

Messenger and Visitor

Published in the interests of the Baptist 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.

For further information see page nine.

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

BY WAY OF REVIEW.

Possibly it may be worth while to call attention here to some of the features of the Convention which lately met in St. John, and to some of the interests represented in the reports of its various boards and committees. We may say, by way of general characterization, that it was a very fair average Convention: The attendance, as was expected, fell somewhat below the average of preceding years, but those who came seemed for the most part to give close attention to the business of the Convention, and the attendance at the meetings kept up well unto the close.

An unusually large number of visiting brethren honored the Convention with their presence and received a hearty welcome. Among these may be mentioned Rev. David Russell, of London, England, whom the Convention heard with much interest, and President Vedder of Crozer Theological Seminary, Upland, Pa. Dr. Vedder was accompanied by Mrs. Vedder. They visited the Convention at Yarmouth last year and were sufficiently interested to come again. Dr. and Mrs. Vedder have spent their summer vacation this year and last year in Digby County. They will always be welcome guests at our denominational gatherings. There were also a number of men who were formerly members of the Convention, but now away from us, who were back on a visit. There was Dr. Boggs of India, Rev. J. A. Gordon of Montreal, Dr. W. J. Stewart of Boston, Rev. George Baker, of Leominster, Mass., Rev. Chas. R. McNally of Brooklyn, N. Y., Rev. W. T. Stackhouse of Winnipeg, Rev. P. J. Stackhouse of Chicago, Rev. H. P. Whidden, late of Brandon College, Manitoba. These men are of our own, bred in our Baptist homes of these provinces and educated in our Baptist schools, and there is not a man among them of whom and of whose work we may not justly feel proud. They are a sample, a fine sample indeed, of the men whom we are continually training and sending forth into the service of the Lord in all parts of the world. If we could but bring them all back to some convention what a gathering it would be!

A number of our Free Baptist brethren, including Revs. Dr. McLeod, C. T. Phillips and David Long, accepted seats in the Convention and made their presence very pleasantly felt. The sentiments expressed by them in favor of the union of the two Baptist bodies in these provinces meets, we are sure, with a very general and hearty response in our denomination.

It was a very pleasant Convention. There was of course, as there always is at such denominational parliaments, some differences of opinion, and it would be too much to say that there was no unnecessary talking, but there was little faultfinding and no bickering. The unity of the Spirit was preserved in the bond of peace. Everybody kept his temper. The Convention was happy in its selection of a presiding officer. President Haley was the right man in the right place, and was well supported by the Vice-Presidents. For the most part the business was disposed of judiciously and without loss of time. Questions that could not well be settled in open Convention were referred to Committees, and the end of the business was reached in good time and with less weariness than is usual. The tone of the Convention throughout was of a pretty even character. If it experienced no specially uplifting enthusiasms, it did not sink into the depths of discouragement. If it did not reach the Delectable Mountains, it was delivered from the Valley of Humiliation and the Slough of Despond. The results of the past year were not indeed in all respects all that had been prayed for and hoped for, but taken as a whole they were of a character to afford much ground for thankfulness and encouragement. And the outlook, while certainly not free from difficulties and contingencies from a human point of view, was on the whole such as to minister to hopefulness and cheerful courage.

It must be confessed indeed that the report of the Home Mission Board was not quite of a cheerful character. This Board finds many opportunities for extending its work, and many pressing calls for help, while the resources at its command are quite insufficient for the requirements. There

seemed indeed for a little some danger in this connection of a clashing of denominational interests, or at least of their representatives, but this was happily avoided by referring certain proposals of the H. M. Board to a committee which in its report recommended the appointment of a Superintendent of Home Missions for Nova Scotia and P. E. Island. This was endorsed by the Convention, and it is hoped that, with a judicious appointment, it will result in a material uplift for the home mission work.

The Convention of course devoted some time to considerations in connection with the raising of the special funds which it has undertaken. There was the Forward Movement Fund of sixty thousand dollars on behalf of our educational institutions, which is now happily completed; the Twentieth Century Fund in the interest of mission work of fifty thousand dollars, which is still in progress, and the new Forward Movement Fund of one hundred thousand dollars, which has been undertaken on behalf of our educational work. It is somewhat unfortunate under the circumstances that the work of the Twentieth Century Fund was not pushed forward with vigor only during the past year. Had the services of Mr. Adams as special agent been retained in that interest through the year, the pledges necessary to complete the \$50,000 would probably have been subscribed. And had the Twentieth Century Committee known a year ago that a special appeal on behalf of the educational work was to be made, they would probably have taken steps to hasten the completion of their work. However, there are good reasons to hope that, with proper adjustments and judicious management, both of these funds will in due time be successfully completed to the great advantage of the important departments of denominational work in the interests of which they have been undertaken.

One gratifying fact is certain from the standpoint of our recent meetings. Our people are developing the grace of Christian stewardship, and are contributing of their means by the advancement of the Lord's work in such measure as they had never done before.

COMING TO HIS KINGDOM.

One thing that must strike us as we study the passage which narrates the events in connection with David's coronation by the men of Judah, is the sincerely religious character of the man. A crisis had occurred in the history of Israel and in David's own life. King Saul was dead and Jonathan his son, and if David's call to the throne, implied in his anointing by the prophet Samuel, was to be realized, this would seem to be the time to assume his kingly authority. But David would do nothing in the matter except by divine direction. He waited upon the Lord, his God, and he waited for the divine assurance before taking any step to assert his right of succession to the throne. This is characteristic of David as the story of his life is given us in the Scriptures. Whatever difficulty there may be in reconciling certain minor details of that story, the narrative is consistent throughout in this, that it represents David as a man of faith. The picture we have of him is indeed very far from that of a perfect man. Faults and imperfections he had, and sometimes he fell into grievous sin. But, after all, his failings and sins were not those of an apostate who had forsaken the worship of God for idols, or of a hardened reprobate who plunged into sin recklessly and without repentance. If he sinned grievously, he bitterly repented and returned humbly to the Lord.

This distinction between the man of faith and the man without faith is in the highest degree important, and it is just as real to-day as it was centuries ago. It is the distinction between the true servant of God, who through the force of temptation sometimes falls into transgression, and the man who, either in self-righteousness or reckless sin, continually hardens his heart against God and never comes to the experience of repentance. It is the distinction between the man who, falteringly it may be, but still really and persistently, sets God before him as the Supreme Object of his worship and affection, and the man who sets up some idol as the object of his heart's desire. It is the distinction between the sinner saved by grace and the sinner who despises the grace that would save him.

A second fact that impresses us in connection with this passage is David's promptness to accept the indications of Providence. When the Lord said—Go, David did not hesitate nor tarry longer in exile. He went up to Judah, not cautiously and by way of experiment as one who would return if his venture proved a failure, but he said farewell to Ziklag and went up to Hebron, taking his wives with him, and the men that were with him likewise, every man with his household. Here again is a lesson, just as true and just as valuable for our own time and circumstances as it was for David's. It is right and wise to avoid hasty decisions, lest we run before we are sent, but when the oracle has spoken, when the finger-board of Providence has clearly indicated the pathway of duty, then to doubt is disloyalty and to falter is sin. It was David's trust in the Lord, his confidence that He who had called him from the sheepfold would set him upon the throne, that strengthened the man's heart and confirmed his purpose in the face of all difficulties and uncertainties which, from a human point of view, stood in his way. It was through such faith—faith

that leads to prompt obedience and courageous endeavor, that those men of old "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." And it is through such faith—a faith that has made men bold to follow where God leads—that in our modern days the triumphs of the Cross have been won. Here there are two most important lessons that we may learn from the story of David—First, learn what is God's way, and secondly, having found it, to move forward therein promptly, courageously and with perfect confidence that those who do His will cannot fail of the highest success and the richest rewards.

David thought called of God, had to demonstrate his right and ability to reign, and the same may be said of all kings worthy of the name. His idea of kingship, we may well believe, was not merely that of sovereign authority, circumstanced with pomp and parade and served by hireling sycophants. If such had been his ideal he would not have found much to attract him in such sovereignty as was possible to him at the beginning of his reign at Hebron. The kingdom of Israel was divided, and by far the greater part acknowledged the sovereignty of Ish-bosheth, son of Saul. Only the tribe of Judah held to David, and it probably much broken and discouraged by reason of the victorious power of the Philistines. But David was not that kind of a young man which insists on beginning at the top of the ladder or not at all. He was the kind that finds some thing worth while to do in any position in which he may be placed. It was worth while in David's view to be a shepherd boy, it was worth while to be a minstrel, it was worth while to be a soldier, and by doing his best in each of these positions in turn, he fitted himself for larger service and higher honor. The day was coming when David should be King of all Israel, and the nation should be united, strong and triumphant under his rule. But the day was not yet. David must first as, the chieftain of Judah, demonstrate his kingly qualities and make proof of his ability to reign over Israel. And still "the path of duty is the way to glory." Still there are seats of power, temporal and spiritual for those who, accepting divine guidance, will do their humble, faithful best in whatever position the Providence of God may place them.

Editorial Notes.

In the London Baptist Times Rev. W. F. Cuff, one of the leading ministers among English Baptists, writing of the Possibilities of our South African Baptist work, says: "Large opportunities are opening on every hand; and what are now only possibilities may soon become accomplished facts of faith and united effort. If we can only get our churches to see the open door and rise to the occasion and enter in, great things will soon be done. Indeed, great things are being done now. South Africa is not a barren soil. Baptist churches are already there and very much alive to all the opportunities, needs and demands of the situation. The pastors are earnest and devoted men who have bravely stuck to their posts through all the turmoil, loss and troubles of the war. Of course, both pastors and churches have suffered through all this, and they need and deserve our sympathetic consideration."

Mr. Cuff cherishes the hope of a federation between the Baptist churches of the Mother Land and the Colonies. This, he confesses, may seem a Utopian idea, "but then," he adds, "we have some of us lived long enough to see many a Utopian idea become a solid reality. We still have statesmen in our pulpits and in our churches who may put their heads and hearts together and devise a scheme which looks impossible now." Mr. Cuff goes on to say that there is a distinct desire in the hearts of the pastors and churches in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand for some kind of real union with our Baptist body in the old land. "They are trying to federate all the churches in the different states and have already launched a big scheme. It was before the Union of Victoria last November when I was present. I think it will be accomplished. That is a distinct beginning, and it may lead to vast results."

Writing of our Lord touching the leper Dr. Cuyler says: "The sin and the shame of too much of the professed Christianity of our day is that it is above touching lepers. That gap left wide open between wealth and festering poverty, between culture and ignorance, between religion in broadcloth and sin in rags, is to-day the severest indictment that Christianity has to encounter. And the only practical solution of the great burning problems of how to reach the neglected masses and how to rescue the harlot, how to save the ragged children and how to evangelize the heathenism of our large cities lies in two words—Christian contact. The personal contact of practical piety and self-sacrificing love with darkness, filth and misery; that's the only remedy. Heart must touch heart. The strong, loving hand must not draw back from lifting lepers from their degradation."