

"Ye have done it unto me." Is it not worth many times the effort it would cost us to open our home and heart to the stranger, to hear those blessed words? If we really love our Master we can have no higher reward than this, the consciousness that we have pleased the Lord Jesus and have actually ministered unto Him. Let us then keep our eyes open for the strangers. Be on the alert in the Lord's work. Satan's messengers are tireless in their vigilance. Oh, surely, when so much is at stake, we can be as watchful as they. So much depends on the beginning. The young man who has just now entered our town has a fresh and clean sheet spread out before him. No old associations of perhaps an undesirable kind to hamper him, no old haunts to tempt him, no prejudices to contend with, he has his own record to make, his own circle of acquaintances to form. He will not long remain so. In a few days he will begin to make his friends; in a few weeks his course, while in our town, will be determined on. Then let the servants of God be ready. Greet him with a smile and a pleasant word. Take an interest in him and let him see that you are in sympathy with him. Introduce him to your friends and surround him by an atmosphere of friendly, genial, Christian warmth and brightness. Get him into the church, and, if possible, get him interested in some branch of Christian work. Give him a place in the Young People's Society. Make him feel that he is needed there, and that he is a part of it. Invite him to your homes for a cozy little fireside talk, or in company with a few friends for an evening's amusement. To sum it all up, make his Christian circle of acquaintances so attractive that the world will hold no charms for him. That is what the Lord meant us to do when He said, "I will make you fishers of men."

God has given us those beautiful homes of ours. Did He mean, I wonder, that we should selfishly shut ourselves up in them, keeping all that is pleasant and attractive there for ourselves and our own, while the young man or young woman away from home and a stranger in our town, pines for one little glimpse of the dear old home life. We may never be able to realize what a social evening in our homes now and then, spent in the light-hearted innocent amusement of youth may mean, to the tried, tempted soul of that young man yonder, who would perhaps have spent that very night in a far more questionable way, had it not been for that kindly invitation. We may never fully comprehend the heavy weight of homesick misery and loneliness lifted off the heart of that young girl, nor with what a different view of life she takes up the duties of the morrow, after but one evening of happy social intercourse in a Christian home.

We may not know, but God does. He knows the needs of all His children, and just how they can be helped. All he requires of us is that we be willing to do His bidding. If we, realizing the great need for God's people to bestir themselves on behalf of the stranger, go to Him for help and direction in this matter, we may be sure that we shall be guided into right ways of working. No hard and fast rules can be made that will suit all cases. Each one must be given special, individual, prayerful consideration. We must wait before the Lord, until our hearts are aflame with love for God and all around us, and then go forth in His name, deeming it a joy rather than a duty to do our little all for Him. With such an army of devoted Christian workers, alert, active, consecrated, guarding the pathway Satan will spread his snare in vain, and many young feet will be turned into the paths of pleasantness and peace.

Waterloo, Ont.

By an unfortunate typographical error in the advertisement of William Briggs' Fall Publications in our last issue, the price of Thomson's "Old Man Savarin" was made to appear at \$2.00 instead of \$1.00. We are glad to know this book is finding a popular sale. No better collection of Canadian short stories has yet been put in print.

### TO THE MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

DEAR BRETHREN,—When the Home Mission Committee met in Toronto last spring they were face to face with a deficit of \$10,000 on the year's work. To equalize revenue and expenditure it was proposed to pay only 75 cents in the dollar on all grants then due missionaries. A special appeal and a generous response saved the Church from the humiliation of repudiating part of its obligations. But a special appeal cannot be made this year; and hence it is hoped that care may be taken in time in setting the facts before the people so that the wants of the work may be adequately met in the usual way. The response given to the appeal last spring is the best proof that the Church is ready to give when the needs are known; please inform your people.

What is the work and who are the men for whom this appeal is made? Home Missions is simply an attempt to give the gospel to the scattered settlers in the newer parts of our country. Into the Canadian North-west settlers are coming from Eastern Canada, from Britain and the continent of Europe, and we are trying to provide them and their families with the means of grace. In the interests of religion and morals this is necessary, but it is no less necessary in the interests of patriotism. These foreigners we ought to Canadianize and make loyal to our institutions. In such work the public school is important, but the church not less so. This is so evident that I shall not attempt to discuss it.

And the men who represent the Church in this work are in a marked degree faithful and successful. No church is better served by its servants than the Presbyterian Church. The missionaries are from all parts of the country and all the colleges of the Church. They are men of scholarship and preaching power. In the large missionary Presbyteries Minnedosa, Regina, Calgary and Kamloops, out of 55 ministers, 38 are graduates in arts or theology. That Western men are acceptable as preachers is proved by the number of them who have been called to the United States, and that even such centres in Ontario as Lindsay and Toronto covet and call.

What are their salaries? The unmarried ordained missionary is promised \$700, and the married \$750 and a manse. But part of this salary is promised by the people and part by the Home Mission Committee. The part promised by the people is not guaranteed by the Home Mission Committee. If the people can pay their part, well; if not, the missionary must lose it. In the past the missionary could depend on the part of the salary promised by the Home Mission Committee; it would appear that that, too, is now an uncertain quantity. How can men meet honest obligations where such uncertainty obtains? The losses sustained by missionaries in the past, and the disappointment and discouragement incident to such losses, led the Synod, at its late meeting, to appoint a committee to inquire into the whole matter of arrears, and if possible suggest a remedy for existing evils.

Permit me to give a few cases, and while reading the figures remember that the salary of a catechist was \$600 and of an ordained missionary, if married, \$750. Two catechists, efficient men, received last year, respectively, \$445 and \$363 without manse and both have families. One ordained missionary with a family got from all sources \$705, (and provided his own house), another \$468, another \$607, another \$542, another, \$570, another \$572, and another \$420. Shall this continue?

A single ordained missionary, an M.A., who stood eleventh, taking first class honors in the exit examination of the Free Church of Scotland, received last year \$296, and had to keep a horse! The previous year the figure was lower; and yet no one has

ever heard him complain. When attending the Synod in Winnipeg this month, he was asked to preach in one of our city churches, and requested, at the close, to tell of his work. So well pleased were the congregation with the man and his address that, spontaneously, they voted him a sum of money to assist the work of his mission.

We want on the frontier men of high character, of spirituality, of prudence, aptness to teach, and we shall not get them, or keep them, unless we sustain them better. We have lost a number of able men already, we shall lose more unless conditions are changed, will you not help to save us from this drain?

Many of us have good salaries and comfortable surroundings. Looking over the column of arrears of stipend in the minutes of the Assembly in the Eastern part of the Church one is struck with the trifling amounts due, although men were conscientious enough to report \$18, \$19, \$20 and even \$61. Happy the ministers that are in such a case! What a contrast is the West! Brethren, look at the list in Dr. Torrance's report. Now these poorly paid men are our brethren; they are engaged in fields where few men are willing to labor; we knew them at college and seminary to be men of sterling worth and valued their friendship; a sense of duty keeps them where they are, shall we not loyally support them? Were you to visit their missions, their homes, or their wives and their children then this letter would be an impertinence.

But what is the West to do for itself this year? you ask. As much as it can. Bear in mind, however, that, large as our crop is, much of it is damaged, and, although good food, must be sold at a very low price, 20 to 30 cents a bushel and even less. No. 1 hard was selling last week at 36 to 39 cents per bushel and the market declining.

In Assiniboia and Alberta, frost has rendered much of the wheat unsaleable and settlers will find it hard to maintain themselves. These statements are made to save disappointment next spring.

At this season of the year missionary contributions are solicited and missionary moneys divided. Will my brethren please place the facts before their people?

Brethren, an apology is perhaps due you for this letter but necessity is laid on me from what I have seen and from the importance of the interests at stake. Pardon, but help.

Yours fraternally,

J. ROBERTSON.

Winnipeg, Man., Nov. 30th, 1895.

MADAME NELLIE MELBA.

It now transpires that the great soprano is a Presbyterian. While in Chicago recently she was the star at a concert given in aid of the Presbyterian Hospital of that city. Afterwards a representative of *The Interior* asked her what he should tell his readers about the diva who sang so gloriously and with such golden profit for their charity.

"Tell them," she said with eager interest, "that I am proud to say I am a Presbyterian, a Scotch Presbyterian, too, and that my people were such before me, on my father's side. Tell them I was delighted to sing for their great hospital, their lovely charity, and that I am proud, very proud, of the magnificent audience that faced me when I sang." Madame Melba's present concert tour has been one of triumph succeeding triumph, and everywhere the glorious nightingale has received the tumults of applause, not as a prima donna surfeited with much praise, but rather as a shy, glad girl to whose heart the plaudits of her hearers went as straight and as movingly each time as if that time were the first. Probably no great singer since Jenny Lind has been as simple in personality, and as winning, as is Nellie Melba. It is pleasant to think that the citizens of Toronto are again to enjoy the privilege of hearing this remarkable cantatrice, Manager Suckling, of the Massey Hall, having, with characteristic enterprise, secured her services for a concert on next Monday evening.

## Teacher and Scholar.

BY REV. W. A. J. MARTIN, TORONTO.

Dec. 22nd 1895. } THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. { Luke ii. 8-20.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Luke ii. 10.

MEMORY VERSES.—10-12.

CATECHISM.—Q. 33-36.

HOME READINGS.—M. Is. ix. 1-7. Tu, Micah v. 1-7. W. Lu. ii. 8-20. Th. John i. 1-14. F. Is. xi. 1-9. S. Mat. ii. 1-10. Su. Lu. ii. 25-35.

At this season of the year the thoughts of every body in Christian lands are turning towards Christmas. Now no one needs to be told that Christmas day is intended to mark the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ, the day when God's eternal son who became man was born into the world. Not that anybody knows for sure the exact date of Jesus' birth, God has kept us in ignorance of the exact date of all the incidents of Jesus' career on earth, except that of His death. Probably this is just that we may not make so much of all the other dates as to forget that the chief thing in the career of Jesus was His death on Calvary. However, it is proper that we should think of the birth of our Saviour, very especially once during the year, and everything seems to point to December as the month in which that birth took place. There never was a birth in which so many were interested. Four thousands years before it took place God had given a promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. That promise in some form underlies and gives its character to the whole Old Testament scriptures. The angels were deeply interested in the fulfilment of God's promise, and there were many faithful souls in Israel, and even in other lands who were looking for the birth of a deliverer. To certain of these faithful ones came the angels proclaiming the glad tidings, and these in turn, as soon as they had seen for themselves, joined in the proclamation. Therefore, let us consider our lesson under the heads, "Christ Heralded by Angels," and "Christ Heralded by Men."

I. Christ Heralded by Angels.—The story of that Christmas night is one of the most familiar of all stories. Who has not pictured the scene? Shepherds on Bethlehem plains watching over their flocks, perhaps counting their lot a hard one, perhaps whiling away the tedious night with conversation about Israel's hope. Suddenly a light bright and dazzling, the usual emblem of God's glory, and one fitted best to express that glory to man's limited comprehension; and in the midst of the light a heavenly visitant! No wonder the shepherds were afraid at so unusual a sight. But their fears were all removed and joy filled their hearts when they heard the message of their visitor, and all the more so when they heard the multitude of heavenly ones swelling out the Christmas chorus which sets forth what shall finally be the state of things when 'the reign of Messiah is perfected, and what ought to be the state of things whenever the name of Christ is known and loved now. The angels were filled with joy, not because of any personal interest of theirs which was secured through the coming of a Saviour for man, but because of their delight in whatever goes to show forth the glory of God. It is through redeemed souls that the manifold wisdom of God is made known unto the principalities and princes in heavenly places; and in the birth of this little babe at Bethlehem the angels saw the beginning of a world-wide ingathering to the glory of the Father and the honor of His name. The angels evidently expected that their tidings were going to have some effect on their hearers, for they pointed out how the babe could be recognized, clearly assuming that the shepherds would go to see for themselves whether these things were so. Perhaps ministers and Sabbath school teachers would accomplish much more if they only had confidence that their words will be received by their hearers or classes, that is, if they had confidence that they were instruments through whom God is making known His truth. Let us all seek to cultivate this idea by yielding ourselves more fully to God, and depending more upon His Holy Spirit.

II. Christ Heralded by Men.—The angels' confidence in the Word of God as fitted to move the hearts of the shepherds was not misplaced. No sooner had the heavenly visitants withdrawn from sight, than they said to each other, "Let us now go and see." There was no doubt in their minds as to the truth of what the Lord had made known to them. Not "Let us go and see if it is true," but "Let us go and see this thing which is come to pass." They came and saw and forthwith went out to tell others, both what they had seen and the things which the angels had communicated to them concerning this babe. Some when they heard wondered, just as many were amazed at the gracious words of Christ Himself. If, however, their hearing went no further than to occasion wonder, it did them no good. If we are merely filled with wonder and admiration at the things of Christ it will benefit us very little that we live in a land where Christ's birthday is marked. Unless we come and see for ourselves, and accept this Saviour as ours, all our knowledge of Him will be in vain. Mary—mother-like—pondered these things in her heart. She did not understand all that was said, but she was willing to await God's time to make things plain. Then the shepherds went back to their work glorifying and praising God. Henceforth that night was a delightful memory to them, and never did they forget the message of glad tidings received by them, nor yet did they cease to witness in their glorying to the truth concerning Christ.