

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

### Summer is coming.

Summer is coming—God's bounteous hand  
scatters his largess across our land;  
Beauty is visible everywhere,  
Earth is re-robed in her garment fair,  
And fields, and hedge-rows, and shady bowers,  
Breathe the sweet incense of perfumed flowers.

Summer is coming—the air is stirred  
With the musical notes of the warbling bird,  
With the gentle laugh of the streamlet's flow,  
And the forest's whisperings soft and low,  
With voices of water, and air, and sod,  
Humming ever, "How good is God!"

Summer is coming—life seems all joy;  
The earth were not earth without some alloy,  
And perchance with its sunny hours may come,  
Solenn and sorrowful scenes to some,  
Who may be, ere the flowers in their beauty fade,  
Gone and low 'neath the greensward laid.

Summer is coming—and, oh, to be  
Travelling for regions more fair, more free,  
For a dwelling within that glorious clime  
Where 'tis ever one beautiful summer time;  
So that we may at life's sunset hour,  
Fade, to re-bloom in the heavenly bower.

## Religious Miscellany.

The following is an extract from a lecture on "The Bible," delivered in London by the Rev. A. Allen, before the Young Men's Association, in aid of the English Baptist Missionary Society.

### THE BIBLE.

The Old Testament consists of thirty-two tracts by thirty different writers, between the first and last of whom an interval of at least 1,500 years elapsed. The New Testament is comprised in twenty-seven tracts by eight different writers, most of them, however, living as contemporaries—an interval of only sixty years being between the earliest and latest of the writings. The wonderful harmony observed in the books of so many different writers, treating so much of historical subjects, is a remarkable evidence of the divine origin of the book. A thousand men might easily write in doctrinal harmony, hardly two could write in perfect historical harmony, unless aided supernaturally; and the Bible was written by thirty-eight men in all conditions of life, most of them herdsmen and fishermen. This book, so purely historical and so marvellously constructed, coming forth from the little region of Palestine, has taken hold of the world as no other book has, having asserted its sway over the civilized and the savage, the peasant and the philosopher; the wisest counselling the transcendancy of its wisdom, the holiest the unapproachableness of its purity. To paraphrase the words of Theodore Parker, who can eulogise the Bible with his rhetoric while he refuses to it the homage of his heart:—"The literature of Greece is meagre and local by its side; acknowledged or unacknowledged, it rules the world; the sun never sets on its holy page; every Sabbath it is read in ten thousand sanctuaries, and every day in ten thousand times ten thousand homes; it follows the palace of the rich and ennobles the hovels of the poor; our legislators make laws by it, and obedience to them is secured by its influence; it refines our literature and imbues our common talk; it is no more in the school than it is in the street; everywhere we may recognise its wondrous presence; our greatest institutions are built upon it; our greatest men have thought their lives well spent in translating and enforcing it—its commentaries alone would outnumber all other books. It knits itself into men's daily lives, and is recognised in all their pursuits—it lies by the side of the merchant, and has a place in the pack of the pedlar—it goes forth in the bark of commerce, and lies in the trunk of the outcast. The monarch recognises it when he receives his crown, the law, when it would authenticate its evidence. The church is founded upon it, and exists for its promulgation—it is with us in the sanctuary, and with us in the closet—our sermons are the expositions of its theology

—our hymns are the utterances of its religion—our prayers are the pleadings that it teaches. It hails us when we are born, and comforts us when we die—it blesses us in the great changes of life, and guides us to their happiest issues—it is to our virtue all its strength, and to our vice all its restraint—in grief it is our solace, and it is the utterance of our joy—of the weary head it is the soothing pillow—of the broken heart it is the healing balm. Men find in it a sympathy with their deepest experiences, and rest on it their holiest hopes—they are not afraid to commit the present to its power, and the future to its promise. They receive alike its teachings of spiritual realities, of earthly duties, and of heavenly rest. It chastens their pride, and encourages their penitence; it rebukes their unholiness, and their rebelliousness cowers at its presence; it condemns their tyranny, and sustains their endurance. It is the sinner's conscience, and the saint's law, the oppressor's foe, and the mourner's friend. Its teaching lies deep in the heart of the prodigal, the spell that is to bring him home; and deep in the heart of the believer, the inspiration that makes him more than conqueror. Our life is happiest when we talk in its light—our dying pillow is softest when resting upon it. It holds in its mighty grasp the fears, and hopes, and affections of half mankind. Other books have their changes, this remains the same; other truths their power and decay, but "the word of the Lord abideth for ever." Ages, as they pass, only root it deeper in human hearts, and spread it wider over human lives. To millions in ages past it has thus been prophet and lawgiver, counsellor, and friend, and never was it so potent as it is now. The truths that have thus from the days of the patriarchs comforted the highest souls, will suffice to the last. "Heaven and earth may pass away; God's word cannot. Its silver cord is never loosed, its golden bowl is never broken. Multiplying centuries only add the sanctity of reverence to the sanctity of love. Still it rises upon the generations of men, their light and salvation, and will continue to do so until its lustre is lost in the glory to be revealed. Through it we now 'know in part;' then, 'in transcending even it, we shall 'know even as we are known.' Not only is this book wonderful in its influence and in its character—being at once intensely human in its utterances and sympathies, and transcendently and palpably divine—but it has also a wonderful history. Subject to the conditions of other books, it was written in ordinary manuscripts, copied by ordinary men, deposited in fallible custody, and has been translated and printed by men liable to mistake and unfaithfulness. Hence the science of biblical criticism, and the blending of divine and human elements in its product, which biblical criticism has to discriminate and harmonise. Having referred to the period of the unwritten word, when God's communications to man were by visions, angelic messengers, or directly composing the canon of the Old and then those of the New Testament. The oldest books of the Bible existed in manuscript for upwards of 3,000 years. When synagogue worship was introduced, copies of the Scriptures were multiplied and preserved in the synagogues in three grand divisions—the Law, comprising the Pentateuch—the Haphtaroth, comprising the prophetic and historical books—and the Haglographa, comprising the devotional books, such as the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, &c. These formed three separate parchment rolls in synagogue worship, and do to this day.

The minute and imperative rules to be observed by the scribes in copying these books were described by the lecturer. So far as human ingenuity and sagacity could devise, everything was done to preserve them from the slightest mistake.

In 1530 Tyndale undertook the translation of the Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, and of his difficulties and the opposition he encountered (obliging him to take refuge at Antwerp), of his success in translating the New Testament and most of the books of the Old, and of his

betrayal and violent death, Mr. Allen gave an interesting sketch. Subsequent translations, and the persecuting edicts against reading the Bible issued in various reigns, being rapidly passed over, the lecturer gave an account of the publication of the authorised version under James I., and of the care exercised to secure its faithful rendering.

If the inspiration of the very words of Scripture be essential to its infallibility, where is the original autograph, or a verbal copy of it? Moreover, infallibility must be wanting to every translation that has been made, and to every version now used. Contending only for the inspiration of its ideas, we repose with certainty upon the received text, and upon every faithful translation of it. May we not, in the light of the history of past translations of the Bible, look somewhat calmly and intelligently at the question of a possible revision of our present authorised version?

Whether the time has come when a revision of our English version could wisely be undertaken—who is to attempt it, and under what auspices, are questions, on the practicability and expediency of which good men may entertain different opinions; but, in the name of common sense and religious truth, do not let us foreclose the whole subject by a cry of heresy, or by fanatically saying that we are contented with our version as it is, that we love even its defects, and protest against their being touched; this is not an intelligent love for the Bible—it is a blind superstition.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Jottings by the way. No. 2.

#### SCENERY AND LABOURS AT ANTIGONISH.

Friday, 29th.—The impression is not effaced from the mind produced on a first visit to this beautiful village, with its calm repose, embosomed in a valley of surpassing beauty and romantic scenery. The eye of the lover of nature feasts on the prospect, and the soul bounds upward to the Creator of scenes 'so wondrous fair.' If there are views of such surpassing loveliness in this world—if to gaze upon the meandering of some peaceful stream, or the green slopes so attractive to the eye; if trees and flowers and these embowering shades, cause the finer feelings of the heart to luxuriate in the midst of so much beauty in this dark world blighted by evil, what must be the emotions of redeemed spirits when contemplating those "fields of living green" in the Paradise of God, which are not sullied by the footsteps of sin, and where no cloud interposes to obscure their living splendor.

"O land of rest for thee I sigh!"

The pleasurable emotions awakened in the breast of the traveller soon experience a sad reaction when he comes to observe the insignia of that vast system of error which overspreads the world. Popery broods over this enchanting scene. Magnificent edifices indicate its strength and likewise its architectural taste. Sydney County contains a population of thirteen thousand, whilst the Protestants number only three, this fact accounts for the existence of so much Catholicism in Antigonish.

The College of St. Francis Xavier is a beautiful edifice, which is an ornament to the village. Three Professors are employed, with a President who teaches theology. We had an opportunity, through the kindness of Dr. Shults, an old acquaintance, a Prussian by birth, to hear his class of young men, reading Livy, Cicero and Xenophon. They are drilled pretty thoroughly. We remarked the peculiarity of the accent which was Italian. The young men first read the Latin and Greek text, then they gave the construction of the words in their order, then a free translation, even reciting Cicero from memory; afterwards they gave the Grammar and Prosody. Their acquaintance with these was most accurate, every inflexion of nouns, the paradigm of verbs, their tenses, and variations were thoroughly understood. Next to Windsor, I never saw better drilling, no cramming appeared here. I received a cordial invitation to attend the

public examination, and bidding my friend, the Doctor, "Good morning," I left pleased with the interview. The College has a fine philosophical apparatus.

Is there no Conservative principle to leaven this dark mass of conscientious error? Is there no element to purify this moral poison besides unholy combinations among sectaries called Protestants? Is this the way to teach the Papist we love his soul? May God preserve us from such folly! than to array against each other those belonging to a common brotherhood, in deadly strife.

Protestantism is not the watchword of Christianity. There may be a more tangible aspect given to the superstition of the Catholic, but human nature is the same in both—nay, within the pale of that church thus branded, may be found a self-denial, a separation from the world, which we look for in vain in other bodies which, with lordly arrogance, term themselves Protestants. If thousands are given, from superstitious motives, to gain Heaven, should not we give thousands to please God? If we see ascetic habits in the poor Trappist Monk, constraining him to rise at two in the morning, to perform his devotions, should not we perform similar duties, from higher motives? If Sisters of Charity abound in deeds of love to the sick and dying, and Nuns live in seclusion from the world, to win heaven, should not we do all these things, from the loftiest and purest principles?

Two Christian denominations occupy this field in conjunction with Roman Catholics, what have they done towards upheaving the vast weight of moral darkness, brooding over the land? There is a Presbyterian interest long presided over by the Rev. Thomas Trotter, a Mr. Honeyman now fills his place—an active man in Schools. Their place of worship is old and shabby; a neat little Baptist Chapel may be seen in modest white, where Mr. Whidden, a meek, modest man, officiates, deservedly esteemed by all as a man of God. Some progress has been made in having the House neatly pedwed off. But Baptists in Antigonish must have more love for souls, to go ahead.

Saturday, visited two families, where, alas! I found a change since I was last here. Consumption, the destroyer of the fairest flowers of mortal mould is busy. One has gone to her rest, another lies on his bed rapidly wasting away; another of the same family will apparently soon follow, but blessed be God all prepared. It is even pleasant to visit the chambers of those who are going home to know that they will be with Jesus in glory. O, my Saviour, prepare me, a poor worm of the dust, for that better land!

Sabbath morning has come, with all its holy and hallowed associations, nature is smiling, and how calm, how still is every thing around me, not a whisper is to be heard in this peaceful dwelling, the soul looks upward to Christ and a restless feeling is experienced, preventing repose. May my poor services, O Jesus, be honoured of thee this day, thou knowest that I would seek to promote thy cause. The house was well filled, and the hearers attentive, but all is vain without the Spirit's power, some tearful eyes are visible; but nothing can be done without a travelling and praying spirit on the part of the Lord's people. They should come to the house of God praying, and hear every word praying. And how should the preacher feel? Alas! how cold are our affections. A trembling fear is sometimes experienced, that we may be running when not sent; but, blessed be God, some seals may be found.

Monday morning.—A feeling of Monday-ness (so called) is experienced after preaching three times on the Lord's-day, but we must be up and doing. Spent the forenoon in writing,—concluded Payson's life. What holiness, what deep piety, what entire consecration to God, what passion for souls, are sentiments which escape from the heart whilst reading the memoir of this remarkable man. How few ministers at the present day are like him. May Christ baptize his servants afresh with the Holy Ghost.