

Messenger and Visitor

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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

One of the most prominent subjects, perhaps the most prominent, which was considered at the late Episcopal Convention in Boston was that of marriage and divorce, a more vital question for the weal of the state can scarcely be found, it lies at the basis of all good citizenship, it is society's strong bulwark. Weaken the marriage bond and social order is shaken to its centre. Great evils have already resulted from the growing laxity of the marriage tie, and greater evils are sure to follow if this tendency is not checked. It is to be greatly desired that the statute laws concerning marriage should be approved by the Christian conscience. To this end the discussion of this subject in representative assemblies of the churches ought to have in view the highest welfare of the home and the community under present conditions.

The growing disregard of the sanctity of marriage, especially in the United States, must awaken alarm in every lover of the welfare of mankind. How to increase homes and how to increase their harmony and permanency are questions of the gravest import, both to the Church and the state. It would be a great gain to the peace and happiness of the homes of the land if the Episcopal church should take a position which other denominations could reasonably follow. The position of the Roman Catholic church on this matter is well understood. Whatever may be the true meaning of Christ's words on divorce there can be no doubt that this question is treated, in too many instances, simply as a matter of preference. The marriage relation ought never to be lightly or hastily entered—and never broken except for the gravest reasons, in accordance with the teaching of the scriptures. We hail with satisfaction any advance on the part of Christian bodies which will lead to a deeper regard for the sanctity of the marriage vow.

GERMAN BAPTISTS IN AMERICA.

Twenty years ago there was but one German Baptist church in Dakota, one on the Pacific coast and one in Oklahoma and Western Canada. Now in the same territory there are 68 churches 17 of these in Western Canada.

In 1874 there was in the United States about 100 German Baptist churches with a membership of 6,000, now the churches number 266 with a membership of 25,000. But these figures do not tell the whole story, some 20,000 members of the German churches have united with English speaking churches, and a number of German churches have graduated into English speaking ones. But even this is not all that can be said, the financial transfer is far greater than that of members. Many of these are the well-to-do, thus the German churches are doing pioneer work for the English speaking portion of the Baptist denomination. Notwithstanding these losses, the yearly net increase of members has been 700 and the increase of money for God's cause has been in a much larger portion. The average amount given per member for church and other mission work is \$13.00, that is significant. It is to be remembered, that there are but few men of wealth among them. The men who represent a financial value of more than from \$10,000 to \$50,000 can be easily counted. They do represent however a great amount of liberality. Almost \$135,000 was expended since the last Conference for various mission works at home and abroad, for in addition to Home Missions the Conference carries on work in Brazil and Cameroo (West Africa), helps the Baptist churches in Germany, Austria and Russia and assists the Missionary Union in Burma, India and China. This is a most excellent showing. We wish our German brethren on this continent great success.

BAPTIST WORLD CONGRESS.

At the recent session of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the following resolution was moved by the Rev. Wm. Cuff.

"That the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland extends a cordial invitation to the Baptist Unions and Baptist Missionary Boards throughout the world to send duly appointed and accredited representatives to attend a Baptist

World Congress to be held in London from Monday, 3rd of July to Monday, 10th of July (both days inclusive), 1905, for the purpose of promoting fraternal intercourse between members of the Baptist community and of stimulating zeal and efforts in Christian service; for the expression of the Baptist position as regards the fundamental relation which should subsist between the church and the state; for consultation and conference as to methods, especially in relation to the ministry, the church and the work of the Sunday schools; for the consideration of questions arising in regard to Foreign Missionary fields and methods of labor, and also as to the oppressions that still afflict our Baptist brethren in many parts of the world."

In supporting the resolution, he said among other things: "Perhaps there was never an hour in the history of the Free churches at home and abroad when a Baptist Congress was more important and urgent than it was at the present time. Baptists must make themselves felt as never before. They had a testimony to give at this juncture of ecclesiastical history that could hardly be made by any other body with such consistency as Baptists could make it. They hated priestcraft, every form of it, and since they believed as their fathers believed, that baptismal regeneration was at the root of priestcraft, they had glean hands with which to attempt to attack it, and to let all the world know that they stood four square against priestcraft in every form. The brethren from afar had something to teach those at home, for they came from a fresh, free country in more senses than one. The churches at home might teach them something but he thought that was problematical and hypothetical. These brethren would come from where there was no State church. What must it be to be there?"

BAPTIST UNION.

In responding to the greetings of the representative of the Free Baptists of Wisconsin, Dr. D. J. Denman, said among other good things, there are indications that the prayer of Jesus is beginning to be answered when he prays that they all may be one. There never was such hunger for the spirit of that prayer as now. Men are beginning to reach out through limitations toward each other. . . . Formal statements are no longer separating us from Christian bodies. Our Baptist people may have been misunderstood, and may have misunderstood themselves. Baptists first stood not for immersion and close communion, but for liberty of conscience, for the right to interpret God's word for themselves, and for freedom from the dominion of the state—for freedom of conscience. We stand for another fundamental, that man must be born anew. Immersion is important but not fundamental. In the matter of restricted communion we have never denied the name Baptist to those who are not strict communionists. We could never rule out Spurgeon and the English Baptists. . . . We may then say to these Free Baptists that the local church is the sovereign unit in our denomination and you can join and work with us. If a Free Baptist church were to do this it should be entitled to recognition and we should welcome it in the spirit in which it comes to us."

THE KEYNOTE OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Keynote of Christianity is the cross of Christ. By the cross of Christ is meant the sufferings, or vicarious death of Christ, or the doctrine of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. On Calvary's cross the secret is revealed. Here is the magnetic power of the Christian religion, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." To the Jew this was a stumbling block, to the Greek it was foolishness. If Buddhism or Confucianism or any of the world's great religions had been traced to their origins, as Christianity has been, they never would have secured the adherents they did. To them there was nothing so revolting as the doctrine of the cross. Wonderful indeed is the wisdom and power of God. The incarnated Christ, crucified as an offering for sin, as a substitute for the sinner, is the hidden wisdom which Paul says was revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. That which was destined to conquer the world had a shameful beginning, and that which was the shame of the Christian religion proved its glory. Blot out the vicarious death of the Son of God on Calvary and there is nothing in Christianity to be desired above Mohammedanism, in so far as the salvation of the soul is concerned. The cross of Calvary, is the keynote of Christianity.

A RIGHT HEART.

Mohammedans, Heathen Pagans and Infidels may be honest, truthful, virtuous and law-abiding. The unique quality that constitutes Christianity is love in the heart. Love that suffers long and is kind, love that is not easily provoked and thinketh no evil. Character and conduct are never safe, until the heart is regulated with the grace of love, and so the good Book tells us 'keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.' If the heart is not right then let us cease from the forms of religion. As one has pithily said, 'the Lord wants reconciliation rather than a ritual.' He passes all, our singing, praying, giving, working and talking, to have a look at the heart behind it all. If that be not right there can be

no acceptable worship. A wrong heart strikes discord in our praises, works havoc in our service and discredits all our worship. If we could get behind some of the religious activities of to-day we might read the burning words, thy heart is not right with God."

A GREAT NEED.

One great need if it be not the greatest need, is a revival of righteousness, righteousness in business, righteousness in politics, righteousness in the home, righteousness in all the relations between men. But such righteousness cannot be without the regeneration of the soul, and this comes through Jesus Christ alone. If men are to be made righteous they must become Christians. It is thus that the way of the Lord is prepared. Thus it is He goes forth conquering and to conquer. The work of righteousness goes forward like an engine and a train of cars upon the two rails of the Spirit in the Word and the Spirit in the Christian. The Holy Spirit is God with us to-day, he lives in his Word of Truth, for it is 'God-breathed,' and he lives in his people who are God-filled. If we depend upon the Spirit of God in the Word and in his people we need not fear what is before us.

A HINT.

In the state Convention of Nebraska the report of the Board referred to the conditions of the churches in forceful terms. Here is one paragraph, it is not inapplicable to conditions in these Maritime Provinces. 'A careful analysis of conditions reveals the fact that only 44 churches gave to all the five denominational missionary objects, 48 gave to four objects only, 33 to three only, 23 to two only, 27 to one only and 44 to none. It is not difficult to account for this lack of interest in missions when it is known that in response to letters sent out it was found that only 1977 copies of denominational periodicals are taken in the state. This shows that only about 1000 Baptist homes are provided with Baptist literature. This leaves nearly 5000 Baptist homes without a Baptist paper.' The moral of the above is let Baptist pastors encourage their people to take the denominational paper. People will not give to that of which they know nothing. This is a weak spot among our own people.

Editorial Notes.

—A century ago there was in South Carolina 20,000 Episcopalians and 2000 Baptists, now there are 102,000 Baptists and 6000 Episcopalians, so it is reported. We hope the quality of the Baptists has grown apace with their numbers. In God's economy of grace quality is more important than quantity.

—Marcus Aurelius has said that every man is worth just so much as the things are worth about which he busies himself. Measured by that standard, there are many lives about us that are worth very little; for there are those who are busier about bonnets and flounces, or novels and entertainments, or cards and dances than anything else, and too often to the exclusion of those things which are the best because they are the highest. The aim of every Christian man will be to fashion his life after the great model—even Jesus Christ.

—There is much said of national glory in these days. But earthly glory is like the dew, evanescent and fleeting, there is a glory that is eternal, it never fades. It comes thro' winning souls to Jesus. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians said 'Ye are my glory.' A sinner saved by grace is greater glory than a nation conquered by arms. Kuropatkin and Oyama are on every boy's lips, but the day will come when their names will be forgotten while he who has saved a soul from death will be in eternal remembrance. Let every pastor and every church so pray and work that our land during this year may be filled with the glory of salvation.

—"I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood;
He fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.
"O never till my latest breath,
Shall I forget that look!
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.
"A second look he gave, which said,
'I fully all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid:
I died that thou may'st live."

Condemnation, prostration, justification, consecration, preservation, sanctification, glorification, are all Him. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

—At the Wisconsin Baptist anniversaries, there was an address upon 'an aggressive church', in which the speaker said, 'such a church must have a true conception of its mission. Its mission is not humanitarian or political, but to seek and to save the lost. The church must believe that without Christ men are lost, there are some things men are saved from and saved to. The aggressive church must depend upon its theology, not upon its soup-kitchens. The church of aggression will believe in sanctification for service. It will be a church of hope, of life and hunger for souls. Too many are jumping-jack churches ever in