

Messenger and Visitor

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Honesty.

Honesty—honesty in business matters we mean especially—is a homely kind of virtue which everybody can appreciate. But like many other virtues it is probably more generally approved than practised. It is a very comfortable thing to feel that you are dealing with a thoroughly honest man, but it is not always so easy to be thoroughly honest yourself. Anybody can admire the man who, under severe temptation to do otherwise, keeps to the straight and narrow pathway of honesty; but not everyone under like circumstances finds it in his heart to follow the admirable example. "Honesty is the best policy," men say, and they more than half believe it. But they are not at much pains to define what they mean by *honesty* and what by *policy*. Has honesty in their thought to do with public opinion, with their own consciences or with the word and the judgment-seat of God? Does the policy they mean cover a month, a year, or a lifetime and a world to come? Most men in civilized countries would think it impolitic to pursue such a course of conduct as would subject them to the penalty of the laws against honesty, and men will quite generally agree that it does not pay to be dishonest to the extent of forfeiting the respect of their fellowmen, even if the course pursued does not involve arraignment before a criminal court or incarceration in a felon's cell. But if honesty is interpreted according to the highest and deepest significance of the word, there is a vast deal of dishonesty from which neither criminal courts nor prison walls, nor the force of public opinion has much influence to restrain men. Christianity indeed teaches that there is a law which discriminates with infinite discernment between honesty and dishonesty, and a final tribunal at which all dishonesty will infallibly receive its deserts. But by many of those who wished to be classed as Christians that judgment appears to be reckoned among the far-off contingencies which for the present may be safely ignored.

It would be great gain to the cause of Christianity in the world if all men in business who call themselves Christians would conduct their business on principles of strict honesty. A man in business has no more right to take from his neighbor that for which he does not give a fair equivalent, than he has to enter his neighbor's house and take his goods by force or stealth. The dishonest trader is as really a robber as is the burglar. There is a great deal of reckless trading too, which in its essential character is not to be distinguished from down-right dishonesty. The result is seen in frequent business failures, bringing loss and sometimes serious suffering to those who are the victims of such reckless methods. It is certainly to be granted that many an honest man has failed in business, because of circumstances which he could not control, and of disaster which he could not foresee. But when a man, either deliberately or recklessly, permits his business year by year to drift into a position in which failure and a compromise with his creditors is inevitable, he is not conducting business on honorable lines; and if at the same time his living expenses are ordered on a scale which only a prosperous business could support his course is positively and deliberately dishonest. A man has certainly a right to expect that, with constant industry and due economy, his business will yield him a living. But there appear to be many who make it a first consideration to get out of their business a first-class living for themselves and their families. If after that there is sufficient to balance accounts, so much the better; but if not, so much the worse eventually for the creditors.

Christian men in business do well to consider that one of the most effective ways in which they can witness for Christ is by being honest and honorable in all their dealings. It would mean much to the world, in its religious as well as its business interests, if it could be said of every professing Christian man in business. There is a man who can be implicitly trusted, whose word is as good as his bond, who will not speculate with other men's money, who keeps his expenditure within his income, who is brave enough to be honest when honesty means poverty or rigid economy, and who will do his utmost to discharge faithfully every business obligation which he has assumed.

It would be well, too, if all Christian people were

brave and true enough to discourage dishonesty and to encourage honesty wherever it is found. Among those who worship the god of this world, one need not be surprised to find that men are valued largely according to the money which they spend, and that no searching enquiry is instituted as to whose money it is that is being spent. But if the same thing is found in society that calls itself Christian, what shall we say? What if Christian doors are open to the man who is living luxuriously on other people's money, while they are shut in the face of the man who, while he is in all other respects the equal of the other, is too honest to live in excess of his proper income? What if to the young man who is spending every dollar of his salary in dress and luxuries, and thereby placing himself under the influence of powerful temptations to actual dishonesty, the doors of Christian homes are opened, which would be tightly closed in his face if he were but honest and prudent enough to live economically and lay up part of his salary for future use? If these things are so, it is a sad commentary on the Christianity of the age. To the observant mind we think it must appear evident that few things are more to be desired than a toning up of what passes for Christian conduct in the matter of honesty.

The Man for the Hour.

That portion of Luke's narrative selected as the Bible lesson for next Sunday is one of much interest. Teachers and students will find in connection with the passage a number of facts and suggestions to repay their diligent study, and there is one grand lesson here which we think no one should miss, that is, the importance in human affairs of an intelligent religious faith and the beneficent influence over his fellowmen of the man whose trust is firmly fixed in God.

The picture which we have here of the ship in which Paul and his fellow travellers sailed, driven helplessly and blindly on through a chaos of cloud and mist and heaving seas—sailors and passengers equally impotent to cope with the resistless power of the elements—is one which vividly suggests the limitations of human power. There were soldiers in the ship, courageous men, no doubt, who represented the best prowess and military discipline of their time, but they are here in the presence of an enemy against whom their arms and all their science of warfare count for nothing. The master mariner and his hardy seamen are there also. It is their particular business to navigate the seas and contend with its dangers and difficulties. But they too are impotent as landmen in the mighty grip of the tempest. Many other callings may have been represented among those two hundred three score and sixteen men who made up the ship's company. But whatever human skill or knowledge was represented there, it mattered not. No human arm could save. Hope had fled and despair was seizing every heart.

In this extremity one voice in that company is raised in words of hope and cheer. Whose voice? It is not the captain speaking in the confidence of nautical science and practical seamanship, nor an officer of the army speaking in the authority of the Roman world power, nor some philosopher, statesman or man of affairs who has a word of wisdom to fit the occasion. It is the man of faith and spiritual discernment who speaks in cheering tones to arouse his companions from the lethargy of despair, to inspire in them hope, steadiness of purpose and energy to lay hold upon the opportunity of deliverance which is to come to them. This man speaks, not in the name of man or in the authority of superior human knowledge or skill; his message is from God whose he is and whom he serves, and it is because he "believes God" that he can speak words of hope and salvation to men in the midst of their despair. But for the presence there of Paul, the man of faith and servant of God, the ship, with all her precious human freight would have perished, not because there was no possibility of escape, but because the men in their lethargy of despair would have failed to grasp the chance of deliverance when it appeared. This story of the storm-driven ship, and its deliverance through the word of faith and the gospel of hope is fruitful in suggestion. It is a parable of much that is found in human life. How often life in the individual or the nation seems to be driven on like that! And from what quarter is salvation to come? Where is the wisdom to solve the hard problems that vex the hearts of men? Whose voice is it that utters words of hope to keep men from despair? The hope of the individual life today, the hope of this storm-tossed world of humanity, is in the men of faith, they who believe God and are able with confidence, established by personal experience, to declare the gospel of the grace of God. The salvation of this modern world of ours is not in its mighty armies and navies, its hope is not in the wisdom of its statesmen, in its learning, its literature, its science, or in all the forces that work in its commerce and its industries. The hope of the world and of the individual soul is today where it was in

Paul's day, in the men who belong to God, who, having heard God's voice in the stillness of their closets and having been strengthened by His angel, go forth to declare His message to their fellowmen. When the sky is fair and the south wind blows softly, men may give little heed to Paul's counsel, but after the tempest has howled about them for many days and all hope has been taken away, the time comes in the experience of many when they understand that the man who can speak in the name of a compassionate God brings the only counsel that is much worth listening to.

Editorial Notes.

—We are pleased to learn from Dr. Trotter, that the condition of matters at Acadia, during the opening weeks of the term has been highly encouraging. The Freshman class numbers 50, exclusive of general students, and contains some fine material. An admirable spirit pervades the college and everything is moving forward with earnestness and assurance.

—The provincial S. S. Convention of New Brunswick held its fourteenth annual session in St. John last week. Many Sunday School workers from different parts of the province were present. The meetings were held in the Centenary church. Sessions for prayer and praise, preceded the business sessions, and at the latter, many matters of importance in connection with this branch of Christian work were discussed. There were present from the United States, Prof. Hamill, Mr. Marion Lawrence and Miss Bertha Vella, prominent S. S. workers, whose addresses were highly appreciated.

—Through telephone communication with Bro. A. E. Wall, clerk of the Moncton church, we learn, as we go to press, that the church, acceding to the request of Secretary Manning, will hold a farewell service for the outgoing missionaries on the evening of Nov. 12. The meeting will no doubt be one of much interest. The Moncton friends will be glad to entertain any from other Baptist churches, who may wish to attend. Those who purpose to attend are requested to announce their intention by postal card to Mr. Wall, clerk of the Moncton church. A fuller announcement may be expected next week.

—In another column will be found a communication from Pastor Shaw, of Windsor, giving some facts which our readers will be pleased to have respecting the extent to which the fire has affected the interests of the denomination in the town. It will be seen that our brethren there are large sharers in the common loss. Many families need help at once, which will have to be continued for some time and which, we hope, will be generously and promptly afforded by their brethren in these provinces. It is gratifying to learn that the new parsonage which we understood at first had been burned, is safe. The insurance on the church buildings, though not so large as could be desired, will be of great service in the work of rebuilding, which no doubt will be undertaken as soon as circumstances permit.

—It is most gratifying to observe that the stricken town of Windsor does not find itself forgotten or unbefriended in the day of its visitation. The news of the calamity has touched sister communities all over the country with a feeling of sympathy which is much more than a mere sentiment. Relief measures have been promptly taken. By grants from municipalities and corporations, collections from churches and private subscriptions aid is being promptly afforded, and in generous measure. In this as in all other good works the ladies are to the front. The women of St. John have been especially sympathetic and helpful. Sad experience in the case of many of them has enabled them to feel a keen sympathy with the homeless people, and to know in what way help could most effectively be given. Lady Tilley and a number of other ladies have for the past week been in Windsor, living in a car placed at their disposal by the manager of the D. A. R. and rendering most valuable service in the assorting of the goods sent in, and in distributing to supply the needs of the sufferers, besides giving such counsel and cheer as their experience and sympathetic hearts enable them to give. It is most gratifying to recognize in the wide and generously expressed sympathy, of which an afflicted community is thus made the recipient, gracious fruit of a Christian civilization. It is due to that divinely human sympathy which Christianity has infused into the life of our times, that when one member suffers all the other members suffer with it. Let this human kindness find abundant expression; it will bless both those who give and those who receive. And much help is needed. We are glad to hear that the people of Windsor are keeping up a good heart, that leading business men are encouraging their fellow townsmen, expressing confidence as to the future of the town, and indicating their purpose to rebuild immediately, or as soon as possible.

Baptist

To read and you likely to the truth and a you. In 1897 leading culty of at our d more or scarcely and the was most stances, the Gen America Trotter church same ti The Bri and und fiancia have rec shortly Maritime much in old church 1897, the for a sep many of that a se manager a success. The m through would ce