

Messenger and Visitor

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A Memorial Volume.*

It is now nearly three years since the death of Dr. E. W. Dadson, who was at the time pastor of the Olivet Church, Montreal, brought a profound sense of loss to the Baptist denomination in Ontario and Quebec. On the suggestion of Dr. A. H. Newman the preparation of a biographical and memorial volume was undertaken by Professor J. H. Farmer of McMaster University. Dr. Farmer has been encouraged and aided in this work by members of the Faculty of McMaster and others, and the results of his labors have just now been presented to the public in a neat volume of about 380 pages. The purpose to publish this memorial volume was doubtless fully justified by the great esteem and love in which Dr. Dadson was held by his brethren in the ministry and the Baptist people generally of the Upper Provinces, by the strong and beautiful personality of the man and by the character and value of his work extending over some twenty-five years of service in the Christian ministry, including six years as editor of the denominational journal. Dr. Farmer, we think, is to be congratulated upon the manner in which he has executed the difficult task committed to his hands. But if it was a task beset with difficulty to give to the materials at hand a proper form and setting, the pages of the book itself bear testimony to the fact that it was also for the biographer a labor of love. The volume is divided into three parts. The biographical section, which occupies a little less than one-third of the book, evinces discrimination and a just sense of proportion; without being fulsome, it is warmly sympathetic and appreciative, and while it entirely avoids prolixity it gives a tolerably distinct picture of the man and a reasonably full account of his activities. Three of the chapters are by other hands than Dr. Farmer's. Two chapters, having to do principally with Dr. Dadson's college days, are by Rev. Alex. Turnbull, and one which discusses Dr. Dadson as a Denominational Leader is by Dr. A. P. McDiarmid. A second part, of about the same extent, entitled THE WRITER, is comprised of extracts from Dr. Dadson's writings, principally selections from his articles in the *Canadian Baptist*, with a very interesting chapter of personal correspondence; and a third part, entitled THE PREACHER, contains nine discourses selected from his sermons.

The justification of this memorial volume is not based on the greatness of the man whose name and whose work it commemorates. It is not claimed for Dr. Dadson that, in the ordinary acceptance of the word, he was "a great man," and he would have been the last to claim any such distinction for himself. Nor can it be said that the environments and experiences of his life were unusual, nor did he stand forth as the special representative or champion of any great principle or movement. Indeed the circumstances and activities of his life may be said to have been in a general way of quite the ordinary kind for a Baptist minister in Canada, with the exception that for a few years his work was done in the editorial chair instead of the pulpit. In intellect and power there were others among his brother ministers who were at least his equals, and in oratorical gifts he was surpassed by many. "Mentally," says his biographer, "he had clearness, rather than brilliancy, vigor rather than acuteness, sanity rather

than breadth, insight, rather than logic, vision, rather than imagination." From this it may be inferred that Dr. Dadson was not at all eminently endowed with those natural qualities which go to make men bright particular stars in the eyes of the public. And this is quite true. He was not a preacher with whom a congregation was likely to fall wildly in love at first hearing, but the congregation that heard him frequently did not usually fail to discover qualities in the man and the preacher that were worthy of their highest appreciation. It may be added, too, that it was not any special grace of person or of manner or any of the externalities of culture that made him attractive to his fellows and caused them to hold his name and work in loving remembrance. Culture indeed he had, but it was the inward culture of mind and heart, rather than the polish acquired by contact with polite society.

"It was his character that gave him pre-eminence." He was a man who not only attracted men by certain qualities of mind and heart, but having attracted them he inspired respect, esteem, love and the fullest confidence. He was a healthy man. In him the elements were mixed in very kindly fashion. Health bubbled up in him as from a deep spring and gave zest and joy to all life's activities, in spite of all labor, trial and disappointment. His instincts and sympathies were broadly human. His healthy physical life found expression and delight in out-door games and pursuits. To no man could a holiday with his family in Muskoka mean more than to Dr. Dadson. His healthiness was not merely of the body but of the mind. His thoughts about things and his feelings for men were characterized by eminent sanity. He had the saving sense of humor, and the love of fun and the appreciation of the comic he retained through all the pain and weariness of the disease that brought him to the grave. The social instinct was strong in him, and the element of *comraderie* or capacity for good fellowship was large. He was willing to believe the best of men and gave them hospitable welcome to his confidence. Above all he was a man true to principle and faithful to duty. Those who knew him did not doubt that Jesus Christ was to him both Saviour and Lord, and it was the controlling love and law of his life to be faithful to Him who redeemed him. It was a healthy, genuine Christian manhood that he lived, embodying qualities that made him a winsome companion, a genuine and faithful friend, an ideal husband and father, a sympathetic and faithful pastor, and an able minister of the New Testament. If, therefore, it is not the life of a great man that this memorial volume commemorates; it is perhaps something better. It is the life of a very human, healthy and genuinely Christian type of man, who was in an eminent degree faithful to the ministry which God committed to his hands. Perhaps the church needs nothing more really to-day than more men of the type of E. W. Dadson.

Convention for the Improvement of Religious and Moral Education.

Some weeks ago there was sent out by the Council of Seventy, composing the directorate of the American Institute of Sacred Literature, Chicago, a call for a Convention to be held under the auspices of the Council with the purpose of creating a new organization for the improvement of religious and moral education through the Sunday-school and other agencies. This call was signed by 417 prominent educators, pastors and other leaders in Christian thought and work, and since its publication a large number of others have expressed their willingness to sign the call. The importance of the subject with which it is proposed the Convention shall deal is widely recognized, and it would seem that the overture of the Council of Seventy is eliciting from many influential quarters a hearty response.

It has been arranged to hold the Convention in Chicago, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 10-12. The plan of the Convention, as tentatively arranged, provides for six sessions,—the first to be a general public meeting on Tuesday evening, followed by morning, afternoon and evening sessions on Wednesday, and morning and afternoon sessions on Thursday. The Convention will be held in one or more of Chicago's largest churches, and the meetings will be open to the public.

As to the composition of the Convention, the Council of Seventy and the Associate members of the Institute of Sacred Literature are, by terms of the Call, members of the Convention, and it is expected that all the signers of the Call will be invited to sit as members. Besides these, it is understood that representatives of educational institutions, church and Sunday-school organizations, Y. M. C. A. and other religious societies will be invited to sit in the Convention. The character, name and methods of the organization which it is proposed to form are matters which the Convention will determine. A programme has been prepared for the Convention which it is believed will arouse enthusiasm for the movement, make clear the idea for which the new organization should stand and lead up in the most effective way to the great business session at which the organization itself will be established. It is expected that the programme will present a larger number of the most eminent men in the field of religious education than any recent Convention. It is hoped that the present need and opportunity of increasing the amount of moral and religious instruction, of improving its quality and of giving religion its true place in education will be clearly brought out in the discussions of the Convention. Persons who wish to attend the Convention are invited to communicate with the Recorder of the Council, Prof. C. W. Votaw, the University of Chicago.

Editorial Notes.

—Has anyone seen a copy of the Baptist Year Book of the Maritime Provinces for the year of our Lord 1902? Some weeks ago an announcement was made in our columns by a member of the Committee of Publication that the Year Book had been completed and some copies of it at last sent out, and we have been waiting patiently ever since, thinking that "here today or here tomorrow" will it come—and still it cometh not.

—From a vote taken upon the matter it appeared to be the general, if not unanimous, wish of the Tremont Temple church that Dr. Lorimer should again become its pastor. As it was understood that the result of Dr. Lorimer's labors in New York had not been all that he had hoped for, it seemed not improbable under the circumstances that he would return to Boston and to the Temple. It is now announced, however, that an answer has been received from Dr. Lorimer definitely declining the call.

—Is it not time that we had a statement from our Twentieth Century Fund Committee of what has been accomplished toward raising the Fifty Thousand Dollars for mission work, Canadian and Foreign. There is or at least there should be, a good deal of interest to know how the work is progressing. So far as we can judge, we believe that the results of the canvass will show that our churches, if the matter is earnestly and judiciously presented to them, are able and willing to contribute the amounts necessary to complete the Fund. And yet at the present time we fear that it must be standing at some distance from completion.

—It is announced that the Methodists of the United States have succeeded in raising in cash and in good subscriptions a Twentieth Century Fund which exceeds the Twenty Million Dollars aimed at by some \$600,000. Of this amount \$8,000,000 have been contributed for the endowment of Methodist educational institutions, \$9,000,000 for the payment of church debts, \$2,600,000 for charitable and philanthropic purposes, \$600,000 for the benefit of retired ministers and \$380,000 for church extension. The fund was made up by about 3,000,000 contributions, and the amounts ranged from one cent to \$400,000, the contributor of the latter amount being a man whose father had been a Methodist minister whose salary never exceeded \$400.

—The conviction has grown upon us for several years past that our churches are gaining nothing by uniting in the services of the Week of Prayer in accordance with the programme furnished by the Evangelical Alliance. Not indeed that we are opposed to Christians of different denominations uniting in prayer and other forms of religious worship for a week at the beginning of the year. Our objection is that the programme—almost the same from year to year so far as topics are concerned, and with the same stereotyped methods as to speakers, etc., has lost whatever inspiration was once connected with it. The people for the most part do not unite in the services. The congregations attending are of the thinnest, and the meetings without special interest or power. Of course it may be different in some communities from what it is in St. John, but in this city, at least, we believe the results would be very much better if each pastor would seek to bring his own people together in their own place of worship for a week at the first of the year to seek the special aid of the Divine

*E. W. DADSON, B. A., D. D.—The Man and His Message. Edited by Jones H. Farmer, B. A., LL. D., Professor of New Testament Greek in McMaster University, Toronto. Toronto: William Briggs.