

## Messenger and Visitor

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—A proposal, begotten of a genuine Christian spirit, has been made by the Bishop of Lincoln, looking to the establishment of a memorial to General Gordon of Chinese and African fame, in order to show more adequately the nation's appreciation of that distinguished Christian soldier. The Bishop proposes the raising of a national fund with the object of establishing a Gordon hospital at the scene of the General's death, the institution to be open to every suffering creature in the district. It is said the proposal is receiving favorable discussion in the English press.

—The statistics of the Presbyterian church (North) in the United States for the year 1897 show an increase of four in the number of churches, making the total 7,635, and a gain of 14,965 in the number of communicants, making the total church membership 975,877, and of 9,702 in Sunday School membership, making the total 1,034,164. But in the number of infant baptisms there has been a decrease of 5,188 as compared with the preceding year. As there is probably no decrease in the number of births in Presbyterian families, the decrease in infant baptism appears significant.

—It may probably be quite a healthy instinct which leads us to think a good deal of our opinions and conclusions, for why, it may be asked, should one take the trouble to entertain opinions unless he thinks a good deal of them and considers that they are worthy the favorable consideration of other people as well as himself. But, as a correspondent elsewhere in a semi-humorous strain intimates, one may cultivate so high a regard for his own opinions as to leave himself very little time or strength to bestow upon those of other folks who perhaps value their opinions not less highly than he does his. A due regard for the rights and amenities of debate in deliberative bodies demands that every man shall look not only on his own opinions, but every man also on the opinions of others. It was probably a wise man who defined a bore to be "a fellow who persists in talking all the time when I want to be talking myself."

—For sometime past Mr. Joseph Cook has suffered from ill-health, incapacitating him for mental labor and preventing his voice being heard, as formerly, in the discussion of important issues in the religious, political and social spheres. It is interesting to note that Mr. Cook has broken his long silence in a letter to the editor of the British Weekly, written from his home in Ticonderoga, N. Y. Mr. Cook strongly advocates a limited international amity and a limited alliance among all English-speaking nations. He says that if the despotic governments of the world could combine to crush the free governments, England and America would no doubt join their fleets and armies in the support of Anglo-Saxon liberty and civilization. There ought to be a high international tribunal for the settlement of all great matters of common interest to advance nations. This great result the great battle between America and Spain seems likely to hasten.

—The aphorism that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian," evidently does not express the sentiments of Bishop Whittle in reference to the American red men. The bishop is quoted as saying: "The North American Indian is the noblest type of wild man in the world. He recognizes a Great Spirit, has an abiding faith in a future life, passionately loves his family and will lay down his life for his tribe. He is the soul of hospitality. If his bitterest enemy came to him he would be treated with as much courtesy as if he were a friend. The Indians are also a truthful race, unless dominated by drink. I have never known an Indian to tell me a lie. Last

year I heard an officer in the army say: 'I have lived twenty-one years with the most war-like Indians on this continent; half of the time I have been hunting them, and the other half they have been hunting me, and I have never known an Indian to tell me a lie.' And every officer in the army will endorse this. They are also very honest and have a dry humor. Many years ago I was holding a service near an Indian village camp. My things were scattered about in a lodge, and when I was going out I asked the chief if it was safe to leave them there while I went to the village to hold a service. 'Yes,' he said, 'perfectly safe. There is not a white man within a hundred miles!'"

—Some American newspapers are discussing the question whether the national flag should be raised over a State prison. The "Christian Advocate" holds that it is quite proper to fly the flag over every institution owned by the government of the country, and that there would be much more consistency in denying the use of the flag to the saloon keepers, for the saloon is an institution in which citizens are disqualified to serve their country in any capacity, often transforming them into law-breakers. This certainly is not overstating the truth concerning the evil influence of the saloon, but if the saloon exists under the sanction of the nation's law there would seem to be no reason why it should not be permitted to fly the national flag. The significant question is not whether it should be permitted to hoist the national flag over the criminal-making saloon, but whether that evil institution should find place under the flag which is regarded as the symbol of the nation's glory. It would be hard to name anything more disreputable which finds shelter under the American or the Canadian flag than the saloon and its products.

—That "when one member suffers all the members suffer with it," is true in a measure or bodies whose component parts are less intimately related than are the members of the human frame or those of the ideal Christian church. The reputation of the British Peerage is now suffering because the venality of a few of its members has been demonstrated by the revelations incidental to the proceedings of the Bankruptcy Court in the matter of Mr. E. Terah Hooley. The fact that some English lords and earls have yielded to the temptation to sell their influence for money no more proves the venality of the British Peerage as a body than the fact that, now and then, a professed Christian minister is revealed in his true colors as a scoundrel, proves that the Christian ministry as a class is not composed of good and honorable men. Such revelations simply illustrate the truth, known from ancient days, that greatness of soul is not conferred by a patent of nobility and that a wolf's nature is not changed by arraying him in sheep's clothing. Still some unreflecting persons will jump to the conclusion that the revelations of the Hooley case have destroyed all confidence in the integrity of British nobility, just as from the discovery that occasionally a minister's black coat is found to cover a scoundrel's back, some persons rush to the conclusion that Christian ministers as a class are unworthy of confidence.

—The Halifax Chronicle intimates that it will not submit to be lectured by anybody as to its right to sell its space to those who represent the liquor traffic, in order to serve their interests in opposing prohibition. We suppose that there is, indeed, a good deal of liberty enjoyed by the people and the newspapers of this free country. If a paper wishes to sell some or all of its columns to the liquor men in order that they may oppose prohibition or in other ways promote their interests, it is free to do so, and there is a sense in which it is nobody's business. If the people do not like that kind of a paper they are at liberty not to patronize it. Only we think that every newspaper should sail under its own colors whatever they are, it should be honest with its readers. If a paper's contributed articles or editorials are paid for by the liquor men of the country, with a view to promoting their own personal interests, that paper should be candid enough with its readers to inform them that such is the fact, and not leave them to come to the very natural conclusion (which conclusion it is evidently intended by the writers of the articles the readers should reach) that the articles in question are bona fide

contributions to the literary department of the paper, published because of their supposed interest and value to the public, and not because they are paid for at so many dollars per column. If a newspaper publishes matter paid for by those who are working in the interests of temperance, not for any merely personal end, but to serve the public good, there should be no objection to publishing that fact also. The men who have to pay for space in a newspaper for such a purpose are not likely to object to its being made known.

—The Hon. Arthur Balfour, leader of the government in the House of Commons, has recently completed fifty years of life. It is probably a surprise to many persons to learn that Mr. Balfour has reached so mature an age, as it is only within the past few years that he has come into prominence politically. He has come, however, to be recognized as a Christian statesman and a power for righteousness in Parliament. Alluding to Mr. Balfour's jubilee, the British Weekly says that "happily he may reasonably look forward to years of active life in which much may be accomplished, and he may be pardoned if he thinks of the past and of the present with pride. There is no sign of any decay in his great influence. He has besides a large culture and is a man of tolerance and breeding. More than all he is a Christian man, and his conduct as a politician shows that he tries to carry his Christianity into his life. No politician has held his place better. His reigning good sense, his gentle manners, his great and various ability, his steady refusal to stoop to meanness and malice, have made him an honor to the House of Commons and one of the pillars of the State." The British Weekly does not believe that Mr. Balfour's books will be long remembered, but says that "they show a singular sensitiveness to what is passing in the minds of thoughtful men, and there can be no doubt that his resolute adherence to Christianity has had much to do with that return to faith on the part of the higher minds of England, which is one of the most reassuring symptoms of these last years of the century."

—"Two important steps toward better understanding and co-operation among Christian denominations in the United States," says the Standard of Chicago, "have recently been taken. One was the beginning, at the National Congregational Council at Portland, Or., of a movement for a council of all Protestant denominations in Washington in 1900; looking towards some form of federation similar to that of the 'free churches' of Great Britain, not the surrendering in any degree of denominational independence but the co-operation of denominations for certain ends of common interest. The other event, of more definite and perhaps more practical nature, was a conference of representatives from the Foreign Mission boards of the Presbyterian, Northern and Southern Methodists, Northern Baptist and Friends denominations held in New York to consider the prospect of Mission work in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines when opportunity shall arise. Dr. S. W. Duncan, of our own union, was made chairman. It was learned that the Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists contemplate work in the Philippines, the Southern Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians and some others in Cuba, the Northern Methodists and the Southern Baptists in Puerto Rico. The conference did not end in talk. Resolutions were adopted requesting the various boards to appoint committees of two to represent them in the division of such fields as they desire to enter. This is a wise and admirable method of arranging for greater missionary comity in these new fields than has been possible, or at any rate easy, in the older fields."

### The Healing of Naaman.

The story of Naaman and his healing, which is the Bible lesson for the week, abounds in valuable instruction and suggestion for young and old. The narrative is characterized by movement and dramatic force. This Naaman, the Syrian, who appears so prominently in it, is a highly interesting character. Commander-in-chief of the Syrian army, he is a brave soldier, an able general, a man honored of the king and great in the eyes of the people. But great and honorable as Naaman is, he is not free from trouble. A terrible disease has fastened upon him and this affliction, like a gathering storm, is fast shutting out all the brightness from his life. What dignity or reputation can compensate a man for being a leper? But many a man who has a clean skin is more foully diseased than was Naaman. It

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