

## Messenger and Visitor

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### One Hundred Pastors Wanted

To give one week, early in May, to MESSENGER AND VISITOR work on their fields. Our offers on page 12 will interest.

### Send The Pastors.

Without doubt a much larger number of our Maritime Baptists would like to attend the Winnipeg Convention in July, than will feel that they can afford the necessary financial expenditure. Even with a one fare rate for the round trip to Winnipeg, and with corresponding reductions for any trips taken through Manitoba or the territories, the railway and other expenses will amount to a sum which comparatively few will feel that they can afford. But then, on the other hand, it may be that some of our good brethren and their wives who have been working hard and living economically all their lives, could not do better than to give themselves a little holiday by a trip to Winnipeg, and thereby get a more adequate idea of this great wide land which Providence has given to them and to their children. This in itself would be not only recreative, but instructive and educative, and then in the Convention itself, as pointed out in a former article, there should be a large and valuable inspiration for all Canadian Baptists. We must recognize it as a very notable event, this prospective Convention in Winnipeg. Look back to a time easily within the memory of men who do not yet think of being old, and what should we have thought of anyone who had predicted that before the close of the century a national Baptist Convention would meet in a fine city, on the site of the then Fort Garry, on the banks of the Red River—a Convention to which Baptists should come from the shores of the eastern and the western seas, and from all over that "Great Lone Land" of which the reading world has just got almost its first glimpse through Principal Grant's book. This Convention will be historic for Baptists, and it will be something to be able to look back to and tell your grandchildren in the days to come, that in its deliberations you had a part.

None would more keenly enjoy the trip and the Convention, and none would derive a larger benefit from it than our pastors. It is to be hoped that a goodly number of them will be able to go. The trip to the West, the visit to that far-stretching land—with its harvest fields, material and spiritual—would be an inspiration in itself, and the presence of the pastors at the Convention would result in a mutual blessing. But there is the financial question which so vexingly stands in the way of many a fine undertaking. "Such a trip is away beyond my means, and that settles the question for me," the pastor will say. It is quite true that but few of our ministers will feel that they can afford such a trip, but that need not prevent their going, if the churches will exercise a little generosity in the matter, vote the pastor a well earned vacation of a month, and put a hundred dollars in his purse to pay expenses. Many of our churches are able to do this, and we believe they would find it a very profitable thing to do. The minister would come back refreshed and enlarged by the experiences of his visit, and with a new inspiration to do his very best for his people, and for the great cause which both he and they are called to serve.

—The University of Chicago has recently secured an addition of \$4,000,000 to its funds. One half this amount comes from Mr. John D. Rockefeller, and the other half from some 400 persons who have made contributions varying in amount from one dollar to over a million dollars. The property possessed by the University now amounts to over twelve million dollars.

### Question and Answer.

There are interesting and puzzling questions, which our Bible lesson for the week brings into view, concerning the measure of knowledge which John the Baptist possessed of the character and mission of Jesus. In the fourth gospel it is related that John spoke of Jesus shortly after his baptism as "the Son of God," and also as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." If John possessed the knowledge of Jesus implied in his use of these appellations, could he, it may reasonably be asked, be in doubt as to his being the Messiah so long expected? And yet the message which John sent to Jesus as recorded in the lesson, would certainly seem to imply that his mind was not free from doubts upon the subject. We must consider that though John was a brave, strong man, a man of great spiritual illumination and discernment—a true prophet of the Lord, he nevertheless was human and subject to human infirmities. He had the defects of his qualities. It was hard for a man of so earnest and active spirit, accustomed to the free, wild life of the wilderness, to endure the trial of solitary confinement in a gloomy prison. Many a brave spirit has been broken, and many a good man's faith has suffered partial eclipse under such conditions. And most of us know how possible it is for truths that have seemed so solidly fixed and full of inspiration, to become fleeting and shadowy to our apprehension when the tides of spiritual life have ebbed. Perhaps John the Baptist had his own ideas of the work which the Messiah was to accomplish, and the qualities of character which he was to manifest, and those ideas were not being realized in Jesus. It may have seemed to John that his own prophecies concerning the Coming One were not being fulfilled in Jesus. As Dr. Maclaren says: "Where were the winnowing fan, the axe laid to the root of the trees, the consuming fire? This gentle friend of publicans and sinners was not what he had expected the one mightier than himself to be."

If John was troubled with questionings concerning Jesus, he evidently took the wisest course in order to have them set at rest. If he had any doubts he did not proclaim them to the world, and fondly cherish them as if he feared that if left to themselves they would not live and thrive. He did not send to Herod and to the Pharisees to tell them he feared that he had been deceived as to the character and mission of Jesus, but he sent his disciples directly to Jesus himself to ask the question that was perplexing himself and them, for they could not but believe that, whatever Jesus was or was not, he was honest and sincere, and certainly would practice upon them no deception. And surely there are few now who know anything concerning Jesus, who do not feel compelled to believe at least in his honesty and sincerity. If then any of us have doubts or questionings concerning him, can we do better than take them to him, and consider attentively what he has to say concerning himself? Is it possible for anyone who honestly studies the testimony of the life and the words of Jesus to remain an unbeliever in his divinity and his power to save?

Jesus was always disappointing men, and at the same time more than fulfilling their largest expectations. It was so in this case. The disciples of John did not carry back to their master the kind of answer which he and they had expected. We can seem to see these men as they come and find the Master at his wonted work of ministering to the needs of a sin-cursed and suffering humanity. They make known their message, and he asks them to wait a little until he shall be at leisure to talk with them. Then he goes on with his work, curing many of diseases, and plagues, and evil spirits, bestowing sight on many that were blind, and all the while dropping the seed of the kingdom into such hearts as were ready to receive it. And these men from John,—they were not, we may believe, idle spectators, uninterested and untouched by what they saw and heard. The mists of doubt which had clouded their minds could hardly endure in such an atmosphere as this into which they had come. As they beheld the miracles of healing, as they heard the joyful praises of those to whom sight or health had been restored, and listened to the gracious words of the Master, the question for them at least must have been answered. And then the Lord said—Go tell John what you have seen and heard, and happy is it for the man to whom this is not a stumbling-block. Jesus did not answer the questioning of John and

his disciples with any direct assertion of Messiahship. He bade them look, listen, consider the evidences, and then decide in their own hearts whether or not this work of his was of God. Whether he was John's "Coming One" or not, whether he satisfied John's ideal of the Messiah or not, was a comparatively unimportant question. The important thing was that they should recognize him as being from God, and an expression of God's grace to men. What Jesus cared for, far more than any formal confession of his Messiahship, was that men should be open-minded and honest toward him—that they should receive and obey the truth so far as he made it clear to them. That is what he seeks in men today—far more than all subscription to creeds and the most zealous observance of sacraments and ceremonies.

Christianity's answer to an enquiring or a caviling world today, must be in effect what our Lord's answer was to John. Behold what the Spirit of Christ has done in the world, what it is doing today. See how the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good tidings preached to them. If there is no evidence here which an honest man is bound to accept that a divine power is manifested in Christianity, then indeed is the world without hope. But if there is evidence, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, as we surely believe there is, that Christ is in his people and that God is in Christ, then it is surely by this same gospel of Jesus Christ that the world shall be judged, and men will be justified or condemned according as they have accepted or rejected its message.

### Editorial Notes

—The debt of the American Baptist Missionary Union has closed its financial year with a debt of \$110,000, which is about double the amount of its debt at the beginning of the year. This increase of indebtedness is not due to any falling off in the contributions of the churches and individuals, which, it is gratifying to learn, have been larger than for some years past, but partly to unusually small receipts from legacies, and partly also from the fact, that the expenditure for the year has been larger than that of the preceding year.

—General Sir George White, the condition of whose health has made a period of rest and recuperation necessary, reached Southampton by the steamer "Dunvegan Castle" on the 14th inst. The reception given the hero of Ladysmith, though less noisy and spectacular than some recent demonstrations in the celebration of British victories, was doubtless no less sincere and heartfelt, and was certainly a most fitting recognition of the distinguished services which that brave and able soldier has rendered to his Queen and his country. General White, it is stated, was visibly affected at the warmth of his reception. In acknowledging the address presented to him on his landing, he referred with admiration to his gallant garrison; all of whom, he said, from General Hunter to the trumpeter, had behaved magnificently.

—It is understood that the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland is to meet in its autumn session next year in Edinburgh. Rev. Charles Williams, of Accrington, alluding to this in the London Baptist Times, informally nominates Dr. Maclaren of Manchester, as president of the Union at that time. "Who so fitting?" Mr. Williams asks, "He is a Scotchman, the son of a Scotch Baptist of the olden type, and the best possible embodiment of all that is truest and most influential in our denomination. No leader commands such universal and enthusiastic loyalty. All are proud of him, grateful to him and ready to do his bidding. He is honored and beloved by Presbyterians, who have on many occasions testified their admiring appreciation of his rare gifts and rarer services to the whole Christian church. . . . He is as vigorous in intellect and as brilliant in speech at seventy-four as at twenty-four years of age. Experience, knowledge, wisdom, are fuller and riper now than then. If Dr. Maclaren can be induced to gather up the lessons of the last fifty years and indicate the directions in which Baptists might and should make new departures, his forecast of the future would be invaluable and most helpful." The Baptist Times warmly seconds Mr. Williams' nomination of Dr. Maclaren as President of the Union.

—It is worth while for those who advocate any good cause, to take pains to approach the people in reference thereto upon their best side. For most people have a better side and a worse side, and even Christian people are not equally good or equally bad all the way through. If a speaker or a writer constantly presents the dark side of the picture, showing how little is being done for a good cause in comparison to its importance and its needs, assuming that those whom he addresses are selfishly with-

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