

The Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES,
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HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 30, 1856.

WHOLE SERIES
Vol. XX. No. 18.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Nature's Jewels

BY W. H.

If you a crown for me would twine,
O wreath it with the flowers,
All fragrant with the pearly dew,
Or wet with morning showers.

These are the jewels we esteem,
The wealth we most admire;
We'd scarce exchange them for the gem
Which decks the monarch's tiar.

O yes, what happiness they bring
From time's recesses deep;
They waken scenes again to life
Which in oblivion sleep.

They carry wandering fancy back
To joys known long before,
The gladsome hours of childhood days
And friends we know no more.

We gathered violets frail and fair,
The same as now we see;
They've bloomed and faded, aye, and died,
Yet have returned to me.

The sunny Spring will soon, we know,
Bring back the absent flowers,
But solar beams will ne'er revive
Those happy, by-gone hours.

'Tis vain to wish for them again,
They'll never more appear;
On memory's page alone remains
Their record, written here.

When vernal flowers again shall bloom,
We'll love them as of yore;
Then fancy shall unfettered range,
And those bright scenes restore.

The violets, and the lillies too,
With roses fair and wild,
We'll love them still, because we know
We loved them when a child.

Missionary &c.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER FROM BURMAH.

KANOUNG, IRAWADDI RIVER,
New Year's Day, 1856.

My Dear Mr. Editor,

Let me intreat all your readers who eschew letters written after the manner of a diary or journal, to turn their eyes from the column that contains this communication. For I am compelled, by my present circumstances, to write, not just when and where I choose, but just when and where opportunity offers. The present opportunity has occurred on the river's bank, while I am waiting with most exemplary patience for my New Year's dinner, whose cooking my Bengali servant is now superintending. It is not exactly the same as a New Year's dinner at home. My assistants constantly call to my remembrance Paul's words, by saying "Tsayah, you have something to eat and drink, and you have clothes, you must be contented?" You must pardon this rather secular preamble, in consideration of some good news which will follow. The last three days of the old year were spent at a large village called Mengyee. At this place there is a commissioner and a detachment of sepoy with two or three officers. The two chief native officials of the Commissioner's Court are disciples. One was baptized by Mr. Kincaid at Ava twenty-one years ago, and is in all respects the finest specimen of a Burman and of a Christian I have met in Burmah. His wife and daughter are also disciples. The other was baptized fourteen years ago by Boardman, but when I met him was alone, neither his

wife nor any of his children having yet been baptized. His wife, however, had been a long time converted, but from fear of her bigoted Buddhist mother had as yet made no profession. During my visit she decided to delay no longer to do what she was convinced duty demanded. Accordingly I had the pleasure of baptizing her. We sang the hymn and offered prayer by the side of a jungle stream, and beneath the thick foliage of overshadowing mangoo trees. The disciples told me that this beautiful spot was, until the advent of the English a rendezvous for the ruthless dacoits who continued to infest the whole district, until the superior vigilance and power of the new rulers scattered them. The disciple whom I had baptized expressed his joy, but said, alluding to his children, "I am not complete yet." His daughter has long been thoughtful, and I hope, on my next visit, about a month hence, to find her prepared to join her father and mother. I have now reached the utmost limit of the present opportunity and must continue my letter on some other occasion.

JANUARY 4th.—The great want throughout the whole Burman mission is native preachers. Had I at this moment fifty good Burman Christians who were willing to devote themselves to the work of preaching the gospel to their countrymen, I could find work for them all, yes, and would gladly accept fifty more. There is, however, in our churches at home, as it seems to me, an error which should be corrected. We often hear it said, nor can any thing be more true, that the way of salvation of any heathen nation must be effected, not by missionaries from a far country, but by the converts whom they are instrumental in gathering. But then if the proportion of native preachers to missionaries, which now holds is a just and natural one, an immense number of missionaries must still be sent to this land, and a long time yet must elapse before Burmah, like the Sandwich Islands, needs no more Foreign Missionaries. Therefore brethren at home need not fear that they will be performing a useless because unneeded work, if they send a missionary or two from Nova Scotia as her quota to Burman evangelization.

We are now descending the river, homeward-bound, having reached yesterday the southern boundary of my LITTLE parish. During my visit to the different villages several interesting and affecting incidents have occurred. At one place I selected as a preaching stand, a house where all the noisy preparations for a funeral were being carried on. I saw the body of a boy of fourteen years, laid out in his burying clothes. The father, aged, bent and grey-headed, was sullenly counting over his beads, while his red and swollen eyes shewed that he felt the loss of his youngest child, very much, probably, as old Jacob did the loss of Benjamin. I asked him if he expected to meet his child in another world. He did not know. Alas! poor old man how could he know—when all he could gather from the faith of his fathers told him that his child's spirit would probably inhabit the body of some animal. I told him about the creation, the fall, the salvation, and tried to give him a ray of light in his darkness. He smiled an expression of utter incredulity, still counted his beads, and I was obliged to leave him convinced that his beads were his only consolation.

At another place, returning to my boat after having spent several hours in talking apparently to no purpose, and feeling worn and dispirited, I fell in with a man who had read some tracts and was a genuine inquirer. Of course my feeling instantly

rose from zero to a very agreeable summer heat. Upon further conversation I found him a very humble minded and sincere man, and as nearly as I could judge, a converted man. I expect to meet him again to-morrow, and may before my letter is closed be able to report his baptism.

JANUARY 5th.—Again on the bank, and again proving, by frequent glances at certain operations going on about a fire, that even a missionary is not exempt from the common weakness of man—an inclination to dine. We stopped this morning at the village of the man mentioned above, and ascertained that he had some business which prevented him from coming to us just then, but that in a few days he would go down to Henthadah and receive baptism there. As I put perfect confidence in his sincerity, I was not at all disappointed. At this same village there are two other men in whom I am interested, from the fact that they have utterly rejected Boodhism, and for years have had a conviction that there was nothing in the system to better their condition either in this world or the next. One is a man in the prime of life, the other upwards of eighty, but clear-headed and vigorous in mind. It was suggestive of most interesting thoughts to see these men rejecting Guadama because they knew him too well. And refusing to receive Christ because they did not know him well enough. I trust they will yet be led to the true Rock of trust. These men belong to a class whom the Burmans call "Paramat,"—a term implying, as nearly as I can understand, what is expressed by our word "free-thinker."

Before reaching home I have still one large village to visit, situated a few miles inland. There lives there an old man who received from Dr. Judson, more than thirty years ago, a few tracts, by reading which he professes to have been led to the truth—to see his sins and trust in the Saviour. He visited us soon after our arrival at Henthadah, and seemed sincere.

HENTHADAH, January 9th.—Reached home this morning, and must hasten to finish my letter. I visited the inland village mentioned above, spent there nearly two days, and was delighted to find the old man for whom I was seeking. He is to all appearance a decided Christian, and thro' his efforts his father also, eighty years old, has been led to the Saviour. To my joy and surprise I discovered that these men were the father and brother of the interesting inquirer mentioned in another place. They all three expect to come to Henthadah to receive baptism in about a month. There are also several men who are considering, and one or two priests who give us some hope that we shall hear of them again.

My only object in writing to your paper as frequently as I do, is to give your readers, or to aid in giving them, such view of missionary labor as will keep alive within them that love for the souls of the heathen which we all as Christians ought to cherish. To what extent I succeed in the attainment of this object, of course I can not know, but I hope I do not altogether fail. Trusting to have more good news to give you shortly,
I remain most sincerely yours,
ARTHUR R. R. CRAWLEY.

For the Christian Messenger.

BAPTIST HISTORY.

DEAR BRETHREN,—

It is a remarkable fact that the controversy between our Pædobaptist brethren and ourselves has undergone great changes during the present century. The arguments which were employed fifty years ago, and were relied on as irrefragable, are now

scarcely ever heard of, except from the lips of some few disputants who have passed their days in quiet country places, and have failed to acquaint themselves with what is going on in the world around them. They still talk loudly about the almost innumerable meanings of *baptizo*, the infants that were presumed to belong to the households baptized in apostolic times, and the argument from circumcision. The assurance with which they repeat these things, and re-produce statements long ago proved to be utterly unfounded, can only be accounted for on the supposition of their ignorance. They are not aware that the old defences of infant baptism have been surrendered by the most learned and acute critics of our age, English, Scotch and German; that no one now, who has any just claim to be considered learned, ventures to deny the soundness of our interpretation of the Greek words used in the New Testament in connection with the ordinance of baptism; that the argument from the Abrahamic covenant has been given up by the best writers on the other side; and that it is pretty generally conceded that infant baptism finds neither warrant nor example in the New Testament, on which account a large number of Pædobaptists on this continent are living in neglect of it. But these are facts which cannot be denied, and we may contemplate them with encouragement and hope. They indicate advancement in the right direction. The principles by which the Baptist Denomination has been distinguished from the beginning are gaining ground everywhere. If we are but true to them a glorious future is before us.

It appears to me particularly desirable at the present juncture, that the members of our churches should be well acquainted with the history of our principles and practices. Such knowledge will enable them to deal properly with the misrepresentations and calumnies which the ignorant continue to propagate. I propose, therefore, with your permission, to furnish a few occasional papers on the subject, in the form of letters, addressed to a young Christian. They will be arranged in the following order, viz:—
1. Primitive Period; from A. D. 31 to A. D. 254. 2. Transition Period; from A. D. 254 to A. D. 604. 3. Obscure Period; from A. D. 604 to A. D. 1073. 4. Revival Period; from A. D. 1073 to A. D. 1516. 5. Reformation Period; from A. D. 1516 to A. D. 1567. 6. Troublesome Period; from A. D. 1567 to A. D. 1688. 7. Progressive Period; from A. D. 1688 to A. D. 1815. 8. Modern Period; from A. D. 1815 to the present time.

I have lately perused a very valuable work, entitled, "The Progress of Baptist Principles in the last Hundred years: by Thomas F. Curtis, Professor of Theology in the University of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania." All our ministers should possess it. Another volume, published last year, should be also on the minister's library shelf. I refer to Professor Duncan's "History of the Baptists," which contains that history as far as the middle of the third century.* Every church should now and then expend a few pounds in the purchase of books for the Pastor's library. It will prove an excellent investment.

Yours truly,
MENNO.

April 17, 1856.

[*We intend to get a few copies of these works shortly, and shall inform our friends when they arrive.]

Good men are the stars and planets of the age wherein they live, and illustrate the times. God did never let them be wanting as witnesses to the world.—*Johnson*.