

Messenger and Visitor

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Some Old Papers.

We have been interested in looking over a number of copies of the Christian Messenger of the year 1848, for which we are indebted to our aged and highly esteemed friend, Captain Jesse Harris, of Westport, N. S. Captain Harris came upon the stage of action when the present century was very young—somewhere in its first decade—and he has a very fair prospect of living to see the beginning of another century. We do not know how long before 1848 Captain Harris was a subscriber to the Messenger, but we believe that it and its successor, the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, have found a welcome to his home week by week ever since that date. This shows how wholesome it is for a man to subscribe and pay for a good religious paper. Those whose memories reach back to the middle of the century will remember that in those days a religious newspaper cost something. We find that in 1848 the subscription price of the Messenger to subscribers residing in Halifax was fifteen shillings, and to subscribers in the country, seventeen shillings and six pence—equal to about \$3.00 and \$3.50 as we count money now. But even then it was an excellent investment of money to take the paper, although it was less than half its present size, and cost more than twice as much as it does today. In one of these old copies before us is a letter from a minister in which he mentions having found both the Messenger and the Visitor in a certain home in what is now the city of Moncton, but was then called 'the Bend.' "That paper," alluding to the Messenger—said the goodman of the house, a 'brother Prince.' "I have taken from its commencement, and if I could afford it, I would now take two or three copies." "To distribute, I suppose," said the minister. "No," said Bro. P., "for the use of my family. Why that paper has done more for the education of my family than all the schools they have ever attended." "How different from another man," reflected the minister, ("I think he lived somewhere near the falls of Niagara) who was afraid the boys would lose time in reading papers." Bro. Prince's good example has certainly borne fruit, but it seems just possible that some of that Niagara man's family may have migrated eastward. When, two or three years ago, the form of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR was changed by reducing the size of the pages and doubling their number, some of our older friends felt a little troubled, because the paper in its new form seemed unlike the old friend which they had known and loved so long. Those good friends (who we believe have long ago become quite reconciled to the change) would perhaps be surprised, if they compared the MESSENGER AND VISITOR of today with the Messenger of 1848, to find that the sixteen page paper which they read today has a larger page than the eight page paper which they were accustomed to read fifty years ago.

As we turn the pages of these old numbers of the Messenger which our friend has sent us, we find many names which are held by us now in sacred memory. There are letters from Edward Manning, William Chipman, Prof. Isaac Chipman, Charles Tupper, Mr. Burpe and Mrs. Burpe, the missionaries, and others whose names have been prominently connected with the work of our churches. In a very few instances we come across the name of some one still living. Here, for example, in the issue of October 13, is the name of "Bro. Thomas Todd," whose "zeal and urbanity" obtained mention in connection with mission work performed by him in St. John city.

An Association met that year at Liverpool, N. S., and the report given of it indicates that a lively interest was being taken in educational and missionary work. Efforts were being made toward an intelligent and symmetrical development of the spirit of benevolence in the churches. It was the time when the "Union Societies" were being established. Professor Chipman read to the association "a detailed and most interesting report" of the financial agency during the year, from which it appeared that nearly all the churches of the Province had been visited by a deputation and that "a system of well organized action had been introduced throughout the country, which, if kept in operation, must shortly afford an ample supply of means to the various objects of religious and benevolent exertion." We learn too that a most lively interest was excited by an address of the Rev. S. T. Rand, in which he detailed numerous facts connected with the condition of the Indians of the country and related his efforts to make himself acquainted with their habits and language, with a view to giving them the Scriptures and otherwise ministering to their spiritual necessities. The report speaks of the presence at the association of "our venerable Brother T. S. Harding, whose mind appeared impressed with deep feeling by the solemn and delightful services which occupied so large a portion of the meeting, and his exhortations and addresses were characterized by a tone of Christian earnestness which touched every heart. His presence was hailed by all with the warmest welcome, tempered however by the reflection that he was the only one present of the Fathers of the denomination, and that the day must shortly arrive when the few remaining links that connect times past and present must be severed."

The same number of the paper contains a brief account of the anniversary of Acadia College. Two young men, having completed the collegiate course, received the degree of B. A. They were Messrs. J. Moser and M. H. McLatchy. Rev. John Pryor, M. A., President of Acadia, and Rev. J. M. Cramp, M. A., President of the Baptist College in Montreal, received the honorary degree of D. D., and the honorary degree of M. A. was conferred upon Rev. Charles DeWolfe and C. D. Randall, Esq.

These old copies of the Messenger bear witness to the fact the Rev. Charles Tupper was, at that time, as for many years before and afterwards, a wise counsellor and a tireless and effective worker in the denomination. He had at the date referred to just published a pamphlet on baptism, the outcome of a discussion which he had held with the Rev. Thomas Trotter, who appears to have been a Presbyterian minister resident at Pictou, and who also had had his side of the discussion embodied in a pamphlet. The harvest of 1848, it appears, was a partial failure. The country was threatened with a scarcity of the necessities of life, and Mr. Tupper accordingly publishes an article in the Messenger in September, in which he forewarns the people and advises them to provide against want by a prudent and economic use of their resources in ways which he proceeds to point out.

There are other matters of interest in these old papers, but we see that our space is exhausted.

"Show Us the Father."

It is a deeply pathetic picture which is presented in that passage of John's gospel which we have for our Bible lesson this week. Our Lord has been telling his disciples that the hour of his departure is at hand, that the time has come when he must leave the world and return to the Father. Their spirits have been made very heavy by his words, and we can seem to see reflected in their sad and apprehensive faces the deep trouble and uncertainty with which their hearts are filled. The presence of Jesus had meant so much to these men, his influence upon their lives had been so great and transforming, they had come so to lean upon him for counsel and to depend upon him for guidance, all their hope and expectation, both for themselves and for Israel, were so bound up in him, that we cannot wonder that consternation and unspeakable sorrow filled their hearts when they knew that he in whom they had trusted with such child-like confidence was now to be taken from them and they were to be left alone. Very tenderly—even as a mother who speaks loving and assuring words to her grieving child—does the Lord speak words of comfort to those

sorrowing disciples; and those words remain as a perennial source of comfort to every believer whose heart is troubled, because they are true for all disciples and in all ages.

"Let not your heart be troubled," the Lord said to his disciples. If we ask, Why should not the heart of the disciple be troubled? the answer is,—Because God is Father and has declared himself in Jesus Christ his Son. If we ask—What is the cure of trouble? the answer is—Faith, faith in God the Father and in Jesus Christ his Son. "Believe in God, believe also in me." If we ask,—Is not death a very terrible experience, shall we not be swallowed up by it and separated from all we knew and loved? the answer is—For the believer, there is no death and no separation from God. The Universe is the Father's house, and in it there are many dwelling places for God's children. Of what the Father's house contains and what the Father's gracious purpose shall reveal we can have but the feeblest conception:

"We only know we cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

The Lord does not forget his disciples. Though absent from them, he is engaged on their behalf. He is preparing a place for them. Nor will he leave them too long bereaved but will come again and receive them to himself that where he is they may be also.

If we ask concerning the way to those mansions prepared for the beloved of God, the answer is that we are not to be troubled about that, as if it were necessary to make a long pilgrimage over land and sea or through the air in order to reach our final home. It is simply a question of coming to our Father, God, and Jesus himself is the way, because he also is the truth and the life. In him is the truth that makes God known, in him is the life that responds to the Father's love, and to those therefore who have believed in him and received of his fulness, he has become the way to the Father and to all the blessing of the Father's house.

Do we ask concerning the Father—Do we say, as Philip seemed to say,—"We believe, Lord, that thou art come from God, and that thou art his son, but the Father we have not seen. We behold thy face, we hear thy voice, we know what thou doest, we trust in thy guidance, we feel safe in thy care, all our hopes centre in thee. But when thou shalt go away, we shall be alone and helpless. Lord, show us the Father, that we may see and know and trust in him, even as we trust thee, and we will ask no more." This is a very real thing, this cry of the soul after God, this cry of the human child for the divine Father. And the answer is here—it is this: The Father reveals himself in the Son. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. He that has seen Jesus Christ has seen the Father. He is the revelation of the Father's holiness in human life, of the Father's compassion and love for a lost and sinful race, the Father's tenderness toward the penitent, the Father's indignation and wrath against the hypocrites and all who despise his longsuffering love. He is the pledge and proof that the Father in Heaven lives and loves eternally. This is the claim of Jesus that his life, his doctrine, his works, his sacrifice, are a demonstration that he is the way, the truth and the life, and that he is the representation and the incarnation of God in human form and among men. If this is not true, then there is no light anywhere, there is no comfort for troubled hearts. Sin reigns and Death. But if this is true, then indeed is it a gospel in which we may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The words of Jesus, "Let not your heart be troubled," are not vain words, for there is a comfort for all trouble and light that swallows up all darkness.

Editorial Notes

—On another page will be found a communication from Secretary Cohoon in reference to students who will be available for ministerial work during the coming summer. Churches and pastors who may desire to secure a student as pastor or assistant during the summer will do well to give the matter prompt attention. There are, no doubt, a number of pastors who could find plenty of work for an assistant during the summer months. There are some probably who are overworked and much in need of a rest, and others who could very profitably

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