

# Messenger and Visitor.

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## Directions to Subscribers in Remitting their Subscriptions.

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### All our Pastors are Agents.

A NEW KIND OF CANVASS.—Not long since the evangelists of Christianism led their people in a systematic canvass of the city in order to find out the spiritual condition of each family, and to use the best measures to bring them under the influence of the means of grace. It is significant that the record of this fact has been copied so widely in the religious press of the country. It seems to show that a canvass of this kind is very unusual. There is a great amount of unostentatious Christian work done, in all our cities; but still, it is not true that there is very seldom any systematic work of this kind done? Is not this very strange? In all our elections of members for city council, for provincial or dominion legislatures, it only requires a small central committee to secure a thorough personal canvass of each elector. Here are men and women and children with souls to save—a Jesus of boundless greater importance than any in politics—and still all the hundreds and perhaps thousands of Christians among them never, perhaps, see it that there is a personal canvass for God and heaven. Neither is this lamentable state of things due altogether to want of deep interest in their souls' good. It is very largely because there is no plan in Christian work. The children of this world are verily wiser, in their generation, than the children of light. Shall we not imitate them, in this particular?

WATER CARE.—Hundreds of young converts have been added to our churches in the last few months. They are babes in Christ. Just as a babe depends upon the family to which it is given for care and nurture, which are to guard it from danger and disease, provide for its comfort and happiness, and develop it in health, strength and usefulness, so is it with these babes in Christ. They will become, for the most part, what the churches to which they have been added make them. The spiritual life which reigns in the churches will be the measure of theirs. If it is high and pure and devoted, it will stamp itself upon these new members. If it be of the opposite type, it will stamp itself upon them all the same. What responsibility and privilege are thus thrown upon all the older members of our churches! They not only determine what their own lives are to be; they also are shaping other lives with all their vast powers to influence to good or evil. How this should encourage and inspire all to do their best.

But the older members need to do more even than to help young converts to lives of purity and consecration by their example. There should be the most tender and solicitous watch care. Just as every symptom of weakness and disease in her child is looked for by the mother with anxious eye, and measures taken to grapple with the danger before it has become serious, so our Lord would have all his people watch over these precious new spiritual lives thrown upon their care. If there be the smallest symptom of carelessness, neglect of duty or privilege, or of sin, let there be loving eyes on the watch to note it, and let the kind word be spoken, the helpful hand be reached out. In their diffidence, which would forbid them to speak to older members about their struggles and Jesus, let the more experienced ones take the lead and enquire of them how it fares with them in the new lives they have begun. How little things to do. Yet how much this would do to keep these lambs of the fold from straying! Surely none will neglect the high privilege of doing this service to Christ and to young believers!

STUDENT SUPPORT.—We hope our students for the ministry may not feel unloved if their case is canvassed a good deal. We are aware there is a sensitive shrinking from public notice of this kind; but it must be borne sometimes. If it result in arousing a greater interest in their best welfare, we cannot afford to abstain from discussion of their case. They are the most precious possession of our denomination, and they must bear with the necessary consequence of the position they occupy.

We began this note to call special attention to the facts stated by Dr. Sawyer last week. Students for the ministry are burdened with debt in their struggles to fit them to do the best work for our churches. They are compelled to waste precious time in making the money needed to

complete their education. No adequate aid—we might almost say, no aid at all—is provided by us to help them meet the expense they incur to prepare them to serve our churches, or to save to the church the precious years of service which they might render while they are compelled to pursue secular callings to make money to pay their bills. While, on the other hand, brethren who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ should be willing to make any sacrifice to serve Christ and save the best, the question is: can we afford to bear the loss of years of labor in the ministry for the sake of the little contribution of means it would require to enable brethren to pursue their course to the end without break? In many cases, perhaps, in most cases—\$100 given to a needy and deserving student, will save a year of service in the work of the ministry to our churches. Is it well for us to allow all the precious fruitage of a year devoted to soul saving to be lost, because we do not give this amount to help them on in their studies. In any case, ought we to leave the students for the ministry to bear these burdens alone? Are there not some of our brethren and sisters whose hearts impel them to lead a helping hand here? Have our churches taken up a collection for this purpose? We are glad to know provision is made for theological students at McMaster Hall by which they can earn enough by mission work in vacation to pay their expenses; but our churches have not done their share in this aid. Apart from this, what have we done for the undergraduates at Acadia? Shall we not do more?

METHODIST STATISTICS.—According to the Methodist Year Book, [1886, the statistics of Methodism throughout the world are as follows:—Episcopal Methodists of various branches in the United States: 23,626 itinerant ministers, 32,875 local preachers, and 3,763,987 lay members. Non-Episcopal Methodist: 2,090 itinerant ministers, 1,763 local preachers, and 195,169 lay members. Methodists in Canada:—The Methodist Church—1,226 itinerant ministers, 1,755 local preachers, and 185,292 lay members. Methodists in Great Britain and Missions: 3,927 itinerant ministers, 36,675 local preachers, 864,717 lay members. Wesleyan Affiliated Congregations: 934 itinerant ministers, 4,997 local preachers, 133,396 lay members—a grand total throughout the world of 32,115 itinerant ministers, 77,879 local preachers, and 5,141,461 lay members.

BASE BALL VERSE SERMON.—Dr. Meredith, the leader of the great Saturday afternoon Bible class in Tremont Temple, Boston, made this hard hit the other day: "A man," he said, "will sit on the fence all Saturday afternoon to watch a base ball game, and then complain if the sermon, the next day, is more than thirty minutes long. Now I maintain that an hour and a half is the shortest possible time in which a dignified, reverential service can be conducted on a Sabbath morning."

And this is not the only case of this kind. Professing Christians who attend all the political caucuses, meetings, who can loiter away evening after evening at stores, etc., and who can follow up all the newest sensations, often can find no time to attend prayer meetings—sometimes they are too busy to keep up the practice of family prayer. But God knows all about it, and men do too, usually.

THE FOLLOWING is from a card written by Mrs. Archibald to Mrs. March, from Begwada, on the Buckingham Canal, India, dated Feb. 18th:

"We are this far on our return from the Jubilee. We hope to reach Ocananda on the 21st, and will take the first steamer for Bimalk. All are well, and the Jubilee was a first-class success. Thirty-three were present, and from first to last it did us good. We go back stronger in heart and as body for work. We have left Tubriada at the Ongole high school, but he may not remain long."

### Christian Liberality.

I hold a meeting at Clarence every Monday evening for the young people. Sometimes at this meeting, I have all the young people to engage in prayer; other times we have some testimonies for Christ; and we have also subjects that are very important, and that bear upon our conduct as Christians. One Monday evening, not long since, we had a good Bible-talk on "Christian Liberality." On this important duty, one of our young people read an excellent paper, considering his age. I thought, that, if I were to copy the paper and send it to you, it would be the means of stimulating others to develop their young people's talents and teach them the Christian's duty in their young days. If you see fit to publish it, it is at your service.

DAVID PRICE.

[THE PAPER.]

There are, perhaps, but few questions at the present time upon which so much has been written, as the question of "Christian Giving." It is a question which every

Christian should settle for himself. As we take up the Bible, to look at this subject, we find that this part of Christian duty was taught and practiced by those who lived under the Old Dispensation, though carried out in a different way to what it is under the present. The first instance we have recorded is that of Abram upon his return from the battle, when Melchizedec, came out to meet him. Abram gave him the tenth of all the spoils. However, we have no account of giving from this time to the erection of the tabernacle. At that time, the Lord commanded Moses to speak unto the children of Israel, saying: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly, with his heart, ye shall take my offering." Ex. 25:12. Similar expressions may also be found in Ex. 36:5; Deut. 15:7. Referring to Ex. 36:5, we find the spirit in which their liberality was to be exercised. They acted promptly when commanded to bring their gifts for the adornment of the tabernacle. But in all their giving, there was the spirit of willingness which the Lord had enjoined upon them. He did not wish it to be given grudgingly, but willingly. But I hear some say, "This was according to the Old Dispensation; we are not living under that rule now; we live under the Gospel Dispensation." True. But the call to exercise liberality is just as loud under the present. We must not altogether lose sight of the ancient mode of giving. Let us for a short time turn our attention to the subject as taught in the New Testament. Paul, in 2 Cor., gives expression to the same idea that is presented under the law, when commending the Macedonians to their liberality, that there must be willingness to make the gift acceptable to God. He says: "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Notice the requirements of this verse: 1. The willing mind. 2. The gift—it is accepted according to what a man hath. Neither of these requirements is hard. If we have not the requirements is hard. If we have not the willing mind, we know where to go and ask for it. But as regards the second, a great many are inclined to think thus: "If I could give as I would like to, I would gladly do so," forgetting that the little things help to make the large ones. The same thought is treated upon in 2 Cor. 9, that engaged his mind in chapter 8.

"For this I say: He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." No farmer would sow half the seed he ought to in Spring and then expect to reap a full harvest in the Autumn. No more can a Christian enjoy the full blessings of grace, who gives of his time and means sparingly and grudgingly to support the cause of Christ. In the next verse he says: "Every man as he purposed in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly or of necessity." Why did the Apostle wish them to feel thus? The question is easily answered: "For God loveth a cheerful giver." Every Christian should keep before himself in all his giving, God's great gift to man, remembering, that "though He was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye though His poverty might be made rich." In view of all this, have we not a sufficient reason for having a willing mind to give? In the last verse quoted, the Apostle does not make the matter of giving compulsory, but according as he purposed. Not the result of a transient emotion; but of a definite, clearly settled purpose to honor God with his substance. He gives them directions for systematic giving. And in the last clause of the verse he says: "For God loveth a cheerful giver." God has something to say about giving. He cares about the amount and spirit, not because He needs anything, but because He would have us so like himself. God is a great giver, "a cheerful giver," and He loves those who imitate Him. A cheerful giver will give largely and often. And the cheerful giver is no loser; for as he gives out, the Lord pours in; enriches him to all bountifulness; and makes him a blessing. But how should the cheerful giver give? He should give

(1) Systematically.  
(2) According to a settled purpose.  
(3) He should give, because it is his duty as a Christian, to give frequently and liberally.

And beholding, "the unspeakable gift," which God has given unto us, should arouse us to nobler acts of benevolence. This is the gift that includes all others, (Rom. 8:32.) How small are our gifts when compared with this wonderful gift of God! Hence, gratitude should lead us to be liberal in our giving. The system of "weekly offering" is not a modern idea. It is only a retro- to Apostolic practice, (1 Cor. 16:2.) Therefore, you see that this mode of giving which is being introduced to our churches is not a scheme of man, but has the Bible for its foundation. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." In the matter of salvation, we only receive, for "nothing in our hands we bring." But

in the grace of giving, we come up to a higher standard, standing beside our Lord, whence we dispense His bounty to the world. Hence, brethren, let us cast aside all miserliness, and give according to our ability.

### Notes from a Sermon by Dr. Higgins.

When Peter said, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you," he surely thought of time being given to the study of the Gospel as one of the deepest and grandest of all the sciences, time, thought, research, given to the doctrines of the Bible, efforts put forth bearing some proportion to the momentous consequences involved in these doctrines. There is no other subject, that demands such earnest, anxious thought as this. All scientific and philosophical questions sink into insignificance compared with the spiritual ones.

Have you, friends, grappled with these problems? Have you found out your own whereabouts? Have you so far considered the questions, What is God? What is man? What is time? What is eternity? What is life? What is death? What is redemption? What is atonement, regeneration, immortality, eternal life? as to feel that you understand your own relationship to all these things? Without some disposal of the great questions involved in these doctrines you cannot have a reasonable hope. And if you have not a hope for which you can give a reason you have reason to fear that it is a worthless hope.

But unlike many of the other questions with which we have to deal in this life these Bible doctrines must be dealt with subjectively as well as objectively. The question is not what these truths are in themselves but what they are to us as individuals. It is not whether I accept the doctrine of regeneration but whether I am regenerate. Not, "do you believe in the historical Christ?" but "have you received the life-giving Christ into your hearts?" "Do you believe in the Holy Ghost?" is not the question, but "have you received the gift of the Holy Ghost?" Not "what you believe about redemption," but "have you been redeemed?"

Some people may be cherishing hopes because they have an orthodox creed. "I believe the Bible, I believe in God and Christ, I believe in the resurrection of the dead and in life everlasting."

All very well, friends, as far as it goes, and yet it stands recorded: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

Permit me at this late date to fulfill an old promise. I have been endeavoring during recent days to square accounts in the realm of communications so that the letters being once written I might have, so far as correspondence is concerned, no more consciousness of sins. In a short letter I cannot attempt to say something about everything or everything about something of Baptist affairs in Western Ontario, Toronto Baptist College, which is yours and ours, needs no words of mine to extend acquaintance with it among your readers, say correspondents there can give fuller information than any other. The Foreign Mission work of the East and the West is so closely joined that it is not strangers to each other. Our Home Mission Societies have no organic relations to call them together, and no meeting ground in their fields of labor, and therefore may not be so familiar with each other's work. May I then write something regarding the present state of Home Missions in Western Ontario? The work is rapidly enlarging, and at present there are over 100 churches under the care of the Home Mission Society, besides the many stations at which churches are not yet organized. About 12 new churches have been planted during the past year, most of them in large towns and growing centres of population. At the same time there are churches passing out year by year from under the care of the Society into self-sustaining strength. The Woman's Home Mission Society is vigorously grappling with the needs of that large tract of country stretching from the Muskoka region to Port Arthur. In this field several churches have been organized recently and in it two or three chapels will be built during the following summer.

Bro. Grafton is doing good work in the supervision of the whole

field cultivated, and I think we could not be satisfied now in the work without a superintendent of missions. Besides Bro. Grant there are two evangelists, brethren Geo. Thorn and W. S. Barker, engaged by the Society to help pastors of mission churches in seasons of special work and to lay hold of new districts where good opportunities present themselves. Cheering word has come to hand to say from both these brethren. They are laboring in different fields and God's blessing is resting richly upon their work.

Next week's issue of the *Canadian Baptist* is to be a member specially devoted, I may say exclusively devoted, to Home Missions. With it to be sent forth a map of the mission field embraced in the bounds of the Western Convention. The location of all the Baptist churches included is given in the map, and the mission churches are distinguished from the self-sustaining ones by red underlining. I will not trespass further on your space with words about Home Missions this time, as a book has come to hand to-day which I want to write a few lines about ere I close this letter, which already is getting too lengthy. The book calls vividly to mind the old Woodstock days, when you were my pastor and I a student in the College, and when another life stood near with strong and kindly help to both of us, that life the life of Dr. Fye. The memoir of Dr. Fye, written by him who was his worst associate, Prof. J. K. Wells, and written as none other than he could write it, reached me to-day. It was hard to write this letter after the book came. I could not resist the impulse, I dipped into it and read, and after reading I found it still more difficult to turn away my thought and write about something else. I rejoice that Dr. Fye's memoir is written and is written with all that faultless taste, that richness of knowledge, that fair and faithful judgment, that loving admiration of the life which so preeminently qualified the author to do this service to the cause of truth, and especially to the Baptists of Canada, a service by which the Baptist denomination is placed in lasting indebtedness to him to whom the work was a labor of love. The book contains an excellent engraving of Dr. Fye, and well on to 500 pages of the most interesting biography, and is offered to the public at the most unobtrusively low price of one dollar. It is not easy for me to find a stopping place on this subject, but here, for the present, I will commend a halt.

### Dakota Correspondence.

I begin this letter by a note about that always opportune topic, the weather. Our winter here seems well sign gone. The general remark here is, "Well it has been a pretty good winter, on the whole." As usual, it has been a pretty long winter, but much of it has been moderate, and some of it really sunny and enjoyable; and very few severe storms have we had throughout its entire length; very few Lord's days have passed, but our country members have been able to be with us at worship in our little city church, and we have had a very encouraging attendance both at the church services and in the Sunday-school through the whole season. Our little band has had several additions to its members since new year by letter, experience, and baptism, although up to the present we have held no special services. Within the last month the baptistry was had in requisition on three different occasions, and the probability is that before long again it will be needed. There seems to be a quiet but deep spirit of inquiry prevailing in reference to the "One thing needful," not only in our city congregation, but also at the country stations, where the pastor of the Grafton holds forth the word of life on Lord's day and week days as opportunity affords. It is interesting and encouraging to see, sleigh-loads of people on a week day afternoon coming three or four miles through the cold to hear the "old, old story" told, and very gratifying indeed to observe the wrap attention given to the truth spoken on these occasions.

Some fifteen miles from Grafton, at an outstation, connected with the newly formed church at the town of Park River, a gracious work of grace has taken place in connection with the labors of our excellent and zealous brother Peter Grant, whose name was mentioned some time ago, in one of your correspondent's letters. Out of a small audience meeting in a private house some seventeen persons have been brought to see themselves as lost sinners, and to apprehend Christ as their Saviour. Some of these have followed Christ in baptism, others are soon to follow, and several whose early training directed in another way are searching for duty, and, at least, some of them, will ere long, "asleep and be baptized." In Grafton the little Baptist church has made a very praiseworthy effort, during the winter, to rid themselves of a little debt, which has clinging to them, for the two years, since they built, and also to finish and beautify

their house of worship, to pay the debt of about \$150, and to complete their place of worship they have raised about \$500; and now they rejoice in a tasteful and comfortable house, and also very convenient for all the church work; and the best of it is that the expense in its fitting-up is all provided for, by the hearty liberality of friends, both in the church and outside of it, and that without any of the crooked and doubtful appliances often had recourse to in this and other countries, by sheer straight giving, in response to a straightforward asking.

Though but a young church, and yet receiving aid from the Home Mission treasury, we are successfully cultivating the Apostolic grace of giving. The Home Mission, Foreign Mission, Publication Society, and the Sunday school, have from us a regular annual contribution, and other worthy causes as they may present themselves to us have a kindly consideration, both from the church and Sabbath school, and I am happy to observe that both church and Sabbath school are developing in this essential grace, recognizing the fact that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth," etc. To-night we begin a series of "Gospel meetings," with the help of our excellent Bro. G. H. Davies, of Hamilton. Of the success of the undertaking, I may have something to say in my next to your columns.

Our venerable Bro. Dr. John Crawford and his little church, about fourteen miles to the north of us, are bravely working away, struggling to remove a miserable church debt of some three or four hundred left saddling the church when the house of worship was built, some three years ago. The good Dr., while wielding a treasured pen, as in days of yore in Canada, is gaining to himself golden opinions, from the thoughtful and orthodox, by his good, clear evangelical expositions of Gospel truth in his own pulpit and elsewhere. Although approaching now close to the "three score and ten," he has more mental spright and freshness of thought than nine-tenths of his brethren on the coveted side of the fifty years. Indeed, neither mentally nor physically does he seem to grow old, and still the teaching and miserably unjust teaching he suffers from the unfortunate Hastings College enterprise, he is still full of happy Christian cheerfulness. In fact, he seems to be one of those happily constituted men who age by the calendar, but in themselves always remain young.

### Our New Members.

From every direction we have had large accessions to the membership of our churches. While the work has been quiet, there is reason to believe that it has brought an unusual number into church relations. These ought to be a great addition to the power of the churches for good and to help gain others. The moment a man believes in Christ he ought to begin work for him.

Of the multitudes gathered to the churches it may be feared that the majority will prove of no more use in winning souls to Christ, and promoting the cause, than those who have preceded them in church membership. Here and there one will "love much" and be impelled to self-denying effort, but the most will sink to the level of those who come out to the help of the Lord and are apparently indifferent as to the spiritual state of their fellow men. The amount of unexercised power for good is one of the most terrible facts in the larger part of those who have joined our churches will serve only to swell it on occasion for fearful apprehension.