

Christmas and Easter.

IN the not far distant past, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists, consistently I believe, refused to recognize Christmas and Easter as of any more importance than any other days or weeks. They well knew that those festivals were of heathen and idolatrous origin, that Christmas was not the anniversary of the Nativity nor Easter of the resurrection. When Christmas fell on a week day they worked "from early morn to dewy eve." Easter week was to them the same as any other week, and Easter Sunday as any other Sunday. Of late years those denominations have in a measure fallen in with Roman Catholics and Episcopalians in the observance of those days and festivals.

Last Sunday, it is said, a teacher in a Baptist Sunday-school got from the minister a mild rebuke, because the teacher in teaching his class in the afternoon, had referred to the history of Christmas and Easter, going back to the time of Astoreth, the Phoenecian goddess, and coming down to the time when she became the goddess of the Saxons, with her name slightly changed, and referring to the observance of her festival now by some Christian denominations. He stated that Christmas was not the anniversary of The Nativity, but of "the harvest home" celebrated by Europeans before the introduction of Christianity into Europe, and that Easter was the time of the celebration of a heathen festival, which had been handed down to our Saxon ancestors when they were heathens, and after the introduction of Christianity pinned on to the creeds of three churches. That Easter was not an anniversary, but a movable feast, occurring on different days between the 21st of April and the 25th of March. The teacher carefully explained to his class that baptism was the true and the only true representation of the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord, and that whatever and whenever administered it should remind us of that Being who died for our sins and rose again for our justification. He could have said that the observance of Easter and Christmas by Baptists might be the thin edge of the wedge which would in time split them off from their God-given rules of faith and conduct.

As a mere layman I will not say more, fearing some one of our ministers may say "I am Sir Oracle, and when I open my mouth let no lay dog bark." I may just hint that history clearly shows that the first steps of the churches away from the teachings of the Book were the incorporation with its teachings the traditions of men, and the observance of Christmas and Easter may be the first steps of Baptists from the right way.

CHAS. E. KNAPP.

Dorchester, April 7th.

The sermon that is after a soul.

The sermon that is after a soul is, like the Master, "filled with compassion." It will have in it what was in Christ's eyes when he looked on Peter, with the curses and denials scarce off that poor disciple's lips. It will have in it what was in Christ's voice when he stood weeping over Jerusalem, and said, "How oft would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not." The severest rebuke will get its chief severity from the deep undertone of Divine compassion. And whether it be warning or exhortation, command or invitation, the terrors of the law or the forgiveness of the gospel, the pathos of a suffering and beseeching and pursuing love will bathe it all, and make it clear that if the sermon does not bring the prodigal home it will be because he preferred to trample on his father's heart and murder mercy.

Brethren of the ministry, what are sermons to "the times" compared with sermons to the eternities? Sermons of instruction are indeed priceless. But the gospel is not simply food for saints. It is a cry of alarm. It is a word of rescue. It is a call to repentance. If sinners are not brought to Christ? Let it never be forgotten that souls are before us every Sabbath—sinful, unsaved, perishing, lost souls. Men of God, "throw out the lifeline."—*Herrick Johnson.*

A duty is no sooner divided than from that very moment it becomes binding upon us.

Look Carefully.

THE revised version has it, "Look therefore carefully how ye walk" (Eph. v. 15). It means attention to our way of living. Carelessness is a greater cause of failure in school, and business, and church than any other. The most serious thing that can be said of a Christian is that he is growing careless. The elements of success in secular affairs are those essential to spiritual success. Want of attention has wrecked tens of thousands. A Christian's first care is the care of himself. No one can really care for another until he learns to do this. To value other souls we must first learn the value of our own. No one is beyond the need of watching and guarding himself. The old are just as likely to backslide as the young. How often some reverse or trouble hurts the life of Christians. How often doubt creeps into the heart, and poison gets into the blood, and the spiritual life dies away. To look carefully means to keep our eyes open and watch the effect of circumstances on our character. Those who walk blindfolded will fall into dangerous places. Most of our temptations and sins we might have avoided if we had only kept our eyes opened and watched. Alford translates the text, "Take heed that you walk strictly." It means following the rule. The only safe way of living is living by rule. The architect does this in building a house. An athlete does this in his games. A scholar does this in his study. There is a rule for everything, and failure to keep it means ruin. Strictness is unpopular. Some people are said to be punctilious and over-exact. Pharisees are excited over minut and unimportant things. Non-essentials are magnified into essentials. Yes, but admitting all that, if we do not walk strictly we shall fail to walk the Christian life. Better keep the law to the letter than not keep it at all.

It is easy to grow loose in speech and in money affairs and in our promises. It is easy to become negligent in filling our place in the church and prayer-meeting. The only people who count for much in the work of Christ are the strict people who keep their promise to their Master. Are you a strict Christian? Are you strict in keeping the Lord's Day. Are you strict in keeping your covenant with the church? Are you strict in telling the truth, and in every part of your life.

Notice.

The New Brunswick Western Association will convene with the Lower Newcastle Baptist church, Queens county, June 21st, 2.30 p. m. All churches are urgently requested to be particular in filling out the statistical part of their letters.

C. N. BARTON, Clerk.

Religious News.

BRUSSELS ST.
ST. JOHN.

Eleven received hand of fellowship on Easter. Ten of them came by letter.

H. F. W.

On March 3rd, two were baptized and received into MENT, ALBERT Co. fellowship with the 2nd Hillside church, and on both two were received by letter into the Caledonia church.

A. A. RUTLEDGE.

Our Sunday School, under FAIRFIELD, N. B. Superintendent W. R. Floyd, is doing a noble work. The Mission Band, presided over by Sister J. Floyd, have model meetings. Our Sunday night congregations are large and attentive; some have lately expressed a desire to be Christians. Wednesday evening the friends gathered to make their pastor a donation unhindered by a down-pour of rain. At the close of a good programme they presented the pastor with \$45.20 cash; this was a real donation, my salary being overpaid without it. We recently heard a pastor say he had the best church. We knew he never was in these churches. Since 1901 dawned, have reported three donations and they are the smallest part; our next will report baptism.

R. M. BYNON.

ANDOVER, N. B. encouraging. Bro. Demings is doing excellent work, he is highly esteemed by all but the rum-seller. Woel unto the preacher when the rum-seller lifts his hat to him. At Andover 15 were added to the church by baptism and by experience, some will join by letter. A number of others have made a profession and will join one of the many different kinds of Baptist churches at this place. There is a gracious work of grace going on at Forest Glen, 5 were baptized last Lord's day, 5 others confessed Christ in the meetings, and 17 rose Sunday evening requesting prayer that they might make a full surrender to Christ. The pastor will continue the meetings this week. I go next to assist Bro. A. H. Hayward at Florenceville. MARPLE.

FREDERICTON. At the Communion service, April 7th, nineteen new members received the hand of fellowship. Fourteen of these were baptized during the past month. J. D. F.

ST. STEPHEN, N. B. Four were received into fellowship of the church on Sunday last, three by baptism and one by letter. In the midst of our grief over the loss of some who have been identified with the church since its organization, these additions bring us cheer and hope. W. C. GORNER.

AMHERST. Pastor Bates writes that Sunday, April 7, was a good day for the church. Congregations were large. An Easter concert by the Sunday School was an interesting feature of the day's services. Before the morning service the pastor had the happiness of baptizing his oldest son, a young man of nineteen.

ST. MARTINS, N. B. The St. Martins church has recently received from Mr. Robert Moran of Liverpool, G. B., a donation of eight hundred dollars toward the building of a new parsonage. Mr. Moran's generous gift has made it possible for a church to undertake the work of building and thus to supply a want long felt. The church has conveyed to Mr. Moran its grateful appreciation of his very generous donation.

WOLVILLE. On Sunday evening March 31st, twelve of our boys were baptized, among them the two sons of Dr. Trotter who were baptized by their father. Easter Sunday evening was a service of praise and prayer and baptism, at which eighteen of our girls were obedient to the Lord's command in baptism. This makes the total number, baptized thus far since Mr. Gale's meetings closed, sixty-four, thirty-two girls and thirty-two boys, thirty-five from the Schools and twenty-nine from the town. There are others who have been received by the church but have not yet been baptized but will be in the immediate future. And we look for others to come forward. It has been a gracious season of refreshing from the Lord in which all our hearts have been rejoicing.

April 8th.

H. R. H.

FIRST MONCTON CHURCH.

Easter Sunday, April 7th, was a day of great blessing with us. We had crowded congregations at each service. In the service of the morning thirteen recent converts were baptized on a profession of faith. In the evening the pastor preached from I Cor. 15:26, his subject being "The Last Enemy destroyed." At the close of the evening service the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered, when the thirteen baptized in the morning, and two who had come in by letter received the right hand of fellowship. The pastor asked for a thank offering of \$700 to meet indebtedness necessarily incurred by improvements that have recently been made. This amount and a little more was cheerfully given. The day closed by the members uniting with heart and voice in singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Others are now ready for baptism. D. HURCHINSON.