

Messenger and Visitor

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The Veterans of the Ministry.

The Wesleyan calls attention to the fact that two highly esteemed ministers of the Methodist body in the Maritime Provinces will this year receive congratulations on the completion of long terms of service in the ministry. One of these is Rev. Dr. Charles Stewart, head of the theological department of Mount Allison. The approaching Conference of N. B. and P. E. I., marks for Dr. Stewart the completion of a half century in the work of the ministry. For thirty-two years Dr. Stewart has been Professor of Theology at Mount Allison, and in that capacity has rendered very valuable and highly appreciated service. He has announced his intention of retiring from the position which he has so long and well filled in the college, but though in his seventy-sixth year, Dr. Stewart's mental and physical vigor is such as to justify the hope "that he may yet be spared for years to enjoy the quiet and hallowed eve of a consecrated and widely useful life." The other minister alluded to above is the Rev. Richard Smith of the Nova Scotia Conference, who with this summer rounds out the period of sixty years in the ministry. At eighty-two, Mr. Smith, we are told, "is full of interest in passing events, alert in intellect, studious on the current themes of morals and religion, always willing, and generally able, to take a preaching appointment for brethren needing rest, and preaching on such occasions with great acceptance to congregations large and small."

In our own denomination in these Provinces we find that, according to the record of our Year Book, there are only two of our ministers now living whose ordination dates back fifty years, although there are a number who are approaching the half century line. One of the two to whom we allude is Rev. A. Martell who was ordained in 1849. Part of Mr. Martell's active ministry was spent in his native Province, Nova Scotia, and part in the United States. Some years ago he retired from the active duties of the ministry, and lived for a time in Wolfville, but has recently taken up his residence at Aylesford. Nature endowed Mr. Martell with a vigorous mind and a robust physique, and he is spending the evening of life in comfort and peace—a fitting close to the long period of arduous public service which he gave to the cause of Christ.

The one other who has crossed the half century line as a member of our ordained ministry, we need scarcely say, is the Rev. John Chipman Morse, D. D., of Sandy Cove, Digby County. Dr. Morse, according to the record, was ordained in 1842—we do not know the exact date—and is therefore about completing, if he has not already done so, the sixtieth year of his ordained ministry. This length of service is probably unparalleled in the history of the ordained ministry of the denomination in these Provinces, and what is certainly unparalleled in our own, or we suppose in any other denomination in these Provinces, is the fact that these three score years of service have been spent on one field and in ministering to successive generations connected with the Digby Neck congregations. And we have no reason to suppose that this long and faithful service has yet reached its limit. Father Morse still breaks to his people the bread of life, and these later years of his ministry have been marked by gracious revivals. It is a wonderful and a beautiful thing to see a man thus bringing forth fruit in old age, ministering now to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the men and women to whom he preached in his earlier ministry. Dr. Morse is great-

ly revered and beloved not only by the people of his own congregations but so far as he is known throughout the denomination. His presence at our annual gatherings is always hailed as a benediction. May he still live and prosper.

There are indeed but few with such original endowments of strength and in whom the mental and physical powers are so harmoniously related as to make it possible for them to continue in the harness to extreme old age. Most of our ministers, before they have completed a half century of service—if indeed they live so long—find it necessary to transfer to younger hands the heavy burdens and responsibilities which they had borne and to spend their later years in semi-retirement. We shall do well to remember in our grateful thoughts and prayers the men who so long and faithfully wrought for us. Some of them are now feeling keenly the effect of the stress and strain of other years. They still deeply love the cause to which they gave the best forces of their youth and their manhood's prime, and would still fain be in the midst of the battle for God and truth if that were possible. Some are hopelessly broken in health and are waiting expectantly for the summons which shall call them home. Words of cheer and appreciation for these old and faithful servants of the King will surely be words in season fitly spoken. It would be miserably selfish and ungenerous to permit those who have freely given the best they had to give, to suffer loneliness, discouragement and poverty, when a few generous words and deeds of appreciation on our part would bring brightness and good cheer to the hearts of these veterans of the denomination. Doubtless if some only knew the experiences through which others pass, many a bitter cup would be sweetened and many a rough path made smooth.

Editorial Notes.

—At the Toronto Conference of the Methodist Church held last week, a memorial was passed, after a sharp debate, asking that women be eligible as members of the General Conference. The Committee to which the memorial was referred had recommended that it be sent on to the General Conference without comment, but the advocates of the idea opposed its being dealt with in that way, and succeeded in carrying an amendment which gave the memorial the endorsement of the Conference.

—The Watchman of Boston says: "Tidings from many cities indicate that Protestant missionary work among Roman Catholics, which has been considered rather discouraging, is becoming easier in its conditions and more prosperous. This is especially true among the French and Italians in New England. Baptists have a good number of converts composed of converts from among these people." It is much easier for Roman Catholics to become Protestant in communities where the social as well as the religious influences are prevalently Protestant, than in communities where the priest's will is law. Many of the converts to Protestantism in the Province of Quebec find themselves practically forced, we are told, by the boycotting and other methods of persecution to which they are subject, to leave the country, and this doubtless has something to do with the growth of French Protestant churches in New England.

—There are men who are ready to encounter terrible experiences and to brave tremendous dangers in the interests of science or to minister to the world's thirst for information. Even while the volcano of Mont Pelée was in active operation, Professor Hellprin, President of the Philadelphia Geographical Society, ascended the mountain for the purpose of exploration. His experience was terrible and had little result. But on the next day, accompanied by Mr. George Kennan, a special representative of the New York Outlook, and others, the indomitable professor started again. The conditions were found to be somewhat better than on the preceding day, but the explorers were exposed to great hardship and danger. "Mr. Kennan," says the Outlook, "describes the crater itself as a huge cavern or crevasse with perpendicular walls, to look into which was like peering into a white hot furnace. There was no cone in the centre, and there were no cinders or ashes near the crater, but there were crusts of sulphur everywhere, and gigantic rocks piled up which had been mistaken for a cone of cinders. . . . There were also clouds of sulphurous smoke through which the sunshine swept at intervals. The ascent, says Mr. Kennan, was the most terrifying experience of my life, yet Professor Hellprin, the previous day had sat enveloped in darkness on the lip of what was once Lake Palmiste and had descended the horrible arête in a thunder-storm of volcanic clouds and almost complete darkness."

—The sentence of Arthur E. Brunet, of Montreal, to six months imprisonment on account of corrupt practices in the St. James election is a measure of justice, which it may be hoped will have some effect to discourage such criminal and shameful acts as those of which Brunet on his own confession was guilty. Against this man there were three charges, to all of which, as we understand, he had pleaded guilty. On the first charge of bribery he was liable to a punishment of six months imprisonment; on the second charge of employing persons to impersonate voters the maximum penalty was two years, and the third offence, that of interfering with the course of justice by taking witnesses out of the country, the judge considered the gravest of all. The maximum sentence, if imposed, would accordingly have been a very heavy one, but in view of the petitions for clemency based on the otherwise good conduct and standing of Brunet and the suffering which his arraignment on a criminal charge had already caused him, the judge exercised a merciful discretion in the matter, making the sentence on all the counts against the accused six months imprisonment. Judge La Coste properly administered with severity upon the criminality of the acts of which Brunet had confessed himself guilty. It is to be hoped that corrupt practices in connection with elections, wherever they may occur and whoever may be the guilty parties, may receive their deserved punishment.

Deacon J. W. Barss.

DIED MAY 22ND, 1902.

"He died, old and full of days." Such are the words which fill our mind as we think of the passing of Deacon J. W. Barss. He had reached the ripe age of eighty-nine years. From the mere length of his life the words "full of days" would be appropriate; but he lived in deeds not years. With him it was quality of life as well as quantity. So in a far deeper sense than mere length of days we may apply to his life these words, "full of days." For such as he are "full of days," whether they live to be three score and ten years old, or whether in the full flush of strength they be smitten down.

The expression "full of days" as used in the Bible calls up the picture of a man at a feast who has partaken of all the good things spread before him, and who then pushes back his chair from the table satisfied. So Deacon Barss, having partaken of life's feast as God offered it to him, having tasted its joys and received its blessings through intimacy with God, pushed back his chair from the feast, satisfied, full, and passed to the presence of him who gave the feast—God.

If we examine the lives of the Old Testament worthies of whom the words "full of days" were written, we shall find that two elements in their lives give character to this expression which was used of them; viz., faith, and benevolence which is only the fruit of faith. And as we think of the life of Deacon Barss our mind rests particularly on these two characteristics of his life, faith in God, and the benevolent spirit, and each was markedly present in his life; and that, too, in all his activities.

If we think of him as a business man, faith and benevolence characterize him. He was a man of strict business integrity, and one, too, who refused to enrich himself through the misery of his fellowmen. Fifty years ago, men in his business who refused to have anything to do with the sale of liquor found little public sentiment to help them in their high purpose and much against them, yet Mr. Barss steadfastly refused to traffic in what would bring reproach to Christ and woe and death to his fellows. We give all honor to such men. They were the precursors of the great temperance movement of our day. Think of him as a man in our denomination and here, too, we find these same traits of character, faith and benevolence. The great enterprises of the denomination were ever dear to his heart. In important crises in their history he came to their help with his means and his faith, and gave them new life and hope. By giving his money he showed that he put faith in them. He helped Acadia over the most critical time in her history, and it is within the memory of us all that he aided the cause of missions with large gifts of money; and so gave our missionary boards fresh courage and strength.

If we think of him as a man among men, there are the same elements of life, faith and benevolence. He was ever ready to lend a helping hand to some struggling but needy soul, as many a one can tell. We thank God for those men who in their large-hearted faith in their fellows stand ready to help them on, to do and to dare for God and the right.

As a member of the church he was willing to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ. His service as a deacon in the Wolfville Baptist church and also as Superintendent of the Sunday-school extended over many years, in fact over more than the length of one generation.

But it was on his home life where the beauty and strength of his character were especially shown; and where indeed his life in the richness of its quality, and the strength of its faith, and the depth of its love was fully seen.

A Christian gentleman, a loving father, a generous and public-spirited citizen, a faithful servant of the Lord