

Messenger and Visitor

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How to Have a Revival.

The building of every one over against his house, under Nehemiah's administration at Jerusalem more than two thousand years ago, is of all things most needed at the present time. Much work is required to be done by Christians in their own hearts in order that they may not greatly fail of success as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the absence of the most desirable of all prosperity, it is in vain to look for a better state of things, until there is some increase of personal piety among God's people, individually; and until concerning those who in these latter days claim to be on the Lord's side, there shall be a fulfilment of the prophet Zechariah's prediction as to mourning "apart." (Zech. 12:12-14.)

Returning unto the Lord must be, not in the mass, but one by one, personally, each one as an individual seeking the Lord. Renewed work for God must begin in the hearts of those who expect to hear the "Well done," of the Master. Here at home, in the heart, is the evil, and the remedy, to be of any use, must be applied here, in order that the cause of God may prosper. If instead of complaining about the broken and prostrate walls of Zion, and if instead of so much anxious care to ascertain before whose door the widest breach in the wall is to be found, all would commence in downright earnest to build over against their own doors, by humbling their hearts before God, the days of mourning would soon be ended.

It may be the case that while some see with grave concern that the walls remain unbuilt, and think they have a heart to work in rebuilding them, they may be too much engaged in building over against the houses of their neighbors just around the corner, or at least in preparing the estimate of the amount of labor necessary to repair that wide breach in the wall in the next block. In thus having the eye turned upon the broken places in the wall, here and there, they may have lost sight of some most necessary work to be done nearer home, even against their own houses. And then, their desires for the building up of the wall, or the revival of religion, may have been too general, and without sufficient regard to the claim of the work upon them as individuals. They may have thought of the work too much as a whole, and failed to consider the part which devolved upon them, personally. Let each one begin with his own heart, and be sure that all is made right there, and it will not be long before the whole work will be finished.

So long as the hearts of men and women in the church, are hard and cold, careless and indifferent, bitter and unforgiving; so long as these persons, whoever they be, are remiss in their duties, blamable in their conduct towards others, faulty in life and hurtful in influence; so long as there is a breach over against their houses calling loudly for immediate, earnest, vigorous, and faithful work in building the wall there, while these things continue no real and substantial progress can be made. If they are liable to the charge of Peter to Simon the Sorcerer, "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God," and of concerning various sins of omission and of commission which they condemn in others, they might be addressed as David was by Nathan "Thou art the man," then they need to begin at once to build over against their own houses, by repenting as in "dust and ashes" and turning unto God "with purpose of heart," saying with Elihu, "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

Those who would see the cause of God prosper must attend to their own piety, and to see to it that it is not in such a condition as to render any service they might perform, utterly worthless. There is no doubt, whatever, that there are many who must look more to themselves than is ordinarily the case with them, if they would really and truly pray, "O Lord, revive thy work." The answer of this prayer, as they offer it must commence with themselves.

In their own revival must begin that revival for which they pray. So long as any think and talk of the necessity that the church should be revived, and lose sight of the fact that they as individual members of the church need to be revived, they cannot reasonably expect that the God of heaven will prosper them, for in this way, they will never truly "arise and build." The Psalmist prays, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit." The purpose and expectation as to the answer to this prayer, are revealed in the words that follow, when he says, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

The Minimum Christian.

The minimum Christian! Who is he? The Christian who is going to be saved at the cheapest rate possible; the Christian who intends to get all the world he can, and not meet the worldling's doom; the Christian who aims to have as little religion as he may, without lacking it altogether.

The minimum Christian goes to church in the morning, and in the evening also, unless it rains, or is too warm, or too cold, or he is sleepy, or has a headache. Perhaps he does not go out in the morning at all—but manages with great exertion to get out to an evening service. He listens most respectfully to the preacher, and joins in the prayer and praise. He applies the truth very judiciously—sometimes to himself, often to his neighbors. When he applies it to himself, it is with the feeling that the preacher is throwing stones.

The minimum Christian is very friendly to all good works. He wishes them well; but it is not in his power to do much for them. The Sunday School he looks upon as an admirable institution, especially for the ignorant and the neglected. It is not convenient for him to take a class. His business engagements are so pressing during the week that he needs Sunday as a day of rest nor does he think himself qualified to act as a teacher. There are so many persons better prepared for this important duty, that he must beg to be excused. He is very friendly to Home and Foreign missions and the other benevolent enterprises of his denomination, and gives his mite for their support. He thinks there are too many appeals, but he gives, if not enough to save his reputation, pretty near it, at least, this is his aim and purpose. He keeps his eye that far to windward.

The minimum Christian is not clear on a number of points. The opera and dancing, the theatre and card-playing, and euchre parties and such like amusements in which confessedly worldly people and some confessedly Christian people, indulge, give him quite a little private concern. He wants to be liberal and not strait-laced, and yet he cannot forget that the time was when he did think—they were not intended for the patronage of earnest Christians. He cannot quite see the harm of many of these popular amusements. The Bible does not condemn them. He does not see why a man may not be an active, earnest Christian and dance and play cards and go to the theatre. He knows several excellent persons who do these things. Why should not he? He stands so close to the dividing line between the people of God and the world that it is hard to say on which side he is actually to be found. This man is in great danger. He does not want to be counted among the worldly, and yet it is difficult to place him among the pious.—He is neither the one nor the other—Where is he? What is he?

Paul says—"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." And in another place speaking of his own rule and aim of life, he says, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Let us

therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," and then as if conscious that all were not yet ready to come up to his high ideal, he adds, "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded; God shall reveal even this unto you."

We cannot better illustrate Paul's meaning in this latter clause than by an incident of pastoral experience:—

A bright young girl had joined the church, who had clearly accepted Christ, but was not prepared to accept any yoke of man nor to subscribe to any creed or code which a church might choose to manufacture.

She courageously defended the theatre and declared her purpose to attend it whenever the plays presented, were of such a character as she could approve.

Her pastor—his name need not be given, said but little, and did not deal with her in heroic fashion, tho' he did sometimes indulge in that method. He committed her unto the Lord, in the firm persuasion that in time He would reveal 'even this' unto her.

She became a Sunday School teacher and was very devoted to her class and very successful in her work. One day she came to her pastor with tears in her eyes—there were tears in many eyes that day—for they were in the midst of a precious work of grace, and many were seeking the way of the Lord; and she said, while her lip trembled, "Pastor, I surrender, you know I have always stood for my right to attend the theatre when I chose, but in my class are several girls that are earnestly concerned about the salvation of their souls, and one of them plumply asked me what I thought about theatre-going. At that moment I saw the theatre as never before, realized its irreligious tendency, felt that if my girls were to go there in the state of mind in which they were, it would be infinitely perilous, and so I managed to stammer out; 'My dear, if I were in your place I think I wouldn't go.' Not quite satisfied with this, she asked, 'Miss Emma, do you ever go?' I felt like a culprit, as I was; and so I said in a choking sort of way, 'My dear, I have gone in my time; but, God helping me, I never will again.'"

Here was a revelation such as Paul refers to, and a real earnest Christian is very apt to get it.

The readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR will learn with deep regret of the illness of the Editor, Dr. Black. For about three weeks he has been confined to his home and while not suffering much bodily pain is still unable to do any work. The paper will appear each week as usual, it being the purpose of the Ex-Com. of the Directors to do the best possible for our Constituency during the editor's enforced absence. We are certain that the prayers of thousands of the readers of this Christian paper will be offered in behalf of our brother, who for years has so faithfully and well served our denomination as editor of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR. It is hoped that Dr. Black's illness will not be of long duration and that not many weeks may pass before we are permitted to welcome him back to the office and his editorial management, for which by trained intellect and deep toned piety he has proved himself so eminently fitted.

Referring to the above, all communications for this paper should be addressed to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR.

Will the friends kindly bear this intimation in mind?

Editorial Notes.

—Somehow the types got into a jumble last week and transferred two articles which were intended for different columns. The article "A Novel Church Letter" was not intended to take first place. If only that letter upon which the good brother was received into church fellowship had been a receipted bill for payment of subscription to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR to date, it might not have been amiss to have had it appear in such a prominent position. Your label, friend! How readest thou?

—It will be a great gratification to the readers of the MESSENGER AND VISITOR to learn from the letter of "A Governor" in another column that the services of Dr. Trotter will be retained in the interest of our own Acadia College, and not only to those but to all the friends of the higher education in these Provinces. Dr. Trotter has done well for our institutions at Wolfville. He has been loyally supported by the Baptist constituency in the past. He will receive the same loyal support in the future. Whatever plans the Board of Governors mature and submit to the people will be