

Messenger and Visitor.

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EMATA.—In Dr. Sanders' sermon as published in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, there are a few typographical errors. In one place is "prisoners" for "pioneers," and in another "feters" for "battles."

ACADIA.—The Principal of Horton Academy, in a private note, speaks highly of the boys gathered there. There are already 52 enrolled. In the college there are about 100 already at work, with the prospect of quite an accession after Christmas. It is expected that the attendance at the Seminary will be largely increased the next term.

SHALLOW.—How often it happens when one who has had no personal experience of theatres, dance halls, etc., gives an opinion of their moral or immoral tendencies, that somebody institutes that such an one is not in a position to give any judgment on the question. On the same principle, no one except he has eaten arsenic can give an opinion of its quality, and none but an inebriate can express an opinion as to the evils of the drink habit. Surely observation in each case will count for something.

UNIFICATION.—The colored Baptists of the South have had four missionary organizations. They have lately held a joint meeting at Nashville, Tenn. At this meeting measures were taken to amalgamate these four into a single missionary organization, called the American Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. It is thought the work of unification will be completed next year. The bonds between the colored Missionary Societies and the Missionary Union are growing stronger.

UNHAPPY PAPERS.—The Baptist papers are not content with having, with freezing courtesy, shown Dr. Dowling the denominational door, and stiffly bowed him out of the Baptist home; they are presuming to offer him advice as to what he had better do with himself. The *Messenger* and *Visitor*, some weeks ago, intimated that Dr. Dowling had better join the Free Baptist body. And now, the *Watchman* follows suit, in courteous phrase indeed, but with a meaning none the less obvious because existing between the lines. We are bound to say that should Dr. Dowling's co-operations lead him to ally himself with either of these bodies, he would find a generous welcome and an opportunity worthy of his or any other man's powers and consecration. But this attempt by the Baptist papers to dispose of the man they have thrust out of their midst, strongly suggests the addition of "insult to injury." Does this sound sweet? We certainly do not mean to imply more than do the facts themselves.

The above intimation is from the open communion *Morning Star*, the organ of the New England Free Baptist. The spirit of it is as bitter as the declaration it contains are erroneous. In response to a question from Dr. Dowling, the Baptist papers in such a gentle and kindly way that Dr. D. has publicly acknowledged the loving courtesy with which he has been treated, declare that the Regular Baptist denomination of the United States was strict communion in practice, and that as an open communionist his place was not with them. Should a Free Baptist minister become a strict communionist, and, as pastor of one of the churches of that denomination, attempt to introduce his strict practice, in opposition to the tenets of the denomination, would the *Morning Star* think itself guilty of thrusting the brother out, if it should tell him that as a strict communionist his place was not in an open communion body? If it should suggest that his place was among the strict Baptists, whose views he had adopted, would he be adding insult to injury?

SIBERIA.—The immense extent of Siberia can be imagined from the following from a contemporary:

If we could take the whole United States of America, from Maine to California, and from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico, and set it down in the middle of Siberia, it would not touch the boundaries of the latter at a single point; then we could take Alaska and all the States of Europe, with the single exception of Russia, and fit them into the remaining margin like the pieces of a dissected map; and, after having thus accommodated all the United States including Alaska, and all of Europe except Russia, we would still have more than 300,000 square miles of Siberian territory to spare.

DARWIN'S FAITHLESSNESS.—Darwin, although not a believer in revelation as generally accepted, was ever ready to acknowledge the blessings which have come to man through the Christian religion. He once made the following answer to some critics of foreign missionaries: "They forget, or will not remember, that human sacrifices and the power of an idolatrous priesthood, a system of profligacy unparalleled in any other part of the world; infanticide, a consequence of that system; bloody wars, where the conquerors spared neither women nor children—that all these things have been abolished, and that dishonesty, in commerce and in the courts, have been greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity. Is a voyager to forget these things is a base ingratitude; for should he chance to be at the point of shipwreck on some unknown coast, he will most devoutly pray that the

lesson of the missionary may have extended thus far."

OUR FINANCERS.—Is it necessary to urge upon all our pastors the need of arranging at once to push the work of collecting for our denominational funds, whether the local committees are organized or not? The chief responsibility must rest upon each church, led by its own pastor. If any of our churches or pastors get the idea that these committees are to do the work of collecting and cast off their own responsibility in any measure upon them, the new plan will be anything but a blessing to them. This plan is devised to reach churches that have no pastors, and to devise the best methods by general conference among all the pastors and leading laymen of a certain district; but whatever plan is adopted, each pastor must lead in working it successfully in his own church. The pastors can help each other by exchanging and each presenting the claims of our great denominational objects to another people as well as to his own; but still, while each pastor may help his neighbor by advice, etc., each one must bear the chief responsibility in his own church. Will not all begin at once, if there has been delay in organizing the groups? In many cases the local committees will be able to do but little; but each pastor can do much. Our attention has been called to an error in our references to the salary of the treasurer of the Convention. It is \$200, not \$250 as stated by us.

ON VACATION.—The editor of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR is away for a vacation. Contributors and correspondents must not be surprised if their letters do not receive as prompt attention as usual. Arrangements have been made to forward correspondence to the editor during the time he is absent, and it will be attended to as promptly as the nature of the case will admit.

TOO MUCH OF IT.—Among the Congregationalists the rage for societies has gone to great lengths. The great New England paper, the *Congregationalist*, is alarmed. It says:

Five women's societies in a given church, besides another for children offered by women! Where is the society whose function it shall be to prevent the organization of any more societies?

Would it not be well for the brethren to follow suit, and organize themselves into societies to promote all the great objects of Christian endeavor? Why not? If the church is not sufficient, as instituted by Christ and organized by him and his apostles.

LIKE CHILDREN.—How unchristianlike we are apt to be of the ordinary blessing which comes to us in uninterrupted flow. It begins with us as children in relation to our parents and continues through life as a habit of thought and heart. A child will be more thankful for a little present which is infrequent than for all the watchful and loving care and provision which supplies the days and weeks with all that is needful for health and happiness. All this stream of uninterrupted bounty—home, food, raiment, tenderness, care, love,—goes for little, is accepted as a matter of course, and arouses little gratitude or pleasure compared with a little trinket costing just a few cents. And is it not the same in our feelings toward the heavenly Father. The constant, unending supply from his hand is accepted almost as a matter of course, and has little effect to stir our hearts. It is some special providence which has the chief power to awaken a strong response. This is not as it should be. The common mercies are the great ones. The fact that they are common shows that God keeps open a fountain for us, rather than gives us a draught now and then. Let us cultivate an appreciation of these common mercies, and it will help to keep our souls on fire.

CREDAL BASIS.—The London Baptist Association has had a special session to consider the question of a credal basis. The Association was originally formed of Baptist ministers and churches "holding evangelical sentiments." It was found that men in these times are making this expression the cover for many forms of belief not originally contemplated, as with the compass of that designation. Spurgeon and others desired a definition of evangelicalism. The great preacher, seeing little hope of attaining this, withdrew from the Association as he did from the Union. The question came up for discussion, however, on Tuesday, Sept. 25. A resolution was moved by Rev. F. B. Meyer, to the effect that no creed statement should be adopted, and giving an elaborate statement of reasons. To this an amendment was moved by Rev. G. D. Hooper that a committee be appointed to prepare and submit to the next meeting a statement of the leading truths intended or included by the term "evangelical sentiments," in accordance with the Constitution. This amendment was voted down, 119 to 85. Dr. Underhill then moved an amendment that the following be added to the original resolution:

"That a committee be appointed to prepare a declaration with regard to the meaning of the words 'evangelical sentiments' and report at the next meeting of the association," which was adopted with 23 dissentients. This means that an amendment which was negatived when moved as a substitute for a declaration that no creed statement should be adopted, was carried as a supplement to that statement. The whole procedure seems mixed. If the amendment did not commit the body to a creed statement why vote it down in the first instance; if it did, what propriety to make it the supplement of a declaration that no such statement should be given?

IS SINGING WORTHWHILE? IF IT BE, WHY DON'T YOU SING IN CHURCH?

BY H. F. ADAMS, YARMOUTH, N. S.

Singing has been connected with the worship of the true God from time immemorial. Joyous sounds hailed the dawn of the first day, for when God laid the foundations of the earth the morning stars sang together and all the angels of God shouted for joy. And who will dare say how many millions of years the Seraphim were singing doxologies to the glory of God before this world was created? Isaiah says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim, each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is filled with his glory."

Not only in heaven but on earth, the great Creator's praise is heard in the upper tones of the rippling brook, in the middle tones of the flowing river, and in the deep bass of the howling sea. And who cannot hear chants in the rustle of the leaves of the forest, and a thousand organs seem to roll out their voices in the immeasurable grandeur of a thunder storm. As I have stood under an old oak tree in my native land, on the evening of a bright summer day, and listened to a hundred little songsters giving all their strength to produce a symphony of the sweetest variations, I have thought how worshipful, if it seemed as if they could not retire to rest for the night till they had chanted their kind Creator's and Preserver's praise.

Who shall say that mountains and valleys, trees and flowers are dumb in this universe of rhythm and harmony and song and sound? In the Crystal Palace, London, I have heard five thousand Band of Hope children sing with wonderfully correct time, to the great swelling tones of the vast organ, in the centre of the mighty cothens; but my spirit has been stirred many times deeper, as I have watched the gorgeous swains among the mountains of ancient Quebec. Mountains garmented with richest foliage in summer, variegated with autumnal tints in fall, and dressed in snowy white in winter, always seemed to me like a row of singers before my study window.

With so much music in God's world, what is there that does not love sweet sounds? Even if one be so unfortunate as to be unable to raise a tune, or distinguish A from B, he or she must be very dry and unhuman who cannot enjoy vocal or instrumental music. Such people appear to be the only discordant things God has made, and cannot feel very much at home anywhere in this realm of song.

What grand singing they had in the old Jewish church. What magnificent arrangements David made for the service of song in the House of the Lord. He did not believe in poor singing in the Tabernacle, as will be seen by the fact that the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, he appointed 288 as a grand choir to lead the singing in the worship of God. (See I Chron. 25th chapter.)

He also gave great prominence to his love for instrumental music, for he had the large number of four thousand men trained as musicians to accompany the choir. They played on harps, sackbuts and psalteries, which were stringed instruments, beside wind instruments, tabours, triangles and gymbals. These musicians were divided into classes of one hundred and fifty-four, each class having three leaders. These played in the daily services, in the order of their appointment. But at the grand festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, the whole of the four thousand had to be present, and with the choir of 288 singers led the great congregation in singing the glorious psalms which King David composed for the occasion.

Hemen, with one of his leaders directed the central choir; Asaph conducted the right choir and Jeduthun the left wing. I have no doubt that to insure harmony, some kind of musical notes were used. For we cannot imagine the refined musical taste of David permitting anything to be played in his hearing, in which the most perfect harmony was wanting. His was a musicaly built soul, and from boyhood up to

old age he had a passionate love for sweet sounds and harmonious tones. Let us not suppose that David confined the singing to a trained choir, for he commanded the entire congregation to unite in the service of song. "Let the people praise Thee O God, let all the people praise Thee," was his exhortation.

An Episcopalian writing in the New York *Churchman* describes the song part of the service at Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle as a choir of six thousand voices. In that great building there is no organ, nor a choir to lead the vast assembly in singing, but a single leader stands beside the preacher and strikes the key-note and they all follow on. I have heard fastidious musical artists find fault with the vast volume of sound the saints shout up to God in that place. I am not prepared to defend it as being ecclesiastically correct musically, but I do assert most emphatically that the one grand aim and end of their song is what is infinitely better, i. e. worship.

It seems to me this one element is being lost sight of in the church services of to-day. Last July I attended a church where four paid singers, two of each sex, constituted the "choir." They did all the song-part of the service but one hymn, which was sung by the congregation. I was never more unhappy in any service before. I never felt so undevoted during the singing in any previous meeting. People may call such proxy singing what they like, but it certainly is not worship. And I contend that song in the House of the Lord is as much a part of the worship as any other.

In another church, less aristocratic, I found the "choir" leading but only about ten per cent. of the people following, and that small proportion singing restrainedly, fearful lest they should be heard by the non-singers and criticised. In the last church I preached in (not my own) about two per cent. followed a small "choir." Now can anybody say that is worship, when a few good singers put their strength forth to get through with a hymn, and nearly all the congregation stand with book in hand, closed mouths, looking at the choir? I think it must be very discouraging to choirs to feel that instead of being leaders of this part of the worship of Almighty God, they are perfunctorily filling up time.

I have long felt that it is a mistake to take all the best singing talent out of the congregations and banishing it together, and that generally apart from the audience. Those left in the pews are thus placed at a great disadvantage in the song-part of the worship. And if there be a good old soul with a cracked voice who desires to enjoy the singing, her vocal strains will annoy others of the silent type. Her only alternative in most churches is to imitate the others and sing with herself, while looking at the choir.

It has come to pass that if one speak of the absence of a choir in a church people say, "Oh, so you have congregational singing," as if the existence of a choir implied that the singing is not congregational, and consequently that the congregation is not to take part in that portion of the worship. It is now about eight months since the choir in my church, of their own free will and choice, scattered their voices over the congregation; and the change has resulted in an improvement in the congregational singing of at least two hundred per cent. The song-part of the service is certainly more devotional, and the few crack-voices here and there are not annoying, as they are drowned, or toned down to a squeak, by the larger number of singers around them.

When I have stood before an audience of four or five hundred persons and only fifty or sixty have joined in the singing of a hymn, I have felt as if a wet blanket had been thrown over my spirit, and it has required ten or fifteen minutes of warm preaching to get rid of the spiritual chill that the non-singers have sent through my soul. Whereas a hymn heartily sung has infused joyousness into my spirit that has lent animation to my whole delivery.

Every hymn has a soul in it, and it may be sung like a "dead march" or a "wedding march." And the spirit of the song-part of the service will add life or death to every other part of the service. More than people think, a badly-sung hymn affected the sermon. I generally am careful to choose a hymn to be sung before I preach that everybody can sing, because a hymn sung in a half-hearted way, by less than half the people, affects me so disastrously.

People praise the singing in Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches, and speak of it as an attraction. That word "attraction" in connection with the worship of Almighty God is a nineteenth century abomination which the Lord must hate. I know the singing in those churches is grand, is operatic, is "artistic," is "attractive." But one thing it is not: it is not worshipful. It excites our wonder, its richness surfeits us, it overwhelms us by

its perfect rendering, but it does not help us to devotion, it does not bring Jesus nearer, for it is all too extraordinary. We can hear a marvellous combination of sounds, but we can catch about as much of the words or their meanings as if they were chanting Latin. And when we get home all we can say of the reports of that splendid choir is "Was not the singing wonderful!"

Some people go to church "to hear the singing." Instead of using song as a medium of access to God, they make song their god. How strangely such pervert creature into Creator, and then they are simply disciples of those who made this perversion easy. By the blessing of God, the song-part of a service has been of incalculable benefit to some when sung as a part of worship. When Augustus Toplady entered the Irish barn, where an earnest preacher was holding forth the Word of life, he heard the congregation sing in hearty tones William Cowper's immortal hymn.

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

The result of that visit was his conversion to God. And who can tell how much of the inspiration of that service gave birth to the grandest and greatest hymns in the English language, which in after years was written by Toplady?

"Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."
At a service held in Exeter Hall, London, where Mr. Spurgeon was preaching while the Tabernacle was going up, a man was convicted of sin while the congregation was singing, "Rock of ages cleft for me," and on joining the church stated that his first serious impressions were experienced while that grand hymn was being sung.

Bad singing, by that I mean a hymn sung by a few dozen out of an audience of two or three hundred, is very injurious to the cause of Christ. It gives those who are only occasionally at church a false idea of the religion of Christ. They regard the members as taking no interest in that part of the worship of God; or that the religion of the New Testament is such a dreadful thing, that its possessors have no desire to enter into the joys of praise.

Now the great question is, "Who is responsible for the present state of worshipless song, and songless congregations?" Of course no one will attempt to trace the effects to their cause. But if the present practice of maintaining a "choir" frustrates the object for which sacred song was instituted, then let us gently and kindly and wisely get our choirs scattered among the congregations. Let us return to the old fashioned plan of hearty and worshipful congregational singing, when the dear old apostles and men and women, with the "Union" tunebook in one hand, and "Dr. Watts" in the other, shouted the praise of God with all their hearts, till the old rafters in the meeting house echoed the lingering strains of "Coronation" and "Warwick" and "Duke Street."

On Historic Ground.
BY REV. J. CLARK.
NO. V.

The horriddest object I ever saw was a gibbet. A solid wooden frame, in shape like an inverted capital letter L, dark, grim, and high, it stood in about as lonely a spot as could well be found, some eight miles out of the town, on the old Roman road leading to London. Passing it in the evening did not make the sight less hideous. I could not wish to linger. One, if not two, human beings had there been suspended in chains until their bodies had literally dropped to pieces; and this no farther back than the early part of the present century. The object in this barbarous form of punishment was to deter from crime. Murder was not the only capital offence. Horse stealing, and even sheep stealing, in those days meant the gibbet.

With the advance of time milder laws have prevailed, and the crimes referred to are now almost unknown. Only a stump of the old Caxton gibbet remains, a relic of bygone days and darker times, never to return. Whether others are yet to be seen I cannot say, but they were numerous enough throughout the country,—justice, civilization, and Christianity would say, far too numerous, in the past. They were objects of terror, superstition, and dread, especially among the uneducated classes. No historian or legislator can point to them as a success in the matter of moral and social reform.

In keeping with this, let the reader turn to that comparatively recent, overwhelmingly weird, and wonderfully vivid teaching poem, "R. Z. ah," by Lord Tennyson, and when he gets through it, he will lay the book down with a feeling of relief, and confess that, after all, there is something better something brighter, than the harshness and severity of law—the principle of love.

Human laws as well as human hearts are to be moulded by the love of God.

A legend lingers in this region concerning a man who escaped the gallows. He was brought before the judge for stealing a sheep. The case looked black. He had been in the field; there were his footprints, indubitably his. There was his knife, corresponding in size with the gash in the animal's neck. There was the man who brought it to the prisoner. All seemed clear. No escape seemed possible. Presently, the man's counsel rises. "My Lord," said he, "this man is charged with stealing a sheep." "Yes." "The animal was dead when it was taken from the field; for the blood marks were there." "Yea." "Then," added the counsel, "I claim the prisoner's discharge; the animal being dead he only ate the mutton. The case falls to the ground." And fall to the ground it did, the man getting clear by the ready wit of his counsel, and a technical flaw in the indictment.

When justice brings the guilty soul of man before the bar of God here will be no flaw in the indictment. Well it is for him, who, taking his stand on Calvary, spends his life as though he daily had a view of the "great white throne."

Another ancient custom, but more of a local character, has ceased within comparatively recent years. The river Stour runs through the old cathedral town of Canterbury. In that city (was it needed no other?) the "Ducking Stool" was brought into occasional requisition. It was intended for the benefit of scolding wives. Though called a stool, it would more properly be described as a chair. Sentence being pronounced, the "scold" was taken to the river side in the presence of a laughing, jeering, shouting populace, and placed in the chair. This was attached to a long beam of wood, having a strong upright support in the centre; the chair and being suspended over the river. At the given word, the shore end of the beam went up into the air; the chair and its occupant at the same time going down into the water. Up and down, up and down, went the beam until the punishment was deemed to be sufficient. Then the culprit was allowed to go free; whether wiser and better for her experience this writer does not say, and history does not show.

For some time now the "Ducking Stool" has gone out of use. Within the last few months it has been handed over to a local museum where it will long be preserved as a singular curiosity. I am inclined to think it was not a decided success, or it would have been used more generally. Probably it was never popular with the ladies. I cannot say that the use it was put to reflected very favorably on the finer feelings of the men.

The best cure for scolds is not the "Ducking Stool," evidently. No; the remedy does not come in that direction. It comes from a loving atmosphere around, and a Christ-like spirit within. Why should not all try it? If there must be restraint, let it be the restraint of grace; if there must be law, let it be the law of kindness. Bitter words are best unsaid. They hurt the feelings of the hearer,—they injure the character of the speaker,—the hearer feels the pain, the speaker bears the sin, and, often, the shame as well. He was a wise man, one of the wisest that ever lived, who prayed, "Lord, keep thou the door of my lips." The lips, like the heart, need to be well guarded. No uttered word can be called back. An ancient proverb says, "When once a word has passed the lips the King's army cannot bring it back again."

This, That, and The Other.

"What I want is, not to possess religion, but to have a religion that shall possess me."—Charles Kingsley.

A wealthy Baptist in Australia has lately given \$125,000 on condition that a like sum be raised for church extension.

A lady stood on the step of an omnibus when a workman in the far corner arose and politely offered her a seat. "I thank you," she said in a sweet tone, but I dislike to deprive the only gentleman of a seat."

Sir Charles Aitchison said, at a summer meeting of the Church Missionary Society in Simla, where he could be easily contradicted on the spot, that Christianity is increasing proportionately in India four or five times faster than the ordinary population, and the number of native Christians is nearly one million.—*Woman's Work for Women.*

"How is it that your church has prospered so greatly and wielded so wide an influence through all these years of your pastorate?" was the question put to an eminently useful minister. "Well, it is this way. I preach for the people on Sunday, and 500 Christian lives preach for me all through the week. The church is a living gospel sermon.—This is the secret of it." The secret indeed! How is it with your church?—*Standard.*