

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

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WHOLE No. 128

It might be convenient for some of our subscribers to hand payment for "THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL" to Rev. W. E. McFutire, as he visits the churches on home mission work from place to place, and any who wish to subscribe for the paper might hand their names to him. He will hand us all orders and payments. Now will not some of our subscribers try and get another name with their own for next year."

The Closing Year.

Another calendar year will soon close. But many memories of it will linger with us for days to come. Some of its occurrences will to some hearts and homes bring thoughts of gladness because of favorable providences and rich mercies, while to others there will be thoughts of sadness over bereavements and losses. Oh! how many dear ones it has hurled away from many of us during its three hundred and sixty five days of flight through time. For while it has created joy in some homes by the addition of new lives, it has left scars of sorrow and mourning in other hearts and homes by leaving empty cradles, empty chairs, lost embraces and smiling faces. Some of us it has left richer, and others poorer. Some much weaker, and perhaps not much wiser. But in taking a retrospect of its passing days we discover much to be thankful for, much to humble us, much to encourage us, and much to be done for many a praiseworthy cause. The world is yet dark, and sorrow and misery are prevalent because of sin. But we can thank our Heavenly Father, that while sin abounds, His rich and Sovereign grace does much more abound, and from this rich source we may obtain aid to battle evil within, and around us. May the incoming year record greater activity, and greater triumphs in the cause of righteousness and truth on the part of the followers of the Lamb than the one that is now expiring. We intend if spared, to continue our work with the little paper, "THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL," through next year, and hope to have the patronage and help of all brethren and sisters to keep it alive, and to make it interesting and useful to our people. It is going into hundreds of families that do not feel able to take a larger or higher priced paper, and in this way it is filling a lack that is not other wise provided for. It is a pleasure, and cause of thankfulness to us that many of our friends who take the larger and higher priced papers are taking this one also, and are in this way helping us to keep it going where others do not go, and there are some who are having it sent to poor families that are not able to pay for it, and there are many such families among us. This act of kindness is as it ought to be, and now is the proper time for any of our well to do and benevolent brethren or sisters to make a poor family, or friend a new year's present of the HOME MISSION JOURNAL. It will be of new value to them twice in every month, while many presents more costly are soon used up and the recipients none the better off for them. The manager of this paper will not be able to call on subscribers for payments or renewals this winter, being laid up with asthma again. We therefore hope that each one who has been taking the paper will renew for 1904, and that any in arrears will make prompt payments, as it will take about twenty-five dollars to make the year end satisfactory.

Thankful for all the good words and payments that have come for the paper, we wish all our friends a cheerful Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Unsettling a Pastor.

Some pastors are born unsettled. They have a chronic desire for change, and one might almost wonder if they will find heaven satisfactory unless they can change mansions frequently. Such pastors are no sooner settled in a field than they begin to look about them for another. The main work to which they devote themselves is the search for pastures new. Fortunately these incorrigible peripatetics are in an insignificant minority, and do not need to be seriously considered in this discussion.

If it be true that the majority of pastors are not temperamentally dissatisfied and restless, why is it that changes are so constant, and that such large numbers are engaged in a hunt for other fields of labor? That this is the case seems beyond question. The pastorate of ten years forms a notable exception to the general rule. In the city of Chicago but two Baptist pastors of English speaking churches look back over a continuous term of service covering a decade of years. We do not recall the precise length of the average pastorate in our denomination, but according to statisticians, it is something less than three years. It is not certain that the best results would be secured if the average could be made thirty years instead of three; but all will agree that the present state of affairs is far from ideal.

When we seek for an explanation of this unfortunate condition, we find it in no one thing. The causes of ministerial restlessness are legion, and only such as are out-standing can be considered here. Among these, the natural tendency to idealize the unknown holds a prominent place. The pastor at Brownsville attends the meeting of his association held with Ridgeway Church. He admires the beautiful church-house, notes the zeal and efficiency of the sister who serves refreshments, contrasts the large choir with his own, and goes home feeling that if he were pastor at Ridgeway his sky would have no cloud. But he has seen the dress parade and not the everyday campaign. The casual visitor cannot know the inner life of a church. We all put on our best clothes for company, and hide our rags in the closet. If the brother ever becomes pastor at Ridgeway he will find difficulties which do not lie upon the surface, and trials as real as those which he has borne at Brownsville. It may be a good plan to exchange loads occasionally, but let no one deceive himself by supposing that a change of field will furnish escape from trial. One can never see the inside of things distinctly from the outside. The next lot to one's own may seem to afford more luxuriant pasturage than the one where he is grazing, but the chances are when he jumps the fence he shall find as large a percentage of weeds to the acre as in the field he just left.

Difficulties! That is a word which explains a vast deal of ministerial restlessness. They are not, in the main, fanciful, but all too real. They are not, necessarily, quarrels between individuals or factions, although these are by no means uncommon. The form varies; the fact is universal; one church it might be the parsimony of the well to do. In another it is the unsavory reputation of a leading member. A third is struggling with the problem of maintaining itself in a community in which the character of the population is rapidly changing for the worse. Some churches have a rare and most disheartening combination of all these with other difficulties thrown in for good measure. No man who is afraid of hard work and lots of it ought to be in the ministry. It is no place for those who seek to go to heaven on "flowery beds of ease." The quest for an easy place will be endless and unsuccessful. It is the business of the pastor to grapple with difficulties and overcome them.

While all this is true, the church has it in its power to minister largely to the content or dis-

content of its pastor. By its attitude and treatment it can tie the pastor with strongest cords, or create in his heart a longing to depart. It may discourage the pastor, without intending to in the least, by being careless when it ought to be careful. This carelessness frequently finds illustration in the conduct of the financial affairs of the church, and especially in the matter of the pastor's salary. Few Baptist ministers receive more than enough for a bare support. Few have any source of income besides their salary. When the salary goes unpaid for a month, two months, six months, what is the pastor to do? He may be able to borrow, but he ought not to be compelled to do this. He may be forced to propitiate his creditors, and then his standing in the community suffers. One thing is sure to happen: the pastor's heart grows heavy, his spirits depressed, his buoyancy and courage ebb, and he wonders if this treatment betokens a desire on the part of the church to "freeze him out." The church that fails to pay its pastor that which is due him, promptly and regularly, is employing one of the surest agencies for unsettling him.

Probably there is nothing in the experience of the Christian pastor more discouraging than the exhibition, on the part of his people, of indifference to the cause of Christ. Lack of a sense of responsibility, that most common and most dangerous of heresies, is at the root of most pastoral changes. A faithful few will be found in every church; men and women who support the prayer-meeting, are seen at the evening as well as the morning service, and can be depended upon at all times and in all places. But great numbers of church members seem to feel that having joined the church they have done their duty. They ride but never pull at the load. They expect to be saved, but seem to care not a bit if the rest of the world is lost. They expect to be fed but have no part in feeding others. Duty is a word unknown to their vocabulary and without illustration in their lives. It is this class that takes the heart out of the pastor, and leads him to wonder if he cannot find a church where a larger proportion of the members realize that discipleship means service.

"The Baptists of Los Angeles, Cal., are considering an aggressive forward movement for the proposed building of a magnificent tabernacle in the heart of the city. It is to be modeled something after the great tabernacle in Salt Lake City, with a seating capacity of 5,000 persons and an estimated cost of \$750,000, which includes also office buildings with 300 offices fronting on two streets, with the tabernacle between. This movement is fostered by the Temple church, of which Robert J. Burdette is now pastor, and has his earnest endorsement. Should it find consummation, as there is reason to believe it will, the Baptists of the Pacific coast will have outdone anything which the Baptists of the Middle West have yet thought of attempting."—*The Standard*.

The Infidel Master and the Faithful Servant: Obeying God

There was an infidel employer of labor who late one Saturday evening ordered all his men to come early next morning to unload a s. p. "I cannot work on the Lord's day," said one young man. "You know our rules," said the infidel master. "Yes," replied the Christian youth, "and I have my old mother to support, but I cannot work on the Lord's day." "Well, step up to the desk, and the cashier will settle with you." Three weeks passed and the young man tramped early and late in search of work, but found none. A Banker one day happened to mention to this employer that he was looking for a cashier. He immediately named the young man whom he had discharged, adding, "A man who could lose his place for his conscience sake will make a trust-worthy cashier." "The king's heart is in the Lord's hand, and he turneth it whithersoever He will." If you obey God first, He will look after you first, and send His help very likely by the hand of the man you disobeyed.