

from America last year said, "the ministers' paper in America." Increasing numbers of ministers and laymen, who love both literature and religion at their best, are becoming subscribers to this noble paper, and we venture to think that no man who has become acquainted with it, could easily consent ever again to do without it. Its qualities fascinate the heart not less than the intellect, and make of its readers enthusiasts and devotees.

In entering upon his literary life Dr. Nicoll naturally settled in London, where his work broadened out in many directions, and intimate relations were rapidly established with the leaders in letters and religion. His residence is now at Hampstead, where he has a picturesque old house, in which tradition says Dr. Johnson once lived. In this delightful retreat, far from "the madding crowd," aided by his stenographer and secretary, most of his work is done, the journey to town being made twice a week.

Pastoral Visiting Yet Again and Biblical Criticism.

I have read with interest the editorial of Oct. 25th, on "Pastoral Visiting," and the article of Nov. 1st, on "Pastoral Visiting Again." The "Elder" (whoever he was) seemed to write as a father giving advice to the son he was anxious to have succeed. The other (whoever he was) seemed to write as one lecturing a brother who—What both wrote was true, very true. It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of pastoral visiting. Though my rule has been to visit my people once a quarter, or at least three times a year, and to visit those who are ill as soon and as frequently as possible, I am learning that I should have visited more frequently and with more profit. Both the writers strongly urged the use of Scripture. Well might they. The modern prophets in going into the pulpits and into the homes of their people, must go with the Word of God and to speak for God.

The editorial has in addition these suggestive words: "It is not at all necessary that you should read the latest novel, nor the newest thing in Biblical criticism," etc. If this is not mainly rhetorical and has any application at all to our maritime ministry, there is more meaning in it than appears on the surface. If it means: in fiction reading and in Biblical criticism, brother minister, seek the "golden mean" "keep in de middle ob de road" many of us respond with a hearty "amen."

The modern prophet who tries to "keep up with" modern fiction, to read the "latest novels," must surely have a wrong conception of his mission. But how about the modern prophet who is not at all in touch with modern thought as it is expressed in modern literature? There are exceptions of course, but as a rule is it not true that those that inveigh against the reading of fiction, are those that have but little appreciation of literature, who do not get much from the pastoral of Ruth and the other beautiful passages of prose in the Old Testament unless they "spiritualize" them, who have little or no appreciation of the exquisite poetry of the Bible, who could only with difficulty be made to see the poetry of Isaiah 14, in contrast with the prose of it in Isaiah 13; or the poetry of Judges 5, in contrast with the prose account of the same fight as described in Judges 4; who fail to find the poetry of the prophets; who do not view the book of Job as the sublime results of the inspired poet's struggling with the problem of the suffering of the righteous; who do not see that some of the rhythmic creations of Tennyson are removed from some of the doggerels of our hymnals, as far as the east is from the west, etc., etc.

The preacher that is so entangled in the meshes of Biblical criticism that he cannot get away from it, but constantly talks it, and (sad to relate) frequently preaches it—destroying beliefs only mixed with error, instead of building up with the truth—is a preacher that fails to see his mission. On the other hand, how about the preacher who rails against the "pen-knife" of criticism—instead of preaching up the truth, preaching against that of which he confessedly knows but little. A short time ago, between the sessions of a convention, a preacher spoke against the critics for some time, until questioned about his knowledge of them, first hand. Seeing his position, he was candid enough to confess that knowing little or nothing about them, in all honesty, he ought to say little or nothing about them. Some time ago, a good spiritually minded evangelist, to an audience composed largely of women, denounced criticism for nearly half an hour, giving them to understand that he had read practically all that the critics had written. When interviewed, at the close of his address, it was found that he had read practically none of the critics.

The modern prophet that wanders into the vagaries of the "newest thing" in Biblical criticism is apt to wander away from his work. On the other hand how about the prophet who leaves upon the minds of the people the impression that the chief aim of the critics is to tear the Bible to pieces, that they are contradicting each other so much that they have nothing in common, that a spiritual critic is next to impossible and that the teachings of

criticism are to be either completely ignored or condemned. While it is true that few if any in the ministry can afford to follow the critics save "afar off," is it wise to refuse to read the Bible in the new light that they (in spite of their many differences) throw upon the Sacred Page? A great pulpit orator on a great occasion taking a text which told of Jesus crossing the Lake of Galilee and saying, "There is another side," preached a sermon on heaven. He frequently abused the critics for abusing the Scriptures.

For the sake of the younger men in the ministry, and many others, let me suggest a symposium on, "What should be the modern prophet's attitude to Biblical criticism." Should their teaching be altogether ignored? If so, why? If not should they be denounced, and how? or should they be followed and how? I have been able (and have desired) to follow the critics only "afar off." They have brought the Christ nearer and made the Bible dearer to me. We (and I speak for many readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR) are anxious for the views of the professors of Acadia College, Dr. Black, Dr. Steel and others—spiritual students who have come in touch with these questions first hand and who think for themselves.

Helpful here are Mr. Moody's words to Lord Overton, "Destructive theology on the one side, and the no less evil spirit of extreme intolerance on the other side, have wrought wide dissensions in many communities of America. Instead of fighting error by the emphasis of truth, there has been too much splitting of hairs and only too often an unchristian spirit of bitterness." Praying for a helpful symposium, I am,
Yours truly,
H. F. W.

Ontario Letter.

REV. P. K. DAYFOOT.

The most prominent gathering of the past few weeks was the annual Convention of the provincial

W. C. T. U.

which met in Guelph, Oct. 31st to Nov. 4th. The delegates numbered 150. They represented 244 Unions, 5,759 members, and 915 honorary members. They also represented 89 Bands of Hope, with 4,978 juveniles enrolled. During the year there have been organized five clubs for boys, one for men, nine Sunday schools, one cooking class, and nine kitchen gardens. Mrs. May Thornley, of London, Ont., was re-elected president, and in her address stated that there are 17,000,000 school children in eight different lands, receiving systematic instruction in temperance principles. The receipts of the year were \$3,841.65. The expenditures were \$2,975.65. The balance to the credit of the society was \$866.00. The extent of work undertaken by these women, may be learned from the fact that superintendents were appointed for 22 distinct departments.

THE SARDINIAN

when it departed for Africa, carried the only representative, so far as known, in all the British army, of the Y. M. C. A. When it became known that the Canadian contingent would be sent, the central office of the Y. M. C. A. in Toronto, was besieged with enquiries from all parts of the country, as to the possibility of sending a man. A committee waited on Col. Otter, the Commandant, and he declared that it could not be done; that the war regulations made no provision for any such work, and that if a man were sent he would be relegated to the rear when the troops should land in Africa. At the same time another committee was waiting on Dr. Borden, Minister of Militia, and he said he knew of nothing to prevent the man going. At this juncture a man offered himself, who was none other than Dr. H. G. Barrie, a candidate for medical missionary work, and a man who, as travelling secretary for the college branch of the Student Volunteer Movement, has shown himself to be possessed of rare tact in reaching men. Another interview was had with Col. Otter, and when that officer learned that the proposed man was a physician and surgeon, as well as a Christian worker, he consented to take him on the medical staff, leaving him free to do personal work among the men, as opportunity might offer. The Canadian government offered free transport, with officer's quarters and rations, the Central Association provided a complete outfit of Bibles, stationery, literature, and an organ. So it came to pass, that during the time when our thousand Canadians are travelling toward Africa, there will be with them not only the two regularly appointed chaplains, but a man specially trained for work among men, and who can tell what the fruits may be? Already the influence is being felt at home. The expense of this venture will be \$2000, and contributions are being taken throughout the Dominion, with the result that the branches of the Y. M. C. A. are being drawn nearer to one another, and are already proposing to organize a Dominion Association. Moreover, it is hoped that this may be the beginning of such work in the British army. During the Spanish-American war, the work of the Y. M. C. A. men was found so satisfactory, that the United States government has asked for a worker for each of the twelve transports now en route to the Philippines, and possibly a similar opportunity may open in the British army. It is doubtful if Dr. Barrie will return. Some time ago, Andrew Murray, the South African pastor and writer, sent an application to Toronto for a medical missionary, and Dr. Barrie seriously considers remaining with him, after he is done with the present work.

Port Hope, Ont.

Arrows from a Hunter's Quiver.

REAL IMPERIALISM.

Imperialism is no longer a sentiment in Canada. It is an established principle, and stands illustrated as never before in the departure from our shores of a thousand sires and sons whose lives are hazarded for the extension and perpetuity of the foundation principles of the British empire, of which Canada is an all-important section.

Toronto gave her men a most magnificent and overwhelming send-off. Spectators, who rang their huzzars into the ears of England's heroes as they marched to the Crimea, and who gave our braves a hearty cheer, say Toronto far surpassed the mother-land in demonstration. One thing is certain, no people ever more heartily surrendered her sons for a great cause than Canada has on this, the first occasion, to actualize the splendid imperial spirit of loyalty slumbering in her bosom.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

Toronto is served annually with a dissertation on Christian unity. And whether because the country now presents a united front to the foes of the empire, it was thought an unusual effort to rally the sundered forces of the church would meet with success or otherwise, that effort was made. But so far as the Baptists are concerned it was without avail, for they were not only conspicuous by their absence, but many have wearied of the sentimental character of this whole movement, which does not seek Scriptural ground for its proposed structure, but reasons for a mutual sacrifice of what are called "the less important principles." "Canada as a field of unity," and "obstacles to Christian unity," were the chief subjects discussed with little interest. Let all the strange children of an irregular daughter of the Reformation unite, but let the Baptists, who might be said to be "without beginning or end of days," abide alone "in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace."

SERMONS IN SONG.

The Temperance League opened its winter campaign in Massey Hall on the 5th with the celebrated Ira D. Sankey as the chief attraction. Thousands flocked to hear him sing the gospel with as much pathos and power as of old. Rev. W. W. Weeks was the principal speaker and rose to the splendid occasion with natural genius and divine power. He is a champion in every cause espoused. Rev. I. B. Hyde, Congregationalist, also gave an address of interest and power. And when Mr. Sankey sang, "When the mists have cleared away," Mr. Hyde said he was converted by Mr. Sankey singing that song in Dublin years before. This was the first the singer heard of it and gave thanks to God.

Toronto, Nov. 8.

J. HARVEY KING.

Being on Hand.

We were impressed afresh the other night at prayer meeting with the service rendered by the boy with the five loaves and the two small fishes mentioned in the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Jesus had been talking to the multitude all day long, and as the evening shadows lengthened, he was confronted with the problem of feeding the vast multitude of hungry people. "Where shall we secure provisions for so many?" he asked Philip. The answer was, "There is a lad here with five loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?" No matter who the lad was; he may have been the nephew of Simon and Andrew, and have brought to his uncles their humble lunch. However this may be, the boy was on hand with his thin barley cakes, and his dried fish, when occasion came for the feeding of the multitude. Had he not been there would the result have been different? Probably the Lord would have found other means to accomplish his purpose. But he was there, and the meagre fare he bore was multiplied to become a feast for the thousands who during the day had been drinking in Jesus' words.

There is much in this for encouragement and stimulus for the ordinary Christian. Not all work, not the most work, is done by direct commission. Much of it is wrought out because the instrument happens to be on hand. Was not this so with Isaiah when the sublime vision in the temple blazed out before his eyes? He was not sent there, he was there, and when the question was asked, "Who will go for us," he could respond, "Here am I, send me." The want of the world to-day is not the lack of opportunities for service, it is rather that there be on hand those who can utilize the opportunities that are afforded.

Let us then, in the various positions and relationships opening before us, seek to be on hand. It may mean the weekly prayer meeting in the summer time, when possibly the pastor is absent, and the numbers are few. Our offering we may deem as meagre as was the lunch the lad of the New Testament brought to the band of the Lord's disciples, but if we are on hand with it, it may be made as adequate to the occasion as was it. It may be in the Sabbath service; we fancy, perhaps, that our presence or our absence will count for little, but, being on hand, we may find the opportunity offering for a service the Lord will most gladly accept. It may be in the ordinary relations of life. Some one may have fallen who needs lifting; some one may be sorrowing who needs comfort; some one may be discouraged who needs a word of help. We may not be commissioned to go to any of these, but if we are on hand, we may be used, perhaps, as we have said. Our supplies may be as meagre as was the boy's lunch in the face of the wants of the multitude. But beneath the touch of the Omnipotent Christ, as the one was equal to the feeding of the thousands, the other may be equal to the wants by which it is confronted. Being on hand may transform a common errand into a divine service, and multiply what hardly seemed sufficient for one into an adequate supply for a host.—Commonwealth.