

Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company, Ltd

Publishers and Proprietors

TERMS } \$2.00 PER ANNUM.
\$1.50 IF PAID IN ADVANCE.

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Address all communications and make all payments to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR.

Printed by PATERSON & CO., 105 and 107 Germain St

The Convention.

Our Maritime Baptist Convention, meets this week in its sixty-sixth annual session in Moncton. The place is central and easily accessible from all points, and a large and representative attendance of delegates from the churches is accordingly to be expected. No doubt but that our Moncton friends will do their part well in entertaining the Convention, and considering the largeness of the task which is involved in this undertaking, it is to be hoped that all who attend will give courteous consideration to all requests and regulations of the entertaining church in order that their endeavor to provide for the comfort of their numerous guests may not be made unnecessarily difficult.

It is to be earnestly hoped and prayed for that a spirit of good-will and hearty Christian fellowship may pervade the meetings and that large spiritual blessings may be received. So far as we know, there are no burning questions to be discussed. There is, we understand, likely to be some consideration of the Young People's work in its relation to our churches and to the Convention, which may or may not lead to some important changes. Apart from this, there will be the customary discussion of our denominational work in the departments of Missions and Education, with other matters in the line of ordinary routine. In accordance with the unwritten law of alternation, the Educational work will this year have precedence in order of time, and the report of the Board of Governors of Acadia University will afford the principal subject for consideration on Saturday, with a public meeting in the interests of Education in the evening. On Monday the Home Mission work will come under review, and on Tuesday the report of the Board of Foreign Missions will receive consideration. In connection with all of these interests it is to be anticipated that the reports will show that the work in these different departments has been prosecuted during the past year with an encouraging measure of success. The reports which, during the summer, have reached the public in reference to our educational institutions at Wolfville indicate a year of faithful effort, earnest endeavor to make the most of present conditions and opportunities and a hopeful outlook for the future. The same may doubtless be said in respect to the mission work both at home and abroad. In none of these departments have the opportunities for service been exhausted, but now, as in the past, doors stand opened to most inviting fields of effort if only the means were at hand to send forth the laborers to sow or to reap in these fields of promise. Every year ought to reveal a deepening interest on the part of our people in the several departments of the work committed to us as a denomination and an enlarging expression of the spirit of benevolence in support of that work. During the past year the business of the country has been generally good, the industries of the land have flourished and the public revenues have been largely augmented: Ought we not therefore, to expect a substantial increase in those revenues which go to promote the Kingdom of our Lord? From what we can learn, however, the reports of our denominational treasurers are not likely to show that in our contributions to missions and other benevolent work there has been any material increase over those of last year. We have probably done little if any more than to keep abreast with the past in this respect. There is also the question as to the spiritual condition of our churches—a question of fundamental importance. What will the report on the State of the Denomination have to show? There is probably no report which comes before our Convention, which is worthy of more careful preparation and more prayerful consideration. Many blessings, spiritual and

temporal have been enjoyed by our churches during the past year, in some churches seasons of special spiritual grace have been enjoyed and there have been considerable additions to their membership. But we greatly fear that if all the facts relating to the spiritual life of all our churches could be presented, there would be seen to be great reason for humiliation and heart-searching inquiry as to the reasons why larger blessings have not been received. In going up to the Convention there should rest upon all a deep sense of responsibility in respect to the things committed to our hands, and a profoundly earnest and prayerful desire to obtain that guidance and blessing from above, without which all that we may do or plan will lead to no great result. Those who attend the Convention from east and west, from north and south will meet as the representatives of a people who are one in their general beliefs, their interests and purposes. May they receive and carry back to their several churches an abundant blessing. The Convention should serve to unite us in stronger bonds of brotherhood and to inspire us for larger undertakings and more successful service. If we shall as a people unitedly and in faith attempt great things for God, we shall not fail to receive great things at His hand.

Vice-President Roosevelt on the Bible

It is for any country an indication of vital national strength, greatly significant as to its future welfare, if the men who occupy its high places of influence and government are reverent believers in the Bible as the Book of books. It is gratifying to note that the pervading Christianity of the United States still finds expression in the Christian character of the men who are called to occupy the offices of President and Vice-president in the great Republic; men who are willing to give expression to their personal belief in the religion of the Bible and their profound interest in the work of the Kingdom of Christ, as Ex-president Harrison, President McKinley and Vice-president Roosevelt did in connection with the Ecumenical Missionary Congress last year in New York. Worthy of note in this connection is an address delivered recently by Vice-president Roosevelt before the American Bible Society. The subject of Mr. Roosevelt's address was The Bible and Character. He spoke of the incalculable influence of the Bible upon all the life, thought and activity of the nation—its teachings so interwoven with all the nations life as to make it literally impossible to imagine what that life would be if the teachings were removed. It would mean the loss of almost all the standards by which public and private morals are now judged and which are the objects of the nation's moral aspirations. "Almost every man," said Mr. Roosevelt, "who has by his life-work added to the sum of human achievement of which the race is proud, almost every such man has based his life-work largely upon the teachings of the Bible." As an instance of a great man profoundly influenced by Bible teaching, reference was made to Abraham Lincoln,—"sad, patient, kindly Lincoln who, after bearing upon his weary shoulders for four years a greater burden than that borne by any man of the nineteenth century, laid down his life for the people whom living he had served so well—built up his entire reading on his early study of the Bible. He mastered it . . . mastered it so that he became almost 'a man of one book,' who knew that book and who instinctively put in practice what he had been taught therein."

Mr. Roosevelt spoke of the national school system and of the inestimable value to the nation of popular education, but he emphasized the consideration that true education means vastly more than the training of the physical and intellectual faculties. It must aim at character, for "character is in the long run the decisive factor in the life of individuals and of nations alike," and the great text book for character building is the Bible. "It is a good thing to be clever, to be able and smart; but it is a better thing to have the qualities that find their expression in the Decalogue and the Golden Rule." There is needed an education that shall cultivate, not merely an intellectual acuteness, but honesty and a moral courage that dares to be honest under all conditions. There is no room in a healthy community for either the knave, the fool, the weakling or the coward.

"You may look through the Bible from cover to cover and nowhere will you find a line that can be construed into an apology for the man of brains who sins against the right. On the contrary, in the Bible, taking that as a guide, you will find that because much has been given to you much will be expected from you; and a heavier condemnation has been visited upon the able man who goes wrong than upon his weaker brother who cannot do the harm that the other does because it is not in him to do it.

"The immense moral influence of the Bible, though of course infinitely the most important, is not the only power it has for good. In addition there is the unceasing influence it exerts on the side of good taste, of good literature, of proper sense of proportion, of simple and straightforward writing and thinking. This is not a small matter in an age when there is a tendency to read much that even if not actually harmful on moral grounds is yet injurious, because it represents slipshod, slovenly thought and work; not the kind of serious thought, of serious expression, which we like to see in anything that goes into the fiber of our character.

"The Bible does not teach us to shrink difficulties, but to overcome them. That is a lesson that each one of us who has children is bound in honor to teach these children if he or she expects to see them become fitted to play the part of men and women in our world. What is true affection for a boy? To bring him up so that nothing rough ever touches him, and at twenty-one turn him out into the world with a moral nature that turns black and blue in great bruises at the least shock from any one of the forces of evil with which he is bound to come in contact? Is that kindness? Indeed, it is not. Bring up your boys with both love and wisdom; and turn them out as men, strong limbed, clear eyed, stout hearted, clean minded, able to hold their own in this great world of work and strife and ceaseless effort.

"If we read the Bible aright, we read a book which teaches us to go forth and do the work of the Lord; to do the work of the Lord in the world as we find it; to try to make things better in this world, even if only a little better, because we have lived in it. That kind of work can be done only by the man who is neither a weakling nor a coward; by the man who in the fullest sense of the word is a true Christian, like Great Heart, Bunyan's hero. We plead for a closer and wider and deeper study of the Bible, so that our people may be in fact as well as in theory 'doers of the word and not hearers only.'"

Editorial Notes.

—The days when the rack and the stake could be conscientiously employed in the service of the cause of truth are, let us hope, forever of the past. But a reminiscent flavor of those days still lingers in the hearts of many good people who are ready to denounce as enemies of good and traitors to the truth all who cannot believe and teach on certain subjects as they themselves do. The fourteenth chapter of Romans has lessons for this present generation as well as for those which are past.

—Patience and perseverance will remove mountains, but human ability has its limits, and, as the Watchman wisely says, "It is a great part of wisdom to recognize the inevitable, to discern the limit beyond which it is useless to struggle and contend. The timid man thinks that he has reached that limit before it is really in sight. The foolhardy man cannot see the limit when he is plump against it. The timid man is always saying that there are lions in the way. The foolhardy man persists in ramming his head against a stone wall."

—The North China Herald, which is the leading English paper published in China, and its judgment, as the Independent says, more valuable than that of a multitude of prejudiced detractors of mission work, is quoted as follows: "The good work that is being done all over China by missionary doctors, missionary schoolmasters and professors, and the men who devote themselves to such periodicals as the *Wan Kwoh Kung Pao* is not rewarded by the grant of C. M. G.'s or C. B.'s, or by recognition of any kind from kings or governments, but it does the work just the same. The transformation of China which is coming on gradually is the work of these men."

A correspondent in a Halifax paper complains bitterly that the accommodations furnished for smokers on certain trains on the I. C. R. are not first class. This might well open the question, why is it that, in the travelling arrangements of the present day, the men who smoke should receive favors above all other men who travel on land or sea. If one wants a place to sleep on a railway train he is charged extra for it, and a good round price too, but the smoker enters the first class car, preempts a seat by depositing his grip and his overcoat upon it, then goes to the smoking car where he probably remains for most of the journey, paying nothing for the extra accommodation however luxurious it may be. And so pampered has he become through privilege that if the appointments of his extra car do not come up to his ideas, he feels so keen a sense of injury that his indignant soul can find relief in nothing short of a public protest—vulgarily styled a "kick." As the esteemed smoker is in-