christian enterprises which we have undertaken as a denomination, each church, so far as possible, should have some hand in the good work and should contribute to the work regularly, according to its ability. In order to this, systematic effort on the part of each church is necessary. To further this end the Convention appointed a committee, composed of a number of brethren, believed to have a good knowledge of the conditions and ability to advise in the matter, who have, after mature consideration, recommended certain plans as the best practicable for the use of our churches. The Convention has considered and adopted the recommendation of these brethren and, acting on their suggestion, has appointed a Committee to advise and assist the churches in reference to systematizing their benevolent work in accordance with one or other of these plans. Of course if any church is persuaded that it has a better plan of work than those named, it is not under obligation to adopt either of them, but in view of the facts just mentioned it seems reasonable to conclude that each church will find it advantageous to adopt one or

other of the plans presented, and will be glad to receive any suggestions or other help which the Committee may be able to give in order to make the plan effective.

It is hardly necessary to repeat here the trite remark that no plan, however good, will work itself. Machinery is not a substitute for force, but merely a plan for making motive power effective. Still in these days no man can afford to despise machinery on the ground that in itself it can do nothing. To annihilate machinery is, for practical purposes, to annihilate motive power. Many winds are blowing and many waters falling idly that might turn the wheels of factories, if only they were harnessed to their tasks. So in many of our churches there are potential forces that might become actual and potent forces of beneficence, if only the proper encouragement were given for their expression and some systematic method provided for their exercise. And it should be considered that these potential forces of beneficence in our churches, unlike the natural forces applied to machinery, grow stronger and more effective by exercise. We do not exercise faith enough in the potential beneficence of our people. The Christian heart is benevolent. If it is not benevolent it is not Christian. What it needs is to find expression for its benevolence. Open the channels, give it the encouragement it needs, and the fountain will send forth its waters in a larger or a smaller stream, and the longer it flows the fuller will be the stream. With the cultivation of the benevolent spirit in the church by some plan of systematic beneficence, everything connected with it will feel the gracious influence. The church's spiritual life will be enlarged, its influence for good in its own community increased, its pastor will be better cared for, and his spiritual life as well as his salary will receive an uplift. We heartily advise all our churches which have not already done so to adopt one of these plans for promoting systematic benevolence. Give it a hearty, faithful trial and see if there is not a blessing in it.

Editorial Notes.

—The *Watchman* mentions a church which in its annual letter to the Association said:—"The pastor and the people are in perfect harmony. The pastor is willing to do all the work and the church is willing that he should." It is quite certain however that no pastor can do all the work, and if he is willing to undertake it, he lacks much of being an ideal pastor.

—We wish again to remind our correspondents that, in accordance with a recently introduced postal regulation, the postage on printer's copy is now the same as on private correspondence. This means that it requires a two-cent stamp instead of a one-cent stamp, to pay for the conveyance of an item of news, or other contribution, of not more than one ounce weight, to this office, and if such matter is not sufficiently prepaid, we have to pay double postage on it if we take delivery of it.

—It is perhaps not worth while to spend much time in explaining or discussing the miracle of the fall of Jericho. The important thing is to recognize the fact that in every age strongholds of wickedness have been falling before the faith of a united people devoted to the service of God. What the great Christian army today needs for the overcoming of the world is not greater numbers or better equipment, but more union and more faith. Greater miracles than that of Jericho are still possible to a people which will give itself to the service of God in united, unflinching faith.

—The first quarter of another convention year ends with this month. It is important that all our churches see to it that the quarterly collections for our denominational work are taken before its close, so that the money may be in the hands of the several treasurers to enable them to pay the salaries falling due at the end of the quarter. It should be remembered that all our Boards are more or less dependent on these funds to meet the obligations which they have assumed in carrying on the work committed to them by the Convention. The churches should therefore be careful not to omit the collecting of these funds. To neglect to contribute to the funds for our Denominational Work in order to give to something else, is as if a mother should withhold food from her children because a stranger had come to her home. There is danger perhaps, lest in the effort to complete the Forward Movement Fund and to raise the 20th Century Fund we omit our regular offering for our Denominational work. This we must not do if we really mean to help our college or missions, for they all receive from these funds. Let us give to the Forward Movement and to the 20th Century Fund, but let these gifts be special, extra offerings.