

Messenger and Visitor

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The Lame Man at the Gate.

In the Bible lesson which will be studied in most of our Sunday schools next Sunday, there are facts and suggestions which should richly repay careful consideration. It is the story of the healing of the lame man by the apostles, Peter and John, at the gate of the Temple, called Beautiful.

Our first thought connects itself with the fact of the apostles going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer. It shows that they still recognized the Jewish forms of worship, and united with their brethren in the daily prayers of the Temple. They had come to know Him who was greater than the Temple, their faith had laid hold on Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, they had felt the power of His resurrection, and had experienced the wonderful baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they had embraced a faith, immeasurably richer in its present experience and its promise for the future than that of Judaism, and yet their union with Christ and their endowment with the Divine Spirit did not necessarily so separate them from other Jews that they must cease to hold fellowship with them and refuse to unite in the daily prayers with those who continued to worship God after the tradition of their fathers. This is characteristic of the sane and vital nature of Christianity in its larger and purer manifestations. It reverences the old names and values the old fellowships for whatever in them is of God. Its aim is not to set up a new standard and utterly disfellowship and anathematize those with whom it has hitherto worshipped. It was indeed impossible that Christianity and Judaism should long walk together. But the apostles, whether they apprehended that fact or not, were in no haste to forsake the Temple and to turn their backs upon its worship. So also has it been in reference to the great reformers of the Christian church. Such men as Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Savanarola, Wesley, were by no means eager to separate themselves from the religious communions in which they were when the greater light came to them. If they went out, it was because they were thrust out. All this must be instructively suggestive in view of the centrifugal forces which have operated so powerfully within the ecclesiastical life of Christianity during these later centuries, resulting in sects which are almost as the sands upon the sea shore for multitude. And still the work of separation goes on, so that men and women, if they believe themselves to have obtained a clearer knowledge of the truth, a new endowment of the Spirit, some increased power for service, can persuade themselves that it is their duty to come out and be separate from the church in which their religious life had been nourished from its infancy, and, to create still another sect, in order to the expression of the new light and the new power which they have received. It is difficult indeed to see how such a persuasion can come from Him who guided and inspired Peter and John.

Other thoughts connect themselves with the incident of the Apostles' meeting with the lame man who was lying at the gate. It may be regarded as a living parable to show what Christianity can do for men. How, on the one hand, it disappoints men, and how, on the other hand, it more than fulfils their largest expectation and desire. The lame man's uttered petition, that which looked to the means simply of prolonging his miserable condition, was denied, but his unuttered prayer, the prayer that meant a blessing so large that he dared not utter it or even frame it in his thought, the petition unuttered, because it seemed utterly hopeless

of fulfilment—that was answered. So, frequently, when we would satisfy our souls with husks, we may find our petitions denied, but never if we seek the greatest possible blessings. Shall we be so foolish as to complain if our Lord denies to us the means of making a poor crippled and inactive life comfortable, in order that He may inspire in us a desire for the grace of spiritual healing, the joy and power that go with perfect health and willing service?

Observe the Christian attitude toward the crippled and helpless. The apostles and the lame man take knowledge of each other, but what a difference in their recognition! On the one part there is the whining, importunate cry of the professional beggar, there is the hand outstretched for alms, but no up-lifted eye, no hope—scarcely a desire—for anything above a beggar's pittance. On the other hand there is the eager look of sympathy and of benevolent purpose; there is a voice that rings clear with love and hope and conscious power; there is a strong and sympathetic hand outreached toward this crippled humanity, there is in all the attitude and expression of love and power, that commands attention, arouses hope, encourages faith and imparts health and power. This is the message of Christianity toward a crippled and mendicant humanity, that still, as of old, lies all day and begs at the gates of the temples. Oh for the love and power needed to enable us to say to this crippled humanity of our day, with the effect which attended Peter's words: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

What is the explanation of this miracle, what is this wonderful power that makes men, crippled from their birth, to walk and leap and praise God? 'If you ask me,' says Peter, 'the secret is quickly told. It is not by any power or holiness of ours that this marvellous thing has been done. It is the power of God, glorifying His Son—Him whom the malice and bigotry of men rejected and crucified. It is his name through faith in his name, that has made this man strong.' And it is in his name, through faith in his name, that the boon of perfect soundness is ever to be sought and obtained.

Editorial Notes.

—Dr. F. L. Cuyler who has recently completed his eightieth year continues vigorous in all his mental and spiritual faculties, and now by his pen proclaims the gospel to a far larger audience than, in the days of his greatest physical strength, he was able to reach with his voice. It would be hard to find a more gracious example of a man who is like a tree planted by the water courses and bringing forth fruit in old age. Dr. Cuyler is quoted as saying that he has discovered that for doing good a consecrated type is far more powerful than a consecrated tongue.

—It is learned from United States Census reports that the number of Canadians in the United States in 1900 was 1,181,778, as compared with 980,938 in 1890. The increase for the decade was 20.5 per cent., as compared with an increase of 36.8 per cent in the preceding decade. Of all the Canadian emigrants to the United States 511,075 are in New England, and of these 379,683 are of French origin. The French Canadians in Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont outnumber those of English origin. In every other state and territory the English-speaking Canadians outnumber those of French origin. The whole number of French-Canadians in the United States is given as 395,197.

—We are informed that the editorial article which appeared in the MESSENGER AND VISITOR last week, on the subject of University Consolidation, has disturbed the minds of some of our very highly esteemed brethren, connected with the government of our college, who fear that it may be interpreted as a sort of official intimation that the Baptists of these Provinces are inclined to look with favor upon the proposal for University Consolidation. We hardly see how the article could be so interpreted, even if it were formally endorsed by the Convention and all the Associations of the three Provinces. But under the circumstances it may be well to say here that the article in question represents nothing more in the way of wisdom or authority than that small measure of these which dwells with the humble individual whose name appears at the head of this page. And the same, of course, is generally true of whatever appears in the editorial columns of the paper. It may be well to add here that we judge it is not desirable that, for the present at least, any discussion of the subject alluded to above should take place in these columns.

—Mr. Andrew Carnegie may fairly be considered an authority on the subject of wealth and its uses. Some recent remarks of his contained in an address, delivered

before the Railroad Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association of New York City in reference to this matter seem to be worth quoting. The best of wealth, the multi-millionaire said, is not what it does for its owner, but what it enables him to do for others. . . . "There is nothing in money beyond a competence, nothing but the satisfaction of being able to help others. . . . And let one who has, almost without intention or desire, had himself loaded with somewhat more than a competence, tell you soberly that what one has beyond this brings little, and sometimes nothing, desirable with it. What all of you should strive for is a competence. . . . and I urge all of you to save a part of your earnings these prosperous days and put it in the savings bank at interest, or better still buy a home with it. The working man who rejoices in his work and laughs away its discomfort is the man who is sure to rise."

—Our Brother Adams is going about the work of promoting the raising of the Fifty Thousand Dollars for the Twentieth Century Fund in his characteristically earnest and effective way. Among other methods being employed to the end in view, the ministers of the denominations are being asked through a circular, for subscriptions to the Fund according to their ability. Mr. Adams tells us that already he has had a very encouraging response to this appeal, and this is quite what we should expect in view of the deep and vital interest which our ministers feel in the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and their general readiness to respond to every call on behalf of a good work. Another circular is being sent out, addressed to the 30,000 young Baptists in 544 Sabbath Schools. This appeal may also be expected to meet with a generous response. We hope that superintendents and teachers will interest themselves in the matter. Mr. Adams hopes for an average of ten dollars a school from a large number, and from others which are not able to do so much, an average of five dollars. This ought not to be too much to expect. If 200 schools will give an average of ten dollars each, that will be \$2,000, and if 300 other schools raise an average of five dollars each, that will be \$1,500, or \$3,500 in all. And if only there are enough willing minds, it can be done, and no one be poorer, but everyone who contributes be richer, for the doing of it.

—A New Year's message appears in the first issue for 1902 of the London Baptist Times and Freeman from Dr. Alexander MacLaren, President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Dr. MacLaren finds in the denominational life and experience of the past year a good deal to inspire gratitude and hopefulness. The churches have reported a larger number of accessions than usual of late years, the 'unity of the Spirit' has been very manifest in unifying the spirits of the denomination, and this largely through the effect of united effort for the Twentieth Century Fund, and the sense of responsibility for their share of evangelizing England is growing. True, Dr. MacLaren says, there is much on the other side of the account, but it is folly to look exclusively at either white or black squares of the chess board and call it all white or black.

—What Dr. MacLaren says as to the first great need of the denomination, is as true for this longitude as for that of England. That greatest need is a fuller possession of the Christ-life in ourselves:

"It is so much easier to do than to be that we are all apt to forget that the great truth of salvation by faith involves very revolutionary teaching as to the order of our efforts at self-improvement. . . . No intellectual apprehension of Christian doctrine, no warmth of Christian emotion, no sedulousness of toil in developing Christian character, will make a strong Christian or a strong church, unless there is, with all these, the opening of the heart by desire and expectation, by meditation and by prayer, that the life of Jesus may flow in and be the soul of our souls, the life of our lives. How the mass of shallow Christianity that hangs like an incubus on our churches would be changed, if once the life poured into it! It would be like the difference between the flat stretch of barren mud at ebb tide, and the same when the flashing waters cover it, and turn it into a mirror of the blue above."

—Farther on Dr. MacLaren employs one of those apt and forceful illustrations in which his discourses abound, to deepen the impression of his words upon the minds and hearts of his readers. He says: "A great experiment is at present in process in the Soudan, which may teach us a better way—that of cutting through and removing the 'sudd,' the miles of matted vegetation choking the channels of the streams whose junction forms the Nile. The obstruction is far away from the fields of Egypt, but it hinders the irrigation which is the condition of their fruitfulness, and its being cleared away means waving crops and prosperity far down the river. So, all our work will gain new force, and new methods will not be wanting, and new heroisms and self-sacrifices will spring up, if more of the 'river of water of life' is allowed to fill our hearts, because we have cleared away our 'sudd.'"