

MESSINGER AND VISITOR.

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Messenger and Visitor

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1901.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

The Sunday-school is generally recognized as representing a department—a very important department indeed—of Christian work. It must be a very poor and weak church that does not, nowadays, maintain a Sunday-school. There are, however, we believe, a great many churches that do not recognize to the full the importance of the Sunday-school, and there are, we fear, very few churches which are employing all their forces to make the work of the school as effective and fruitful as possible.

We do not mean to find fault. We would recognize gratefully what is being done through consecrated talent and self-denying labors in this department of Christian work. The superintendent has our sympathies. Very much depends on him in respect to the success of the school; his responsibilities are great, and if he is at all faithful to the trusts committed to him, large demands will necessarily be made on his thought, his time and his patience. All his services too are rendered without remuneration, so far as any material equivalent is concerned. However, he shall receive his reward. The superintendent should certainly be chosen by the church, and with the greatest care as to his fitness for his most important position. And, having been chosen, the church should stand by him with the same prayerful, helpful loyalty which, or should be, accorded to the pastor; for the superintendent of the Sunday-school has the opportunity of service for the church and the community in which the church is situated, scarcely less important than that which the pastor himself performs. The office of the teacher, too, should be regarded as one involving great responsibility, and demanding ability and faithfulness. No church possesses talent of too high an order to be consecrated to this work, and nothing short of the best available should be employed. With the right man for superintendent, and with the best men and women who can be obtained for teachers, and these upheld and encouraged by the sympathies and prayers of pastor and church, the prosperity of the Sunday-school should be assured.

The relations of the pastor to the school cannot be other than a matter of great importance. Whether or not the pastor shall teach in the school should be determined by the measure of his strength and the number and extent of his duties and engagements. But at all events, he should keep in close and sympathetic contact with the school. Under favorable circumstances he may certainly render valuable assistance by teaching a class in the school; but as a general thing, this will not be the most important service which it is in his power to give. The educated, alert and progressive pastor has here one of his grandest opportunities for wise and unobtrusive leadership. By being himself thoroughly alive as to the importance and the possibilities of Sunday-school effort by acquainting himself with the best methods of work, the best helps for teachers, the best Sunday-school literature, and by keeping the school and its work prominently before his congregation as of the greatest interest and importance, he will be rendering service of the utmost value. Such a pastor will be a wise and sympathetic counsellor to the superintendent and the teachers, and more or less he will inspire his people generally with his own enthusiasm in the work.

It is not always practicable or even desirable in view of all the interests of the church that the pastor should teach in the Sunday-school; but it is very desirable that sometimes during the week he should meet with the superintendent and teachers for the study of the lesson for the next Sabbath. This will bring him, once a week, in touch with the teachers and with their work, enable him to estimate their ability and the measure of their faithfulness, and afford opportunity for giving instruction and encouragement. If the pastor's work in relation to the teachers is faith-

fully and efficiently performed it will result in due time in producing a body of intelligent, earnest, and well-furnished teachers, the value of whose work can not be estimated.

The opportunities for Sunday-school work in connection with our churches are great and inviting. In some places they are of course greater than in others. But, greater or less, no church and no pastor should rest satisfied until all the people, old and young—the young especially—shall be brought into the Sunday-school and instructed under the influence of the best talent and the best spirit which the church possesses or can command.

It is the custom with many schools at this season of the year to close for the winter. This, in some cases, it is true, may be necessary, but in many others, we fear it is but an unworthy concession on the part of the teachers to the weakness of the flesh. The scholars would gladly go to the school if only there were those to meet and instruct them, an earnest band of Christian teachers. But for these Christian teachers it is too hard a task to face the unpleasantness of the autumn and the winter months for the sake of helping the scholars. And so these schools are carried on in a half-hearted kind of way, for no one can be expected, even in the summer, to get up a very great interest over a school which is to die almost as soon as it has begun to live. Let those schools, then, that have been accustomed to close with October, buckle on their zeal and determine, in the name of the Lord, to keep alive all the year round, and see if results do not justify all the sacrifice demanded.

REV. DR. PARTRIDGE AND THE THEATRE.

Dr. Partridge, rector of St. George's, Halifax, has been for some weeks past giving lectures on Sunday afternoons, on common subjects of the day. "The Religion of the Drama" was the subject for Sunday, the 11th.

The following, according to the *Morning Herald's* report, says Dr. Partridge, is the current opinion of the theatre now held by religious people: "There is no religion in the drama. The stage is utterly corrupt. Whatever might have been its original intention; whatever its former place in the education of humanity; whatever the influence once exercised upon men and manners; whatever its power in former times to instruct or elevate; now it is a sink of iniquity, a school of vice, a den of infamy, a hot-bed of indecency, animalism and earthliness, which no one who calls himself a Christian, or desires to save his soul, will enter or encourage. Look at the vice and sin and shame which in our large cities inevitably surround the theatres and opera houses! Consider that immorality appears to be enshrined around the haunts of actors and actresses and all the machinery of a playhouse! Beshink yourself that supper houses with their bars and liquors, and gambling halls, with their allurements to sin, and worse traps and pit falls for unwary youth are legion in the neighborhood of the dramatic stage; and ask yourself if as a pure and upright man you can say one word in favor of such a pest house of moral corruption and putridity as a modern theatre! Remember what is the general reputation of actors, how they are looked down upon by all respectable people! Think how you would shrink yourself from all social contact with them, and keep your daughters from making much more from cultivating their acquaintance. Think how they live in degradation and die in despair! And then say one syllable as a Christian minister in their defence if you dare!"

The Doctor proceeds to show that this judgment is unjust, and that the theatre gives "refreshment and help for God's suffering and worn ones." If the theatre has such a reputation as Dr. Partridge says it has, would it not be well for him to account for it? Since the days of Elizabeth, the time at which it was revived, and civilized, till the present day, it has been on trial among English speaking Christians. It is supposable that, in a time of strong prejudice, an unjust judgment might be given against any institution; but, how is it possible for an injustice to last three hundred years, especially in this age, tolerant and lax? How can the reverend apologist account for this? Ridley and Latimer were burned and Bunyan was imprisoned; but the world has reversed the judgment of those days. How is it that the theatre is kept on the world's side of the house?

In defense of the stage, Dr. Partridge says: "They are following a lawful calling. Why should they be looked upon as criminals? There is a good deal of injustice here, which follows an, upon the whole, estimable class of persons, whom a mistaken estimate of what religion is, and a perverted and erroneous standard of judgment have caused Christian people, otherwise kindly, sympathetic and just, to vilify and condemn as an order of society which is hopelessly dis-solute."

This will not do? The devout of every church, the great spiritually minded preachers of every body of Christians have been against the theatre, and are still against it. The intelligent religious opinion of the foremost of Christians of to-day is opposed to the modern theatre. It is believed to be hostile to Bible piety. Why is this?—How can it be accounted for, if it is a good place for

"God's suffering and worn ones" to get recreation and furnish their Christian weapons?

Of the Puritans, Dr. Partridge says: "As soon as they arrived in America, they began to persecute, whip, maim and burn or otherwise slay those who would not think or worship as they did." Did Puritans "burn" and "slay"? They whipped and imprisoned.

"To day," says the doctor, "the spirit of Puritanism lives and flourishes. Let any man have the courage of his convictions and speak boldly; let him disregard conventionalism and give utterance to the thoughts that burn within him. He is no Christian. The rock, the fagot, the stake await him not, only because the persecuting spirit has not at present the power. How soon it may have, either from the one side or the other, the opportunity or authority to persecute to the death, God only knows."

This is alarming! How fortunate to have wholesome laws in Halifax to keep Presbyterians and Baptists under restraint. Give them the power and what? "Rack," "fagot," "stake." Really Dr. Partridge has made a discovery since coming from free England to Nova Scotia. How could the reverend gentleman look a Halifax audience in the face and talk in that way?

After describing the talents and genius of the actor, Dr. Partridge asks:

"Is he the sole representative of the highest power bestowed upon the sons of men who is certain to be damned if he uses them?"

John B. Gough found a field after his conversion for his great gifts outside of the theatre. Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, and other ministers who might be named, possess histrionic talent of no mean order. They find room for their gifts in another sphere.

Dr. Partridge gives a true and pathetic picture of the life of many manual workers—short of apparel, short of food and badly housed. "On the whole," he thinks, says the Doctor, "let them go to the play." But where can those poor people, so destitute, get fifty cents apiece to attend theatres a few nights every week to refresh their souls? It will be apt to strike most persons, we think, that, considering the needs, physical, intellectual and spiritual, of this class of people, the theatre is not the place where their money can be spent to the best advantage. Of the "conscientious actor who uses his splendid gifts," the lecturer says, "I dare to utter it, to the glory of God." Perhaps so; but taking the theatre as a whole, we "dare to utter it" there is nothing to show that its influence is or has been for the glory of God, but much evidence of a wholly opposite character. We would not wish to deny to the learned Doctor the praise of having said some good things, but when he tells his audience at the close that his lecture is imperfect, we find ourselves able to subscribe to that quite as heartily as to any other part of his discourse.

THE BAPTISTS OF MAINE.

The Baptists of Maine held their anniversary this year at Bath. Zion's Advocate, the Baptist paper of Maine, says the meetings were largely attended and of deep interest from first to last. The Missionary Convention represents the Home Mission work of the State. From the report of the treasurer it is learned that the permanent fund amounts to \$61,500. There has been received during the year for rents, \$1,800; from interest and dividends, \$3,571; from legacies, trusts and bequests, \$2,230; for the pulpit services of secretary, \$230.82; for ordinary contributions, \$4,423.92. There was paid to missions, \$5,271.58; for salaries, \$1,324.94; for grants to churches, \$973.23; to trust beneficiaries, \$709; for printing, \$520; for interest on account, \$412.29; for miscellaneous, \$2,962.86; transferred to permanent fund, \$1,100. The report on the state of religion in the churches contains the following:

In summary we find there are at present 250 Baptist churches in Maine, three having been received into associational fellowship within the year. Within these churches are 99 pastors, and these with a few students keep 137 churches supplied. During the year 535 have been received by baptism; this being 38 more than last year and 49 above the average for the past ten years. The total membership as reported is 19,215, a net gain of 44, while last year showed a net loss of 86. As above stated, 137 of the 250 churches are served by pastors or stated supplies, but what of the other 113? Fifty-three, or a little more than one-fifth of the churches in the state, are without any stated preaching, many of them without any whatever. It is a fact not commonly recognized, if known, that there are 45 churches in the state that have a membership, resident and non-resident, of less than 20 each. Thirty-three faithful disciples of Christ and ministers of His Gospel are needed for work in important but vacant fields. Some of these churches are abundantly able to support pastors; others will need the Convention's aid and the encouragement of other churches that they may take this highly important step.

The report makes reference to the Young People's Societies as follows:

Sixty churches in their letters to the associations refer to the work of the Young People's Societies. In every instance but one, testimony is borne to the great value and helpfulness of their work. In that solitary exception the letter hopes that the society may be revived to do again such work as it formerly had done and which was evidently missed. In the development and employing of the vast power of these so-

cieties is the solution of many a difficult question in the maintenance of the smaller churches.

Christian Giving.

An excellent report was presented to the N. S. Eastern Association by the committee on Systematic Giving, of which committee Rev. W. F. Parker, of Truro, was chairman, and we presume, writer of the report. In the course of this report the question is asked: "How are we to get right before God on this matter of honoring the Lord with our substance?" The answer, in brief, is, Not by systematic giving merely, or unsystematic or spasmodic giving, but by Christian giving. What the report contains under this head is appended:

Christian giving is the cure for these ill-formed characters, dishonoring churches and financial woes in our Lord's work; and this we earnestly commend to all our brethren and to the churches. It contains all the excellencies of other methods with none of their defects. (1) It begins in the heart, not the brain or the purse. It is an index of the spirit of Christ within. "Every man as he purposeth in his heart so let him give, for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2) It is therefore an act of worship—a recognition of human need merely, but an expression of love to God, by sacredly devoting a portion of what He has given us to His glory. "Honor the Lord with thy substance." (3) It is also regular (or systematic if you will). It is a shameful truth we sometimes sing when the collection is being made, "Nothing in my hands I bring." No one who is able should appear before the Lord empty handed when he knows that a part of the worship is to be "giving." Praying or praising could be discarded at such a time with equal propriety as giving. "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store as he may prosper." And as he comes into the church to worship, let him bring an acceptable offering unto the Lord. For Christian giving is

Collections for Annuity Fund and Donations to make all Pastors Members.

The Convention at Moncton recommended every church in the Convention, to take a collection on the first Sunday in November for the Annuity Fund. That Sunday will soon be upon us. About 80 ministers have already united with the fund. There are about 80 more eligible who ought to unite at once. This is the time! Let not this autumn pass away leaving any of the ministers not on this fund—an excellent provision made by the churches. The Rev. L. D. Morse wisely instructed the treasurer of the Foreign Mission Board to put him on the fund and keep his dues paid. This is wise and just, not for himself alone, but for his young wife as well.

A SUGGESTION.

Some ministers say, "We are not able to pay our back dues." I believe you; and I will tell you now what I have done without your permission. I have sent circulars to your deacons through the clerks of the churches, appealing to them to move the churches forthwith to help you do what you do not feel able to do yourselves. I tell the deacons in this circular, that if they will take an interest in the matter, and get you put on the fund, that in time of need you will be worth \$3,000 to you; \$1,500 to your widow, if the affliction of widowhood should come upon your wife, and \$250 to each of your children under sixteen years, should they become fatherless. I tell your deacons that as this is the season for donations, the best donation the churches can make you is to pay your back dues, and make you members of the Annuity Fund. If able to do more, let it be but a part of the donation. A certificate of membership, which can be obtained from the treasurer, would be a valuable item in your next donation. I shall hear from your clerks, deacons and churches, I feel confident of it. My stock of blank certificates is almost exhausted, but I shall get a new supply immediately to meet the demand.

FAREWELL SERVICE.

A farewell service was held on Sabbath evening, October 11, in the North church, Halifax, on the eve of the departure for India of the missionaries, the Rev. L. D. Morse, Mrs. Morse and Miss McNeill. The congregation was large and deeply interested. Unfortunately the Rev. J. W. Manning was necessarily absent from the city. Dr. Saunders occupied the chair. After the singing of an appropriate hymn, led by the choir, reading of the 2nd Psalm by the Rev. Josiah Webb, prayer led by the Rev. William Hall, and an anthem by the choir, Dr. Saunders gave a brief address, in which he welcomed the missionaries to the service, expressing the greatest interest felt by the audience in them and their work. He also welcomed Mr. John March and Rev. J. H. Saunders, as representatives of the F. M. Board to this farewell, given by the churches of Halifax, to the missionaries. The Rev. J. H. Saunders, being called upon, reminded the young missionaries and the audience that it was the old Gospel that was needed for India; that it was all-sufficient for reaching, transforming and saving all men in all conditions of moral degradation. There must be faith in God, confidence in each other, and in Scriptural methods, and a belief in lost humanity yearning after God, however low it may be found.

Mr. Morse followed, and touched all hearts by his open, fervid utterances. He loved home, and if he could be made to feel that it was his duty to stay in his own country he would rather stay. But he listened to the call of duty. He felt that his labors in India would not be his own alone, but all who had shared in his training, his mother first, and those who prayed and gave the money to support him. He asked for the sympathy and prayers of all.

Mrs. Morse was asked to speak a few words. She modestly referred to her struggles in deciding to go to India now. Her dear mother died last winter, and it was a question whether it was not her duty to remain at home. She asked God to guide her, and believed he had done so. She carries the hearts of the large audience with her.

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had had struggles, but the path of duty was made plain and she went gladly to do work in India—to instruct women and children and lead them to Christ. She shares with Mrs. Morse the sympathy of all hearts.

Miss Johnstone, of Dartmouth, at this stage, on behalf of the W. M. Union, gave Miss MacNeill, their missionary, a parting address, in the happy strain characteristic of all her public utterances. "Be not weary in well-doing" was given as a motto.

After another hymn was sung, the Rev. N. A. McNeill, pastor of the church at Chester, and brother of Miss McNeill, the missionary, addressed the audience, and told how hard it was to part with his sister, although he had encouraged her to go. His words of advice were well chosen. He was followed by the Rev. Wm. Hall, who briefly stated the hopeful view of the missionary undertaking.

After an anthem by the choir, the Rev. F. H. Adams spoke briefly. He appealed to the people to consecrate themselves and all they had to the Lord's work. More money must be given for Foreign Missions. The \$830,000,000 in the hands of Christians of the United States and Canada must be drawn on more heavily to send out the 6,000 young people now offering themselves for foreign service.

Mr. John March, treasurer of the F. M. Board, then gave a farewell address to the missionaries, in which he first cautioned them in regard to patience in learning the language; and in the matter of over work. Hopeful declarations were made. Their prayers for the Board were sought, and the prayers and sympathies of the Board pledged for them.

Dr. Saunders then, for the audience and the denomination at large, gave each missionary the right hand of fellowship, accompanied by a few sentences. Another hymn and the benediction closed this most interesting service.

At 12 o'clock on Monday, the Rev. J. H. Saunders and a number of Halifax friends took leave of the missionaries on the deck of the Caspian, which bore them away toward their destination in India. Prayers, sympathies, benedictions follow this new recruit to the staff on the field.

That Law of Christ.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. 6: 2.

This bearing of one another's burdens is manifestly a practical way of fulfilling the new commandment, "That ye love one another."

The carrying out of this rule should not be confined to individual Christians, but should be practised by churches as well. The churches that are strong should assist the weaker in carrying their burdens.

This can be done by the strongest church of a group doing all that it can towards making up the salary of the pastor, instead of simply contenting itself with raising the salary needed to pay for its share of the services of the pastor. Supposing, for example, there are three churches grouped together under the care of one pastor. One church has half of the time and the other two a quarter each. The church having two of the labor can easily make up more than half of the salary, but the other two find themselves unable, after every effort has been put forth, to make up the remaining half. What a beautiful illustration of bearing one another's burdens would it be, for the stronger church cheerfully to make up more than half the salary, and at the same time permit the weaker churches to have half of the labor. This is an excellent way of doing home mission work and tends to increase the bond of sympathy between the churches. We are sorry to notice in some quarters a disposition to act in a way directly the reverse of this. "We will pay for what we get and nothing more," is the ground taken. Even in the single church, where there are different stations, this spirit is sometimes manifest. No matter how important the labor for the building up of the interest at that station, and so benefiting the whole church, if they cannot pay for the labor they cannot have it. How mean, how selfish is such a policy, how contrary to the rule before us.

We mean not by all this that the stronger shall be burdened and the weaker eased, but that each doing according to the ability given them shall be an equality.

Another way by which the stronger churches can assist the weaker is by contributing to the Home Mission funds. The larger part of the work done by the Home Mission Board is in the way of helping weak churches and weak groups of churches in making up a sufficient support for their pastor. Hence the Home Mission work is a systematic way of obeying the rule under consideration. On this ground, as well as on many more, this work deserves and claims the generous contributions of the stronger churches. We are hoping that they may be more generous during the present year than ever before.

A. CONNOR, Cor. Sec.

The Messenger and Visitor will be sent to New Subscribers from now till Jan. 1, 1902, for \$1.50.

Dresden.

Dresden is one of cities in Germany; at verdict of most travel there is much to attract in this old city of trees, the curious narrow garden nooks, the quaint place a charm which city like Berlin lacks. merical, business like, centre, and its streets a mense stores and tenement and six stories high, color and style. In the vaine for the tall trees, old fashioned, easy home the suburbs, especially Blasewitz, some of the villas imaginable. The flows through the city the Altstadt and Neustadt.

The chief attraction side of its natural beauty is a gallery of famous old paintings, largely from the Louvre in Paris. At the present time it is over the paintings. It note the difference in between the old and the new. The former almost idealistic themes, Scriptural, "The Christ" or "Hercules" other mythical subjects devote themselves also the reproduction of landscapes, objects, a may be said to be realistic. I wished to see more carefully brated man say in the ture, that the ideal in dead, that artists now ist and that the great ready been accomplish art. At the time I cept such a startling after I had visited seen the works of Cor Paolo Veronese, Vec brandy, and others, but when I stood in the De fore that marvel of Raphael San Sisto" of Raphael no longer to believe the long ago attained its The "Sistine Madonna" the most beautiful fac it is co-mingled ex and purity. It seems could look upon it better and nobler. This wonderful painting usually thronged with stricken beholders. They saw something of the sight-seeing tour. The first time I saw beautiful, but the second was more beautiful fascination about it one. In a small room of the corridors of the painting which, attract much, if not more. It is a work of Titian "Tribute Money." I had come to Christ "Is it lawful to give not?" seeking to en face turned toward the intellectual penetrat and a look of rebuke questioner coming. Behind that cothing for the sin of the po convicted of hypocri ner. Here is a striking moral purity and never saw any other fully realized my idea a vision of love and

There were hundred works, as "The adoration of the Kings," etc., which are masterpieces cannot be equalled by least they have not the modern department character. Here are "Spring of the Market Woman," "Norway," "Bad Ne There are also in this attempts at ideal these are copies, the same as those of painters. The fact is practical spirit of the influence felt both poetry. In neither sublime productions these days science do The tendency is to cannot be analyzed. The imagination, the restrained. It lacks become realistic, even is chained to natural the aim of art should reveal nature, not relations however, but its soul. It is in modern art fails, and clearly evident what paintings of the old are beautiful, but power to affect us. Ideal is wanting.