

THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

VOLUME I.

ST. JOHN, N. B., MARCH 14, 1899.

No. 7.

The Home Mission Journal.

A record of Missionary, Sunday-School and Colportage work. Published by the Committee of the Home Mission Board of New Brunswick.

The JOURNAL will be issued semi-monthly, beginning with January, 1899. Special numbers will be published for November and December of the present year.

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TERMS, - - - 50 Cents a Year.

A Secret of Power.

When it is said that a person, an institution, or a church has a high reputation, it is important to know the character of the constituency that entertains this opinion. To be well regarded by a few persons of discrimination and weight may signify much more than the plaudits of an unthinking multitude.

Ministers and churches need especially to bear this discrimination in mind. The size of a minister's congregation and the general esteem in which he is held in the community depend largely upon certain personal gifts and policies. Ministers are peculiarly open to the temptation to demagoguery, and to saying and doing the things which will elicit public attention and approval. That this temptation is so often resisted is the highest kind of tribute to the genuineness and sincerity of our ministers. But every little while there is evidence that a minister is making use of claptrap and *ad captandum* appeals. His name becomes widely known. He is spoken of as "bright," "smart," "up-to-date," "progressive," and it seems to himself and his friends that he is eminently successful in his work. But while the more superficial may entertain this opinion, the sober-minded, judicious men and women in his church and the community may profoundly regret the lowering of his ideals, and the general lessening of the weight of his influence. He succeeds in drawing large congregations, and the work of the church has a "boom," but he has less and less of that quality which leads weak and tempted human souls to regard him as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He is not the kind of man to whom one would go with confidence in the great crises of life. He is not one whose presence in the chamber of death brings the light and solace of the eternal world. And, depend upon it, it is this quality which this man is missing that makes up the secret of the strength and success of the ministry.

Entire churches are often misled in the same way. They aim to make their services and ministrations attractive and popular, and they

succeed. But whether or not they are succeeding as churches of Jesus Christ is largely determined by the moral weight they carry in the community, by the estimation in which they are held by thoughtful and spiritually minded people. There is no contradiction between the moral weight to which we allude and large popularity among all classes. But popularity without moral weight is an apple of Sodom. Such churches have a name to live and are dead.

There is an insidious temptation to cultivate piety for the sake of power. It is the old sin of Simon (Acts viii. 10), who sought the gift of the Holy Ghost for the sake of the material advantage it might bring. But the reality of this temptation should not blind our eyes to the fact that the genuine success of a minister or of a church is conditioned upon the qualities denoted by the word piety. Real success depends on the substantial elements of character, upon spiritual insight and sympathy, upon noble ideals, upon personal fellowship with the spirit and purpose of Christ. Everything else is "wood, hay, and stubble."—*The Watchman*.

Unsought Blessings.

Perhaps we do not always realize to ourselves with sufficient clearness that the work of Christ has brought benefit to humanity at large quite independent of the conscious relation of individuals to Him. It has put the race upon the plane of salvability; it has created a new set of correspondencies, influences, and opportunities.

Our Sunday school lesson for this week gives us a pertinent illustration of this fact. The man who was born blind did not know anything of Jesus. He appears to have been brought into contact with the Saviour by one of those eddies of circumstance that are as incalculable as the breaking of a wave. But once brought into relationship with Christ the physical calamity that clouded his life was removed, and the physical restoration proved the channel of the richest spiritual blessing. It was not this man's deliberate and settled choice of Christ that at first brought him into this circle of blessing. It would be nearer the truth to say that it was our Lord's choice of him. In Christ a great beneficent force entered into the currents of human activity, and this man, blind and ignorant as he was, received a blessing that filled his life as the surging ocean, upborne by the mighty swing of the tide, flows into the coves along the coast.

It is exceedingly wholesome for us to impress upon our thoughts this large truth. Sometimes

we are tempted to think that because we have "accepted Christ," we have done something that has such a distinct tinge of merit that all that Christ does for us is in a certain sense the reward of our action. We think of ourselves as an investor, who, by a small risk, has made a gigantic fortune, comes to think of himself. He has not earned it, to be sure, but it is the outcome of his courage, sagacity and enterprise. But our choice of Christ is comparatively a small thing in comparison with the Saviour's choice of us. When there was no eye to pity and no arm to save, His eye pitied and His arm saved. We little dream of the mercies that have come to us from Christ, long before we knew Him, and that, untraced to Him, are brightening and ennobling our experience.

The description of our Lord's self-revelation to this man whom He had been blessing is one of the most dramatic incidents in the New Testament. The question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" found him unsuspecting of his benefactor. Christ's answer, "Thou hast both seen Him"—through the sight He had just bestowed—"and He it is that talketh with thee," was more illuminating than any light that had dawned upon him from the sun. What a wealth of suggestion the Evangelist puts into the simple description of the action which was the man's answer to this revelation. "And he worshipped Him!" The physical blessing had accomplished its mission in leading him to the spiritual possession. The unknown Christ in becoming known had unsealed the eyes of his heart, and he knew Him, "whom to know is eternal life."—*The Watchman*.

The Discovery of Christ.

In the last half of the first chapter of the gospel by John we have a record of spiritual discoveries of who Jesus of Nazareth was. John the Baptist discovers the "Lamb of God" in the Nazarene listening to his preaching. The witness of the Baptist constrains Andrew and John the Evangelist to follow Jesus. Andrew goes forth from that interview to tell Simon and Philip: "We have found him." Philip repeats the same declaration to Nathanael, and the record closes with Nathanael's discovery of the Son of God.

In various ways, led by the testimony of those in whom they placed confidence, these men were led into personal relationship with Jesus; they came to look into His face, to hear His words, and to receive an impression of His character. The result was that His personality was revealed to their inner vision. Their spiritual experience resembled a traveller's sudden discovery of the vision that bursts upon