

Messenger and Visitor.

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—MAKE IT GENERAL.—"The penurious deacon," says the *Cumberland Presbyterian*, "is a stumbling-block in a church, so far as finances are concerned." Yes, and as far as everything else is concerned. If he is close-fisted he may offer earnest exhortations and prayers, but they will be but little regarded by men and less by God. But the deacon is not the only one of whom this is true. It is still worse if the pastor never gives to the cause of Christ, or gives but little, while it is scarcely less true of all the members of our churches.

—WELL SPOKEN.—The *New York Observer*, a Presbyterian paper, referring to obstacles to union discussed in the *Presbyterian Review*, some time since, has the following frank and manly utterances. After expressing "much confidence in the future of a denomination which holds to the Bible, and the Bible only, as its rule of faith and practice," it adds:

"We are glad to know that there are millions of Baptists in the world who live and die and live forever on the foundation of the Scriptures. Their fidelity to what they receive as the congregation of immersion, is a pledge of their fidelity to those other teachings in regard to man and Christ and God which constitute the gospel that is to be preached to every man that cometh into the world. We are sorry not to find Baptists at our common tables, but when they stay away because they believe that the Word of God requires them to be immersed, we have nothing but admiration and respect for their conscientious adherence, at any cost, to what they believe to be the Word of God. Holding the great doctrinal truths of the New Testament in the same spirit, it is not strange that the Baptists have wrought with great power as preachers, missionaries and martyrs."

Now, if all our Peco-baptist brethren could appreciate our position as does the *Observer*, it would go farther toward the most real kind of unity—that of mutual respect and Christian love—than anything else. It is surprising the cool way in which many who admit that we have the scholarship of the world on our side as to baptism, and who themselves adhere to the principle of strict communion, will lecture and scold us because we do not adopt their substitute for the baptism of Christ and his apostles, and refuse to violate their own principle that baptism should precede the Lord's Supper. They are apparently oblivious of the fact that our consciences are bound by what we esteem to be the truth, and that they should convince us of error before they, as true men and loyal to God and themselves, should ever consent for us to change our practices. Follow the example of the *Observer*, brethren.

—A FAULT.—The *Religious Herald* often publishes notes which must act as a sharp pruning knife upon the actions of brethren. The following is a specimen:

A Baptist preacher at a District Association spoke at some length and with emphasis of the great services he had rendered the Baptists. Soon after, an old brother, alluding to the claims that the preacher had made, said: "He has done a great deal, and of course we should all honor him for it, but he would be far more honored if he said less of what he has done." Another grey-headed old man said: "While he was speaking of what he had done, I was thinking how John A. Broadus would look doing the same thing. Think of him and the congregation of his great services and ringing the changes upon them." Then the company laughed and some one said: "Well, Dr. Broadus has as much right to do it as any one else."

If we have done true service our acts will in the end speak for us. If our services are not appreciated it will not help matters to tell of our doings or what we have done.

—A DIFFERENCE.—The *Presbyterian Witness* remarks: "A Baptist church is to be erected at Moser River, East Halifax. Is not one church sufficient for so small a locality? Yes, brother, one church is enough if the cue to be built is not our church."

—HELD OVER.—We have received a communication from Bro. E. J. Grant on the proposed Union with the F. C. Baptists. He has kindly consented that it be held in hand until we return from a short vacation, as it seems desirable that the editor be at his post when a discussion is started, lest it get beyond control.

—CHANGED HIS VIEW.—Rev. B. M. Casright, one of the most prominent of the Seventh Day Adventists, has become convinced that the observance of the seventh instead of the first day of the week as the Sabbath is an error, and has joined the Baptists. He has published his reasons. He says:—

"I gave up the observance of the seventh day because I became fully convinced that the evidence was not sufficient to justify its observance, and the blessing of God did not go with the keeping of it. Like thousands of others, when I embraced the seventh day Sabbath I thought the argument was all on one side, so plain that one hour's reading would settle it, so clear that no man could fail to see its truth and its honesty. I felt willing to meet the world in its defence. The only marvel to me was that everybody

did not see and embrace it. But after keeping it twenty-eight years; after having persuaded more than a thousand others to keep it; after having read my Bible through, verse by verse, more than twenty times; after having scrutinized, to the very best of my ability, every text, line and word in the whole Bible having the remotest bearing upon the Sabbath question; after having looked up all these; both in the original and in many translations; after having searched in lexicons, concordances, commentaries and dictionaries; after having read armfuls of books on both sides of the question; after having read every line in all the early church fathers upon this point; after having written several works in favor of the seventh day, which were satisfactory to my brethren; after having debated the question for more than a dozen times; after seeing the fruits of keeping it; and after weighing all the evidence in the fear of God and of the judgment, I am fully settled in my own mind and conscience that the evidence is against the keeping of the seventh. Now, if others think that they know better about this question than I do, and that they can settle it in a day, as I once did, I shall not quarrel with them, but pity their credulity.

—INFIDELITY IN GREAT BRITAIN.—There is a "National secular society," in Great Britain. "Secular" is another word for infidel. This society has about one hundred organized branches. The statistics of this society shows that the new members received have fallen off regularly each year since 1853. The statistics are: 1853, 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900. This society no doubt represents the strength of infidelity in Great Britain, and its comparative decline represents a corresponding decline in infidelity.

—THE CONVERTED BRAHMIN.—The letter of Bro. Sandford, in another column, will be read with the deepest interest. It shows how hard is the struggle to break away from heathenism as in the terrible traumas of caste. We shall all await the conclusion of the struggle with keen expectation. Yet this is but one instance of thousands taking place. What a power the gospel has to break men away from such iron bound systems. Incidents of the kind given us by Bro. S. do more to touch our deepest sympathies and draw forth concern for the perishing in darkened lands, than very much of general statement. The specific is always more telling than the general. Who that reads Bro. Sandford's account will not send up a prayer that grace may be given the young brother who has shown such resolve in following Jesus?

—ONE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.—McMaster Hall has won another feather for its cap. The American Baptists have established a fellowship, to be completed by students from all Baptist colleges in America. This is the first year it has been offered. The subject on which the fellowship was given is church history. Bro. McKay, one of the students at McMaster, has won it. The faculty of McMaster in general and Dr. Newman, the Professor in Church History in particular, are to be congratulated.

To the Afflicted.
"How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out."
"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."
"Hidden things belong unto the Lord."
"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."
"He doeth all things well."

The above quotations may be useful to the children of affliction, some of whom are just now wading through the deep waters. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and they are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye. The most valuable gem was polished the most, though once in a rough state. Christians have been and still are greatly puzzled at the strange dispensations of Providence. Some sunsets are beclouded, but the sun is there. "Now we see through a glass darkly," but later, face to face. When the mists have rolled away, then the silver lined clouds, now so black and lowering, will appear, and the Sun of Righteousness shine forth in His beauty and strength. To all such children of sorrow would we say, "simply trust him," and "carry everything to God in prayer," and "the way will appear plain."

"Steps up to heaven,
All that the Father sends
In mercy given."
"Behind a crowning Providence
He hides a smiling face," &c.
"Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
Therefore, child of sorrow, cheer up and all will be well with thee, for "He doeth all things well," and "his care to humbly submit our wills to his Divine will."

—Put self last. When others are suffering, drop a word of sympathy. Tell of your own pain rather than that of others. Hide your own little troubles, but watch to help others in theirs.

Aunt Jerusha's Conversion.

MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"A telegram with a terrifying message for some one," said Minnie Hazelton, looking from the sitting-room window. "A blue-coated messenger boy is running up the street, dodging the rain-drops. Dear me! he is coming here. Please open the door, Julie; I have such a dread of a telegram. They almost always bring bad news."

This was bad news, indeed; a summons for Mrs. Hazelton to go at once to the sick bed of her only brother. She read it aloud, looked at the girl, and, hesitating to catch a glimpse of her own pallid face in a mirror, at once left the room.

"She can't go," said Minnie. "She has no money to pay her fare, and Uncle Will is too poor to send it to her. She ought to go. Aunt Jerusha is here to stay with us, so there is no good reason why she should not go. I am afraid she will be very much grieved about it. What can we do to comfort her?"

At that moment, their mother returned with her usual bright face. "Minnie," she said, "I wish you and Henry would get my trunk from the store-room and set it in the hall by my door ready to be packed, and Julie you may take a few necessary stitches in this black dress."

"But, mother, what are you going to do?"

"I am going to try to do what is right."

"How are we to know what is right?" asked Julie.

"My experience teaches me, my child, that the right impulse comes uppermost, the questionings and the doubts follow."

"Then, mother, your first impulse was to go at once to poor Uncle Will?"

"Certainly, my child; and then the question of expediency and of money came up."

"Of course; and what are you to do about it?"

"Go on and make my preparations, nothing doubting that if the Lord wants me to go he will provide the way."

"That is just a walking in the dark," said great Aunt Jerusha, impatiently, and her rocking-chair creaked and her knitting-needles clicked the protestations that she bit her lips to keep from speaking.

"What is faith but a walking in the dark?" asked her niece, cheerfully. These stockings are to be darned whether I go or stay. Will you do them for me?"

"Of course," replied the old lady, heartily. "It is good to have a common interest on a rainy morning; it keeps one's spirits up. But you are just as likely to have money provided for a journey to the moon to-morrow as you are to have a miracle performed to provide money for a journey to Boston. All the same I want you to go to your brother; I think you ought to go, and wish you had the means. I shall be sorry to have your faith receive such a shock as is inevitable in this case. It is bad for you and for the girls."

"You say that because you are not a Christian, Aunt Jerusha. If the way is not provided for mother to go, we shall all be satisfied that the Lord did not need her there, and we are just leaving it with the Lord."

"And I suppose you expect to find a gold piece in a fish's mouth, or something equally remarkable," said Aunt Jerusha, as the fisherman's horn was heard. "The age of miracles is past, and you will find it so."

"Old Silas Clapp is riding on the fish cart," she said, presently, peering from the window. "I will go to the door, you are all busy, and I was brought up on Cape Cod; I can't be cheated in fish."

Be sure to look in all their mouths," laughed Minnie. Aunt Jerusha did not reply, but presently she put back her head to say:

"Mr. Clapp says Mrs. Hazelton promised him a coat."

So I did," said that lady. "Your father's old dress-napkin, Minnie. It is in the garret; fetch it, please, or I would better go for it myself; I shall find it more readily."

"Oh, not this morning, mamma," cried the girls.

"But this is one of the Lord's calls, and how fortunate that it came while I was still at home."

Aunt Jerusha sniffed. "You are following one of his calls already," she said, "and as their can be nothing analogous between the two, let me tell the man we are all particularly engaged, and send him back to his home."

"We are not called upon to follow the Lord's analogies; our part is to obey what we hear his voice. My first impulse was to get the coat. The question came later. Give the poor man a coat by the cooking-stove, Minnie, I will be back presently," and the sweet-faced woman dropped her work and hurried away to the garret.

She was gone for some time, so long, indeed, that her daughter had made Mr. Clapp a cup of tea and it with a light lunch on a little stand by his side.

"What is it, mamma?" she exclaimed,

at once, as her mother appeared from the gloom of the back-stair with the coat over her arm. Her face fairly shone, and there were traces of tears on her still fresh cheeks.

"The Lord has shown his hand to me many times when I followed his teachings," she said, "but never quite so plainly as to-day. I found the coat that has been packed away in the cedar-wood chest ever since my husband's death, and as I shook it out, he thought me to look in the pockets. There was one rip in the side of one of the small pockets, and running my hand through the hole into the lining and wadding, I found this roll of bank-notes."

Aunt Jerusha arose from her chair and came forward. The girls thought she seemed to be two or three inches taller than her usual remarkable height.

"Sarah Hazelton," she said, "I stand rebuked before you all. I had the money for your journey in my pocket, and was chuckling over the triumph I should have when I gave it, and proved to you that it was no miracle, and that the Lord had nothing to do with it. He has performed a miracle in spite of me. I have been a doubter for 60 years; but I never will doubt him again."

"They all tried to keep me at home because it rained, and I was poorly," put in the old man; "but I had to come; I felt as though something was leading me right this way; and I caught a ride and I've got my cup of tea and my coat, and you've got your pay for being good to an old man, for Jesus' sake, for I know that is why you are always so good to me."

Aunt Jerusha's hard heart was melted at last, and she became a faithful Christian, who for the remainder of her appointed days walked by faith, and from out her old wilderness of doubt and unbelief drew many lessons that were helpful in giving light to the unconverted.—*Nat. Baptist.*

Impelled to Victory.

One of the most brilliant battles of the war was the storming of Missionary Ridge. General Fullerton tells the story of it in the *May Century*. The battle was fought and won without orders. Certainly no military officer having a regard for the lives of his men would have sent them on so desperate an errand. General Bragg felt sure enough on the heights, which were cresting with cannon. It was late in the afternoon of Nov. 25th, 1863. There had been an artillery duel all day long. An order was given to move forward and take the rifle pits to the foot of the ridge. The signal-guns were fired, and 20,000 men leaped forward carrying all before them. The rifle-pits were taken. Pausing a few moments for breath, as if by common impulse, the men began to climb the mountain. Not a commanding officer gave the word. The soldiers who carried the muskets took things into their own hands, the officers followed, then led. A wave of wondrous enthusiasm swept through the hosts. As they went fighting their way, the bitter hail of musket-balls rained in their faces. Shells burst by hundreds among their torn and bleeding ranks, but they went. There was no thought of protecting the flanks, although the enemy's lines stretched beyond on either side. There was no thought of reserves or of support. Grant saw the movement, he comprehended the danger of disastrous repulse. Turning to Gen. Thomas who stood beside him, he said:

"Thomas, who ordered those men up that ridge?"

"I don't know," said Thomas. "I did not."

"Granger, did you order them up?"

"No," said Granger. "I did not. They started without orders."

Grand ordered Fullerton to ride over and ask Wood and Sheridan if they ordered the troops up the ridge. They both said "No, they are going up without orders."

So mounting from rock to rock those veteran legions reached the summit, drove the enemy from their guns, and the battle was won. Then followed a wonderful scene. Some shouted; some cried for joy; some danced in wild delight, and now the general hurrah. Gen. Granger rode along the lines, and playfully said, "Boys, you are going to be court-martialed, every one of you. You took this ridge without orders. You were ordered to take the works at the foot of the mountain, and you have taken those on top. You have disobeyed orders, and you know you ought to be court-martialed."

Some day, some glorious day, the soldiers of Christ will sweep over the world in obedience to such a divine impulse. A mighty wave of enthusiasm will sweep over the sacramental host. "It can be done! It can be done!" will suddenly become the creed of the Church, and the thousandfold she will have the "swing of conquest" and the war of the ages, of which all other wars are only battles, will be over forever, and the nations will learn war no more, and then

"Some sweet bird of the South
Will build in every cannon's mouth,
Till the only sound from its rusty throat
Will be a wren's or a bluebird's note,
And then 'The earth shall be full of the
knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover
the sea.'—*Sel.*

Pleading Prayer.

BY REV. C. H. SPRAGDON.

"Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope," Lord, I have been hoping on thy word, and have acted upon that hope; I believe the word to be true, and I have pledged the truth of it. That is a good pleading. A man has given me a bill—not a transaction I ever had anything to do with; but suppose such a thing. Suppose I go and discount it, I say "My friend, you must honor that bill, because I have received the cash for it. Do not fail to meet it." It is as if we said to our God, "Lord, thou hast caused me to hope upon this promise of thine. I have been raising present comfort upon the credit of it. I felt so sure that it would be fulfilled that I have taken it into the market, and I have been living upon its proceeds by hoping upon it." See how David went and discounted the promissory note; he encouraged himself by it. Turn to the verses which follow my text, and you will see. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. He had been comforting himself by the promise; and if the promise failed, that comfort would turn out to be a sheer delusion. Will the Lord delude those who trust him? Read the next verse; "The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law." I stuck to thy doctrine, thy precept, thy promise: I declared thy word to be true: wilt thou not keep it, and so vindicate my confident assurance? I remembered the judgments of old, Lord; and have comforted myself. I have thus derived strength and establishment out of thy promises already. Wilt thou allow the enemy to tell me that I have deceived myself? Wilt thou revoke thy declarations? It cannot be.

This is wonderfully blessed pleading. "Thou hast caused me to hope, therefore, O Lord, remember thy word." When I read how God kept his promise to his people of old, I said, "He will keep it to me;" and when I remembered how he had kept other promises to me in past times, I said, "He will keep this also." His former dealings have induced us to trust in him. "Lord, thou hast caused me to hope; my hope is of thy creating, nourishing and perfecting. I am justified in hoping in thee on this occasion, from what thou hast done for me in days gone by. Thou hast caused me to hope. It was thy word, and thy Spirit helped me to go from faith to hope; and now, when the windows of hope are opened, wilt thou not be pleased to send in a messenger of grace and peace?" O needy child of God, go home, and plead in this fashion, and you shall not return empty! Have you come into a position from which there seems to be no escape? Do not ask to escape, but cry, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

The African Desert.

If the "wilderess" in winter offers many attractions, it is quite the reverse with the "barren" of the desert. This is truly the ideal desert, consisting mainly of hard, gravel plains, diversified by zones of deep sand, rocky ridges, sometimes of considerable altitude, and rugged defiles. It is absolutely destitute of vegetation and consequently of animal life. Only the ostrich and hyena scurried swiftly by night and the vulture hovers over the caravans by day. Not a tree, not a bush, not a blade of grass relieves the glare of the sunlight upon the yellow sand. No one can resist the solemn impression of deep silence and infinite space produced by the desert. When night has come, and the soldiers and Bedouins are asleep in their bivouacs, walk away under the unequalled African moon beyond the first ridge of sand or rocks. Around you stretches a boundless sea-like horizon. The sand gleams almost as white as snow. Not a sound falls upon the ear, nor the murmur of a breeze, nor the rustle of leaf or grass, nor the hum of the smallest insect. Silence—only silence—as profound as death, unless it is broken by the howl of a prowling hyena, or the distant roar of the king of beasts.

Within the limits of Egypt and the Sudan, these desolate, atomized extend over three quarters of a million of square miles, never trodden by the foot of man. Only a few caravan trails cross them in their narrowest parts, with scanty walls at long intervals; and the necessities of trade can alone account for their being penetrated at all. They are like oceans, where caravans pass each other in haste like vessels at sea. The marches are perfectly terrible, and yet

it is worse to halt during the day than to keep in motion, for the heat makes sleep or rest impossible, even under canvas. With the burning sand under your feet and the vertical sun over your head, you are as between the lids of an oven. In summer the thermometer rises to 150 and 160°. The air that blows feels as if it had just passed through a furnace or a brick-kiln. Over the plains it quivers visibly in the sun, as if rising from a red-hot stove, while the mirage mocks your senses with the most life-like images of lakes, ponds and rippling waters. No more laughter or merriment now. Soldiers and camp followers protect themselves as best they can with their turbans and blankets, bringing over all the boards of their cloth capotes, leaving only a narrow aperture, just enough to see, while, strange to say, the Bedouins stride along on foot, bareheaded and almost naked, without appearing to suffer any great discomfort.—*Amos.*

A Waddy-Headed Heathen.

Disheartened missionary, returning to his field after years of absence: "Oh unhappy man, you have lapsed into error and darkness and paganism again!" Chief heathen, apologetically: "Well, you see, after you went away a Catholic missionary came along and told us the bad place was full of Methodists, and so he went away into his communion; then he went away and a Presbyterian came along and waked us up on regeneration, adoption and election, and we joined his church; then an Episcopalian came, and he waked our Westernists and stocked up on prayer books; then he left and a Baptist laird, and walked us into the water and baptized us right; and we'd just about got settled when a New Congregationalist came over and told us that so long as we were heathens we had a dead sure thing of going to heaven; but if we became Christians we had to walk mighty straight or go to the everlasting bonfire. So we ate him up, burned our Bibles and resumed business as the old stand. Boys, put the parson in the cage and fobbed him up for Thanksgiving day."—*Bob Burdette.*

This, That and the Other.

—The census of Italy taken last December, shows a population of 29,943,607, an increase of 243,822 since 1885.

—The New York city directory, just issued, contains 324,813 names, indicating a population of 1,600,000.

—Presbyterian statistics just published show: Northern Presbyterians, 696,827 members; Southern, 150,398.

—Those two celebrated preachers, Rev. Dr. Bacon and Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, were once disputing on some religious subject, when the former accused the latter of using wit in his sermons. "Well," said Mr. Beecher, "suppose it had pleased God to give you wit, what would you have done?"

—Minutes of Northern Presbyterian General Assembly for this year, show that out of 6,436 churches, 1,201 are without pastors. Most of these vacant churches are in the West, which fact may result from more of these churches being unable to support pastors, or it may be from the restlessness in the newer States.

—Speaking of the somewhat materialistic theory of Pre-millennialism, the *Calcutta Indian Witness* says:—"Any dogma that makes Christ say to Satan, in this Missionary century: 'thou must increase, but I must decrease,' is not in harmony with our copy of the Word, or reconcilable with modern history. Sin abounds, and gladly and joyfully would we halt the bodily presence of the King at the head of the scattered army. But we cannot agree with the good, and great men, who see victory only in this way. The Holy Spirit will lead the Church to certain and complete conquest, and already the morning breaketh and darkness and discouragement ought to disappear."

—The distillers of the West are combining to form a great whiskey pool with a view of controlling the wholesale liquor trade of the United States. The capital represented by the members of the pool, is estimated at \$25,000,000. It is proposed to monopolize the production of liquor in this country and regulate prices. Incidentally the combination will take part in restricting the growth of "temperance institutions," and will oppose the passage of laws "calculated to injure the trade."

The temperance cause will find a new and powerful enemy in this whiskey monopoly. Twenty-five million dollars is a large sum to fight against.

—The income of the Free Church of Scotland last year, for foreign missions, was \$486,145,—the largest sum ever realized by the Church for that purpose. There are in the mission 27 principal and 150 branch stations; forty ordained, four medical, 23 teaching, and 23 female missionaries (besides 21 missionaries' wives); 24 active preachers, 3103 native teachers, 11 European evangelists and assistants, 154 native helpers, 5,206 communicants, and 16,614 pupils in schools.