

"Make the people sit down," which is given without any hint of what was to follow and comes immediately on the back of the exhibition of the scanty supplies. Wonder and expectation must have been quickened, and "what is to come next?" must have been the unspoken question of all. But they were to learn the lesson of doing what Jesus bids, and leaving him to do what he wills, confident that, if we take the attitude which he commands, we shall receive the blessings which we need. The evangelist sees vividly the green grass which afforded convenient ground for the rows of expectant guests at this "table in the wilderness." Being grass-land, no crops were harmed. Obviously Jesus had now come down from the hillside to the plain below, since grass is more likely to grow there than on the heights.

The point at which the miracle took place is as undetermined as in the change of water into wine. The true reading omits the words which represent Jesus as giving to the disciples in order that they might give to the multitude (which words have probably crept in from Matthew), and connects our Lord directly with the seated feasters. No doubt the method of distribution was by the ministry of the disciples, but John passes over the media and fixes attention on the true giver. It is Jesus who gives when his disciples' hands hold forth the bread, and we should regard them as but transmitting, not originating, what they dispense. Probably it was in Christ's own hands that the loaves were multiplied. The disciples would wonder no less than the recipients, as they came back time after time with empty hands and received fresh supplies. One can fancy that at first they would deal out sparing doles, which would grow more liberal as they found that there was no failure to fill their hands however often they came. Like the widow's cruse, the store did not diminish by use and met all demands. Christ gives an inexhaustible gift and the more we ask and use, the more remains ready to be bestowed.

We are taught by Jesus himself to take this miracle as symbolical, for he followed it with the great discourse on the bread of life. So we are not indulging in fanciful "spiritualizing" when we see, in the hungry crowd, the race of man with the deep desires which the world can never fill; in the bread from Christ's hands, the perfect food of the world, of which, if we eat, we shall be satisfied and live forever,—even himself whose flesh is "meat indeed"; and in the disciples' carrying to hungry lips what Jesus had laid in their hands the example which all Christian men are bound, and all deeply Christian men will be impelled to follow in their stewardship of the gospel.

Editorial Notes.

—By courtesy of the publishers of McClure's magazine we reprint on our first page Rudyard Kipling's new poem, entitled *The White Man's Burden*. The poem sets forth the author's conception of what is involved in the relations of the strong and cultured peoples to the barbarous and ignorant, which is not merely the right to conquer and rule but, the duty, through patient, self-sacrificing effort, to uplift and bless. The poem gives virile expression to a noble ideal and voices the spirit of the gospel. It has its application not only to the relations of the white and the colored races, but everywhere where there are those who have the ability to extend the help which others need.

—The Maritime Year Book came to hand just too late for notice last week. It is a book 216 pages and contains the usual minutes of Convention and Associations, reports of Boards, Denominational treasurers, etc., with other matter, all of which should be of interest. The Year Book should find a place in every Baptist family. For some reason, not clearly explained to us, the Year Book is much later than usual in making its appearance. No doubt but that another year arrangements will be made which will insure its publication in good time. There should be no trouble in getting it out within a month or six weeks after the meeting of Convention.

—Mr. Cutten's article on another page deals with a subject which is sufficiently important to demand the most serious consideration. We are hardly prepared to subscribe to the teaching that a fair inter-

pretation of the precepts and the spirit of the Scriptures makes it necessary, in every case, to disallow the re-marriage of a divorced person. But the danger is certainly on the side of a too lax rather than an extreme view of the sacredness of the marriage tie. The subject is one which should receive careful study, especially at the hands of ministers of the gospel, who certainly should be careful not to lend their influence to sanction marriages which, in the light of Christ's teaching, are adulterous.

—The committee of the corporation of Brown University, appointed to nominate a successor to President Andrews, has named for that important position Dr. James M. Taylor, President of Yassar College. Dr. Taylor is fifty years of age, was educated at Rochester and became pastor at South Norwalk, Conn., in 1873. After nine years there and four years more in pastoral work in Providence, R. I., Dr. Taylor was, in 1886, appointed to the presidency of Yassar, a position in which his large ability for such administration has been tried and demonstrated. The Watchman considers that the main characteristics of Dr. Taylor as a preacher and public speaker are his robust common sense, his sound judgment and methods, and his knowledge of men. He is of sturdy physique, enjoys the best of health and has a winning personality.

—The people of New Brunswick are at present in the midst of an election campaign which will be all the more exciting because it will be short. No doubt many a Christian man is finding himself in these days under strong temptation to do things which will not be quite pleasant to contemplate when he comes "to sit alone with his conscience in the place where the years go by." It cannot be made too emphatic that in God's sight the distinction between right and wrong and the penalties for wrong-doing apply as truly in politics as in other spheres of action. Men and nations are called to account for the way in which they exercise their political duties. Not in politics any more than in anything else is it permitted to do evil that good may come. He who offers or accepts a bribe is, by so much destroying the very foundations of good government. Surely Christian men may be expected to recognize this and, in the discharge of their political duties, to act honestly, intelligently and in the fear of God.

—The subject of demoniac possession, to which our correspondent "Medicus" calls attention, is confessedly one beset with difficulty. It seems to be quite plain, however, that the New Testament writers represent such possession as both possible and actual in the days of our Lord and his apostles, and the demons as being subject to exorcism. Apart from any claim for their inspiration, the statements of the evangelists (one of them a physician)—especially their reports of the words of Jesus on this subject, cannot be lightly set aside. And leaving the New Testament out of the account, would we have sufficient grounds for pronouncing the theory of demoniacal possession absurd? Certainly we cannot deny the possibility of the existence of demons or evil spirits; and, granting their existence, do we know enough of the relations of such beings to human personalities and to human organisms to justify us in declaring that there may not occur abnormal conditions—induced by infraction of God's laws—in which a human personality may become dominated and controlled by the personality of an evil spirit? We would speak with deference to our correspondent's superior knowledge in matters within the domain of medical science, but we are inclined to believe that science has not so conclusively demonstrated the absurdity of demoniacal possession as to make it necessary to reject or explain away what appears to be the plain doctrine of the New Testament on this subject.

From Halifax.

So far this year there has been no general awakening of the unconverted in the city and county of Halifax—no phenomenal seeking for salvation. But there are in certain places indications of special religious life. In the West End church the Rev. G. A. Lawson and the brethren laboring with him have been much encouraged of late. Two additional deacons have been appointed—Mr. Foster and Mr. Freeman. The Sunday School and other meetings are larger than ever before. In the services there is an intense and refreshing state of feeling, indicating unusual spiritual life. A number are ready for baptism and others are enquiring for the way of life.

The North church commenced special services this week, and the brethren are looking for a blessing on their efforts. The meetings will be held partly in the church building and partly at the Bloomfield mission station.

The Tabernacle had a serious back set in the prolonged sickness of the pastor; but he is again at work and hopes to see his church filled with zeal and abundant in labors for the salvation of sinners. Financially all the churches are in a progressive state.

Cornwallis street church is still active under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. Robinson, S. T. D. The collections at special meetings are large. A small amount has been raised, and is in the bank, for paying the mortgage of \$1,400 now on the church property. If this mortgage were removed the church would be in an easy financial condition. All help will be gratefully received for this object.

The First Church had its annual meeting a few days ago which all the organizations connected with the church reported. They are all in an active state. So far as finances are concerned the past year has been a prosperous one. But the spiritual life of the church is not according to the desires of the pastor and other members. This causes much enquiry. The pastor and brethren are hoping that the breath of the Spirit will soon be felt again—that Christians shall be filled with faith, hope and zeal, and sinners cry for mercy. The pastor was not able to fill his pulpit on Sunday last. He has his turn of the prevailing epidemic, but hopes to be on his feet again in a few days. The Rev. Mr. Le Bean of Grand Ligne will preach on Sunday morning next in the first church and in the North church in the evening.

Special services have been held for some weeks past in Dartmouth. Rev. W. E. Hall assisted the pastor in this work. Eight have offered themselves for baptism, and others are expected to follow soon.

The County Missionary has spent the month between the city and Jeddore. He has had tokens of encouragement. At the head of Jeddore harbor the brethren are preparing to build a new meeting house. The old one is small and perhaps not in the right place. A new one is much needed. The Jeddore churches are much crippled on account of the failure of the fishing, on which they largely depend for income. On the east side they do not feel like promising Brother Sterns any salary; but their house is open to him, and they are willing to contribute according to their means. On these terms Mr. Sterns preaches the gospel and discharges all duties of a pastor. On the west side they have not been able to pay promptly the promised salary, and at a meeting held a short time ago, a large minority declined to vote for the continuance of the pastor's labors, solely because they did not see their way clear to remunerate him. All who are acquainted with the brethren at Jeddore, and the writer is one of them, know how liberal they are with their money when it is their possession. Their liberality has been overflowing. When their pastor has needed help in special services, they have of their own accord given freely to engage such help. They should now have the special sympathy in their embarrassed circumstances.

Rev. W. E. Hall is now on a visit to Isaacs Harbor. The forming of the second church will likely do much to advance the work of the Lord in that prosperous community. The Harbor has always been a serious obstacle to the cooperation of all the people at one place. So soon as the meeting house on the east side is built, they will be able to do the greatest amount of work. The Doukhobors, about 2,000 of them are comfortable, cared for in the buildings on Lawler's Island and in the ship in which they came from Batoum to Halifax. There is no further report of the spread among them of the small pox. They are a very religious people but have some fanciful beliefs.

The B. A. Book and Tract Society held its annual meeting on the seventh instant. The venerable W. C. Silver, the President, was present and occupied the chair. 31,272 families have been visited in the year by the colporteurs who have done work in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Labrador and Newfoundland. The sales of the year have been about \$7,000. The total cost of the year for salaries and travelling expenses was \$4,244. There were 81 families found without the Bible, and their wants were supplied. Also 93 families who had no book except the Bible. About \$750 worth of tracts and books were given way to the needy. Grants from the Depository in addition to what colporteurs gave away, amounted to \$611, making a total of \$1,371.

Since the society began work upwards of \$300,000 worth of books and tracts, weighing at least 360 tons, have been distributed in these Provinces.

Fourteen colporteurs have been employed during the year. The work on the other parts of the field is carried on with faith and hope. Mr. Freeman is tireless in his labors in the Hammonds Plains and Sackville districts. Other denominations, of some others, are waiting for the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in their congregations.

Lent, we are reminded, is at the door. We are indebted to a Montreal paper for the advice given to the Episcopalians of Halifax by Bishop Courtney. This is what he is reported to have told the people of St. Luke's: His dear people were told that they need not abstain from the customary luxuries in Lent, and he advised them to be cheerful at all times. If any man was a smoker he need not deprive himself of his cigar or his pipe. If any one was in the habit of taking a glass of wine, he or she could take it, provided of course that it was used in moderation. If they wanted to play the piano, he told them it was no harm to play it in Lent. But attendance at the theatre was not proper in Lent. He told them that the church of England stood between Roman Catholics on the one hand and dissenters on the other, and should draw both into their fold. This is a bid for smokers and wine-bibbers, the home for Roman Catholics and all dissenters. The Bishop bids them walk in. REPORTER.