

to them, that it would be their lot to live with her to the end of her life.

When Christmas came, Matthew proposed that they should have a little party on Christmas Day—just Dorothy and Lisa, and Lisa's friend, Alice Reany. The latter had already been introduced to them by Lisa, for the girls seemed to have become fast friends, and on Sundays Alice accompanied Lisa to the Mission school, Lisa never having shaken off this old love for a new one, although there were many schools nearer to her place of abode than this one.

Lisa rejoiced in getting Alice to accompany her; for she was a girl who had never received any religious education, and had been but a casual attendant at a place of worship. It was starting to her to meet with a girl of such simple, earnest piety as Lisa, and though at first she was prone to ridicule and shun her, yet ere long she was attracted towards her by her amiable disposition, and by a tender sympathy that seemed to divine her most secret thoughts and feelings, so that in the end they became close friends, although in many respects they were utterly dissimilar.

Christmas Day saw them met together in Matthew's kitchen, which Hugh had decorated with great taste in honour of the occasion. And when they found themselves sitting there in their best clothes, entertaining two blooming young girls,—Alice radiant in a bright blue dress, and pale pink ribbons in her hair and round her neck; Lisa in a sober brown, relieved with the whitest collar and cuffs, and blue ribbons,—Hugh thought that the place was quite picturesque, and worthy of a less humble home than they could boast of. Alice bore herself with a coquettish air, and seemed quite conscious of her beauty, although there was a degree of modesty in her behaviour which prevented her being offensive to anyone; indeed to people of less severe and simple tastes than Matthew and Hugh, these airs and graces might have been considered altogether charming. But in their eyes the palm was carried off by Lisa, whose beauty was of a more homely kind, and consisted rather of expression than of features and complexion, though those were about the average. But her manner was so completely natural, so innocent of any intention to win admiration; and a chastened air, uncommon to young girls, yet beautifully becoming to her, pervaded her, and seemed to tell that Lisa's early history had been totally unlike that of most girls, and that the remembrance of it was burnt into her soul.

Alice had a sad expression in her eyes sometimes when she was perfectly quiet; but it was different from Lisa's calm seriousness, and it was evanescent. Dorothy was the last to arrive, and upon Alice being introduced to her, she looked hard at her and said, 'I believe this is Alice Reany that I wished good-bye to more than eight years ago,—a little lass in short frocks.'

'Yes, Mrs. Sharpe,' answered Alice smiling. 'I remember you, and you're not so much altered as me, I dare say.'

'This is one of my neighbours,' said Dorothy, turning to Matthew and Hugh. 'Her father keeps the Bell Inn, and that ain't many doors from our old cottage, so we shall be neighbours again some day.'

'I shan't often go home now I'm settled to learn a business in London,' answered Alice, with that sad light in her eyes again for a moment.

(To be continued.)

Curious Phenomena in the Oil Regions.

A correspondent of the Baltimore American says that at Titusville, Pa., Senator Anderson's beautiful grounds, on the suburbs of the city, present a splendid sight every clear night during summer. The great attraction is the fact that they are brilliantly illuminated by natural gas from the Newton Well, about four miles distant. This well yields nothing but gas, and when first opened the roar of the escaping gas could be heard, it is said, for a distance of seven miles. The gas has since been confined so as to be conveyed in pipes to the city and is used extensively for cooking and heating purposes. In the house of Senator Anderson not a stick of wood or lump of coal is used during the year either for cooking or heating. He uses the gas in cooking stoves and

in open grates in his parlors, sitting rooms, and chambers. It gives too much smoke to be used for light indoors, and simply takes the place of fuel. There are about twenty standards on the lawns and around the fountain and lake in the Senator's grounds, and one magnificent arch, the innumerable jets from the pipe each throwing out a flame about twelve inches long. There are about twenty standards in all, with about thirty jets, each jet throwing out a fierce flame from twelve to eighteen inches long. The portion of the grounds illuminated is to the extent of about four acres, and is as light as day in every part. The fountain is a magnificent work of art, surmounted by a nymph pouring water from an urn into a goblet, and four swans, each throwing streams into the basin below, while there is a beautiful floral display at the base of the fountain and on the ground surrounding it. The lawn is kept in splendid condition, interspersed with variegated flowers, and the effect of this brilliant illumination may be imagined amid such a scene of floral attractions. The gas is also used for heat in the conservatory, and we are informed by the gardener that the entire cost of the gas used for domestic purposes and illumination of the grounds is but \$100 per annum. The force of this gas is so great that recently, in tapping the pipe to put in a service pipe for a dwelling, the particles of iron were forced out with such velocity as to enter the flesh of the plumber's arm. The gas from the Newton Well is extensively used in Titusville in place of fuel, similar to its use in the mansion of Senator Anderson, and there is some talk of using it for the general lighting of the city.

The Pittsburgh Dispatch says that situated about four miles southwest of Clintonville, Venango county, is a well which, for volume of production, surpasses anything yet discovered in that county. The well was completed upward of a month ago. No oil was found, but an immense gas vein was encountered at the place where oil was expected. Before abandoning the well the owners resolved to draw out the casing. This was attempted in the usual way, but the casing stuck about a foot above its former resting place. As it was elevated to its present position, the fresh water from the upper part of the hole rushed into the well at the bottom of the casing in great quantity. As it did so, the gas raised it to the surface of the earth after sending it forty feet above the top of the derrick. There it continues to gush, and may for all time. It is estimated that at least twenty thousand barrels of water are thrown out daily. It is truly a remarkable phenomenon.

Brevities.

The government of China has issued a proclamation which not only favors religious toleration, but mentions with special favor the work of Christian missions, and enjoins upon the provincial government to favor their work.

That baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God is demonstrated by the fact, that of the ten thousand persons sprinkled and poured upon for baptism—ministers as well as laymen—who come to us annually for Christian baptism, all tell us that their consciences were nearly always ill at ease; but, after obeying Christ's ordinance as He appointed it, they received a conscious evidence of the Divine favor never felt before, and have since felt a conscience fully and sweetly answered.

Fifteen missionaries sailed from New York on the 6th inst., for Burmah. Among the number was the venerable Dr. Binney, now seventy years of age.

A telegram from Adrianople reports that more than half the Jewish inhabitants of Kizanlek, men, women and children, have been massacred by the Russians and Bulgarians. This treatment will encourage the Jews to return to Palestine.

The great Baptist Noel, of England, who for years occupied a high position in the Episcopal Church, declared that his conscience troubled him for more than twenty years, and was only satisfied by a scriptural immersion. We think the statement of this fact on baptismal occasions would have a good effect.—American Paper.

The Baptist Union of Scotland.

held its Annual Meetings in Glasgow on the 23rd, 24th, and 25th of October. They commenced with a Conference of office-bearers on Church Finance, the President, Rev. Dr. Paterson, in the Chair.

After praise and prayer, the chairman explained the nature of the meeting, and called on Mr. John Williamson to introduce the subject of conference, which he did in an able and comprehensive paper, of which the following is a brief outline:—

THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING.

The financial state of a church is a good indication of its progressive character. Giving of money for the support of the Gospel is a service which all members of the church, except those dependent on aid, should take part in, and the sum given should be in proportion to what is spent for other purposes. Whether one-tenth, or any other portion of income, it should be on a scale worthy of being termed liberal. It answers best for most of our people to give small sums frequently, and, therefore, the custom of weekly contributions should be fostered and encouraged. It is a becoming thing that, on entering the place of worship we hand in our contributions as an offering to Him whose we are, and whom we have come to worship; and while anything like undue pressure is to be avoided, too much copper in our contributions is not creditable, at this time of day, to our membership. What may be done if the weekly offering plan is carried out with a will, may be seen if we suppose a church having a membership of one hundred acting it out. The first five we may put down as needy members, for whom the church has to care. The next ten we might take as able to put one penny into the collections every Lord's Day; other ten, threepence; other ten, sixpence; other ten, one shilling; other ten, one shilling and sixpence; other ten, two shillings; other ten, two shillings and sixpence; other ten, three shillings. Then we might take five of the number who could give five shillings, three who could give ten shillings, and two who could give one pound. In this easy way, from a church of one hundred members doing their duty, under the constraint of Divine love, we get the sum of £11 18s. 4d. each Lord's Day for the support of the Gospel. Or take it in another form, and passing over those who do their duty, we may suppose that a man with fifty pounds a year of income could give silver, viz, sixpence; that one having one hundred a year might give from one and sixpence to two shillings; one having two hundred a year, may give from three to five shillings, one with four hundred a year may give gold: one with eight hundred a year may give one pound or more; while those with incomes above a thousand, we might expect to give five and ten-pound notes every Lord's Day. The future support of the ministry needs to be conducted on a scale of vast improvement over the past, and more in accordance with what the same brain power and whetted intellect could command in other departments of labour. Every church is responsible for the example it sets to other churches in this matter of money contributions, and worthy remuneration of those who give themselves to the ministry of the Word. It is the individual purpose to do, and the scrupulous, consistent, every first day of the week performance of the duty, without reference to what others may or may not be doing, that is the sure and perfect way of meeting the financial wants of our churches. When care over the money matters of a church is taken up as one's own concern by each member, there will be little danger of a diminution in the funds though such member should be many Sabbaths absent; for on returning, the full amount of arrears will be made up as faithfully as an upright man would pay his landlord his rent, or the Queen her taxes. The excellency and great point in this mode of contributing and collecting the church funds is, that it works without talk about it, or effort of any kind; but in quietness, the desired end is secured.

A number of brethren expressed their opinion on the subject: Mr. Bowser would especially advise the younger ministers to attend to this important question, and to remember that in speaking to the church they were speaking to honest men and loving women; and, if their words were enforced by uprightness and earnestness of life, their teaching in relation to finance would not be despised. Mr. Flett thought that the members should have an opportunity at the commencement of each year of knowing the probable sum that may be required, and of saying how much they would individually give as their share of the required sum. Mr. Findlay, Glasgow, thought that this education should begin on their admission to the church. An applicant should be made to recognize this as one of the duties of membership.

With reference to the year's statistics, three new churches have this year been admitted into the Union, which now consists of 76 churches, 72 pastors or ministers, with a membership of about 7700, as compared with 7385 last year; 843 were added to the communion, of which about 534 were baptized, making

a clear increase, after deducting all losses, of some 320, or an average of rather more than 4 1/2 per church—a smaller increase than last year. There are 39 Bible-classes, with an attendance of 1599, as compared with 1470 last year; 62 Sabbath-schools, 721 teachers, and 5276 scholars, as compared with 62 schools, 690 teachers, and 5390 scholars last year; in all, about 7275 as compared with 6850 last year, young persons receiving religious instruction; 210 preaching stations, and several cottage meetings and children's services. Three large and elegant chapels had been opened during the year—two in Glasgow, and one in Edinburgh—costing in all nearly £30,000.

There are seven new chapels in course of erection, estimated to cost upwards of £12,000 more. Miss Scot Macdougall, of Makerston, who built a chapel at Kelso at a cost of £2000, has in a most handsome manner, made a free gift of it to the Union. The Chapel Debt and Building Fund has not yet begun operations; but it is hoped that the £3000 still needed to bring up the capital to the necessary amount will be speedily raised, and that the scheme will take practical effect in the course of this year.

The Educational Report, which stated that during the year the energies of the committee had been directed to their proper work of seeking and educating approved young men for the work of the ministry. During the year eight students had been under training: (1) in University; (2) in a weekly class, conducted by two of the tutors; (3) in the regular summer theological session.

Home Missions, the Scottish Baptist Magazine and Education of Ministers were subjects of serious and earnest consideration.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Home Missions.

Dear Brother,— The good work of home evangelization goes steadily forward. Cheering reports reach us from time to time concerning the labors and successes of our missionaries. Since the beginning of the present fiscal year twenty six missionaries and missionary pastors have been laboring under the direction of our Home Mission Union. Of these seventeen are still receiving aid from our treasury.

On Monday last, the 5th inst., our Board met in regular session. Thirteen brethren were present, nine of whom were members of the Board. The treasurer reported several liberal contributions as having been received during the month of October. A financial statement is herewith forwarded. [It appeared in last week's C.M.—Ed.] Applications for aid continue to come in from various fields. It is at present simply impossible for us to comply with the solicitations of all who are seeking assistance. In several instances small churches, conveniently near each other, seem unwilling to unite in sustaining a pastor. Each determines to have its own pastor, and each applies to our Board for financial aid. Of course, as a rule, no aid is granted under such circumstances. We simply recommend neighboring churches to unite in pastoral relations.

In a few instances true magnanimity has been shown in endeavoring to sustain the interests of Home Missions. An example of this kind is furnished in the excellent report just received from Rev. W. E. Hall in reference to his missionary labors at Springfield, New Albany and Dalhousie. The ministers of Annapolis County have agreed to supply destitute churches in their neighborhood, and, instead of asking for aid from our treasury for their services, they kindly donate to us all monies collected at these out-stations, and allow the Board to have credit for their missionary work. This is noble. Bro. Hall, however, seems to be the only minister who has kept his pledge in this matter. We very much regret this; and it is our hope that the other ministering brethren will adhere to the original agreement. Bro. Hall remarks in reference to his visit to Dalhousie East: "At the close of the Sabbath morning's service we met at the Lord's table. My heart was made sad when I learned it was the first time they had sat down at the sacramental table for the last nine years. Surely the Baptist cause must be the cause of God; and He must take of it, for we do not. Perhaps there are but few churches that have been so thinned by death and removals during the past ten years as the church at Dalhousie East. This, together with their having been sadly neglected has left

them to nearly die out. It does seem a shame to us as ministers and churches who live within six hours drive of them, to allow that people to starve while we surfeit at home. I enclose \$5.41, being the amount of collection taken at Dalhousie East on Sabbath morning for Home Missions."

Surely this is an example worthy of imitation. The general prevalence of this sort of missionary spirit would speedily supply every vacant pulpit and neglected community in Nova Scotia. Will not other pastors pursue a similar course?—An excellent brother, who has been laboring in much the same way as Bro. Hall, remarks:—"Our enterprise needs more real sympathy and support. Every man who turns his finger must not ask for pay. Let us have less puff and more doing and giving." Rev. Jas. Meadows has received an appointment to a mission for three months to the sadly neglected settlements lying along the coast east of Jeddore. He will visit these places as often as practicable.

Our French Mission funds are exhausted. Shall we abandon this mission? Surely not. A noble work, begun and sustained with so many earnest prayers, can scarcely be permitted to come to nought without some effort to prevent such a calamity. But what is to be done? The mission cannot be continued without adequate support. We strongly urge the friends of this mission at once to contribute liberally towards the maintenance of our missionary.

We would be very grateful to any of our friends who will kindly present our Board with County Maps of Nova Scotia. Will not some generous reader of the Messenger in each County send us such a map for the benefit of Home Missions? Reader, if you have a map of your County rolled up somewhere in your house and seldom consulted by you or allowed to see the light, we promise to make good use of it, and to return it, if desired, at any time you may think it necessary. W. H. WARREN, Cor. Secretary, Yarmouth, N. S., 1877.

For the Christian Messenger.

Decline of Infant Baptism.

That Infant Baptism is wasting away among intelligent Evangelical Protestants can be questioned no longer. Among the Congregationalists it is "more honored in the breach than in the observance." Indeed, the Roman Catholics, from whom it comes, sturdily rebuke in one of their journals "the alarming decrease of the sacrament, stating that in a certain number of Congregational churches, containing more than eleven thousand members, there had not been an infant baptized. Why should the Catholics mourn? The "sacrament" is nothing to them except as effecting regeneration, and as such it is explicitly rejected by the select few among Congregationalists occasionally practising it.

There is a shrinkage among the Presbyterians also. The number of infants baptized annually, as compared with the past, are growing "small by degrees." The Cumberland Presbyterians, strongest in Kentucky and Tennessee, where Baptists are strong in numbers, report, out of a membership of 101,000, "Infants baptized 1320," "Adults baptized, 4105." The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, embracing the whole country, reports, in a membership of 557,000:—"Infants baptized, 18,092,"—a very small number, when the membership is considered:—"Adults baptized, 15,263,"—a very large number. Among the Western Presbyterians there were not one-third of the number of infants baptized that there were in the churches connected with the General Assembly; and what is singular, the adults baptized were more than three times the number of infants. Where Baptists are strongest infant baptism is weakest, e. g., in Boston the Baptists are so numerous, the unscriptural custom is "ready to vanish away," and "therein we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

The foregoing extract is from the Examiner & Chronicle, and is another proof, that error, no matter how long practised, or how sacredly regarded, must go down before the power of Almighty truth. Take courage, brethren.