

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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WHOLE SERIES.
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POETRY.

A Christmas Hymn.
It was the calm and silent night,
Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to fight,
And how had Rome of kind that sea,
No sound was heard of chattering wars,
Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain,
Apollo, Pallas, Jove and Mars,
Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
And in the solemn midnight,
It was the calm and silent night,
The senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient, urged his chariot's flight,
From lordly revels, halting homes,
Triumphal arches gleaming swell,
His breast with thoughts of boundless
What rec'd the Roman what tell
"A party province far away,"
In the solemn midnight,
Within that province far away,
Went plodding home a weary boor,
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable door,
Across his path. He passed, for naught
Tells what was going on within,
Here, when the stable boy only thought,
The air, how calm, and cold, and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Oh, strange indifference! Low and high,
Drowned over common joys and cares,
The earth was still, but knew not why,
The world was listening, unaware,
How calm and silent, and how still,
One that shall thrill the world for ever,
To that still moment, none would heed,
Man's doom was linked no more to sever,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

RELIGIOUS.

Active Work the Condition of Endurance.
and rendered drowsy by the cold, sink
into the slumber which is the harbinger
of death. What shall the others do?
Crawl closer together to cherish
little animal heat they yet retain, while
they cast a look of pity on their perishing
comrades? Nay, if they do, they
too will surely die; if they would live,
they must hasten to their feet, rouse
the others from their deadly sleep, rub
vigorously the reclining frames with
the snow that lies thickly round, till
they have recalled them to life and
motion and the very effort made by
them will be the means of their own
salvation.

When we find churches, the members
of which do no work for God, except in
speaking words of comfort to their
brethren in the social meeting, and
even thinking this "a cross," instead
regarding it as a child regards his
pettle; in his father's house, we need
not wonder why they are in no cold,
feeble and dying a stiffer; nor need we
feel surprised at beholding the deserted
and closed sanctuaries that tell of
defunct assemblies of the saints. No
many churches remain in this land,
Christ has said what He said to the
church in Laodicea. "I know thy
works, that thou art neither cold nor
hot; so then because thou art lukewarm
and neither cold nor hot, I will
spue thee out of my mouth." And
the result is, that just as on walking
by the sea-shore we tread on empty
shells that, once inhabited by living
creatures, have been cast up by the sea,
so the shells of the dead, so in-
travelling through the country we see
those deserted sanctuaries, and memo-
rials of departed life. The grandest
church of modern times to my mind,
is not one of those of world-wide fame,
but a little church in New York, with
twenty male members, yet of these,
thirteen are lay preachers of the gospel,
who supply the stations every week;
this church recognizes its aggressive
mission, for it has a rule refusing into
its fellowship any male who, living in
age and health, is able to do the work,
will not pledge himself to this effort,
at his own expense. This will be a
strong because it is an active church,
for strength is the result of activity,
not the cause of it; is many say; and
think. The weaker the church is, the
more need is there for its activity if it
is to live.

In the early stages of decay members
of a church often comfort themselves
by saying, "I do take care of His
church." Yes, it is true, but not
of any and every organization that calls
itself a church of Christ. The church
is to be the salt of the earth, the
light of the world. What is the proof
that a certain substance is salt? Not
that it looks or smells like salt, nor
that it comes from well-known dealers,
nor even an anal chemical analysis
that has analyzed it. He found all the
elements of salt in it; but that put
around, rubbed into meat,
it penetrates it, purges it from corrup-
tion, and thus its value to it.
So if the church is to be the salt of
the earth, the light of a certain
association of Christians is really a
church of Christ, not its orthodox
creed, its congregational order, its
care in receiving members, its wealth,
its popularity, nor its past history,
its past work; its success; but its
present power in purging the tide of
corruption, and influencing those
around it to face the gospel of
Christ. Let a church regard only its
own peace and material prosperity, let
its members be only their own
spiritual comfort and edification, and it
must die; for salt "has lost its
savor." If he gives no light to
those around, indifference will surely
be removed that before long,
it has always so; the churches that
are venerable for age have been
venerable for zeal and devoted-
ness in the Sa work. It has been
so everywhere saddening to read
the records of an associations even
in this new land many are the
churches that for a time a feeble,
sickly, selfish have died out, their

names only remaining buried in the
records of the past; not a few are the
localities where once strong churches
flourished, where now are only the
melancholy remembrances of past glory.
Every now and then dead churches
have to be buried; among them, those
once large, active and honorable, as
well as those abortive efforts to found
a church, which have had the signs of a
speedy end in them from the beginning.
Let our churches which would avoid
this fate evangelize their districts. In
no part of the world are better, and
few places possess so many facilities
for this work as does that wherein we
are placed. In the various school
houses which abound everywhere we
have suitable places of meeting; in the
horses and carriages our friends require
for their business, they have the means
of assembling for evangelistic labor.
Let our churches, recognizing the duty
of aggression, send out detachments of
their members in two or three different
directions each Sabbath, those who can
be accompanied by a preacher going
with him to form a nucleus of a con-
gregation; and to draw others to hear
him; those who cannot, going alone to
hold a social meeting, in which with
prayer and praise shall be mingled
simple declarations of God's dealings
with them, and their experience of His
love. These simple means God will
bless and honor to the gathering in of
souls to His heavenly kingdom, while
their labors will bring a deeper enjoy-
ment of divine things to their own
breast, their own church will be quick-
ened and grow stronger alike in faith
and in numbers, and the whole land be
cultivated for God.

there he points with his finger up
there and tells him to seek first the
kingdom of God." There was that
man with his eyes dull with the loss of
reason, but the text had sunk into his
soul—it had burned down deep. Oh,
may the Spirit of God burn the text
into your hearts to-night. When I got
home again my mother told me he was
in her house, and I went to see him.
I found him in a rocking chair, with
that vacant, idiotic look upon him.
Whenever he saw me he pointed at me
and said, "Young man, seek first the
kingdom of God." Reason was gone,
but the text was there. Last month
when I was laying my brother down in
his grave I could not help thinking of
that poor man who was lying so near
him, and wishing that the prayer of his
mother had been heard, and that he
had found the kingdom of God.

Young man, young woman, won't
you seek the kingdom of God to-night
when he tells you to? May every
man and woman assembled here to-
night seek the kingdom of God. Let
us pray.

Get, that you may give.

There ought to be. Surely it will
be one of the proverbs of the Mil-
lennium.

Get, that you may give. It is
simply the condensation of what Paul
was inspired to say to the Ephesians
when he directed the convert to "lab-
or, working with his hands the thing,
which is good, that he may have to
give to him that needeth."

Amos Lawrence once wrote to one of
his partners: "I am sick, and deprived
of the sight of most of those who call
themselves Christians, and give their
papers, and driving them money. In
the house, then when able to be
abroad. And again he wrote: "The
good there is in money lies altogether
in its use—like the woman's box of oin-
ment; if it be not broken, and the con-
tents poured out for the refreshment of
Jesus Christ in his distressed members,
it loses its worth. He is not rich who
lays up much; but who lays out much."
And many a man who has had hun-
dreds of thousands of dollars has dis-
covered that it is a joy to toil for
moisture, not in order to hoard, but to
scatter it; has even found that the
common world was made for common
folks, and that the dear luxury of doing
something for others may be felt just
as really, and just as richly, by the
little pauper who, with a kind heart
and a love smile, gives a cup of cold
water to the thirsty wayfarer, as by the
millionaire among his money-bags.

It is a blessed thing for any man to
share what he may have with others
who stand upon a lower social and
financial plane than he does. But it is
still more blessed for him to go to work
to earn money, expressly that he may
have it thus to share with others. This
is intensifying his benevolence, and
dignifying it from what might have been
a mere incident of good nature, into a
principle and a passion controlling the
life, which it makes lovely and illus-
trious.

Try it, reader!

Experiment with Paul's gracious
wisdom.

Get, that you may give; and fail not
to give, when you have got.—Congre-
gationalist.

A White Flag.

Those familiar with railway service
are glad to see a white flag hung out
at the crossings and stations. It tells
of safety, and proclaims that all is well.
Not so the green flag; that speaks of
doubt and uncertainty, and warns the
engine-driver to be on his guard; while
the red flag tells of danger, collision
and wreck, and arrests the train in its
course.

One evening the wife of an old flag-
man at a railway station said to her
husband: "John, there will be a flag
held out to-night—a flag in the hand
of Jesus. It will not be a red flag, for
there is no danger; it will not be a
green one, for, thank God, there is no
doubt; but it will be a pure white flag,
for all is perfect safety and peace, and
I am very nearly at my journey's end."
That night she died. "Precious in
the sight of the Lord is the death of
his saints." Reader, would there be a
red flag or a white flag held out to-
night, if you were called to your jour-
ney's end? "Blessed are the dead
that die in the Lord; yes, saith the
Spirit, for they rest from their labors,
and their works do follow them."

"Thank you for my conversion,"
said a young man to Mr. Moody, as he
was leaving the place of meeting. He
believed himself to have been converted
during the sermon. "But we like better
the terms of gratitude used by the old
Indian woman of Long Island, who
used to recognize the annual gift of her
Thanksgiving turkey by saying to her
benefactor, "Thank the Lord! and I
thank you, too, Col. Gardiner!"

Better to be alone than in bad com-
pany.

Death is deaf, and hears no denial.

Active Warfare for God in the World.

The work of every Christian church,
and that church whose members think
their work for God consists in gather-
ing themselves for worship and instruc-
tion from time to time, and in giving
money to pay for it, that church has
the seeds of corruption in it, and though
its members may be saved, the church
will surely die. Every church should
send out its members to evangelize the
district around; there is not a church
existing where (if they cannot preach)
the brethren, and the sisters too, could
not sustain a social meeting in at least
three or four destitute neighbourhoods
in the vicinity of their church each
week. We are apt to forget that God
requires personal labor as well as money
gifts of those who profess they are
not their own but His. We are apt
to forget that every one who is saved
is a "debtor" to the unsaved. The
"bride" is to "say come"; how but
thus can she? Every one "that hear-
eth" is to say "come," and not the
pastor only; and the health and exist-
ence of a church depend on this being
done. Activity is the indispensable
condition of spiritual health and life no
less than of physical. A party of
travelers, passing through our northern
woods in the inclement winter which
Maine experiences, are everpowered by
the cold; far from help, they must
depend upon themselves or perish;
they sit down to rest and to consult;
one after another, wearied with travel

When Moody Visited a Sermon.

When I was a young boy—before
I was a Christian—I was in a field one
day with a man who was hoeing. He
was weeping, and he told me a strange
story which I have never forgotten.
When he left home his mother gave
him the text: "Seek first the kingdom
of God." But he paid no heed to it.
He said when he got settled in life,
and his ambition to get money was
gratified, it would be time enough then
to seek the kingdom of God. He went
from one village to another and got
nothing to do. When Sunday came he
went into a village church, and what
was his great surprise to hear the
minister give out the text, "Seek first
the kingdom of God." He said the
text went down in his heart. He
thought that it was but his mother's
prayer following him. Some one must
have written to that minister about
him. He felt very uncomfortable, and
when the meeting was over he could
not get that sermon out of his mind.
He went away from that town, and at
the end of a week went into another
church and he heard the minister give
out the same text, "Seek first the
kingdom of God." He felt sure this
time that it was the prayers of his
mother, but he said calmly and delib-
erately, "No, I will first get wealthy."
He said he went on and did not go
into a church for a few months, but the
first place of worship he went into he
heard a third minister preaching a
sermon from the same text. He tried
to drown—to stifle his feelings; tried to
get the sermon out of his mind, and
resolved that he would keep away from
church altogether, and for a few years
did keep out of God's house. "My
mother died," he said, "and the text
kept coming up in my mind, and I said
I will try to become a Christian."
The tears rolled down his cheeks as he
said, "I could not; no sermon ever
touches me; my heart is as hard as
that stone," pointing to one in the field.
I couldn't understand what it was all
about—it was fresh to me then. I
went to Boston and got converted, and
the first thought that came to me was
about this man. When I got back I
asked my mother, "Is Mr. L—
living in such a place?" "Didn't I
write to you about him?" she asked.
"They have taken him to an insane
asylum, and every one who goes up

Novel Way of Filling Churches.

At the recent annual meeting of the
Watford Public Library, Sir Henry Cole
referred to the desirability of establish-
ing musical classes. He had during
his time tried an experiment with
music, which he explained as follows:
"I have long held the opinion that
the churches of this country are not
quite as much used for the benefit
of the people as they might be; and I
once was instigated (Heaven knows
how) to see if I could not make use of
my parish church at Brompton. Of
course I was all allegiance to the vicar,

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