

Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company Ltd
Publishers and Proprietors.

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

S. MCC. BLACK, EDITOR
A. H. CHIPMAN, BUSINESS MANAGER
85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Printed by PATERSON & CO., 92 Germain St.

—One of our good pastors writes us in a very despondent mood about our Maritime Year Book. He seems to have quite lost hope of it ever making its appearance in *this* world, but intimates that, as there are to be two resurrections, the year book for 1898 may be able to make a *late* appearance in the hereafter. Our brother should not give way to pessimistic suggestions. It is quite possible that some of us may live to see the issue of the Year Book for 1898.

—A Russian correspondent of a London paper represents that the Czar is much encouraged at the favorable reception which his proposals, looking to the establishment of peace on a firm basis among the great Powers, have met with in Great Britain. In view of the early assembling of the peace conference, the Czar is said to be now engaged, in conjunction with his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Muravieff, and the State Council, in elaborating a series of resolutions to be submitted to the conference, and is devoting his closest personal attention to these proposals in order to make them generally acceptable to the Powers. It is represented to be the hope of the Czar that, though the first conference may not lead to immediate results of importance, yet it will mark an important step in the development of the disarmament idea in Europe.

—Rev. Charles H. Corey, D. D., who is a New Brunswicker by birth, a graduate of Acadia College and personally known to many of our readers, has recently resigned the presidency of Richmond Theological Seminary, an institution which has for its object the education of students for the ministry in connection with the colored Baptist churches of the south, a work in which for many years he has been very successfully engaged. Dr. Corey is a man of winning personality, and he has shown remarkable fitness for the important and difficult work to which he has given the best energies of his life. It is stated that he gives up the work now on account of ill health and goes to his home at Seabrook, N. H., for rest. The Religious Herald, the Baptist paper of Richmond, alluding to Dr. Corey's resignation, says: "We are distressed at the resignation of Dr. Corey. He came to Richmond many years ago, a stranger to us all. He has conducted his difficult and delicate work, as president of Richmond Institute, with rare tact and unflinching good sense. He has done a work for the colored people of the State that will endure through all the years. He leaves with the cordial respect of the whole community."

—The seventieth annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society shows that during the year which it covers—that ending March 31, 1898—the work of the society has advanced in all its departments. The issues of Bible, Testament and portions of the Scriptures amounted to 4,387,000, which is 600,000 above the total of the previous year. The number of colporteurs abroad has risen by over 250, and in colportage sales there has been an increase of 200,000 copies. The number of Bible-women employed by means of the grants made to the various missionary societies, and missions at work in the East has been increased by over 200, making a total of 500. Much good, it is hoped, is being accomplished through the agency of these Bible-women who not only read the Scriptures to the secluded eastern women, but also, in some cases, teach the women to read for themselves. They also visit the wards of hospitals, crowded at times with thousands of otherwise inaccessible women, and declare to them the word of life. In China the demand for the Bible is increasing, and the same is true of India, in spite of the famine. In the Russian Empire 550,000 copies in over 50 languages are

required annually to meet the demand, and the door is widening. Preparation is being made to meet the opportunities which appear to be opening in the Philippines, in Bolivia, British Central Africa and the Upper Nile. The Scriptures are being every year translated into new languages. Twelve have been added to the list of translations during the past year, making a total of 351 languages into which the Scriptures have been translated through the agency of the society.

—Mr. William T. Stead, the English editor of the Review of Reviews, seems to be correctly described as a Russophile. He believes in the value to Great Britain of a friendly understanding with Russia, and he has an extremely good opinion of the present Czar, as he had also of his father. Mr. Stead has given some account, in the Review of Reviews, of his recent visit to the Czar at Livadia, on the Euxine, which of course makes very interesting reading, whether the reader is able to see the Czar and his government altogether as Mr. Stead sees them or not. Having seen and conversed with the Czar on political subjects of great importance, Mr. Stead emphatically rejects the opinion, held by many, that Nicholas II., though a good-hearted and well-meaning young man, lacks the physical and intellectual vigor and the decision of character necessary to the making of a great sovereign. He sees in the present Czar a man to thank God for, "an emperor, yea, I say unto you, and more than an emperor." Physically, the present Czar differs much from his father. He is rather small of stature, a little taller than was Lord Nelson or Napoleon Bonaparte, and about the height of General Gordon, whom he resembles in other respects. In physique he is wiry and vigorous, a much healthier man than was his father, Alexander III., who, though great in stature and with immense muscular development, was, from the insurance company's point of view, by no means so good a life as his successor. For the intellectual and personal qualities of the present Czar the English journalist has nothing but admiration. His mind is exceedingly alert and his memory remarkable. "Alertness, exactness, lucidity and definiteness are four excellent qualities in a man, and the Czar has them all." Then he is simple unaffected, with all the delightful school-boy abandon of manner, entirely frank, and to all this is added "a modesty as admirable as it is rare." Will Nicholas achieve in the direction of disarmament anything worthy of being called success? Mr. Stead acknowledges that the obstacles in the way of success are very great, but concludes that the character and the position of the Czar are such that the issue is to be regarded with much hopefulness.

Jesus at the Marriage Feast.

The Bible lesson for the current week is of interest especially because it indicates the attitude of Jesus toward the home, the family and family relationships. "There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," and in that marriage and the accompanying festivities, there was represented much that is of great interest and significance in the life of men. It seems probable that one, at least, of the families immediately interested in the marriage at Cana was related to our Lord, for the mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus with his disciples, just arrived from the Jordan, also receives an invitation to the wedding feast. Perhaps he had hastened his coming somewhat in order to be present at the marriage of his friend. At all events he had been pleased to accept the invitation. At the beginning of his public ministry, fresh from the remarkable events recorded in the preceding lesson, his mind filled with thoughts of the ministry which lay before him, our Lord did not consider it foreign to his mission or beneath his dignity, as the Son of Man and the Christ of God, to be present at a wedding feast, participating and assisting in the festivities.

There is much that is significant in this incident in the life of our Lord. It makes it plain that Christianity does not withdraw itself from the social life of men or frown upon their innocent enjoyment. Its spirit is one of kindness and of friendship. Christianity may maintain a feeble existence in the solitude of the cloister, but its true home is among men in all the busy ways of life. The religion of Christ is not only for the closet and

the church, but for the home, the street and for all the avenues of life. It has, indeed, its wilderness experiences, its nights of prayer on the lonely mountain, its terrible wrestlings alone with God, and also its Mount of Transfiguration. But from all these it soon returns to make its home and fulfil its ministry among men. Of John the Baptist's ascetic life Jesus spoke no word of disapprobation. John was the man for his time and his work, but his life and work were prophetic of an infinitely fuller life and larger work about to be revealed. As we read the narratives of our Lord's life, we must perceive how constantly he was with men and how much he made himself a part of their life. As a worker, sharing their toil, as a teacher, instructing men in the truth of God, as a guest at the house of Pharisee or Publican, in the joy of the marriage feast, in the sorrow of the chamber of death, in quiet wayside talks and in impassioned addresses to the multitudes, Jesus was with men, full of concern for their interests, full of sympathy for their infirmities and ready always, in self-sacrificing love, to minister to the physical or the spiritual needs of the multitude or the individual. And Christianity must mark the footsteps of its Lord and follow where he led. Christians are in the world that they may be its light, its salt. It is for us to mingle with men; to sympathize with human infirmity, to be an illuminating and purifying influence among men, extending to all the hand of charity and helpfulness, declaring the gospel of the grace of God and giving freely as it has been given unto us. Particular, as remarked above, this incident at Cana is significant as indicating our Lord's regard for marriage and the home, and his sympathy in all happiness which comes to the world through an institution ordained of God and honorable among all men. And the Son of Man gave his benediction to the marriage feast by making it the scene of his first miracle, in which he manifested his glory and confirmed the faith of his disciples.

The meaning of the brief conversation between Jesus and his mother is a question of much interest in connection with the lesson. What did Mary mean when she said to her son, "They have no wine"; and what did Jesus mean by his answer which, in its English rendering, seems so cold and stern? Expositors differ a good deal in regard to the interpretation. To us it seems important to remember how much Mary knew and what deferred hopes and expectations she must have cherished in her heart concerning Jesus. The knowledge of his supernatural birth, and many things concerning him, she had treasured in her breast. What conversations there must have been between them as the days of boyhood passed! And when manhood came, and year after year passed, how longingly—perhaps at times impatiently—Mary must have waited for the fulfilment of the prophecies and the hopes which centred in her son. And now indeed the glorious day that she had waited for seemed to have come. Jesus has come forth from retirement to address himself to his mission. Mary has doubtless heard of what had taken place at the Jordan and of John's recognition of Jesus as "the Son of God." "Now surely," she is thinking, "his time is come. Any day, any hour, he may do some great act that shall show forth his glory and make him manifest to all the people as 'the Hope of Israel.'" Jesus replies not so much to the words as to the thought of Mary. Doubtless there was that in his look and tone which relieved his words of any suggestion of discourtesy. He seems to say, "This is a matter in which I can take counsel with God alone. Your thought and your way are not mine, and, tender as is the relationship between us, it must not interfere with the higher relationship which I sustain to the Father in Heaven. The hour for the full revelation of my glory is not yet come, and it cannot come at all in your way, though it will surely come in God's way." How sadly—at times almost despairingly—it would seem—Mary waited while the mysterious drama of her Son's ministry was unfolded, and how the sword-thrusts of disappointment and wounded mother love pierced her heart! But consolation and triumph came at last, when her Son was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. And so for all tried and trusting hearts, let us believe, the mystery and the pain of life will be swallowed up in the light and the joy of the resurrection morning.