

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
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Religious.

PRINCE EDWARD BAPTIST HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND BAPTISTS.

Dear Brethren,—

We once more address you on behalf of our Home Missionary Society. The Board of that Society has lately met; and it is at their request that we thus appeal to you.—In doing which our principal object is, to recount the goodness of the Lord, and encourage you still to work, and give, and pray with a view to farther experiences of that goodness.

We have our claims to meet. More especially we have to sustain in the field our brother Kidson. We do not indeed give him a constant appointment. We rather renew his appointments from time to time.—But while he is willing to work for us, and while the Lord continues to bless his labours, we seem to find it our duty to commission him afresh, and so to bring ourselves under fresh obligations for his support.

You are aware that we have excellent reason for these our renewed appointments. You know how the Lord prospered our brother in the Western portions of our Island. Principally at Summerside, though not there alone. Our brethren in that place have their piece of ground, given to them by a member of our Board. They are raising funds for the purpose of rearing their house of worship—a work in which they do not spare themselves, and in which their neighbours come freely to their aid. Meanwhile, until they can erect their own building, they maintain worship, and conduct their Sabbath School in the Grammar School edifice in their town. Thus the Lord continues to "show them tokens for good."

Our brother Kidson is now labouring to the Eastward of our Island, about Belfast and Uigg. He has held continuous meetings at the former place: some fourteen have "put on Christ" in baptism; and still the work seems to be progressing. At our Quarterly Meeting, recently held at West River, our brother just came to look at us. But so much did he feel the importance of the work at Belfast, that he immediately returned to press onward in it.

Others besides brother Kidson go forth to labour in our behalf from time to time, and have to be sustained by our funds.—Neither do they "labour in vain for the Lord."

Now, therefore, dear brethren, we look hopefully to you for your annual contributions to our Treasury. You gave us as much as we wanted for our last year's work. Which, however, was not much; as our principal agent, brother Kidson, was able to engage in his work only during a portion of the year. We now want you to furnish us with the pecuniary means for the current year. We expect to require much more this year than last; and we put our trust in God, and in you, for the needed supply.—Some of our churches are already moving in the matter. One, it is expected, will nearly double, if not quite so, its contributions of last year. According to present appearances, our work will demand somewhere about twice the amount expended last year. We venture to hope that, in due season and measure, such an amount will find its way into our Treasury.

And why not? The salvation of souls is our first great object; and what is money in comparison with souls? Our principles as Baptists, our New Testament principles with regard to the ordinances and ordering of the Lord's house, are surely worth far more money than has ever been bestowed upon them yet. The Lord has been with us in our efforts as put forth during the past year; and he is even now stretching forth his hand on our behalf. His word at the present juncture resembles that which he gave to the children of Israel in ancient days, "Speak unto these Israel Baptists that they go forward?" And shall not that word command our cheerful obedience?—We boast not of wealth; but we are not weighed down by deep poverty. Nay, we

even enjoy a certain amount of prosperity. Now, therefore, let our thank-offerings be laid on the altar of Him "from whom all blessings flow." He will graciously accept them. And more,—He will richly return them to us making them "twice-blessed;" and giving us to realize, in our own glad experience, the truth of his own great utterance, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

We remain, Dear Brethren,
Your fellow-laborers in the Gospel,
(Signed by Order.)

J. DAVIS, President.
D. A. VAUGHAN, Secretary.
Charlottetown, Feb. 1869.

THE CHILD'S LESSON.

It was a stormy evening, and the snow was falling thick and fast, while the wind howled mournfully among the streets and alleys of the great metropolis, with a melancholy wailing sound, like the voice of a homeless ghost. The few foot passengers hurried along, shawled and muffled to the very ears, beggars crouched, shivering in door ways, and under sheds; and as the darkening twilight gradually descended, the whole scene wore an aspect of bleak and intense gloom. Even the wealthy merchant, as he stood in the door of his establishment, shuddered, involuntarily, as he drew his mantle closer about his throat, preparatory to facing the wintry storm, on his homeward way.

Just as he was about to step from the warm and luxurious atmosphere into the biting air without, his agent came hurrying in with a bundle of papers under his arm, and wearing a business-like demeanour, which at once attracted the attention of his employer.

"Well?" interrogated the merchant, shortly, for he was in a hurry to be at home.

"I am late sir, I know," said the agent, "but I was unavoidably detained. That poor woman down on Morden Street cannot pay this quarter's rent, again. Last quarter she was deficient also, and I see plainly that you can expect nothing of her."

"Well," said the merchant, coldly, as he drew on his gloves, "What is the use of troubling me with this affair? I suppose you know what to do about it?"

"I know sir," responded the agent, who, although what is generally considered a hard business man, was not without a gleam of latent kindness in his heart; "but her situation is really very bad—husband dead, children ailing, health miserable—she says she has worked her fingers to the very bone to raise the rent; and I believe it to be so, from all I have seen."

"I don't know that I'm to be held responsible for everybody else's misfortunes," said the merchant still more sharply. "Why did she take a house if she could not pay for it? I can make no exceptions to my ordinary rules."

"But sir," said the agent, "to turn any one out such weather, so—so sickly, too, as they seem—"

"If I once begin, there will be no end to this sort of thing," said the merchant, pushing past the speaker; "general rules must bear hard on particular cases. I can't afford to lose my rent in this manner. Let every one take care of himself say I."

He nodded hurriedly as he spoke, and passed out into the open air. It was no slight task to breast the angry storm, and as the merchant passed along, holding his wrapper close to his chest, he could not banish one or two slight twinges of conscience respecting his late interview with the agent. However, he continued to check that "still small voice" of the internal monitor by the business maxims which may do well to stifle the reproachful thrill that sometimes haunts the hardest heart, but which will shrink into nothingness when pleaded before the awful bar of God!

"Please, sir, a penny!" moaned a voice as he struggled onwards, and a gaunt hand was laid upon his arm. "I never begged before sir, and it's little I ask now of your abundance!"

The merchant looked down with an angry frown, as he met the appalling gaze of two

dark hollow eyes. It was a mere boy, slender and pale, as he saw by the dim flickering light of the gas lamp close by.

"Not a farthing!" he cried sternly.—"Beggars every where! Can't you leave me a minute's peace?"

He hastened onward with impatient speed, while the boy sank back on the door step with a low half audible sob, bursting from the depths of a breaking heart.

The sound caught the rich man's ear.—He looked around half irresolutely, but in an instant went on exclaiming, "A worthless impostor, no doubt—let the public authorities take care of him. It's none of my business!"

And yet little as the reader might suspect it, this man could be both kind hearted and generous. In the family circle, in the church, or among his friends, he scattered money and kind words with a liberal profusion; but in all the little charities of daily work-day life, his heart was closed to the mute appeal of want—closed by long habit and by the false laws and maxims that surround so many in their intercourse with the world.

One or two more streets were soon passed, and he stood in the entrance of his own magnificent home.

Hardly had the merchant entered, when a slight figure came bounding down the flight of stairs at the further end of the hall to meet him. She was the orphaned child of his only sister—the sole heiress to all his wealth, and the one being on earth whom he worshipped more than his gold.

She led him upstairs to his drawing-room an apartment even more splendid than the spacious hall below. The merchant sat down before the cheerful fire, with the little one at his feet, and listened with a loving smile to all her innocent childish prattle.

"Uncle what have you been doing to-day?" asked the child, at length, after a slight pause.

"Why, little one, you could not understand all these business affairs,—your curly head must be filled with pleasanter matters! I have been piling up money for you, Amy—loading off ships for the East—and planning about a thousand different schemes."

The little girl sat looking thoughtfully into the fire for a minute or two—

"But I mean, Uncle," she resumed in an instant, with a wishful gaze, "have you been doing anything that will make you feel happy when you lie awake at night, listening to the wind?"

The merchant looked at her, half surprised, while an uneasy, almost a guilty feeling drawn him as if some rash hand had drawn aside the curtain of his most secret soul. Her simple words seemed to awake buried memories in his heart, and an old sentence crept into his brain that he had not thought of for a long, long time, and almost unconsciously murmured aloud those solemn and sublime words,

"He giveth songs in the night."

"I remember that, Uncle" cried the little one, her grave face breaking into a quick sunshiny smile. "Miss Warren makes me learn a verse every day from the Bible, and I learned that not long ago."

"Indeed, that's a good plan, my little rose bud," not sorry for a reasonable excuse to turn the conversation, for sundry intrusive misgivings were rankling in his mind, "What have you learned to-day?"

Little Amy crossed her hands softly on her breast, and looked upward with a reverent air, while she softly repeated the sentence:—

"Freely ye have received, freely give."

The merchant started from his chair as if struck by a thunderbolt. He stood a moment, and then began to pace the floor, with a hurried, uneven step, appearing unaware of little Amy's eager questions and astonished look.

How plainly they rose before him—the meek, pale face of the poor widow, whose home he had that day taken from her—the hollow eyes of the beggar at the road side, ten thousand other haunting shadows peopling every corner of that regal apartment. While like a trumpet sounded in his ears the prophetic words, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Five minutes elapsed, and he was still walking the floor with the same restless tread, his soul tossed backwards and forwards by contending emotions. Suddenly he stopped before the fire again.

"Where is my hat, Amy, dear?"

"Why, don't you hear the snow beat up against the window, Uncle? Are you going out again in the wind and storm?"

"I must my darling. There is something very important I have forgotten."

And he went forth again into the darkness and howling tempest, with a strong, brave resolution, striving in his heart against the pang of remorse that the sweet child's voice had uninvitingly awakened. As he turned to look back for an instant, he beheld an infant face at the window, with long sunny curls falling around its earnest brow. She was watching him on his way—his little guardian angel!

The boy still sat on the door step in a narrow street with his face buried in his hands, and apparently lost in a sort of stupor. The merchant softly touched his shoulder. He looked up with a start, but almost ere his bewildered eyes could recognize any distinct form in the dim lamp light, he was alone again, while the glimmering ray was reflected from a broad piece of silver in his hand. He staggered to his feet with a faint exclamation, and the wealthy merchant went on his way, rendered richer far by "the blessing of him that was ready to perish!"

It was growing late and no one was in the office when the merchant arrived there, except his agent and book-keeper, who were comparing some accounts. They both rose to their feet astonished at this unusual apparition—

"Mr. Parker!"

"Sir!"

"Did you follow my directions about that woman—that poor widow in Morden Street?"

"I haven't yet, sir," stammered the agent.—"The first thing to-morrow I intend to—"

"Tell her she may keep the house for the present, and we'll say nothing about the rent. We must not be too hard upon the poor people, Mr. Parker. And stay—send her round to my house to-morrow, and we'll see what can be done for her."

Before the good natured agent could express his sincere pleasure at this novel aspect of things, the door had closed, and his employer was hastening homeward again, with a far lighter and more cheerful heart.

"It is true," he mused, while his footsteps mechanically trod the old accustomed route, "I am the almoner of my Father's bounty. Strange that it never occurred to me before, how much good might be done in the highways and bye-ways of this world. How many—many years I have walked in luxury, while brethren were fainting on the wayside for but a morsel of my own overflowing plenty. It shall be so no more!—The future is my own;—but for the long irrevocable past, God forgive me, for I cannot forgive myself!"

The red glow of the fire was shining over a silent group in that lofty room. The merchant in his easy chair, with an open book on the stand at his side, and the beautiful child sitting at his feet, her fair face half in the shadow, and the sunny hair parted back from the transparent brow, like bands of gold. The serious tender eyes, were fixed on the old man's countenance with loving earnestness.

"What are you murmuring to yourself, Uncle, dear?"

"Look my little Amy."

He held the old time worn Bible so that the fire light gleamed upon its sacred page, and bending down, the child read the sweet words;—"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise!"

REVIVAL OF HEATHEN CRUELITIES.—A missionary in the Madras district of Southern India, says that the barbarous practice of hook-swinging, which has been discontinued for many years, is again revived, and is likely again to become common, as it is understood that the government will not interfere to prevent it.

Forgive thyself nothing and others much.