

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

THE AIM OF THE PREACHER.

Dr. Cuyler says that he was once asked by the late Mr. Spurgeon, this pertinent question "How far do your chief preachers aim at the conversion of souls?" This is a pertinent question for ministers to ask themselves today. We read that Jesus "came to seek and to save the lost." This was his aim and purpose. To this end he gave himself with all the energy of his being. The main purpose of the apostles was to win men to Jesus by the aid of the Holy Spirit. The keynote of this whole business, according to Paul, was struck when he declared that he was "determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." It is further said of him that he "ceased not to warn sinners, night and day, with tears." The great Reformation in the 16th century was far more than a protest against prevailing errors; it was direct bringing of souls to the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Christian life of the churches in England had reached a very low level, and a great spiritual famine prevailed, the Wesleys and the Whitfields stirred the slumbering Christian heart to its deepest depths, and warned their fellow countrymen to "flee from the wrath to come." Their one aim was to lead souls to Jesus. And the influence of their life and labors has not ceased to be felt to the present day. Let every preacher ask himself this question on bended knee "How far does my preaching aim at the conversion of souls? The answer might be a real awakening.

"How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" These words are proof of a regular ministry to whom the work of preaching is given, of a church to whom the business of sending the ministry is committed, and as the means for sending the ministry is opened up on church members, there seems to be such a unity, such a connection between them, they become one, in divine effort, so lasting in effect that the world in hearing may believe, and believing may be saved. This work just had a beginning on earth on the plains of Bethlehem when angels came crying, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." The disciples took it up and to-day the ministry and church are engaged in it, proclaiming the glad tidings. The song has never grown old; the supply from it is still sufficient, blessing the nations, strengthening, cheering and comforting all engaged in it.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHILDREN.

Though the religious instruction must begin in the home it cannot end there. Necessarily it can only be the beginning. The churches depend mainly upon the Sunday school for further religious instruction. This work cannot be superseded and its importance cannot be over-estimated. There are other organizations which supplement the work of the Sunday school, such as Y. P. Societies, Mission Bands, etc. No one believes for a moment that everything is done for the children that ought to be done for them. After making the most liberal allowances for the work of all these agencies, there remains a vast field for instruction which the church must not overlook. One of the saddest facts of our church life to-day is that so many of the children are not in our Sunday schools, and that so few of them are brought into the church of Christ ere they leave the school. It has been stated "that not more than one fifth of the rising generation enter maturity as professed Christians."

To properly meet this obligation is one of great difficulty, and every pastor has felt the responsibility most keenly. This debt he can meet in no formal way. A weekly sermonette will not do it, nor a perfunctory rehearsal of the decalogue or formal catechetical instruction. These are all good in their places but by themselves are entirely inadequate. The children must be won by those who propose to be their best helpers. And this should be and can be done by the gray-haired saint as well as by the youthful disciple, and no work pays better. The child of to-day is the man of to-morrow. What is done for him in youth will follow him through all the years of his life. Impressions made then will stick. As the stamp leaves its impression upon the plastic wax so the lessons instilled into the mind of childhood by the loving parent or teacher or pastor will

never be effaced. The pastor is the leader of his people, the shepherd of his flock, the instructor of his pupils. These are of all ages and grades. There is the old man of seventy and the child of seven. It is for him to minister to each in his season, and needs and attainments. His work is varied and complex. The old shepherd can masticate dried grass, the lambs can utilize only the fresh green herbage. "To each his portion" is his aim and endeavor if he be a wise and tender guardian of his flock. How he will do this must be left to his judgment and discretion, circumstances vary, and means must be adapted to ends. One man will do it in one way and another in another way. "Oh, church of God! whatever else you do or do not do, care for the children and the young people. Win them, draw them by the cords of love and the bands of a man."

PROFITLESS HEARING, WHY?

In Hebrews 4:2, we read "But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Just as there was a reason why those Hebrews were not profited by the Gospel, so there is a sense in which we as Christians are not profited as we might be, and to the extent the Gospel is designed to profit.

One reason for this may be that our hearts are not right in the sight of God, as was said of one of old. Our prayers may not be so definite and earnest as was David's when he prayed "Create in me a clean heart." Perhaps we overlook the great fact which Jesus announced when he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." It may be we go to the house of the Lord with minds pre-occupied. We take the world, its claims and duties, too often with us, and so we are not in a fit condition to receive with meekness the ungrafted word which is able to save the soul. There is no wonder that comparatively little profit is derived from the preaching of the Gospel, the word preached not being mixed with faith.

The condition of the heart has very much to do with the proper reception of the truth. "It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness." Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life. It is of supreme moment to keep a close guard on the heart and the avenues thereto; for as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Well indeed may he sing,

"Oh for a heart to praise my God
A heart from sin set free."

A HINDRANCE TO SPIRITUAL LIFE.

The Report of an Association in Kentucky contains a message which may apply to our own churches. The paper refers to some of the influences which tend to lower the spiritual life, and refers to amusements as one of these and the desecration of the Lord's Day as another. In respect to amusements, it affirms that the Lord's people often deeply grieve the Holy Spirit, and positively quench his power in their lives, by engaging in them.

The influence of the social card-table is more toward the gaming-table than toward the Lord's table. The tendency of the dance is toward minding the things of flesh rather than toward the things of the Spirit. The influence of the theatre is toward an even lower moral plain rather than toward the upward calling. All these amusements are, in their tendency, distinctly away from the church rather than toward it. If this be true, what should be the Christians attitude toward these forms of evil? Ought he to try the impossible, serve two masters?

A THOUGHT.

One of the hopeful signs of the times is the care that is shown in having God's house made beautiful and attractive in its appointments. In this we are only following the ideal which is set before us in the natural world. We see the beauty of the Lord everywhere. "Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." While this is true, we must remember that religion is not confined to externals. It is much more than these. Every renewed soul is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and he would have this dwelling place "a thing of beauty" forever. Sin stains and defaces it. The forces of evil would enter and mar the beauty of this heavenly shrine. There are forces that threaten its destruction. As sentinels we need to watch with sleepless vigilance lest an enemy find entrance. "The sin which doth so easily beset us," is to be watched and fought against. As one has well said, "Each of us made beautiful by the indwelling Spirit should see to it that he in very deed, is a living stone in that holy temple which God, through the ages, has been building for the glory of his great name."

'ABIDE WITH ME.'

This is a hymn which never grows old. It touches the cords of the human soul and makes them vibrate with its sweet impressive music, yet how few know anything about the author. Henry Francis Lyte was the rector of a little church in the village of Brixham, on the coast of Devonshire in England. He was richly endowed intellectually, a poet and a scholar. His life was spent in this village among these simple fisher-folk where he preached for twenty

five years, dying with consumption at the early age of fifty-four. This exquisite hymn was composed on the Sunday evening on which he preached his last sermon. It was the one desire of his heart to build a beautiful church to take the place of the poor building in which he ministered to the people of his charge. Thirty years that church has been building and the fishermen have contributed to its erection no less a sum than \$35,000, at least \$10,000 more were needed which has been obtained from outside sources, and the new church will stand as a monument of the saintly rector who lived for his flock and left a memory among them the influence of which will be felt until the end of time. It is not where we work as the Spirit with which the work is done that tells.

INFLUENCE.

Life is not a matter of convenience to be dissipated in frivolous self-indulgence or wasted in misdirected energy. In more ways than one we are our brother's keepers. Does not this thought give a significance to life that is measureless in its results? If men considered that no one "lives unto himself and no one dies unto himself," would he not pardon the paths of his feet and think of the words which fall from his lips? The best we can do ought to be done, if from no higher motive than to help the men and women, by whose side we walk, those who may jostle us on life's pathway.

It is a fact that we are either lifting others or degrading them. Men are either made better because of their contact with us or they are becoming poorer. This makes daily living a serious business, and serious it is, because of the tremendous issues which are involved.

Editorial Notes.

—Somebody has said, and it is worth repeating and to be remembered: "Great saints pray, ordinary men preach. High sounding words and showy acts may impose upon the few, but it is silent effort moves the world." It is the still small voice of the eternal Spirit which reaches the hearts of the most hardened and depraved and wins them to the Christ of God. It is never "by might nor by power" that the most effective work is done "but by my Spirit saith the Lord."

—The formation of the Baptist Union in China by all the Baptist missionaries of all lands is a step in the right direction. The Union is for the study of methods and general helpfulness; not for altering the work of the different Boards. This is eminently wise. The missionaries representing the two Canadian Boards thus meet. Would it not be a good thing if all the Baptist missionaries in India would form a Union for the same purpose? An agitation among the missionaries along this line might be helpful.

—The Congregationalist of Boston calls the attention of its readers to the fact, that next year all the Presbyterians of Scotland are to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of John Knox. This will be a worthy celebration of a most worthy man. Just now, two branches of the great Presbyterian church of Scotland, the United Free and the "Wee Frees" are having a celebration which is not at all edifying and certainly does not help the world to see the beauty there is in Christ Jesus. They will be all too ready to say "Behold how these Christians bite and devour one another."

—Some one has well said that "the greatest assistant a minister of the gospel can have is a consistent Christian life keeping step with his sermons. People are apt to remember the man long after they have forgotten his message." The truth of the above finds frequent illustration in daily life. Sometimes we hear it said of some men, "if we could only keep him in the pulpit he would be all right, but alas, on Monday he undoes what he says on Sunday." A minister above all men should be pure and good, faithful and true, should never promise to pay and forget to keep his promise. Little straws show the current of life as they float along its stream. We cannot be too careful.

—The temperance sentiment is on the advance in old England. The need for this is very apparent. In a recent address the Rev. F. B. Meyer said that a prominent member of his church had been refused office because he was engaged in the liquor traffic and had since left the church. Mr. Meyer went on to say that he would not turn out of office a man engaged in the liquor business, but in future elections no man who received any revenue from the liquor trade would be considered. It is said that in the Congregational church in England, twenty-five years ago 768 clergymen out of 2000 were total abstainers while to-day 2500 out of 3000 are. This is advance. The time is not far off when every minister of the gospel will be a total abstainer for the sake of others. That time ought to be here and now.

—The death of Ernest C. Harper came as a painful surprise to many in these Provinces. A recent graduate of Acadia, with a splendid record as a student he had entered upon his life work in the city of Pittsburgh, Penn. with high hopes and bright prospects as an electrical engineer. In another column will be found brief obituary notice. There is left to mourn his loss a widow, Edna, youngest daughter of the late I. C. Cook of Canso, N. S., who was