

# Messenger and Visitor

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—The British Weekly hears that Dr. Lorimer, of Boston, is to preach in Regent's Park Chapel during August and in Dr. Clifford's, Westbourne Park, in September. Dr. Clifford, it is stated, will visit America in the Autumn and will preach several Sundays at the Tremont Temple, Boston, for Dr. Lorimer.

—Attention is called to a statement—appearing elsewhere in this paper—put forth by the Chairman and Secretary of the "Prohibition Plebiscite Campaign Committee," for New Brunswick, calling upon the friends of prohibition to organize for action, in view of the approaching vote which is to test the strength of the public sentiment of Canada in reference to a prohibitory liquor law, and determine, so far as such a vote can, whether or not the sentiments of the country is so strongly in favor of the abolition of the liquor business as to justify the expectation that legislation to that end would prove effective. As the committee intimate, if the full strength of the prohibition sentiment of the country is to be registered by the plebiscite, there is need of immediate action, for though the time of taking the vote has not yet been announced, there seems to be good reason to believe that it will not be delayed beyond the early autumn.

—We hope that it has not escaped the attention of the readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR that our denominational treasurers are reporting that receipts for benevolent work have, so far, fallen far short of the estimates for the year and of the requirements of the work undertaken by the several Boards. Unless there shall be prompt and generous contributions from the churches, some, if not all, of these interests will suffer, and the Boards will find themselves embarrassed by accumulating deficits. A prompt and vigorous effort on the part of the churches would avert such calamity. Only a few weeks now remain before the accounts for the Convention year must close, but if each church will take prompt steps to gather in the available contributions, and if each individual church-member will ask himself or herself how much is due from me as a contribution to the Lord's work, and will act according to the dictates of a grateful Christian heart, we are sure that the Lord's treasury will be greatly replenished and the several treasurers will be able to present their reports at the close of the year with cheerful hearts.

—The doctrine and practice of infant baptism are not easily harmonized with evangelical principles, to say nothing of harmonizing them with the letter of the New Testament Scriptures. This was illustrated in certain utterances connected with the recent meeting of the Methodist Conference at Truro and noted in correspondence to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR last week. That was, without doubt, good advice, given by certain of the ministers of the Conference, that, in relation to the subject of infant baptism, careful attention be given to "the instruction of our people in the teachings of the Bible." This, indeed, is good advice for any people on any subject having to do with Christian faith and practice, and we would suggest that it would be well to leave the church "standards" out of sight until the teaching of the Bible has been very thoroughly and honestly investigated. To our thinking "standards" should be made to conform to the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures interpreted to harmonize with the standards. A doctrine so important as infant baptism, if it is to be received, ought surely to be capable of being explicitly justified in the teaching of Scripture. If the New Testament is silent in regard to infant baptism, that silence must be regarded as highly significant. Those who adhere to infant baptism on the supposed ground that there are teachings of the Bible on which it is justified should be able to give a satisfactory answer to the following questions: Is there any evidence that, during our Lord's ministry, either He or His disciples baptized infants? Did Jesus ever command or commend the baptism of infants? Is there any record in the New Testament of the baptism of infants? Did the apostles—Paul, Peter, James, John—in all their epistles published in the New Testament, ever exhort the Christians of that day to have their children baptized, did they ever mention infant baptism or say anything to imply that it was, or ever would be, recognized as a Christian ordinance?—If all these questions have to be answered in the negative, must we not conclude that the argument from Silence in this case a very weighty one?

## MESSENGER AND VISITOR.

### The Nova Scotia Central Association.

The Central Association of Nova Scotia met in its forty-eighth annual session with the church at Hantsport. The first meeting was held on Friday afternoon, June 24, the Moderator, Rev. C. H. Martell, of Canard, presiding. After a time spent in devotional exercises, the association elected its officers for the year. Rev. W. N. Hutchins, of Canning, was chosen Moderator, and Rev. J. H. Barrs, of Wolfville, Clerk. The remainder of the session was devoted to the reading of letters from the churches.

#### THE EVENING SESSION,

in accordance with the printed programme, was given to the Associational B. Y. P. Union. President Lawson was in the chair, and presided with grace and dignity. The choir of the Windsor church furnished the music at this session. The Scriptures were read by Mr. Irad Hardy and prayer was offered by Mr. C. W. Rose. After a few words from the president, a brief address of welcome was given by Dea. S. H. Mitchner, of the Hantsport Union. This was responded to appropriately by Rev. W. N. Hutchins. The Secretary's report was read by President Lawson. Two excellent addresses followed: Rev. Z. L. Fash, of Halifax, spoke upon "The Relations of Culture and Service," and Rev. E. P. Churchill, of Bridgewater, upon "Christian Culture Necessary in the Development of Character."

#### SATURDAY MORNING

session opened with prayer by Rev. M. P. Freeman. Rev. C. H. Martell called attention to a resolution adopted by the association last year, which gave the time from 3 to 5 on Saturday afternoon to the sisters of the W. B. M. U. for their annual meeting. This resolution, by some inadvertence, had been omitted from the minutes and on Mr. Martell's motion it was restored. On behalf of the committee appointed by the association last year to memorialize the Provincial Legislature in favor of the prohibition of the liquor business, Rev. C. H. Martell reported that the committee had attended to the duty and that the petition had been read in both branches of the Legislature.

The report on Obituaries, presented by Rev. E. N. Archibald, called attention to the gratifying fact that no minister within the bounds of the association had been taken away by death during the year. At the suggestion of Dr. Kempton and others the report was amended by mention of Deacons Joshua Ellis, of Canard, E. G. W. Greenwood, of Halifax, and Joseph Hamu, of Mahone Bay, as brethren who have recently passed away and who had very faithfully served their generation and the Baptist cause in their respective churches and in the denomination. At the request of the Moderator, Revs. E. O. Read and A. Martell led the association in prayers of thanksgiving and consecration in view of the facts presented in the report.

The report on Finances was presented by Bro. B. H. Eaton, of Halifax. The committee on this subject was appointed to devise means for increasing the benevolent funds. The report recommended that the District meetings apportion the benevolent funds to be raised, among the churches of the district according to the ability of each church, emphasized the importance of the pastors leading their churches in systematic benevolent work and offered suggestions as to plans and methods. The report was discussed at some length.

Dr. Saunders called attention to the principle involved in the report, which he approved, believing that it did not imply any interference with the proper independence of the churches. Rev. P. S. McGregor said that such a plan as that proposed in the report had been tried in Yarmouth county with advantage. Rev. E. O. Read said that all the good things do not come from Halifax. They had been working on such a plan in Kings County and it worked well. Rev. A. Cohoon believed the plan presented to be a good one, but, like every other plan, it needed to be worked, and much depended on that. Some discussion occurred as to whether or not it was best to work on the lines of what is known as the Convention Plan. Bro. E. N. Beckwith said that the B. Y. P. Union of the First Church, Halifax, was making its contributions in accordance with that plan. Rev. E. S. Stearns spoke of the need that instruction be given by pastors in reference to the interests embraced in our plan for benevolent work. Rev. W. H. Jenkins called attention to a statement in the report to the effect that if a church did not make contributions to the benevolent work of the body as frequently as once a quarter, it showed that the church was not properly pastored. He endorsed and emphasized this statement and spoke of the great results which might be attained by systematic benevolent work in the churches. Rev. J. H. Barrs praised the report and endorsed Mr. Jenkins' remarks. Rev. H. H. Saunders said the pastors were sometimes much perplexed by the brethren who tried to lead them in this matter. Some taught that there should be no departure from the Convention plan, others contended that there was a more excellent way. He thought that it should not be considered that this work rested solely on pastors, but the pastors could do much in the way of educating the people. After the report had been quite fully discussed it was voted that Mr. Eaton, who had written it, be re-

quested to prepare a digest of its contents, of which 1,000 copies should be printed and sent to the churches.

The pastors who have come into the association during the year: Revs. Z. L. Fash, W. E. Bates and P. S. McGregor, of Halifax; H. R. Hatch, of Wolfville; B. N. Nobles, of Kentville; H. H. Saunders, of Melvern Square. E. P. Churchill, of Bridgewater, and Bro. Mason, Lic., of Tanook, were called to the platform and received from the Moderator the hand of fellowship, accompanied by fitting words of welcome, to which they each briefly responded.

#### SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

First in the order of business on Saturday afternoon was the report on Denominational Literature presented by Rev. A. A. Shaw, of Windsor. The report claimed that all good literature might properly be regarded as Baptist literature. It urged an intelligent and devout study of the Scriptures as of the highest importance and recommended the use of the revised version. In reference to books a distinction might be made not only between bad and good but between good books and the best books, and these best books—those making for the development of the highest character—should be selected. In regard to magazines and papers there was a like distinction. The Baptist Book Room at Halifax was commended as supplying good Sunday School literature and other books. The Baptist Hymnal was especially commended. The report cordially endorsed the MESSENGER AND VISITOR and desired that it might have place in every Baptist home. The Editor of the paper by invitation of the Moderator spoke briefly in its interests. Rev. W. E. Hall said that recently, while visiting sections of the Province in the interests of the College, he had perceived more clearly than ever before what an educating force the MESSENGER AND VISITOR is among the people. Wherever it is taken the people are intelligent in regard to our denominational work and ready to assist. Where it is not taken there is comparative ignorance and corresponding lack of interest. He regretted that so many Baptist families did not take the paper.

Rev. C. H. Martell very heartily commended the MESSENGER AND VISITOR as very satisfactorily meeting the needs of the denomination for a religious newspaper.

Bro. G. A. McDonald spoke in the interests of the Book Room, and said that committees in the churches, such as the report had recommended, to examine and select the best books for the S. S. libraries would be of great assistance to the Book Room. The report was unanimously adopted.

The report on statistics presented by Bro. B. H. Eaton, showed that the Central Association was organized in 1852, with 33 churches and a membership of 3482. There are now 55 churches and the membership reported is 10,500, of which number, however, 2253 are non-resident, leaving resident members 8247. The committee urged greater care in securing the transfer of church membership in cases of removal from one place to another. It is feared that persons are encouraged to retain their membership in churches from whose bounds they have removed, and it is believed they are very rarely urged to transfer their membership. The failure of duty in this matter is believed to result in much harm. The increase in the number of churches of late years has not been large, only five having been added in the last twenty years.

So far as received at the time the report was made out 44 letters had been received from the 55 churches. These letters indicate a total decrease in the churches heard from of 113. The number of baptisms for the year in these 44 churches is 203. There have, however, been baptisms in other churches whose letters were delayed, which would bring the number of baptisms up to about 250. The report notes that the small number of baptisms reported presents cause for searching of heart. Attention is called to the large number of members reported as dropped from the roll, and in some cases it is evident that this "dropping" has taken place, though not so reported. The committee suggests that all persons removed from the roll, except by death or dismission, be reported either as excluded or that a new column be added for the "dropping" cases. The former is favored as more in accordance with Baptist usage.

The report on Temperance was presented by Rev. M. P. Freeman. The report called attention to the fact that the foes of temperance are vigilant and the ravages of intemperance are great. While advising not to abandon old methods, but to seek to persuade men to total abstinence, the report laid emphasis upon the influence of law. Reference was made to the plebiscite to be held, as presenting a crisis in the temperance work. It is for the Christian people of Canada to determine what the vote shall be, which is to declare whether or not the country is ready for prohibition. The taking of the plebiscite by the government implies that if the people want prohibition they may have it. The people should do their utmost to make the plebiscite a success.

The report was tabled for future discussion. At 3 o'clock the moderator left the chair, and the meeting was resolved into a session of the W. B. M. U. Miss Johnstone, Provincial Secretary of the Union, presided. The scriptures were read by Mrs. De-

July 6, 1898

July 6, 1

Witt of Wolfville. An address of Davison, to which the delegates, by Miss Johnstone and Mrs. W. E. Hants County natives of several of the F. M. B. report of this in our W. B. M.

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