

Messenger and Visitor.

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A PAPER printed in Tamil and Telugu, published by the missionaries in Madras, India, has a circulation of 100,000 copies. H. Gratton Guinness has thirty colored missionaries for Africa. In the opening and Christianising of Africa greater progress has been made in the last five years than in the ninety-five years preceding. The Baptists have in Brazil five churches, 240 members and fifteen missionaries. The Congregationalists have fifty churches in Japan. Rev. F. E. Clark, the leading light and president of the Society of Christian Endeavor, in order to correct the supposition that these societies are not closely related to the local church, says "that one of the fundamental principles of the movement is that no Christian Endeavor Society owes allegiance to any other organization except its own church." It is an open question whether the slave trade or the trade in rum and fire-arms is doing the most to degrade Africa. It is evident that the degradation caused by the trade in liquors is doing much to provide the conditions under which the slave trade flourishes. And yet the British Anti-Slavery Society is found objecting to the consideration of the question of the restriction of the trade in fire-arms and spirits, in the Brussels Conference. Anti-slavery sentiments have long been popular in England, but the anti-prohibition of the liquor traffic is also popular. In Africa these anti are antagonists—so that the good intended by the one is destroyed by the other. It may be feared that even leading members of the Anti-Slavery societies of both England and America are liquor-dealers. This is an illustration of the utter blindness of those in the liquor business to the real interests of civilization and Christianity. In Texas, the Baptists are in numbers and influence reported to be far ahead of every other denomination. Besides numerous smaller schools, they have two colleges with 800 students. The church membership is about 300,000. They have enjoyed great spiritual refreshing during the past year.

We have received this week a very kind letter, full of good cheer to us, from our aged brother, the Rev. D. Crandall. He recites with great pleasure the progress of our Baptist principles and practices in the by-gone days in these Provinces, and is most thoroughly interested in all the issues of the present hour. At eventide may it be light with all these dear old fathers in our ministry.

SELF-DENIAL.—Judging from what is written on this subject, we conclude that much misapprehension obtains as to the real teachings of the word of the Lord as to self-denial. And yet nothing can be more plainly put than is this: "The grace of God . . . teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world." The self-denial here enjoined forbids our indulgence in anything mean or scabby, or in any practice particularly harmful to us; while it favors the proper use of every good thing, and the complete gratification of every noble desire. A rectified common sense demands just this self-denial as this. The Heavenly Father's love dictates it. Had we no sinful, soul-destroying desires or passions no self-denial would be enjoined on the followers of Christ.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SEAMAN'S FRIEND SOCIETY OF HALIFAX has been laid upon our table. It includes the work done by the various departments of the Society for the seven months from May 31st to Dec. 31st, 1889, as a change in the date of the annual meeting had been made from June to January. By the report of the manager, Mr. James S. Potter, we learn that some 325 seamen and man-of-war sailors have been lodged; 160 nights lodgings had been furnished the destitute. Quite an amount of money has been deposited for safe keeping. The missionary of the Society reports: Weekly visits to the wharves and vessels, distribution of tracts and illustrated papers, religious services held on shipboard at the Home and Bethel; the sick in General Hospital have been visited; outgoing vessels have been furnished with reading matter. The physician reports but few cases of sickness, and freedom from all forms of contagious or infectious diseases. The ladies report the work of the various committees done by them. The sick have been visited; the families of seamen have shared in their good offices; socials for the seamen have been held; the proceeds of entertainments have swelled the funds of the institution and afforded pleasant occasions for the seamen. This Society deserves the hearty support of all Christian people.

The Central Baptist does well to quote Dr. Strong's deliverance upon higher education, to which he evidently refers in these remarks, and to comment so wisely upon them. The principle here referred to has been guiding and giving prosperity to the Baptists of these provinces in their educational work for more than half a century. The high Christian character and work of the professors and teachers of our academies, seminary and college is prophetic of future good. "Dr. Josiah Strong recently said: 'It is well to remember that in moral as in mental training the teacher is more than text-book or method. . . . No school when true religion is exemplified in the character and life of the teacher, can be wholly godless.' And it is just this principle which makes us insist with all our might upon the maintenance of our denominational schools and upon the selection of Christian teachers for these schools. The support of a Christian school is not simply aiding in a mental development of the young but is designed to educate the whole man or woman, intellectually and spiritually."

The Southern Baptists, and we believe the Southern Christians generally, have never paid the slightest attention to that Protestant Lent, the week of prayer. They do not recognize the authority of the Evangelical Alliance, and they do not believe in set days and seasons. Moreover they do not propose to allow any set of men to dictate to them when they shall pray nor for what they shall pray. Whatever others may think, they believe the Holy Spirit guides the prayers of His people, and should be left to do so without human dictation as to when He shall move them to pray for certain things. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." They believe, too, any effort to get large numbers everywhere to pray at one time for the same thing, teaches a very dangerous error in regard to God. Numbers have no influence with Him; He is not ruled by majorities. He is no Baal to be heard because four hundred are praying at once. Two or three who are agreed together can prevail with Him where thousands who are praying not because the Spirit guided them, but because the appointed week has come, will fail. Nothing can be worse than to give men wrong impressions of God.

So says the Western Recorder, and we think it well for Northern Christians, as well as Southern, to see to it that none of the religious observances of the church are misleading; especially as to the will and character of Jehovah.

Forming and Dissolving the Pastoral Relation.

NO. II.
The sacredness of this relationship makes the dissolution of it a very grave matter. If there is any meaning in the expression, "in which or over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops or overseers," then it is manifest that there should be much prayer for divine guidance before a single step, looking towards separation, is taken by church or pastor. If it not because this guidance is not sought that so much harm comes to the churches and very much reproach to the ministry in connection with this matter? We have the conviction that if the principles already stated were observed when the union was entered into, there would be fewer dissolutions than there now are. But under any condition of things there will be more or less changes. How then shall they be brought about?

The following are some of the principles to which, in our opinion, there should be due regard in dissolving this relationship: 1. The absence of anything like underhanded or crooked dealing. We greatly fear that there are things done in this connection that are not in agreement with this principle. A member desires a change of pastors. Instead of waiting till it can be brought about in a proper manner he resorts to the mean, cruel practice of starving his minister out. He does not consider that in withholding his offering, he is not robbing man, but God. Others a little more honorable, keep back all tokens of appreciation and sympathy, such as they formerly manifested, and so make the pastor feel that his resignation is desired. I knew of one case, where a member is said to have induced his pastor to tender his resignation by telling him, that if he did so he would establish himself more firmly in the church, and then, when it was presented, set himself to canvass for it to be accepted. Wrong reasons for not continuing the pastor are sometimes brought forward. Several years ago I attended the meeting of a church, at which the question of continuing the pastor was considered. After a very full expression of a desire for a change, a resolution was brought forward to the effect that the pastor be informed, that as they could not make up, as much salary as he ought to have, they did not think that it was right to

ask him to remain with them. When this motion was about to be put to the meeting, I interferred and urged them to be honest, and not make the pastor think that it was inability to raise the salary when it was not. Sometimes a few of the members get together in some irregularly called business meeting, and a vote is passed declaring the usefulness of the pastor at an end. These and all kindred courses are unworthy of a church of Jesus Christ. There is a way in agreement with the above principle; here it is: Every church holds, or ought to hold, its annual meeting as the year's ground. Let the pastor be present at the opening of the meeting, present his report of work done during the year, and the condition of the church. Then have the treasurer's report presented and passed upon, and the work of the year closed up. After this is done let the pastor retire. This will give the church an opportunity to talk over any matter in relation to the pastor, whether it be the increasing of his salary or giving him notice of their desire for a change. As it is understood that such business can be transacted at that meeting it will always be in order to take it up. Being done in this way, neither the pastor nor any other member will have any ground to complain that the thing was done "in a corner."

On the part of the pastor, also, all should be open and above board. Unless it is right for a church to be looking about for a pastor before informing the present incumbent of their wish for a change, it cannot be right for a pastor to be looking about for a church before he has resigned. Any pastor would, it seems to me, feel wounded and grieved, not to say insulted, if he discovered that his church was pursuing such a course. How then must the churches feel under similar circumstances? That such a practice is doing much to lessen the esteem in which the Christian ministry is held I know too well.

If, after much prayerful consideration, a pastor is satisfied that he should leave his field of labor, the first step to be taken is the tendering of his resignation, giving himself and the church sufficient time to make arrangements for the future. But no pastor should resign until he intends to make his resignation final. To resign with the view of testing the feeling of the church, or of pressing the church to a certain course of action, is a great mistake. If there is any latent objection the resignation is almost sure to bring it forward, and very likely create others, so that if the resignation is not accepted, the pastor's hold upon the church is greatly loosened. There is, moreover, the danger that the resignation may become a "bone" over which the church shall wrangle (we have known of such cases) or the church may take the pastor at his word and accept the resignation, much to his disappointment and chagrin. I once heard a minister remark, with considerable bitterness, concerning the church he was about leaving, "they are a nice people, they let a minister do as he wants to."

In regard to reasons for leaving a church I see no occasion for giving them, either to the church or to the public. If any thing is given let it be the real reason. The suspicion is abroad that many of the reasons (?) given will not bear examination.

2. The absence of all harshness and all unnecessary wounding of feelings. If it becomes necessary to inform the pastor that a dissolution is desired, let it be done in the kindest manner possible. It will be hard enough at the best. An official note is too cold and cruel. Have two of the wisest and kindest of the brethren appointed to wait on the pastor, and let them do their work before the gossip can anticipate them. The pastor on his part should receive the intimation in all meekness, and regard it as an intimation from God that he has work for him on another field. He should carefully refrain from unkind remarks or "plain" sermons. It is too late now for such sermons, they will do no good and will confirm the church in the opinion that the course they have taken is the right one, even when they have proceeded in an unkind and unchristian manner. This is a time when a minister needs much of the spirit of the Master. If, on the other hand, the pastor makes the first move towards separation, let him do it in all kindness. His people probably love him more than he thinks, and the church, on her part, must not, if he acts the straightforward part, censure him, much less accuse or even suspect him of unworthy motives. If they have to give up a man they greatly desire to keep, let them remember that the "field is the world," and the Master may need him elsewhere. A minister of Jesus Christ and a church of Jesus Christ that have been united in this sacred relation ought not to separate in

anger and bitterness and evil speaking. Each should forget, as far as possible, the failings of the other, and remember the virtues.

3. Supreme regard to the welfare of Christ's cause.

This is a very broad principle, but we shall only attempt a few illustrations. It should be remembered that the minister exists for the church, not the church for the minister. A "good minister" must not seek his own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's. A man finds himself pastor of a church, in which there are divisions, lack of discipline, illiberality and kindred evils. What shall he do? Resign and leave them? How then is the condition of the church to be improved? Was it ever known that a pastorless church made great advancement on the road to improvement? Would it not be for the welfare of the cause of Christ, for him to remain at his post and by patient labor and wise leadership bring the church out of her troubles and up to the place a church should occupy. Such a work is worthy of the labor of a lifetime, infinitely above what can be accomplished by flitting from church to church. There is much of just such work that needs to be done in these provinces, work that will redound greatly to the welfare of the cause of Christ, at home and abroad. But it can only be done by the men that will remain at their posts and endure hardness as good soldiers.

Again, a minister is very pleasantly situated, but he learns that the question of his remaining has been considered at the annual meeting, and that a large minority do not desire it. What shall he do in such a case? The above principle will, if honestly applied, help him to a right decision. Not what is best for him but what is most for the welfare of the Redeemer's cause. And for his comfort and support let him remember that what is best for the "cause" will, in the end, be best for him.

Or a minister, without any seeking on his part, receives a call to a field affording much greater opportunities for usefulness than the one he now occupies. If in the opinion of those who know him best, he can do the work that needs to be done, then the interests of the Master's kingdom may require him to leave his present charge, and his people should cheerfully give him up and send him forth with "a God speed you."

But enough. Let closing let me say that I have felt impressed to write on this subject. I have put things plainly, but I hope kindly. My hope and prayer is that by calling attention to this matter good may be done to the cause we love.

A. CORROOK.
Halifax, March 7.

An Ancient Work on Missions.

M. B. SHAW.

It was extant before Carey's day. No doubt Carey drew from its fascinating records much of the inspiration that fired his heart, and all the breadth of enterprise that made him the father of modern missions. The authorship of the work is popularly ascribed to a highly cultured physician named Luke, though it is supposed that a certain fearless, self-denying, fully-consecrated missionary named Paul had a hand in its compilation. I refer to the little treatise, which I fear does not receive the attention of Christians its merit demands, called the "Acts of the Apostles." It was written, as near as can be conjectured, in the year 63 A. D., and has fallen in its unique and glorious purpose only in so far as Christians have failed to lay to heart the soul-stirring facts narrated therein. It is the record of the beginnings, and the model work, of organized Christian effort. It opens with the account of fervent, united prayer from all the disciples, pleading the promises given them by their recently ascended Lord. (1:4, 5, 13, 14.) After filling up the broken number of the Apostles, they, both men and women, continued in earnest prayer and eager expectancy, when suddenly down came the promised blessing in rich abundance. (2:1-4.) Peter began to preach at once, and it was a wonderful day; thousands converted; thousands baptized; thousands more smitten with conviction, for we read that, day by day, people were being added to the newly organized church from all parts of Jerusalem. (2:46, 47.) This was ideal home church work and home mission work—the foundation of all Christian enterprises. As the result of a little unpleasantness with the Jewish authorities, brought about by an impulsive benevolent act of Peter (3:2-8), and the firmness of Peter and John in standing by convictions of duty (4:8-12), a model prayer meeting was established (4:24-31).

That model cannot be followed too closely. First the disciples related their

experiences (ver. 23). Then quoted the promises (ver. 25-28). Then they made direct appeal to God for exactly what they wanted (vers. 29, 30). The whole service seems to have been filled with the spirit of praise, everyone "took part;" everyone received a blessing.

Deacons were appointed. Men of faith, filled with Holy Spirit, and one at least was thoroughly posted in Scripture, and knew how to apply it fearlessly to men's hearts (5:5, 6; 7:1). The only answer those self-righteous sinners in Jerusalem could make, to such preaching as Stephen's, was to kill the preacher, and this they did with scant ceremony (7:57-60). But "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." Philip went down into Samaria, and those mongrel Hebrews gladly received the Word (8:4-6). An Ethiopian met him and accepting the full gospel message, went on rejoicing to take, no doubt, the blessed truth to his benighted country (8:35-39). Peter went down to Lydda, and soon was rejoicing in a great revival in all the plain of Sharon (9:32-35). He also visited Joppa, and his wonderful works of healing, and faithful preaching, greatly strengthened the faith of the Christians already there, and added largely to their numbers (9:36-43). Race distinctions were for all time broken down through a revelation to Peter, and afterwards through the conversion of the Gentile family in Caesarea (10:9-15, 45-48).

All of this activity had been confined to the borders of Palestine; it was essentially home mission work. A man was needed to lead off in taking the gospel to distant lands. God took Saul, a graduate of the State University, (22:3), a free-born Roman citizen, (22:29), a skilled Greek scholar, (17:22-29), and with a violent opposer of Christianity, and first converting him, then gave him a three days' training in the most remarkable theological school of the ages (9:9; 1 Cor. 15:8; 2 Cor. 12:1-7), and gave him a commission "to bear His name in presence both of Gentiles and of kings, and of Israel's sons also," (9:15). Just at this time a wonderful work of good was in progress at Antioch, (11:19-21). Barnabas was sent by the home church to look after it, and bringing Paul over from Tarsus, the two carried on a mission there for a whole year, (11:22-26). Here the disciples were first called Christians. How the work spread after that! Money was needed; it was systematically and freely offered (11:29); and the disciples, according as each one of them, something for ministry. The apostles went forth by twos and threes, preaching, as they found hearers, the glorious news, that "God, according to promise, had brought to Israel a Saviour—Jesus," and "that, through this One—unto all men—remission of sins was declared; and from all things from which it was not possible in Moses' law to be justified, in this One every one that has faith is being justified;" (13:23, 38, 39). The first fruits of the foreign mission was one Sergius Paul, a man in authority at Paphos, in Cyprus. Afterwards, in a short space of time, multitudes received the joyful message. At Antioch in Pisidia the Jews got angry because they perceived that Gentiles were as eligible heirs of grace as they, and stirred up violent opposition, (13:14, 43-45, 47-51), and did not cease to follow up Paul with malicious and inveterate hatred until they saw him in chains on his way to Rome, and that the tribunal of Caesar. Throughout the whole of Asia Minor "this way" was preached, and thousands were persuaded to enter and walk therein. Over in Macedonia, Achaia, Phrygia, Galatia, and in all the countries and islands about the Mediterranean we find the tireless apostles of the tireless Jesus, constraining men to receive the gospel of the Son of God. Churches were formed, regular services established, and every Christian became an enthusiastic missionary in permeating the whole world with this wonderful doctrine.

In the meantime, denominational schools were being carried on; young men and middle-aged men were being instructed in all the knowledge necessary to apostleship, by women "professors" as well as men "professors" (18:24-26; 17:10, 11, 12). Such, in a general way, are the main features of this ancient book. Space will not admit of even a brief biography of Paul, whose life-work is dwelt upon with great exactness. We turn to Roman history to learn how all this missionary zeal and endeavor influenced the world. About 50 years after the death of Paul, an official report was made to the Roman Emperor Trajan to the effect, that "many persons of every rank in all the land were accused of Christianity. Nor has the contagion of this superstition per-

vaded cities only, but the villages and open country." Justin Martyr, A. D. 108, says, "There is not a nation, Greek or barbarian, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father and Creator in the name of the crucified Jesus." Tertullian wrote in the 2nd century: "Though of yesterday, we have filled every sphere of life—the exchange, the camp, the populace, the palace, the forum." The secret of such an extension of Christianity in the face of stripes, imprisonment, and death, is found in the fact alone that all these Christians interpreted literally their Saviour's departing message—they believed that He intended just what He said: "Go into all the world, proclaim ye the joyful message to all the creation."

Would to God that command of Jesus could find the hearts of all to-day, who say that they have received the adoption of sons through the blood of the Covenant!

Feb. 25th, 1890.

John Wesley and the Baptism of Infants.

In the stirring discussion now being had on the revision of the Confession of Faith in the Presbyterian church, some interesting and instructive facts in church history as to the doctrines and practices of the past are brought to light. A correspondent in the New York Evangelist, says this of John Calvin and John Wesley:

"In those times of so much criticism concerning the doctrines taught in our Confession of Faith, prominence has been given to the belief of the Presbyterian church with regard to infants. "In your issue of Feb. 20 is a quotation by Dr. Van Dyke from Calvin's works, which shows he believed in the eternal perdition of some dying in infancy. The same was the belief of John Wesley, as any one can see by reading his 'Treatise on Baptism,' which formerly was included in the volume of Doctrinal Tracts published by the Methodist Episcopal church. It was first published in a bound volume of Tracts by T. Mason and G. Lane, for the Methodist Episcopal church, in 1832, but disappeared in the volume of 1861. Mr. Wesley maintained the following propositions:

"First, That Adam's sin doomed him to eternal misery. "Second, That the whole race of mankind are obnoxious both to the guilt and punishment of Adam's transgression, and that infants are included in that guilt and condemnation. Mr. Wesley says: 'We are all born under the guilt of Adam's sin, and deserve eternal misery on that account.' "Third, That since the infant is doomed to perdition, the only way to make it a child of God, is by baptism. He says:

"Our church prays in the baptismal office that the person to be baptized may be washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and being delivered from God's wrath, receive remission of sins, and enjoy the everlasting benediction of His heavenly washing. . . . It is certain by God's Word that children who are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are saved. "Fourth, Mr. Wesley taught that infants could not be saved unless they were baptized. His words are:

"If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism, seeing in the ordinary way they cannot be saved unless this be washed away by baptism." He adds: "It has been already proved that this original stain cleaves to every child of man, and that hereby they are children of wrath, and liable to eternal damnation. It is true the Second Adam has found a remedy for this disease, which came upon all by the offence of the first. But the benefit of this is to be received through the means which He hath appointed; through baptism in particular, which is the ordinary means He hath appointed for that purpose, and to which God hath tied us, though He may not have tied Himself."

"This language is plain enough to show that as to the condition of infants at death, the follower of John Wesley has no advantage over the follower of that other John called Calvin. Both partook of a common belief of their day. I do not more believe Wesley was right than I do that Calvin was right. But how is it that through all this period we have heard so much of 'horrid Calvinism,' and absolutely nothing of 'horrid Wesleyanism'? Election, predestination, and reprobation belong also to both, though many think them the awful doctrines of John of Geneva, and of no one else. "In view of Mr. Wesley's firm adherence to the prevalent belief in sacramental grace, it should not surprise us to read what Southey says in his Life of Wesley: "I do not believe that an instance of equal blindness or dexterity, whichever it may be thought, can be found in all the other parts of Wesley's works."