

Messenger and Visitor

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A Great Lack.

We profess to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the highest wealth is to live with him, and in him, and for him. But, alas, how thoughtlessly, how loosely, how nervously we live in reference to those everlasting treasures, to win which we have professed before God to be willing to suffer the loss of all things else, and even count them but dross. We, like worldlings, are alert for worldly opportunities, but where is our alertness for the Father's business? Just think of it. We are not so poor but that we can spend hundreds of dollars for ourselves, on our secular ventures, our places of business, our homes, our pleasures, but we are too poor to spend more than a few dollars on our Lord Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. We are not so busy but that we can go to the concert and the lecture, and the opera; but we cannot find the time to go to the prayer meeting. We are not so delicate but that we can go out of a stormy day to meet a business engagement; but our health is too precarious to jeopardize it by keeping a church engagement. We are not so tired but at the close of a busy day we can endure standing and being jostled by the hour at a crowded social entertainment, but we are too exhausted to spend an hour in the Sunday School. But all are not like these. There are exceptions. Not a few there are who give to Christ and his church all that they ought to give, of their money and time and strength. But it is not so with the great majority. Where do we see in professing Christians, as a body, that sleepless vigilance, that unwearied diligence, that keen and far-reaching foresight, that exhaustless enthusiasm, that all-absorbing devotion to Christ and his cause which we see exhibited every day by hundreds and thousands of worldlings all around us in their pursuit of earth's bubbles? Two professing Christians meet each other on the street, both profess to have been bought with the precious blood of the Lamb of God, both have been baptized into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost; in that very act-yowing before God and angels and men; to devote their all in advancing the Kingdom of Him who has laid down his life for them. Both profess the expectation of meeting each other at his judgment seat, and entering on their celestial patrimony. And yet during their few minutes colloquy, the chances are a hundred to one that not a single word will be uttered about the heavenly property in which they have professed to have invested their all; but instead thereof there will be allusions to the condition of the stock market or the dividends which some mining stock is expected to pay. If men were to stop and think for a minute they would see how distressing a sight it is to behold Christ's followers, professing to be pilgrims and foreigners in the earth and seeking the better country, even the heavenly, to be so eagerly joining hands with men of the world in laying up for themselves only earthly treasures. Certainly, the Lord spoke truly, when he said, 'The children of this world are for their generation wiser than the children of light.' Some people seem to have a great dread of a little excitement or enthusiasm exhibited in Christian service, but these same people would count such an exhibition in things of the world as absolutely essential to success. Would God, that we had something of that enthusiasm of the Divine Nazarene which led his friends to lay hold on him saying, 'He is beside himself.'

Baptist Bigotry.

It is often declared that the 'bigotry' of Baptists is the chief bar to Christian union. So persistently has this affirmation been made, that there are many people who really believe that it is true. By 'Baptist bigotry' is meant the views which Baptists hold as to the two ordinances of the church, more particularly to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, or the Eucharist.

But these doctrines offer no bar to Christian union. If by 'Christian Union' is meant a union of the heart in the common work for Christ, then Baptists are as ready as Pedobaptists to so unite. And if 'Christian Union' means 'an organic union,' the Baptist doctrine of the ordinances is no bar to this. Do not Methodists and Presbyterians and Congregationalists agree in the doctrine of the ordinances? Yet there is no more appearance of organic union between any two of them, than between any one of them and Baptists.

It seems passing strange to us that these three denominations just named, to say nothing of others, should not form an 'organic union.' If a Presbyterian minister can become a pastor of a Congregationalist church, and a Congregationalist become pastor of a Reformed church, and a Methodist assume the pastoral charge of a Congregationalist church, there would seem to be no good reason why the churches which these men had served, could not form one body and become organically one. These ministers perhaps never professed to have passed through any great change of belief as to the nature of the Christian church. If either of these when assuming their pastorates were to express his views of what led him to change his church relations, he would probably say that he did it simply because the field to which he went offered a wider prospect of usefulness. It looks as if they thought the differences between their respective denominations as a very small thing—a boundary line to be stepped over, with little if any hesitation. And what these ministers might do, could with equal readiness be done by their congregations without violating any real principle. To us it seems bordering almost on the impertinent for Pedobaptists to assail Baptists as being the great bar to Christian Union when, without the violation of any New Testament principle, they maintain separate and distinct organizations at great expense, and on practically the same territory, over which either could work to advantage without the help of the other.

The differences then between some Pedobaptist churches being so slight, so much a matter of preference and so little a question of conviction, that conscientious men can pass so readily from one to the other with no change of essential belief, that the wonder to some of us is, and this wonder deepens with the passing years, why these advocates of organic union do not set the 'bigoted Baptists' an example of consistency and form such a union among themselves. The Baptist conscience does not stand in their way. They are not near enough to touch them. Baptists are out of that race entirely, and are as though they were not—to them. There must be other than 'Baptist bigotry' somewhere or Pedobaptists that have so much in common would get together very quickly. The need of this is seen very clearly, and felt very keenly, in some localities in our own country, but when the great mission fields of the world are considered, the need is seen and felt a hundred fold more keenly—it becomes, shall we say it, an imperative necessity.

Unanswered Prayer.

Somebody has said, 'The church has well nigh quit praying its prayers, though there are still stated occasions, when it meets and says its prayers.' There are some good people who finish their prayers before they know what they are doing. How do we know this? By asking them what they prayed for when they bent the knee.

But if our prayers mean nothing, God's answers mean nothing. Praying a prayer is something like sending a telegraphic message from St. John to Montreal. If that message is to go, the wire must go all the way between the two cities, and must be up and completely insulated along the poles. Let a tree fall across the wire and press it to the ground, the message will not go. Remove the obstruction and insulate the wire, then the very minute the

operator touches the key in St. John, the message is jumping off the wire in Montreal. Something like that is what takes place when we pray. The wire of our faith and consecration must not only go all the way to the skies, but must be up and thoroughly insulated.

If a dishonest business transaction falls upon the wire, the prayer will not go up. If any sin which blights and curses our lives falls across the wire of faith and consecration, the petition will not reach the ear of God. 'If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.' This may account for many unanswered prayers.

Editorial Notes.

—There is more good sense in the following clipping from an exchange than usually finds its way in the press. 'If you, your lips would keep from slips, five things observe with care; of whom you speak, to whom you speak, and how, and when, and where.' Just one thing more may be added, of what you speak. The Master once said, 'Take heed what ye hear,' and also 'Take heed how ye hear.' It is the *what* and the *how* which has so much to do with life and conduct.

—The Watchman of recent date is responsible for the following: 'At the Calvary church, Providence, R. I., a bright little girl nine years of age related a beautiful and vivid experience. Her father is a member of a Presbyterian church, sprinkled in his infancy. When she asked his permission to join the Baptist church, he said, 'My daughter, I won't stand in your way, but do you think that you understand all the obligations of the occasion sufficiently to take the responsibility.' 'Why, papa,' she said, 'I am a great deal older than you were, and know a great deal more than you did when you thought that you were baptiz'd.' That is a strong Baptist position."

—There is nothing more costly than success. This is true of any enterprise in which we may be engaged. It is true of churches and their work. It is true of all our denominational enterprises. The more vigorously a work is prosecuted, and the more successful it is, the more expensive it becomes. Take, e. g., our educational institutions. The success that is crowning the efforts of those who are at their head, makes increasing demands for further equipment. While much is done there is yet much more to be done. This is true of our mission work—Home and Foreign. A mission that is dead or dying makes few calls for funds. It is the successful work that costs. Have you stopped to think of the growth of our work in India for the last ten years? The present outlook all along our Baptist line is cheering indeed.

—EASTER SUNDAY, so called, is receiving much more attention from the Christian people of to-day than was given formerly. It is appropriate that one day in the year should be set apart for observing the resurrection of our Lord; but it is well to remember that every Lord's day is a reminder of that significant event. Here, therefore, who bears this fact in mind and truly worships his Lord on the first day of the week does not need to emphasize the great doctrine of the resurrection on one Lord's day of the year any more than on another. Easter day is a great day for the Christians. It is a day of gladness, of joy, of power. Easter reminds him of the ground of his faith and hope. Christ is risen, therefore all who believe on him shall rise from their graves. In this we rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

From Halifax.

The Reform Association, referred to in my last report from Halifax, is holding a series of meetings, going from church to church in the city. E. D. King, K. C., the president, has in his veins enough of Scotch blood to give him persistency. If the work of the association is bandoned during the life time of its present members, E. D. King, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier said about the Quebec Frenchman in defending the empire, will fire the last gun. Reports as to the moral condition of the city differ. Some say that it is extremely bad, others say it is no worse than other cities of the same size. There is, no doubt, work for the association. The law regulating the liquor traffic is almost wholly disregarded. And, as it is mixed up with notorious houses, the laws intended for their suppression are not well enforced. The fight goes on—darkness against light, truth against error, right against wrong, and virtue against vice. Pulpits Sunday schools, temperance societies, and other Christian organizations on the one side; the rum business, gambling commercial and political dishonesty and other evils on the other.

The Rev. Mr. Gale, a well known evangelist, was brought to the city by the Methodists. After labouring for about a week in the Grafton Street Methodist church, a union with the first Baptist church was formed, and now the two churches are co-operating in public services.