

## Messenger and Visitor

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### THANKSGIVING DAY.

The Thanksgiving Day which God provided for the Israelites was far enough from being a solemn day, in the usual sense of this term. It was a day of gratitude of gladness, of social enjoyment, of eating the fat and drinking the sweet, and of kind substantial remembrance of the less fortunate of their number. The God of overflowing goodness loves to see his people happy—not happy apart from Himself, for this is in the nature of things impossible, but happy in his gifts and still more happy in the Giver.

It is an eminently fitting thing that our Government should proclaim a day to be specially set apart as a day for national thanksgiving, and that it should be at a season when the fruits of the field shall have been gathered. This recognition of God as the great Giver is most seemly. The husbandman sows and gathers in his harvest, but there is a power beneath and behind all, without which his efforts would be vain. The being who causes the sun to shine and the rain to water and refresh the earth, is the source from whence all material blessings flow. Individuals and nations are dependent upon Him. It is right then that the people should be led to think of, and to see, the hand which guides and controls. We cease from daily toil and lift up our hearts in grateful love to the Giver of all good as we recount the daily mercies which have come to us amid the constant round of duties which have engrossed our lives.

The Bible affords innumerable instances of the thankfulness of God's people. The Psalms are resonant with expressions of thankfulness to God for his manifold mercies. We are told that "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord," and in the New Testament the great apostle exhorted those to whom he wrote, "In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

To many, thanksgiving day has no deeper meaning than freedom from wearisome toil. To others it affords an opportunity for general merry-making and revelry. To such as these the day has lost its meaning and purpose. There need be neither gloom nor sadness, nor austerity. Such is not the character of Him whom we desire to honor. That must be a sad home indeed which can find nothing in the year for which to be grateful. It surely might have been worse, and so with the land in which we dwell and call our home. The beautiful harvests, the hum of the wheels of industry and the general prosperity that is seen on every hand, call for an expression of devout thanksgiving to Him who has promised that seed time and harvest shall never fail. Then there is freedom from plague and pestilence and the awful ravages of war. Surely the people of Canada are highly favored in these respects, and can truly say "The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places and we have a goodly heritage." Let every reader on thanksgiving day say with one of old "Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all his benefits."

### BAPTIST UNION OF SCOTLAND.

The annual session of the Union was held in the Adelaide Place church, Glasgow, beginning Oct 24, and continued for four days.

The annual report made a favorable showing for the churches embraced in the Union. Eight churches were admitted during the year. There are 127 churches composing the body, with a membership of 18,700. There have been 1270 baptisms, not included in the eight churches just received into the membership. There are 136 Sunday schools with 16,560 scholars and 1880 teachers, of the Sunday school scholars 180 have become members of the churches as compared with 153 last year. The Christian Endeavor Societies number 86, of which 59 are senior societies and 27 junior with a total membership of 2800. Bible classes still keep the lead as to numbers, the membership being given at 4066 against 3790 last year, though the classes stand the same as last year, 69 in number.

The income for the year has been £14,000. Chapel debts have been paid off to the extent of £4077—leaving a present indebtedness of more than £6000. On the whole the outlook for the ensuing year is considered hopeful. The new president Rev. J. T. Forbes gave his opening ad-

dress taking for his subject, 'Symbols of service, or Creeds and our attitude towards them.' It was distinctly practical and had special bearing upon the great conflict now on in the Presbyterian churches of Scotland. It was a tract for the times. A desire has been expressed to have it printed. The Baptists of Scotland are a wee folk but active and vigorous withal. The soil is hard, but grow they will.

### EVANGELISM.

This subject is occupying the attention of churches in the United States and Canada as it has not done for some time past. The growing formalism that obtains in so many churches and the lack of spiritual power, is causing many earnest Christians to inquire into the cause and the remedy for such a state of things. At the Baptist State Convention held a few days ago in New York, the report of the Board spoke out with no uncertain sound. 'The churches, all of them live on evangelism, and die without it. It always has been, and always must be true that the Great Commission demands but two things, the making and training of disciples. It is, and always has been true, that the great purpose is, that the churches shall be evangelizers, and the ministry the leaders and trainers of the churches for this work. The great first purpose of the ministry is therefore evangelism—wide, constant, effective evangelism, but mainly through the church.'

The church's likeness to Christ is most marked and emphatic when it is imbued with the spirit and purpose of saving men. All other work is tributary to this, or is resultant from it. The conclusion to which we are forced is, that much larger attention must be given to evangelism, and to preparation for evangelism. There is no other such urgent call for vital and material resources. The world's great interests are in wise and effective evangelism. Its great burdens root themselves in unchristian character and unchristian living. The world's great business now and onwards, is making men Christian from the centre to the circumference of their being. No other such interest demands conferences, educational and inspirational conferences, and continued church, Sunday School, and family, action. The call is for continued, devout seeking unto God, in penitent confession and hearty repentance—a return from all wanderings and a deep consecration to God and to humanity. We have quoted largely from this report, in order that our readers may see the trend of thought among those who stand in the very forefront of the battle against sin in all its varied forms. We are glad to learn that the pastors of the churches in St. John are turning their attention to this great subject, upon which the growth and prosperity of our beloved Zion must ever depend. We are just entering upon the season when active, vigorous work by pastor and people is most opportune. There are none of us who can be satisfied with the kind of spiritual life which obtains so largely in many of our churches today. The need of a spiritual refreshing from on high is everywhere apparent. May the blessing which has tarried so long speedily come to us all.

### NEW DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE.

In his annual report to the Baptist Union at its recent session in Bristol, Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, the Secretary, said, "We have endeavored to bring that (new declaration) into closer harmony with the great commission of our Lord. The whole of this 'Declaration of Principle' is based upon these words Christ gave to his disciples when he left them. We have added an important sentence under the definition of baptism, which it is proposed should read—"That Christian baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried and rose again on the third day."

In a third clause we have added what should surely have been in our "Declaration of Principle" before, "That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelization of the world."

It is refreshing to read the above and to find our English Baptist brethren taking such strong ground on the question of Believer's Baptism, and this in view of the Baptist Congress which it is proposed to hold in England next summer, to which Baptists of every name all over the world are invited to send representatives. Some one has said "that the real creed of the Baptists is found in the Great Commission." If that were obeyed, and lived up to, there would be few defections and fewer schisms in the body, and everywhere a glorious endeavor to reach out after, and to save fallen men.

### THE ALBERTA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

This is a six year old institution. Its regular annual meeting was held with the church at Okotoks, which has for pastor Rev. N. L. Kempton. There were 50 delegates present from all parts of Alberta and Medicine Hat in Assinaboia. Of the pastors embraced in the Association

the names of White, Robinson (A. T.) Corey, Litch, and Kempton are well-known in these Provinces by the sea.

Rev. C. W. Corey was the preacher of the Association sermon. It goes without saying that it was a good one and well delivered. There was considerable interest aroused by the address on the Industrial Guild of the Great Commission by Pastor Robinson and strong commendatory resolutions were passed.

The reports showed that there were 27 churches embraced within the bounds of the Association, 14 of which were English speaking 7 German and 5 Scandinavian, the total membership reported was 1481—of which 837 were English, 540 German and 99 Scandinavian. The net increase was 104 of which 63 were by baptism.

There are 22 pastors and more than 50 preaching stations, 18 Sunday Schools with 1178 scholars and 67 teachers.

The Mission Circles number 10 and the Young People's Societies 5.

Next year a portion of the time is to be given to the Young People for a discussion of their work. Appropriate resolutions were passed on Church Union, Tract Repository, Sectarian Schools and the Industrial Guild.

The Association is not large, but it is only six years old, and a boy of that age is not big. Its members had to travel long distances. It has room to grow and will grow as the country develops. Wise heads, warm hearts, heroic service and consecrated zeal, will make their impress upon the incoming settlers. There are some good and true men who are at the fore. We are glad to make this reference to the work of our Baptist brethren in Alberta.

### OUR RELIANCE.

The real forces in Christian warfare are the spiritual ones. Our power is in proportion to our spiritual strength, to our trust in God, and not in proportion to numbers, wealth, equipment, or any kind of material forces of the Kingdom in this world. There is great danger that Christian workers shall rely too much on human power and wealth and effort. We like to count numbers, compute the value of schools, churches, and property of all kinds. It is reported of Napoleon that he declared that "God was on the side of the heaviest battalions." And that is true too, though it is true only when the heavy battalions are on God's side, the side of truth and righteousness. The Christian's weapons are not carnal but spiritual. These only are mighty in the pulling down of the strongholds of sin. We are making progress backward when we rely upon anything but the Word and Spirit of God to gain our victories. Social reforms are good, legal enactments when they grow out of healthy sentiment are effective, all kinds of ethical teaching and humanitarian efforts deserve sympathy and help, but God's people must depend upon the truth, the old truth of the gospel of Jesus for the final victory.

### Editorial Notes.

—The Kings Daughter's Guild situated on Prince William St. No. 13 is a home for girls coming to the city from the country. To strangers it ought to be very helpful, because it is under Christian auspices, and young ladies who are unprotected will be cared for. Terms reasonable. Miss Bowman will give all necessary information.

—It is said of Robert Hall that he characterized a certain minister of his acquaintance as belonging to the class who should either be always in the pulpit or never in the pulpit by saying, "The head of Mr Blank is so full of everything else but religion one might be tempted to fancy that he had a Sunday soul which he screws on in due time and takes off every Monday morning." Mr Hall might have affirmed the same thing of others who are not ministers. These are not sinners above all Galileans. Religion is not a thing that can be put on or off as one may his Sunday clothes. It is something within which works out in daily life, and is as patent a fact and potent a factor on Monday as well as on Sunday, and is just as good or bad on one day as the other.

—The October number of the *McMaster Monthly* contains as a leading article a brief tribute from the pen of Dr. E. M. Kierstead, to the late Dr. D. M. Welton. The tribute was what might be expected from the facile pen of the writer. In terms of appreciation he described the personality of the man, his influence upon others, the simplicity of his preaching, the doctrines he taught, all of which gave him a place in the hearts of the people whom he served. Dr. K. closes his article by saying: "The evangelical character of his preaching, his quenchless love of the gospel, his sincerity of friendship, his Christian brotherliness, his culture, scholarship and ability, endeared him to those who approved things that are excellent and of good report."

—President Eliot of Harvard, has said, "The slow moral progress of a nation is due to the reading of poor books by the children." This thought has been kept in mind by those who are at the head of the public school system of this country. There is a wide-spread knowledge of men and things which is useful to the conditions of life in a new and growing country, and this has a tendency to develop an alertness and fertility of resource that are always ready when occasion requires. True, one's environment may, and does, have much to do with the development of a