

Correspondence.

A FIVE DOLLAR BLESSING.

"How low folks are in their minds!" said Brother Smith to Brother Brown, as they two sat by the fire in the vestry on a Thursday evening, waiting for the people to gather to the weekly meeting.

Brother Brown listened to this oration with much attention, and made answer in a similar strain, bewailing the lowliness of Zion, and wishing for "better days."

"What can we do to bring about these 'better days'?" asked Brother Smith, putting a few more sticks on the fire.

"He sells his marketable wood at six dollars a cord, burns tree limbs at home, and picks up wet stuff for the church."

"That is not treating God's house with proper respect" replied Brother Smith. "No wonder Brother Dix is in a low state of mind, a backslidden, lukewarm state."

"He says he can't find wood for the meeting-house, and pay a subscription to the minister too,—it is too heavy a draft upon him,—so he sells the best wood, to get money to pay his subscription," remarked Brother Brown.

"This is but a subterfuge to hide his narrowness," said Brother Smith. "Brother Dix is able to do much more than he does for the support of the gospel. I wish that I had the money at interest that he has. But to return to the point from which we have wandered,—what can we do to improve our spiritual health and vigour?"

"I have thought upon this point considerably," said Brother Brown, "and have about come to the conclusion that we shall never accomplish much in spiritual things with our present minister. He seemed to run well for a season, but now all is at a stand-still—nay, even going backward. Our converts of a year ago, where are they? You can't lay your finger on one out of three of them. One of the regular prayer meetings has completely died out, the other is just ready to expire, and here we two sit to represent the weekly meeting. The minister is not in his place, church members are engaged in their worldly affairs. We need a man that shall get up a grand awakening."

"But whom can we get?" enquired Brother Smith. "With our means we can't command the first talent, you know. Our minister is a pretty fair sort of a man, if that he had more of the Spirit, though I regret to say, he is getting rather cold and lifeless. Think of his neglecting the weekly meeting! How can we expect the members will be otherwise than backward if the minister sets the example!"

"I never knew him absent before" said Brother Brown, and think he must be unexpectedly called away, or something detains him at home."

Brother Brown arose, and while the two were preparing to leave, some light feet were heard ascending the vestry stairs, and a lady stood before them.

"Oh," she said, "you are about leaving. I have hurried as fast as I could to get down here to let the people know, if any were gathered for the weekly meeting, the reason of the minister's absence. His wife is sick, and he got out of dry wood yesterday. This morning he expected a load, but it didn't come, so he had to hire a team to go to fetch it. He said he would try to be back by half-past six, but if he failed, I must endeavour to leave his wife long enough to let the people who might gather know the cause of his absence. Mrs. Denham is so sick, and I have had such a struggle to keep her room comfort-

able with the green wood, that I have not been able to get down here, till now."

"I am sorry there is sickness in Mr. Denham's family," said Brother Smith. "Ministers are very apt to get sickly wives, I believe."

"You are right, and no wonder," replied the lady.

"I don't know why you said that," remarked Brother Smith.

"It would require an unusually strong constitution to endure the anxiety to which minister's wives are ordinarily subjected," said the lady.

"Anxieties!" repeated Brother Smith, "what anxieties have they beyond women in general?"

"Most women when they eat one meal, have some tolerably definite idea, as to where the next is to come from," was the response; "but minister's wives don't always have this comfortable assurance. I know Mrs. Denham don't."

"Are the minister's family complaining of their fare amongst us?" asked Brother Smith, rather sensitively.

"No,—at least I never heard them complain of anything, though how a woman can get along as Mrs. Denham does is surprising to me. In feeble health, with two small children, company at a moment's warning, and often the slenderest stock out of which to prepare acceptable food to set before guests; a poor inconvenient house, scantily furnished, and never a month's wood in the house in the depth of winter."

"You are making out quite a case," interrupted Brother Brown; "but I don't know who is to blame for this state of things. When Mr. Denham came among us, we subscribed certain sums for his support, and expect to meet our obligations like christian men. He knew about the sum we would be able to raise. Had he deemed it insufficient, he was at liberty to say as much, and seek some other field of labour."

The lady bowed, and glanced around the vestry. "How many came in to attend the meeting this afternoon," she enquired.

"Only myself and Brother Brown," was Brother Smith's reply. "Religion is at a low ebb with us. We had been deploring the lukewarm state of our church when you entered."

"What did you conclude was the cause of it," enquired the lady, resting against the form, and placing her feet to the fire.

"We think there are more causes than one," Brother Smith replied. "I suppose some of us may have neglected our duties, and so displeased our Master. Then we are all apt to lean, more or less, upon our minister, and ours doesn't seem to be in the place he was some months ago. Brother Brown and I have been considering whether or no, when the year is up to let him go, and try another one."

"Then you have become dissatisfied with Mr. Denham?" asked the lady.

"Well, we should not wish to say that exactly," was the reply. "Perhaps the man does as well as he can, though he has not the life and power of some ministers. I have not been as blessed under his preaching as I expected to be at the outset, and Brother Brown's experience corresponds with my own."

"Yes," said Brother Brown, approaching, "I confess, Mr. Denham has not come up to my expectations. When he first came among us I thought he was going to be an instrument in the hand of God of doing much good in the community and in the church. But these prospects are all overcast. It looks gloomy ahead. Mr. Denham has lost much of his spirituality, or I am no judge of such matters. The blessing I obtain from his ministrations is very small."

"If you get a five dollar blessing, I don't see what more you could expect" said the lady in a quiet tone of voice. Her words were electric. The two men looked quickly at each other, and turned towards the door.

Brother Smith and Brother Brown commenced with themselves that night. They were both worth their thousands. The little woman at the vestry was dependent on her exertions for her support. Yet on the minister's subscription, her name was down for an equal sum with Brother Smith and Brother Brown, and she had found no dearth of spirituality in Mr. Denham's sermons. On the contrary they had fed her soul from Sabbath to Sabbath. She saw the ministers family were pinched every way. The very small salary was slow and irregular in coming in, and they often lacked the comforts, if not the necessities of life. These things depressed Mr. Denham. He was comparatively young, peculiarly diffident, greatly lacking in self-

assertion. He could not go to men of wealth, years his senior, and ask for the pittance they had subscribed towards his salary. But he felt that God would withhold his blessing from those who treated his cause so niggardly, and prayed in his closet that God would deliver his church from the thrall of covetousness. It was a hard place to work, and when added to other difficulties, his wife fell sick, Mr. Denham felt he would not be sorry to end his labors there with the closing year.—But "a word in season how good is it!" and the little woman who visited the vestry on monthly meeting day, had spoken that word—"If you got a five dollar blessing, I don't know what more you can expect."

What more, truly! they were able to pay twenty-five. Such a sum would be no more for them than five for the vestry woman. They had raised two hundred and fifty dollars for their minister! How could they expect God's blessing till they righted this wrong in their midst.

Brother Brown and Brother Smith sent their boys next day with a load of dry kindlings and wood to their minister. Then Brother Smith who held the subscription list drew it forth, and placed a figure 1 at the left hand of the 5, which stood against his name, and it now reads:

"Alpheus Smith, \$15." He thought it was an improvement, and was so pleased with it that he went round to see how many would be of the same opinion. He found several, and quite a little purse of ready money was made up for the minister. Brother Smith and Brother Brown found the sermons more spiritual at once. The prayer meetings put on new life, and soon there were indications of a genuine revival of religion. The brethren openly declared that they believed that covetousness was the great sin in their midst with which God was angry. Brother Dix felt the force of their words and handed two cords of the best marketable wood into the church sheds for winter fires.

When Mr. Denham's year came round, instead of seeking a new field with a heart depressed by manifold temporal trials, he was laboring in the midst of protracted meetings, where crowds of anxious souls flocked to the altar seeking salvation through Jesus.

Brother Smith liked his \$15 blessing so well, that he thought he must make it twenty-five next year, and so he did,—also Brother Brown, and a good many others, doubled their first subscription. How strong that once weak church grew! What a power for good it became in the community! What happy converts went down into the baptismal waters! How strong were its laymen in the spirit and power of truth! What a godly pride that pastor felt in his people! Yes, and even the wicked and careless said:—"There is a set of men and women who practice as they preach; they honor their profession; they give without stint for the support of their cause, there must be something in a gospel for which men will sacrifice worldly gain."

Oh, professed christians, are you starving your souls on a "Five Dollar Blessing," and wondering at your hunger? "Go ye and do likewise."

For the Christian Messenger.

A VISIT TO THE PARSONAGE.

My dear Brother Selden,—

On the first of May last, after a ten day's voyage from Liverpool, I landed in the city of Halifax. There I met with a very cordial reception from numerous Baptist brethren. Very soon my steps were directed, in the most plain and unmistakable manner by the Great Head of the Church, to the very pleasant village of Bridgetown. Since coming amongst the people here, it would be impossible to speak too highly of their manifold and unceasing kindness to one who is a stranger in a strange land. Not a week has passed away without some token of friendly feeling. This feeling manifested itself in the most tangible manner on Thursday, the 21st of the present month.

Early in the afternoon friends from Bridgetown and the vicinity began to take possession of the parsonage. As the day wore on the number rapidly increased. A bountiful repast was provided by the sisters. "The cup which cheers, but not inebriates" was patronized most liberally. The celebrated R. Hall, it is said, would sometimes drink as many as sixteen cups of tea; I need scarcely say, however, that the friends on this occasion were satisfied with a lesser quantity.

Too over, the business of the evening began. E. Bent, Esq., was called to occupy

the chair. Brother Solomon Chute presented the Pastor with a purse of money, as a token of esteem from the church and congregation, as well as friends not connected with our own denomination. After a reply from the pastor, several brethren, including the Methodist and Presbyterian ministers of the place, spoke with considerable liveliness and feeling.

Kindly reference was made to the former pastor, Brother G. Armstrong, A. M., whose labors in the past have endeared him to a large circle of friends.

The weather, though severely cold, was extremely favorable, and all present at the gathering, which was very large, seemed brimming over with enjoyment.

The amount presented, in money and various useful articles, reached the noble sum of \$161 72, besides \$5 50, presented to the pastor's wife. Such gifts as these show the warmth of christian sympathy, and greatly cheer the servant of Christ in laboring for the souls of men. Of all these kind and thoughtful donors, I can only say, my heart thanks them.

I feel it my duty to write you these particulars for publication in the Christian Messenger; and it rejoices my heart exceedingly to think that these friendly acts are recorded by the nail-pierced hand of Jesus in "the book of God's remembrance." We feel as though we could hear the voice of our Well-beloved say: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

May each contributor "receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Thus prays,

Yours sincerely in the best of bonds,  
J. CLARK.

For the Christian Messenger.

MISSIONARY MEETING AT PINE GROVE.

PARADISE, Jan. 19th, 1875.

Dear Editor,—

The Fourth Anniversary of the Women's Missionary Aid Society of the Pine Grove Baptist Church was held on Monday evening, the 11th inst. The sisters had exerted themselves to prepare an interesting entertainment, and their efforts were not in vain. I have not the programme before me, and can, therefore only indicate the character of the exercises.

After the reading of the report, there were select readings, recitations, dialogues, and addresses, interspersed with excellent missionary music. To ensure variety in the addresses each speaker, when invited, had a particular topic assigned to him.

All the readings and recitations were very appropriate, and contained pointed truths. I was much interested in one exercise which consisted of questions asked by one of the sisters and answered in concert by two little boys and three little girls.

Much information concerning our own mission was brought out by this exercise. From the collection taken at the close, the amount of which I did not learn, but which I noticed contained considerable silver, as well as from the interested attention of the audience, I trust the interest in missions was increased by the exercises of the evening.

A. COHOON.

The following is the Annual Report of this Society:

As the fourth year of the existence of our Woman's Missionary Aid Society has closed, we would acknowledge that by Divine favor, we still continue anxious to do something for the cause of our Redeemer. We have had our trials and discouragements, saddened by the death of one valuable member.

We also deeply regret the removal of others, but God has been our helper. We are numerically this year much the same as heretofore. Dues have been paid promptly, and in one instance doubled. Monthly meetings for prayer and missionary conference have been attended as punctually as circumstances would permit; and although we feel that our part in the great work is very small, yet we earnestly desire that the Gospel seed now being sown may be abundantly successful. It has been said we sympathize with Foreign Missions to the exclusion of others, but we trust we feel a deep interest in every effort to evangelize the world. Our hearts often thrill with sorrow for Europe, as well as India. Germany with all its institutions of learning, has its dark corners; restless, pleasure-seeking France, with many other nations, have but a glimmering light here and there; Rome, where Paul labored and suffer-

ed, has been like a sealed book, but the Lord has opened it, and the old manuscript is being written over with a bolder, freer hand in living, glowing characters, which we trust, will obliterate the dead letter of Popery. Already has its enlivening influence been felt by some of the priests, while many are walking about with sanctimonious faces, saying to each other, "We must die," when the response comes, "Yes brother we must die." Spurgeon says he thinks it the very best thing they can do, considering their uselessness. They prepare for the terrors of death by associating their minds with its gloom knowing nothing of the victory wrought by the blood of the Lamb.

But when we consider the uncivilized millions of the East, Godless, hopeless, helpless, and depraved, their intellect cramped by the weight of moral darkness that prevails, and so few to labor for them, can any intelligent person say we have done enough? that Foreign Missions too much occupy our attention? Shall we remain heedless to the cry of those who have learned their own condition and the pleadings of God's workers.

True, various denominations contributed their aid, and the labours of good men have been rewarded by the conversion of hundreds. Karens, Telogoons, and other nations have listened and believed, and bigoted idol serving Burmese, have been brought into the service of Christ. Even Chinese with their fantastic ideas of celestial sovereignty have condescended to credit the gospel message. But how few compared to the mass yet unsaved. But what of Siam, is it impenetrable. More so than Burmah was when Judson entered its hostile cities, climbed its palm-clad hills, and suffered violent persecution, for the sake of his Master.

We glance at the needs of Africa and the islands of the sea and feel that the harvest is indeed great, but the laborers few.

May we have faith to pray that the bright, soft, purifying light of the great Missionary may shed its rays upon every mountain and valley degraded by idolatry and superstition, until the sweet sound comes ringing over the waters that the mental darkness of miriads has been dispelled, and they have been made willing by His power, to crown him Lord of all.

LOUISA A. MOREHOUSE,  
Secretary.

Religious Intelligence.

CAPE BRETON CONFERENCE.

The Quarterly Conference of the Baptist ministers and churches was held at Cow Bay, January 15th to 19th. On Friday the 15th an address was given by Brother Brown. On Saturday evening Brother Armstrong preached; also on Sunday, morning and evening. In the afternoon addresses were given by Bros. A. and B. to the parents, teachers and scholars. On Monday afternoon two papers were read, followed by discussion and criticism; one by Bro. A. on "The Kingdom of God," the other by Brother B. on "The work of the Holy Spirit." Both brethren were requested to forward their papers to the Messenger for publication. In the evening addresses were given by these brethren, after which it was suggested that any brother or sister should quote a promise or promises from the Bible and speak upon it. This was readily responded to by the brethren; a very pleasant time was spent in that exercise. On Tuesday Bros. A. and B. held a service at Homeville. In the evening a missionary meeting was held at Cow Bay, the brethren speaking on "Nova Scotia Home and Foreign Missions" and "British Home and Foreign Missions." Considering the state of the weather, the meetings were remarkably well attended throughout. We were favored by the visit of friends from Homeville, South Head, Big Glace Bay, and Little Glace Bay.

Yours very truly,  
J. BROWN, Secretary.

ANTIGONISH, January 25, 1875.—Dear Editor.—In addition to the many articles of value received from the different sections of my field of labour and already acknowledged, allow me to acknowledge the receipt of \$50 a New Year's gift of the Antigonish Church. You need not be surprised Mr. Editor, at this fresh token of the people's generosity, for I assure you, it is just like them. Always abounding in works of love, may the good Lord continue to bless them most abundantly.

Since the commencement of the Week of Prayer we have been holding Union