

# CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

A Family Newspaper: devoted to Religious and General Intelligence.

REV. I. E. BIBB,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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In neighbourhood is thus blessed. During the time above mentioned, I have endeavored to preach 32 sermons, attended 5 conference meetings, attended 4 other services, visited and prayed with a large number of families, and distributed about 800 pages of tracts collected for the mission as follows, at South Bay 14s. 9d.; at Grand Bay, in contributions 6s. 7d.; Mr. Samuel Bars, 5s.; Mrs. Ann Am, 5s.; at Gundalo Point, in 3 collections 6s. 6d.; Mr. John Herington, jun., 10s.; Mr. Thomas Petengell, 7s. 6d.; Mrs. Mary Leirstead, 20s.; Elder Blakney's sons 5s.; Mrs. Vincent, 2s. 6d.; at Milkish, in collections, 7s. 6d.; from Esquire Whitman 5s. 10d.; Mr. Wm. Wordon, 5s.

Respectfully yours, D. CRANDAL.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

Upham, Aug. 18, 1854.

DEAR BROTHER BILL,— I hereby send a brief sketch of my Mission at Mill Cove, which, with Brethren Bunting and Kierstead, I visited on the day we parted from Wickham, and addressed a congregation at their Chapel the next afternoon, on our return from the up lake tour, of which you have been informed by Brother Porter. As his appointments called him home, I stopped at the Cove alone, and preached in different parts of the place. The Church here is small and at present not prosperous, having no minister happens that way. Most of them appear to see their need of a Pastor. They certainly ought to have one; but it will be necessary for some other Church in the vicinity to unite with them in raising a support. The Cove Church would at present, however require aid, as their subscriptions for a Minister's services half the time, might not exceed £25. There is a large field for Ministerial labor in that section, which ought to be cultivated. After being a week with the friends I left on the 10th inst. for home which I reached on the 14th.

Received during the time at the Cove from Brother John Herit, 20s.; from Mr. Archibald M'Clean, from Cumberland Bay, 20s.

READ IT.

Ministers of the Gospel, we ask you to read the following communication from the pen of the Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, and catch the spirit of heaven inspired love which breathes in every sentence, and pray God that your number may be multiplied a thousand fold.—Church's, redeemed by blood divine, READ IT, and hasten to the mercy seat in penitence for past neglect, pouring forth your supplications with renewed earnestness for an increase of Ministerial laborers in the great harvest field. Fathers and mothers in Zion READ IT, and go to God in believing prayer, that he may graciously consecrate your sons to the great work of winning souls to Christ. Young men of talent READ IT, and enter into your closets, and in deep contrition for your worldliness and pride, say in the language of the prophet, "Here am I send me." When we first saw this article we thought we would only give extracts from it, but as we read it carefully, we felt that we could not blot out a single line,—every sentence is full of point and power. We will therefore, give what our pages will admit this week, reserving the rest for our next issue.—Ed.

The Church's Prayer for a more Adequate Supply of Ministers.

BY JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the

harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Thus spake the Saviour of the world, when he saw the multitude willing to receive instructions, and the paucity of teachers ready and competent to impart it. The scene moved his loving heart to compassion. Instead of miraculously raising up an army of laborers, which he easily could have done, he laid it upon the conscience of his people to pray for them, and made the supply depend upon their supplications; and thus, to a certain extent, makes them responsible for an adequate and efficient ministry. I have been of late deeply and solemnly impressed with the importance and necessity of this injunction of our Lord, and equally so with the fact that it is generally and astoundingly neglected. I repeat the assertion to draw attention to the fact—it is generally and astoundingly neglected. How rarely is it the subject of ministerial petition in our public assemblies; of the prayers of the brethren at our social meetings: of heads of families at the domestic altar; or of individuals in their closet exercises. I put it to all who may read this paper to inquire how often they hear it mentioned in associate devotion; and how often they make it the subject of their own. The whole matter of the ministry seems, by common consent, to be all but excluded from our prayers. True, our brethren pray at our prayer-meetings for their own ministers, and sometimes not only with earnestness, but with adulation. But how strangely they forget the ministry at large. Or if they pray for those who are already engaged in the work, how rarely they pray for a greater supply of laborers! How small a space of our united supplication is devoted to our Colleges, either to the students or the Professors! But the subject of the present paper is specific—it is for a numerous, an adequate and efficient ministry—for more labourers.

If ever there was a time when the people of God should lie down upon their faces, imploring with all the importunity, boldness, perseverance of faith, for a larger supply of ministers, each full of the Holy Ghost, as was Barnabas and Paul, it is the period that is now passing over us. And yet the Lord's people are silent; or, if not silent, satisfy themselves with a few formal, lukewarm petitions, destitute alike of faith and fervor.

Before I come to enjoin the duty of prayer, I will for a moment advert to the kind of ministers we must pray for. This may be known from the work they have to do—to gather in the harvest of souls to Christ and to heaven. We want harvest men, for harvest work; men that can and will do this; men that thoroughly understand the great work of saving souls, and who will give themselves to the work. It would be a poor recommendation of a laborer for the harvest field that he was a good tradesman, or that he was a good scholar, or well read in history, if at the same time he did not know how to reap. His work is specific, it is to gather in the harvest, and his qualification must be appropriate. So it must be with the ministers of the gospel.

They are described as laborers, not as loiterers; and as laborers in this work of gathering in the harvest. A man may be very busy, very diligent, really very hard-working, but if he is not busy, diligent, and hard-working in reaping and gathering in the harvest, he is not the kind of man we should pray for. The work of the Christian ministry is as specific as the work of the reapers in the corn-field; and if he is not fit for this work, what business has he to be there?

For such laborers the church must lift up a general, loud, importunate, and persevering cry; and just for these two reasons—the immensity of the harvest, and the paucity of the laborers. If we saw a vast breadth of wheat spreading out before us, and only here and there a solitary laborer, though, perhaps, there

were scores of loiterers and idlers sitting under the hedge, or stalking about with their sickles under their arm, we should involuntarily exclaim, "The harvest will perish for want of laborers to collect it." Such, friends, such is the scene presented by the spiritual harvest.

If we look to the heathen and Mohammedan world, we find about a thousand missionaries for seven or eight hundred millions of immortal souls; we find in China only a single missionary to seven millions. How slowly the twenty missionaries required by the Baptist Society for India come forth!—Where are the ten for China which the London Missionary Society are anxious to send out? If we turn our attention to the Colonies, we see a population rapidly multiplying beyond all preparations of Evangelical Christians have yet made for their wants. But my present purpose is more particularly to plead for prayer, with direct reference to our own country. And here, in reformed Protestant England, what a paucity of evangelical laborers prevails. What are three thousand out of fifteen in the Church of England? Are there more than twelve thousand spiritually enlightened, earnestly devoted, right hearted, ordained ministers for the whole United Kingdom of England, Scotland, and Ireland?—But to come to our own denomination, I ask what is the state of that? Are not hundreds of our churches destitute of pastors? True, we have also hundreds of ministers destitute of churches, but are they laborers fitted for the work of gathering in the harvest? Look at our Colleges; with one or two exceptions, are they not all only half full?—New College, in London, has no more students for the ministry at the present time than Highbury alone at one time contained. Manchester College is not much more than half full. Springhill could receive, and we hope will receive, when the new building is finished, double its present number. Is it not the complaint of our Professors, that their classes are all lamentably small. And thus the education of our ministers in this day is going on at an enormous cost; not so little, in some cases, as a hundred pounds (\$500) a year for each student! At the present moment we have many stations of the greatest importance unoccupied, and without any immediate prospect of being occupied. Whatever be the cause, whether it be a low state of spiritual religion in the churches which leaves the bulk of our young men lukewarm and worldly; or the tide of emigration drawing them away to distant lands; or the higher requirements for admission into the Colleges, by which many otherwise ardent and devoted men are rejected; or the smallness of our stipends, by which young men of much prudence are prevented from becoming aspirants for the high and sacred employment of saving souls; or the divisions of our churches, which repel those who otherwise feel a desire to be engaged in ministerial duties; the fact is indubitable, that few are offering themselves in this day for admission to our Colleges. Nor does this apply merely to our own country; it is equally true of the Continent, and of America. This is a subject not only for lamentation, but also for inquiry. May we not trace it up in part to a deficiency in the church's prayers, and in part to a want of the church's own neglect in looking out for suitable men to be educated for the ministry? I have no doubt that both these are to be taken into account. I shall advert to the latter in the close of this paper, and confine my remarks at present to the former. We have not because we ask not; or asking, ask without faith, fervor and hope.

It ought to be borne in mind that we, practically as well as doctrinally, admit it is the Lord's work to send laborers into the field. We repudiate the practice of "bringing up our sons for the church," irrespective of in-

tellectual qualifications. We wait till God has converted the soul and moved the heart to the work. We, therefore, are, by our own views of the ministry, especially bound to pray for labourers. We entirely depend upon the Spirit's working in the hearts of men for ministers. To neglect prayer is, with us, to neglect everything. We thus disuse every means. We ignore the whole theory of apostolical succession, not only as unscriptural, but unnecessary; for, without attempting to trace back our call to the ministry through the dubious and dirty channel of Episcopal ordination, we derive it directly from the Holy Ghost. The office is of Christ's appointing, the qualification of His working, and the call His giving. How fervently, believingly, and constantly should our prayers, therefore, be directed to Him for the supply of ministers. Prayer is an intelligent, believing, and practical acknowledgment of Him as Head over all things to His church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in (or with) all. Did He not ascend up on high, having obtained gifts for men, to give "pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ?"

Surely this not only teaches us the duty of prayer in reference to this subject, but makes it obligatory upon us. The gift of faithful pastors is His Divine prerogative, and an act of His power and grace. The church, measuring her Lord's ability and grace by her own narrow views and limited means, has but a faint conception of her Lord's inexhaustible resources. Her prayers have been in proportion to her own views, and not to His loving heart and mighty arm. She has appeared afraid of excess in her petitions when she has, in fact, comparatively asked nothing. Why should she not prepare herself to ask and to expect a ministry as large as the wants of men, and as excellent as that of the apostolic age? Why, Christ, ascended up on high to give such a ministry, and is only waiting for the believing prayers of His church to bestow it. Instead, therefore, of sitting down to mourn and lament over the paucity of eminent, devoted men, let us go to Him in the confidence of believing prayer. The church's faith should raise to the church's necessities and the Lord's ability to supply them; and her prayers should be the expressions of her faith.

The prayer for such a blessing as a devoted and efficient ministry should be general and importunate. It is a subject demanding the solemn attention of every minister and every member of the Christian church. It is a duty, from the obligation of which, none are exempt. It is not to be left to the preacher and the pulpit, but the whole body of the faithful should be engaged in wrestling supplication for this blessing. Ministers, of course, must lead, and, instead of a cold, occasional, and heartless reference to the subject, they should breathe out such entreaties in the hearing of their people as should enkindle the flame of devotion in a whole church. If it is true in reference to this, that man "ought always to pray, and not to faint." The utmost importunity should characterize our prayers.

We have only to dwell upon the magnitude, the richness, and the necessity of the blessing, to see the importance of this. The churches are to be supported in vigor, and the world is to be converted principally by preaching, and by preaching adapted to accomplish the mighty result. We do not under-estimate the power of the press and the advantages of education; but these will never supercede nor surpass the influence of the pulpit. The ministry of the Word will ever remain God's chief instrument for working out the plans and purposes of his grace towards this revolted world. Everything is standing still, or only moving slowly on for want of an adequate number of earnest preachers of the gospel.