

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

TO THE REV. WM. GEORGE, MIS-
SIONARY ENVOY TO BURMAH.

BY THE REV. JAMES SPENCER.

By love constrained go and proclaim
To distant Karens veiled in night,
The potency of that bless'd name
Which changes darkness into light.

With straining eyes they westward look
For men their bondage to release,
To bring them to the Holy Book
And publish on their mountains peace.

Go then and seek thy wandering flock,
Whose land no living waters give,
And point to them the Sanctified Rock,
And bid them drink its streams and live.

Go to that parched and arid field,
With heavenly seeds implant the ground:
So shall the desert harvests yield,
And with the reaper's song resound.

Go, take to them the living bread
Which God to us has freely given,
And let their famished souls be fed
With manna that comes down from heaven.

Go bid the lame with gladness bound,
And teach the silent tongue to sing,
And let the distant vales resound
The praise of Zion's Glorious King.

Religious.

LETTER FROM REV. A. F. PORTER.

TARNAGULLA, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA,
July 15th, 1869.

Dear Bro. Selden;—

This is a world of change and disappointment. Man appoints but God disappoints. It was my fixed purpose to settle in New Zealand but God's ways are not our ways. After writing you from Dunedin I visited some of the gold fields, and the Lord went with me, and greatly aided me to deliver my message of salvation. I preached in six different gold districts to large and attentive audiences, and was greatly encouraged. In four of these places the people urged me to settle among them, offering to support me liberally, the collections alone during my three weeks travel amounted to \$70. I should have been disposed to locate myself in the Mount Ida gold district where I have reason to believe my labors were owned of God in the conversion of souls, but I learned that the winters here are very severe. Not so long, and cold as in Nova Scotia but very wet, and trying. They have snow in the valleys about a month, and on the mountains all around in sight of the town the year round; and I was convinced that the climate would be very much against me. My answer to them was, I am in the hands of God and if he orders it I shall return. On my return to Dunedin I found a letter from Bro. Levi W. Eaton of Auckland, urging me to remove my family to Auckland without delay; and go to the Thames Gold fields to take charge of the Baptist interest there. I was convinced that here was a large field of usefulness open before me, and that the climate is all that can be desired, and also that I should be handsomely supported, (I regard this last as a minor consideration) though it costs twice as much to live in N. Z. as in N. S. But there was the Maori war, which I can assure you is no small affair—I am for peace, and did not feel much inclined, after coming so far, to seek a home, to settle my family in a country surrounded by such reckless savage hordes as are all around the Thames. There was also a very encouraging letter from Dr. Hobbs, of Sydney, N. S. Wales, informing me of the state of the Baptist Churches in N. S. W. and Victoria, and describing the climate as the best in the world for my complaint, I was now in great doubt what to do. So I laid the two letters before the

Lord and earnestly sought divine direction. The result was that in four days we were all on board the fine steamer Tarasua 1000 tons sailing for Melbourne with the intention of visiting Bro. Hobbs as he had sent us a pressing invitation. The first place we called at was Port Littleton, where we remained twenty-four hours, I took the steam cars and went up to Christ Church a distance of ten miles, 1½ miles of this line is a tunnel through a very high mountain. This is the prettiest town I ever saw. It is surrounded by rich level plains for about thirty miles with high towering mountains far in the distance, while that on the Port Lyttleton side is very near looking down upon the city; presenting on the whole a scene whose magnificence beggars all description. Here are beautiful hedges for fences, and extensive fields of golden wheat now ready for the reapers. Here I found a close communion Baptist Church with a fine new chapel, but without a Pastor, I expected to meet the Rev. Mr. Thornton who had been their successful Pastor for four or five years, not knowing that he had left the place. I soon learned that he had fallen into some disgrace on account of some irregularities of many years ago, that recently came to the knowledge of his congregation, and greatly interfered with his usefulness. So he had suddenly decamped to parts unknown some two months before. Here were six converts waiting for Baptism, and there seemed to be a gracious work going on among the people. They wished me very much to remain and break to them the bread of life, but how could I? The ship was out in the Harbor of Port L. My family were on board. Our stuff in the hold, only an hour to decide, and £30 sterling paid for our passage to Melbourne, I could only say, The Lord's will be done, I may be directed to return. They followed me to the station, and expressed an earnest desire that the return steamer would bring me back. We next visited Wellington which is a pretty little town all surrounded by lofty mountains, but it is a very dull place, especially now on account of the Maori troubles which are principally in Wellington Province. We next crossed, and sailed down Cook's Strait and called for twenty hours at the city of Nelson.

Here I was first met by Mr. Dodson formerly from Nova Scotia. He is now a wealthy brewer, I spent a few hours very agreeably at his mansion, feasted on his delicious grapes and peaches. Nelson is noted for its fine fruit. It is a snug little thriving, home-like town of about 4000 inhabitants.

In the evening the Rev. Mr. Davis formerly a missionary in Ceylon, now the Pastor of the Baptist Church in this place, came on board and would have us all go up and spend the evening at his house. He had not enjoyed a visit from a Baptist minister for four years. So we took the horse cars and went up to the city with him, and had a most delightful time. About 11 o'clock he accompanied us back to the ship and we took an affectionate leave of this dear brother in the Lord. It poured rain all the time we were in Nelson yet we formed a very favorable impression of the place and people.

We parted from this kind brother on Saturday night, and it was arranged that if we should not leave next day, I should preach for him; but at 9 a. m., next morning we were steaming down the harbor, so we saw him no more.

We then sailed down the west coast to Greymouth, where we exchanged a number of passengers. This is a very flourishing gold mining town of 2000 inhabitants. A little further down we called at Hokitika a Mushroom city of 6000 people. There is nothing attractive here but gold. The town is surrounded by a dark, dense forest, and it rains nearly all the year. The harbor cannot be entered by ships, and only at high water by small coasters. The passengers and freight were taken off in the night, while it was calm and we lay at anchor, by a small steam boat kept there by the company for the purpose, but the next day when it came out with about 36 passengers for Melbourne—it blew a gale,

as it most always does here. And there was a scene, in getting them all safely on board which can be better imagined than described, but at last all are safe and the bags of gold too, and after six days of continuous head gales we enter the beautiful Yarra, and wind our narrow way about three miles up to the city of Melbourne. We had been on board fourteen days, but this is nothing for us now, and we enjoyed the passage much. I would give you a description of Melbourne and its many beautiful suburban towns, but I have too much else to write, and must defer this until another time when I hope also to give an account of Otago. Waiting here for further advice from Bro. Hobbs we rented a pretty little cottage in the city of Callingwood two miles from Melbourne. Here we stayed six weeks during which time I had preached in most of the Baptist Churches in and around the city of Melbourne, in Collin's St., and Albert St. Churches, in Melbourne, in Callingwood. Two Sabbaths in the City of Emerald Hill, here I was much interested. And one in the City of Williams town.

There is a Baptist Association in Victoria similar to yours. This Association has what is called an Executive Committee, something like your missionary board, which meets in Melbourne monthly. This committee after hearing me preach, requested me to take three months mission to Tarnagulla, where there was a small Baptist church that had been six months without a Pastor. I agreed to spend two weeks with them, or until I should hear from Dr. H. The time was set, and the church advised of my coming, when two letters came from Christ Church praying me to "go over and help them," which I felt disposed to do; I took these letters to the Secretary, Bro. Wade, an aged divine, asking him to release me from my engagement. His answer was, "My dear brother go up to Tarnagulla two weeks and if you do not think the call to labor there quite as urgent as this from Christ Church, then you can determine yourself what course to pursue." So I came 78 miles by rail and 30 miles by coach. The brethren met me, and gave me a warm reception. After the first Lord's Day it was evident that God had sent me, and had a great work for me to do at this place.

The Church consisted of thirty bona fide members. They have had a pastor for five years, but there had been no net increase, and they were discouraged. They have a neat stone building called *Ebenezer Chapel*, and a parsonage free from debt. The Church immediately awoke. Hope revived, and they poured out their hearts in prayer and praise. Sinners cried for mercy, the waters were troubled the second Sabbath. Here is a fine baptistery that never was before consecrated by a baptism, and you may be sure it caused no small stir in the town. The latent enmity to our principles was fully aroused and warnings thundered from some pulpits, but we paid little attention to these things as it was evident God was at work among us. The place became too strait, the congregations greatly increased so that the house that was never before filled would not hold the people and great numbers had to go away for want of sittings. After three weeks they gave me a unanimous call to become their minister, offering me \$20 a week and house free, and gave me \$125 to move my family up, and commence housekeeping. I told them my principles, as a N. S. Baptist, in the plainest terms, and they agreed to them, though formerly *open communion*, in the fullest sense of the term. This was also a mixed church, but they have seen the evils arising from such disorder, and are now whole Baptists. So seven weeks ago I moved my family to the parsonage, which has been thoroughly renovated and a large addition made to it for us, and we are quite comfortable and happy in the work which I know has been assigned me by my Master. Eighteen have been added to the church and we have a baptism every week, and the good work still goes on. This is a gold-mining town of 2600 inhabitants. It has nearly all been dug over, and now they are far down in the earth. The sound of crushers is heard

night and day, only stopping 25 hours for Sabbaths. I preach once a week in a similar mining town three miles away, called *Maidentown* or *New Chum*, also once a week in a beautiful agricultural town five miles from here called *New Bridge*—where there is a growing interest. So you see I am not idle, I preach five times a week and attend other meetings. My health has been very good. After the winter set in, which is the rainy season, my lung pained me considerably, and I was afraid I should again break down, but God has been better to me than my fears. I am now quite strong again. It is now mid-winter, and the weather is delightful. My peas, turnips, onions, &c. are just up, and the grass and trees are very green. Gold mining and grape and wheat growing are the principal industries in this colony, but I do not think mining pays any better here than in Nova Scotia, and I would quite as soon be a farmer there as here. Some seasons are very good, but more are cursed with drought, and thousands of sheep and cattle die for want of water. There are no wells of pure water here, below the surface it is brackish. The water for house use is all caught from the iron roofs.

Miners' wages here average £2 10s. sterling a week; farmers and shepherds not nearly so much. The climate for nine months of the year is delightful—then come the hot winds, or black winds as some call them, which from their description I judge must be something fearful. The forests are ever green but not pretty like home. The scenery so far as I have traveled in the colony is very tame, and uninteresting. No doubt this is destined to be a great country, but I would candidly advise my friends at home who are doing well, to be contented at home—and if they are not doing well there, they would not be very likely to do better here. It is true a good many fortunes have been made here—but not more than one in twenty is successful; quite as many get rich there as here, and I am sure the common people in Nova Scotia live far better than they do here. Hundreds, you thousands of people here are striving with all their might to make enough to go home and be comfortable, and they seem to care very little how they subsist while here, so as they can realise their fondly cherished expectations.

But truly, here is a great field for experienced Baptist ministers. There are many more churches than pastors, and there is great demand for more ministerial labor, both here and in New Zealand. I know of many places where an earnest man could get good support and do great good. And if any of our ministers at home need a change for their health, I would recommend them to come out here. I have never regretted leaving my dear country, now dearer to me than ever, and I don't think I ever shall, although I have been led in a strange way—it is all for my good, and I trust for the honor of my Saviour. I can truly say I have never been happier in my work than since I settled here. A few days ago I was overjoyed to get 12 Nos. of the *Christian Messenger* from New Zealand—none later than January; please send them direct to me after receipt of this. I never prized your paper so highly before—don't fail to send it regularly.

Four members of this Church are Nova Scotians, but the most part are English. There are thirty-five Baptist Churches belonging to the Association, and a number independent of it. There are many flourishing cities and from all accounts I conclude the Country is going ahead rapidly.

Yours truly,

A. F. PORTER.

For the Christian Messenger.

BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

A GOSPEL LETTER.

Boston, Aug. 18th, 1869.

With us this is "vacation" season. The Pastor leaves his pulpit, the merchant his counting room, the lawyer his office, the mechanic his workshop, and all rush pell mell, crowding cars and steamer,—for