

# Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,  
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NO 52

**GIVE THE MESSENGER AND VISITOR ONE DAY.**—Who of our pastors and subscribers will give one day to canvassing for the MESSENGER AND VISITOR? Help us, brethren, just now.

—AN EXCUSE.—A brother writes, "Mr.—wishes his paper discontinued. He cannot be persuaded to take it any longer—pleads poverty—six or eight dollars a year for tobacco!" This friend has deliberately decided to choose his selfish and harmful indulgence, and rule out an influence which might be of untold good to his family, if not to himself. He has incurred a very serious responsibility. If the question had been submitted to the Master for decision he would never have done this. How can men answer for it, when they hold to indulgences of this kind, which are bad under any circumstances, and reject from their families one of the strongest helps to good morals and to the faith that saves. We hope no one else will follow this lamentable example.

—HALIFAX CORRESPONDENT.—Beginning with this week, we hope to have a regular correspondence from Halifax every fortnight. For several months past, very little has come to hand from this centre of interest, through the ordinary channels. We hope still to receive fugitive communications thence; but there will be something to depend upon. We hoped this may be satisfactory to the brethren in Halifax, and make the MESSENGER AND VISITOR more interesting to all.

—APPRECIATION.—We could fill columns with the kind words of appreciation that keep coming to us almost every day. We have never published extracts from letters of this kind, so far as we remember. The reason is not that they do not help and cheer us; but because it did not appear justly as if we should do so. One of the best evidences that the MESSENGER AND VISITOR is enjoyed by its readers is seen in the fact that its list of subscribers has increased fifty per cent the last two years, although the times have been exceptionally hard. Another encouraging feature is that very few discontinue after once taking the paper. For all kind words we return our sincere thanks. For the help of our pastors and many esteemed brethren who have sought to get the paper into all our families, we are very grateful. Words of commendation from the pulpit, and personal effort to secure subscribers, explain much of the success achieved, and the place the MESSENGER AND VISITOR is winning in the esteem of the people. Most of all we would not forget that many are taking the paper to God in prayer for his blessing. We rejoice to believe we can say, without presumption, "it is the Lord's doing." May He give more grace to the editor, and aid the paper to help on his work in all the spheres of life and all the activities it touches.

—WEALTHY BAPTIST.—Mr. J. A. Bostwick, of New York, is said to be the wealthiest Baptist of America, if not of the world. He is put down as worth at least \$40,000,000. He is a member of Dr. Armitage's church.

—CALVINISM.—Some of our Methodist exchanges have been discussing Calvinism. Many uncomplimentary references have been made to this bed-rock doctrine. It has been said that the New Theology is but a reaction from the logical conclusions to which this doctrine commits its adherents. A Prof. Seldon, however, takes his brethren to task for their shallow criticisms of Calvinism. He deems that it tends to render efforts for the salvation of souls less earnest, or makes people less interested in the fate of the heathen. This is all very true, and more might be said in the same line. It is a fact that modern missions had their origin in a denomination which held this doctrine. It is equally true that, for a long time, Arminians as well as Calvinists were very sluggish in their efforts to save the lost in darkness and lands. In all the great enterprises of the Christian world to-day, those who hold to this doctrine take a leading part. It surely will not render a man less, but more energetic, to feel that there is a triumphant purpose of God to be attained, and that he labors for an unrepentant sinner.

—IS IT GENERAL?—We have the most reliable information that a minister of a Methodist church has been preaching up the doctrine that the church is not to be a place for saved people only; but that all are to be welcomed who have any desire to be saved. As a corollary of this teaching, Calvinism is to be given to adults who do not profess to have believed. We are aware that the original Methodist societies were framed with no other condition of membership than a "desire to flee from the wrath to come"; but we supposed that the Methodist churches of to-day were differently constituted. It is true, also, that in-

fants, by virtue of their baptism, are considered members, in some sort, but to receive to full membership those who do not profess to have accepted Christ as Saviour, and thus recognize them as the members of his body, while still not his subjects, is a belief and practice we had hoped the generality of Methodists had outgrown. However, the seed of all this mischief is in the infant baptism, by which the unrepentant are introduced into the church, to remain there, unless out-breaking sin makes their lives a disgrace. Were it not for this unscriptural practice, it is doubtful whether any would have conceived the doctrine that a man who has no life from Christ is to be welcomed to a place in his visible body.

—AS USUAL.—Henry Ward Beecher is terribly distressed at the cruelty with which the sects, which he numbers at seventy, are attacking each other. He pitches into them without mercy, and shows a spirit more bitter than the one he so wretchedly condemns. It is hinted that Mr. Beecher has not been very kindly treated by the orthodox across the water during his late tour. If one person abuses another, we should be careful how we abuse him for it. How few preach what they practice, and fewer still practice what they preach.—*Gen. Baptist.*

This is very common inconsistency. Who is there that has not heard men scolding other people like fish women at Billingsgate, for their lack of kindly Christian charity? Those who talk most of union are often most determined to have no union except on their own terms, and those who claim to be the most liberal are often the very men who will not allow others the right of private judgment.

—KIND.—The editor of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR has received an elegant Christmas present from the subscribers at Spring Hill, Camb. Co., N. S. He wishes to express his heartfelt appreciation of the thoughtful kindness which prompted these friends to send it.

—MISLAIN.—Some time since we received a series of questions from a brother. We were unable to give attention to them at the time, and now we find that they are mislaid, and we are not sure of the name of the brother sending them. Will he kindly repeat the questions, and they shall receive attention?

—INDEPENDENT SABBATH SCHOOLS.—"Sabbath School Worker" has sent us another communication. We should be glad to publish it, if we thought it would serve any good purpose. We fear, however, that there will be no place where the discussion could more easily and profitably end than at the present stage. Our brother has had considerable more space than we have taken, and the one whose views have been criticised has the privilege of the last word. It is just to our brother, however, to give the following extract from his communication, which explains itself:

I have to say, in reply to your last, that you labor under a little misapprehension in reference to the principal point raised by me in my first letter. I did not say, neither did I attempt to prove, in that letter, which plan of conducting a Sunday school was the best. That was not the point; but the point I raised was that a Sunday school operated on the independent plan might be run as successfully as one managed in connection with the church, and that such Sunday school did not occupy an anomalous and unfortunate position, simply because it was managed independently of the church.

—ENTHUSIASTIC.—We fell in with a student on his way home from Acadia college, to spend the Christmas holidays. We enquired about the state of things at the college, and the glowing account he gave of the work of the last term and of the advantages to be had there, was good to hear. He said that Dr. Sawyer commended the students in high terms, for their good behavior and their diligence with which they have studied, during the year, thus far. All our readers will be glad to hear that the work of our college is going on so well. Oh for the means to make her, in still greater measure, what the time demands! You that have thousands, ask the Master if he does not desire you to leave the mark of your lives upon the future, by helping to make Acadia the greatest power for good possible to the generations to come.

—THE THEATRICAL TO-DAY.—D. W. Howell, the distinguished American novelist, who no doubt knows whereof he speaks, puts into the mouth of one of his characters, in the serial being published in the *Century*, this characterization of the modern theatre:

"About three weeks ago, at the theatre, there was one of those pieces on which makes you despair of the stage. A farce of indecently amusing innuendoes and laughably vile situations, such as, if they were put into a book, would prevent its being sent through the mail. The theatre, apparently, can still be an ally to suggestion, as it was at the restoration, and not shock its audiences. There were all sorts of people there that night; young girls, who had come with young men for an evening's polite amusement; families, middle-aged husbands and

wives; respectable-looking single women and average bachelors. I don't think an ordinary theatrical audience is of a high grade intellectually; it's third or fourth rate. All the people were nicely dressed, and they sat before that noisy mass, and listened with as smooth self-satisfaction as if they were not responsible for it. But all at once it occurred to me that they were responsible, every one of them—as responsible as the players—as the author himself."

This is said of the high class theatres, so called, in praise of the purity of which a good deal is said. Those who wish their children to grow up pure minded, had better keep them as far as possible from all the places of resort of this kind. Children would not be sent to a district where there was danger of small-pox, because they might escape infection; but be kept away, because they might take it: ought not all to act with the same prudence about the moral nature which is immeasurably more worth than the body?

—DEAD THINGS THAT DON'T DIE.—The *Christian Index* is disgusted with the statements so often heard about the dying condition of Christianity and much of that which has been its strength, and speaks plainly:

The other day we heard that Calvinism was dead; then that non-rationalistic service in churches was dying or dead; then that the old theology was dead; then that Protestantism was dead; then that Christianity itself was dead; and having heard all this we concluded that those who are regardless of truth in their statements are not dead.

The truth is, in all statements of this kind, the wish is the father to the thought.

—RESOLUTION OF CORDELIA.—We have received a resolution of condolence presented by Harcourt Division, Sons of Temperance, to the family of Mrs. Joseph Stephens, of Weldford, Kent Co., N. S., lately deceased. Tender reference is made to her high Christian principles and her many amiable qualities.

—THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET.—The article which lately appeared in the *Canadian Baptist*, in reply to the unfavorable comments of *The Week* on the decision of the Ontario Baptists to ask university powers for Woodstock college, has called forth unfavorable remark. *The Baptist* responds by throwing down a challenge to discuss the following propositions:

First: The State transcends its legitimate functions, and wrongfully uses the money which belongs to the whole people for the purposes of a class, when it appropriates public funds for the support of colleges and teaching universities.

Second: It is, from the very nature of the case, impossible for any State Government to conduct such institutions in the most economical and efficient manner, or to surround them with such moral influences and safeguards as are essential to the highest well-being of the students who enter them.

We believe these propositions cannot be successfully attacked. They embody the fundamental questions in the whole controversy of denominational versus State universities. We are never safer than when we plant our feet firmly on bottom principles. The discussion of these propositions would be of general interest to the Baptists of the Dominion.

Programme for Week of Prayer.

Sunday, January 2: Sermon.—Long-suffering grace of God; for many tokens of the mighty working of the Holy Ghost; for new openings for the spread of the Gospel in many lands.

Tuesday, January 4: Humiliation.—Intemperance, licentiousness, and all immorality; for the formalism of many, and the cold indifference of others.

Wednesday, January 5: Prayer for the Church.—That the people of God may know their high calling and responsibility; that grace may be given to all pastors, teachers, and preachers; to proclaim the Word in its simplicity and fulness.

Thursday, January 6: Prayer for Families.—That the young may be early drawn to Christ and kept from the evil that is in the world; blessing of God may rest on all universities, colleges, and schools; better observances of the Lord's Day.

Friday, January 7: Prayer for Missions.—That the Church of Christ may recognize the glory of the commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature," and may feel a privilege to make sacrifices that it may be fulfilled. That far greater zeal for the Divine glory, and far more purity for the perishing, may be imparted by the Holy Ghost to all the people of God.

Saturday, January 8: Prayer for Nations.—For the suppression of the opium, the liquor, and all other immoral traffic. For the blessing of God to rest upon all efforts to remove the curse of intemperance.

Sunday, January 9: Sermon.—(We hope the Spirit's power may be felt by all who gather together to pray, and that the work of prayer may be the beginning of revival and ingathering, in many of our churches.)

## Home in our Father's House.

BY REV. NEWMAN HALL, D. D.

Afflicted believers, your sorrows are only for a little season; your weeping is for a brief night; joy cometh in the morning, the morning of an everlasting day. A Christian's trials are but the discomforts of a journey, each stage of which, however rough the road and wild the weather, brings him nearer the home of his heart. The darkness is only that of the tunnel through which we are hurrying at express speed. The speck of light at the end is nearing and brightening as we speed onward to the sunshine of eternal day.

Our Lord allayed the heart trouble of his disciples by assuring them that in his Father's house were many mansions, and that the parting which caused them sorrow was for their good; that though he was going from them, it was to prepare a place for them, and that he would surely return to receive them to himself, that they might abide with him for ever.

Our Lord speaks of heaven as home. "My Father's house." What a contrast to the gorgeous imagery employed by servants in the child's saintly simplicity of the child. Inspired men are overawed by the distant vision of the paradise of God, the celestial city, Jerusalem, with its pearly gates and streets of gold. It is as if a poor cottager, after visiting a royal palace, tried to describe the unimagined splendors of a place which members of the royal family simply knew as home. How in harmony with the high claims of deity ascribed to and for him! The disciples were not to be troubled on his account. Although he was going, he was not to be troubled. He was going home. "Let not your heart be troubled." And because of their intimate union, they were not to be troubled for themselves.

If heaven is Christ's home it is ours also. He is our Elder Brother. "He is not ashamed to call us brethren." He said, "I ascended with my Father and your Father." We are "joint heirs with Jesus Christ." His Father's home is ours also. What hallowed associations are suggested by the word! All there are many exceptions caused by very extreme poverty, and still more by sin. Yet it is true of most persons of all conditions that, whatever scenes of grandeur they may visit, they feel, "There's no place like home." Not the outward investiture, but the indwelling light and the pervading atmosphere of affection render the humble dwelling equally with the grandest mansion, home. Love makes home.

Home promises rest. There the wearied limbs or wearied brain repose after the days' toil. See, amid the multiplied cares and labors of the present life, we look forward to the rest that remaineth for the children of God. "There will be occupation, but no painful toil." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labors."

Home suggests fidelity. There is no true home without it. We may suspect deceit and treachery outside, but we can cast off all reserve, all distrust, at home. Home suggests sympathy. There may be coldness outside, no interest in what deeply concerns us, no response to our warmest feelings; but at home we are always sure of a listening ear, a kindling eye, a responsive hand, a heart-expressive kiss. There may be curiosity outside, openly avowed or suspiciously concealed; and even friends may sometimes prove forgetful, selfish and unkind. But home, true home, is the palace of love.

"Where have you been of each other sure." But the purest and brightest of earthly homes are but faint types of the home above. There every heart is wholly true to every other, every thought true to God. No suspicion lurks here, no envy at other's gifts, no cherished ill-will, no antipathy, no mere calculating selfishness, but true, hearty, genuine, expressive, warmly manifested love. What a heaven this world hints true intercourse among Christians "will have been left behind." "We shall all be changed" in this respect and the unlovely things which more or less cling to believers and interfere with fellowship here will disappear, when the bride of Christ will be "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

Oh, the rapture of meeting again and being forever at home with the dear ones we have loved on earth, all made perfect in the presence of the elder brother, whose likeness all will bear! Oh, the bliss of holiest, deepest constant sympathy with Christ himself, and so being in the fullest sense "at home" in heaven! There by grace alone and yet by covenant right; not strangers, nor visitors, but mere residents, but children at their Father's, having "a right to the tree of life"; penetrating every recess of that paradise, entering every chamber of that place, and feeling, "It is all mine, because it is all his, and I am his!"

It is a permanent home. There are mansions yonder, abiding places, not movable tents, but a fixed, enduring habitation. We know that when this earthly tabernacle

is dissolved, we have a building of God. How unlike the uncertainty and perishability of earthly things! The lake, so calm reflecting from its unruffled surface the sky and stars, may, in one short hour, be wild with storms. The stream, which reflects the sun, suddenly becomes dry. The fairest flowers droop and die even as we gaze on them. The loveliest and most loving homes are quickly broken up. No looks and bolts can shut out sickness, sorrow and death. But as the home above is everlasting, so its pleasures are for evermore. The sunshine will never be overcast by one fleeting thought of change or death.

And there is abundance of supply. There are "many mansions." The Jewish temple was a place not merely for worship but for residence, and had around it courts a variety of chambers for priests of various degrees. So the heavenly Jerusalem has habitations for all whom Jesus consecrates "kings and priests unto God," and these consist of all who are washed from their sins by his blood. The Father's house is large enough for all his children.

The preparation is vast as the heart of God. Holy angels are there, and saints of all ages, "a great multitude whom no man can number, out of all kindreds and tribes and peoples." But still there is room. The Father is bringing not a few but "many sons unto glory." There are multitudes unknown to men, but known to God, who have not bowed their knees unto Baal. Heathen nations are pressing into kingdom, and the day is not far distant when all shall know the Saviour from the least to the greatest. There is room for them all. There is room for us. There is room for every mourner; "Let not your heart be troubled." Number implies variety. The mansions are not of uniform size and arrangement, though all are perfect in beauty. They are fitted and prepared for dwellers of varied capacity and degree. Mansions for children and for young men, for the weak and the strong, for babes in Christ and for those of full age. None need fear that because they are inferior to others there will be no place for them above. There will be no exclusion of classes, no barriers of separation, but there will be variety of degrees of glory, suited to the meanness for the inheritance, and thus the very lowest in attainment if a sincere believer in Christ, may be sure of a home among the many mansions. There is no fit place in hell for any soul in which there is sincere penitence for sin and trust in the Saviour. Timid, doubting, sorrowing one, let not your heart be troubled. Those gates shall open for you. Those streets shall be trodden by you. You shall drink of the river, clear as crystal, and you shall eat of the Tree of Life, and find a home in the many mansions of our Father's house.—*The Advance.*

## Soul Restoration.

A man upon the way having accidentally lost his purse, is questioned by his friend where he had it last. "O," he said, "I am confident that I drew it out of my pocket when I was in such a town, at such an inn." "Why then," said the other "there is no better way to have it again than by going back to the place where you last had it." This is the case of many in these loose, unsettled times. They have lost their love for Christ and his truth since their corn and wine and oil have since increased; outward things are in abundance added unto them they have slighted the light of God's countenance. When they were poor and asked of all worldly goods, they then sought God's face both early and late, and nothing was more dear unto them than the truth of Christ. What, then, is to be done to recover the lost love for Christ? Back again, back again, directly where you last had it! Back to the sign of the broken heart. There it was that you drew it out into good words and better works; and though this love be since lost in the crowd of worldly employments, there and nowhere else you shall be sure to find it again.—*Dr. Spencer.*

—A lily grows mysteriously, pushing up its solid weight of stem and leaf in the teeth of gravity. Shaped in beauty by invisible fingers, the flower develops we know not how. But we do not wonder at it. Every day the thing is done; it is nature; it is God. We are spiritual enough at least to understand that. But when the soul rises slowly above the world, pushing up its delicate virtues in the teeth of sin, shaping itself mysteriously in the image of Christ, we deny that the power is not of man. A strong will, we say, a high ideal, the reward of virtue, Christian influence this will not account for it. We allow a miracle to the lily, but none to the man. But mysteriousness is the test of spiritual growth. It was Christ's test: "The wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."—*Drummond.*

## "My Finger Marks"

We were struck by a thought of Eliza Barrett's, that thousands of our fellow-creatures will quietly water earthly with characters of fleeting things those they might have carried thither had not never lived. "The sunlight of the world," says she, "will reveal my finger-marks in their primary formations and in their successive strains of life and thought." A pair of women believed they had gained sixty miles in one day in their course, but it was proved by observation that they had lost more than thirty; the ship had been urged forward by the wind, but driven back by an under-current. How many under-currents of trivial actions or even looks and manners, influence scarcely heeded, may be hindering the Christian progress of others! But, on the other hand, how many an example that deems itself unnoticed has been honored by the Master as the means of doing immortal work for him! Our concern must be present fidelity to God, leaving all consequences with him; the Evil One is ever ready to use the frailties of professing Christians as instruments of harm—may we not believe that every true, loyal, loving life is so employed by the all-seeing Christ as to move the waters of the River of Life to the healing and comfort of many?

Angell James, a mighty instrument in the conversion and building up of souls, traced his solemn impressions to the consistent life of a lad with whom he was thrown into companionship. They shared the same bedroom, and he became powerfully influenced by the regularity with which his friend was wont to pray and read the Bible. That boy, leading his quiet Christian life, little dreamed that he was stirring thoughts and feelings that would inspire congregations at home and abroad, for the writings of Angell James are dear to countless hearts. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things," whispers the Master; he will take care that this faithful servant is made ruler over many things, setting in motion, though perhaps unconsciously, even "the fountains at which God's angels drink."—*The Quaker.*

## This, That, and the Other.

A home missionary was asked the cause of his poverty. "Principally," said he, "with a twinkle in his eye, 'because I have so often preached without notes.'"

—Some one intending a rebuke to Mr. Spurgeon's hyper-Calvinism, asked him, "Do you ever preach to sinners at all?" and received for answer, "Yes; you must come along to the Tabernacle and you shall hear me preach to one!"

A traveller in India writes that he has seen at a bazaar a devotee who has lain sixteen years on a bed of nails. His body was full of sores. Another aspiring saint was holding a flower-pot at arm's length, and had held it in that position for five years. A third stood with his arm uplifted, and without power to move a muscle, and lay being apparently stiff, and the long finger-nails growing into the wrists.—*London Baptist.*

—The more perfect the sight is, the more delightful the beautiful object. The more perfect a appetite, the sweeter the food. The more musical the ear, the more pleasant the melody. The more perfect the soul, the more joyous the joys of heaven, and the more glorious to us that glory.—*Richard Baxter.*

—He whose chief anxiety is to reach heaven, is not worth much for practical service here on earth. And he who is not fit for any place on earth, is certainly not fitted to enter heaven. The way to get ready for heaven, is to fill one's place here on earth. He who is in the loving service of Jesus will be ready to stay on earth or to go to heaven, just as Jesus thinks best.—*S. S. Times.*

—The infinite goodness of God bestows more mercies upon us in the method of prevention, than of answer to particular prayers. We enjoy most things before we ask, and often more excellent in kind, and more abundant in measure than we ask.—*Samuel Lee.*

—Our godliness is not a fruit of the love of Christ. Sweetness, gentleness, and pity are the qualities with which He endows His disciples. It is imperfect virtue which is sour, severe, and implacable. Perfect virtue is meek, affable and compassionate. It thinks of nothing but doing good, of "bearing one another's burdens." There is an acidity in pure Christ-love.—*Zion's Herald.*

—A convention of the Universalist churches of the United States was recently held at Akron, Ohio, and reports there presented show that there are 900 Universalist churches in this country, with 35,214 members, and property worth 7,000,000.

—Harnack, the German critic, says that explorations among the tombs and catacombs of Rome have proved not only that there were Christians in the Imperial Palace before the end of the first century, a fact known to Paul; but that members of the Imperial Family were Christians.