

# Messenger and Visitor

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—Rev. Dr. Lorimer, of Boston, is to lecture on Thursday evening of this week, in Brussels St. church; his subject "Changes and Chances, or Tides in the Affairs of Men." It is not every week that the people of St. John have an opportunity of hearing so distinguished a lecturer, and no doubt Dr. Lorimer will be greeted with a full house.

—Rev. Dr. Hovey has resigned the presidency of Newton Theological Seminary, which he has so long and ably filled. The institution will not, however, be deprived of Dr. Hovey's services as he will still retain his professorship. The English department of the Seminary has been abolished, but students who are not college graduates will be admitted provided they are sufficiently advanced in their studies to profit by the regular class instruction.

—Poor old Spain has indeed fallen upon evil times. If she dealt bitterly with others in the past, it is her turn to be bitterly dealt with now. Engaged in an unequal foreign war, which seems likely to strip her of the remnant of her colonial possessions and her prestige among the nations, she is threatened imminently also with internal revolution. There is no strong, intelligent public opinion in the nation to dictate and give effect to the policy of government, but the ignorance and instability of the populace favor the schemes of demagogues and political adventurers. The people, exasperated at the reverses and indignities which the nation is suffering and incapable of understanding the real situation, seem ready to rise against their rulers. There has been rioting in many places, and the outlook for the nation's internal as well as her external relations is far from cheerful.

—The spacious audience room of the Main St. church was packed on Sunday afternoon at a welcome service held to give expression to the good feeling of the congregation on the occasion of Pastor Gordon's return from the west. Mr. D. J. Purdy presided. A pleasing feature of the meeting was an abundance of excellent music. Addresses of welcome were presented from the church, the Sunday School and the B. Y. P. U., all of which were expressive of deep regard for the pastor and hearty appreciation of his ministry on behalf of the church. Mr. Gordon replied at some length, recognizing the hand of Providence in his visit west, since good had come to himself personally, to the church which had been well ministered to during his absence and a blessing had also rested upon his labors in Winnipeg. He gratefully recognized the indispensable value of the co-operation of his brethren in whatever work he had undertaken on behalf of the Main St. church and the interests for which it stood. Rev. Mr. Long, of the F. B. church, followed in a brief address. We are pleased to learn that Mr. Gordon's health has been much benefited by his visit to the west.

—Sixty years of service in Foreign Mission work would be, under any condition, a remarkable record, but it is especially so when one thinks of these three score years being spent (with the exception of brief furloughs) in so trying a climate as that of Burmah. On February 16th, in Rangoon, special services were held to mark the 60th anniversary of the arrival in Burmah of Rev. Durlin L. Brayton and Mrs. Elizabeth Lincoln Stevens, missionaries of the American Baptist Missionary Union. The occasion brought together a large concourse of Burmese and other native Christians, with many missionaries and other friends. In connection with an interesting programme of exercises, an address suitable to the occasion was delivered by Rev. E. W. Kelly. In the course of the address Mr. Kelly said, "The districts and towns of Meigui, Moumein and Rangoon have been the centres of your activities, but distant villages are replete with the

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monuments of your toils and prayers. Churches in town and district, yea and churches in heaven, for two generations have passed by, are witnesses to your labor. The Pwo-Karen Bible and Christian literature in the same language are an enduring monument of the founders of the Pwo-Karen Mission." Both these missionaries are past four score years, but, long as has been their term of service in the Foreign field, it has been exceeded in one instance—that of Mrs. Cephas Bennett, who died in September, 1891, sixty-one and two-third years from the time of her arrival in Burmah.

—The church life of the students attending a Christian institution of learning is a matter of importance. The relation between the students of such an institution and the local church is not always so sympathetic and helpful as could be desired. Those of the students who have made public profession of religion before coming to the institution do not as a rule, we believe, transfer their membership from the home church. Those who are converted during the time spent at the institution sometimes unite with the church there and sometimes with their home church. The consequence is that the students, as a body, and the church are not very closely united in sympathy and interest, to the serious loss of all. It is interesting to note an effort, in connection with Mount Holyoke Seminary and South Hadley Congregational church, to remedy this defect, through what is called "A Wayside Covenant," in accordance with which, on the first Sunday in March last, about 150 young women assented publicly to an agreement to make that church their church home, to participate in its ordinances and to promote its faith and fellowship. Similar relations with the local church have been entered into by students of other New England institutions. There would seem to be no reasonable objection to such an arrangement, and it should prove mutually and highly advantageous both to the students as a body and to the church.

—Alluding to Dr. Hovey's resignation, after forty-nine years given to Newton as teacher, and the completion of thirty years in the Presidency, the Watchman says: "It is an almost unexampled record of faithful and valuable service. Our denomination has had many other men who have been more in the public eye than he, but American Baptists have not produced anyone who has ranked above him in broad and careful scholarship, in strength of character and in that quality of personal influence which broadens and deepens as the years go on. In a great denomination he occupies a leading place. There are thousands of thoughtful men in the United States who have turned to him for direction and counsel when theological questions have been in debate, and they have always found him broad-minded and absolutely fair in his judgments, and unswervingly loyal to the authority of the Word of God. He has contributed more than any man of our generation to keep the theology of our churches in line with those evangelical convictions which lie at the basis of our denominational strength and growth. As an expounder of a strictly Biblical theology Dr. Hovey has had no rival. He has brought a judicial temper, a singular clarity of mental vision and a scholarship of unusual range and exactness to bear upon the interpretation of the Scriptures. It would be difficult to say whether Dr. Hovey has gained his position as an authority principally by his scholarship or by his character. Both have contributed to it. He is loved and trusted intellectually and morally as few men among us have been."

—In the old days, before the advent of the mowing machine, when strong-armed mowers with their scythes went forth to cut the hay upon the meadows, they were accustomed to spend some of their time and strength every morning grinding the scythes and putting them in perfect condition for the day's work. The man who was foolish enough to go at it with a dull scythe might get to his work a half hour earlier, but when night came it would be found that—other things being equal—the man who took time to grind his scythe had done more and better work, with more satisfaction and less fatigue, than the man who rushed to his work with his scythe unground. It paid the mower to spend some time at the grindstone. So also it pays the young man to take sufficient time to prepare for his life work. He who rushes into it without due preparation will

find himself at a disadvantage and will accomplish less in the end than he who takes time to prepare. There are plenty of botchers and blunderers in every calling. What the world needs in all spheres of labor is workmen who need not to be ashamed.

—A good many young men entering the ministry appear to fear that if they shall take time properly to prepare themselves for the work to which they believe themselves called, the grand opportunities of their lives will forever be lost. And so they hasten all unprepared into the most sacred of callings. That this is a mistake they are apt to discover when it is too late to apply the remedy. It is not so much the quantity of the work as the quality which tells, and besides, the man who takes time to prepare is likely to do more work, as well as to do it more effectively, than the man who will not take time for that purpose. For the former will generally be doing his best work at a time when the latter finds his services are no longer in demand and he is practically laid upon the shelf. We do not remember ever to have heard a man in middle life regret that in his youth he spent too much time and labor in preparation for his life work.

## His Coming.

From the passage with which the Bible lesson for the present week is connected and from other related passages, it is clear that it was no part of our Lord's purpose to make known the time of his final coming and the consummation of the age. There can be no mistaking his declaration that the time of the end is not within the knowledge of men or of angels, but is known to God alone. It is equally clear that our Lord desired his disciples to understand that his departure, now so near, was not a final withdrawing from the world. His great work of redemption was still incomplete, and sometime in the future he would appear to effect on behalf of his people a glorious consummation. He would have them strengthen themselves in the assurance of his spiritual presence and his unceasing interest on their behalf. He would have them live and labor always in an expectant attitude, looking for his return in the glory of his Father, to vindicate their faith and to compel the submission of his enemies.

What Jesus desires for his disciples is not that on some one particular day in the course of their lives they shall be prepared for a great event or a special emergency, but that their attitude and endeavor may be so constantly true and faithful that every day shall find them ready. They are not to be like students who, detesting study and caring only to "pass," seek to compass this end by squandering all their time except so much as is necessary to "cram" for examination day, but rather like those who, through love of knowledge and faithfulness to their teachers, are so constantly devoted to their studies that no day finds them unprepared. It is only by constant vigilance that the Christian can be prepared for the coming of his Lord. But we are not to be misled by our Lord's illustration in the lesson into supposing that the coming of the Lord should be to Christians a day of alarm and terror or in any way like the coming of a thief in the night, except that it comes unexpectedly. To the true and faithful servant the appearance of his Lord does not bring consternation but joy. As Paul writes to the Thessalonians, it is not for the children of God to be overtaken by the day of the Lord as by a thief in the night, "for ye are all sons of the light and sons of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober."

To be prepared for the coming of the Lord is to be prepared for all experiences with which we may meet. It is to be prepared to enter the doors which Providence may open to us for larger Christian service. For the faithful soldier receives promotion while the campaign is going on, and does not have to wait altogether for his reward until the final victory. An attitude of expectancy toward his Lord is also for the Christian the best preparation against the assaults of Satan. The man who lives in the day, with his face turned toward the light, will not easily be persuaded that it is his interest to make fellowship with the works of darkness.

The best preparation Christ's servants can make for his coming is to be devoting themselves faithfully to the duties he appoints them. We shall not

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