

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1858.

WHOLE SERIES.
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NEW SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Baptism.

How sweetly solemn is this sacred scene!
Surely the Holy Spirit hovers near—
His dove-like form to mortal eyes unseen,
But humble hearts must feel his presence here—

Descend thou heavenly Messenger of peace—
Shed o'er our souls the beams of sacred love;
Here let all doubts, and fears, and conflicts cease,
And holy joy pour on us from above.

How sweet the notes of the Baptismal hymn
Float o'er the stillness of the Sabbath morn!
So to the mercy-seat—between the cherubim
May grateful incense from our hearts be borne.

Jesus who, though the spotless Lamb of God,
Though free from sin—from all defilement free—
Didst yield thy sacred form to Jordan's flood
A glorious pattern of humility.

Shall we poor, sin-polluted, full of guilt,
Disdain the pathway thine own feet have trod?
No—take us Lord—do with us as thou wilt;
But keep us near Thyself—our Saviour, God.
Lower Stewiacke, February, 1858. J. B.

Miscellaneous.

For the Christian Messenger.

Spring.

ONE of the grand designs in the arrangement of nature appears to be the comfort and happiness of man. Of this we have daily assurances. The most striking, and perhaps that which yields most to our convenience and comfort, is the agreeable variations produced by the Earth's revolutions round the sun, called the Seasons.

Every season possesses some charm peculiar to itself. Perhaps none has more beauty, or brings along with it more joy than Spring. How joyfully are the first signs of its approach hailed. And when the intruder is fast robbing the earth of its fleecy robe with which Winter has clothed her; to adorn her with one of richer hue; all animate and inanimate objects seem, by the fresh vigour which they display, to say, "Welcome! And there are none to shed a tear at the departure of our northern friend.

The lover of nature as he takes his walk at early morn cannot but be delighted at the cheering aspect presented to the sight. The wild-wood, vocal with the notes of myriads of Songsters, (by far the sweetest music earth can afford) the hills and valleys bathed in the golden light of the rising sun, the sweet murmur of the brook as it swiftly glides on its course, triumphing that it has at last broken the fetters with which it has been bound, and the rich verdure with which nature is bountifully clothing the earth, all lend a charm to the scene, and seem to rejoice in the happy change; and he who cannot join in a hymn of praise and thankfulness to the Giver of all blessings, must be insensible to the charms of music, and void of taste for the finest productions of nature.

Nor does the evening hour possess less beauty, though of a different nature. The sun sinking behind the western horizon, the cool breeze which reminds us of the character of the last season, the gently coming twilight, and the bright twinkling of the stars, as one by one they become visible, like gems set in the broad canopy of heaven, all tend to the most ennobling and exalted sentiments, and raise the mind above its earthly abode, and prepare it for communing with nobler spirits.

The Spring brings a pleasing change of business along with it. All classes anticipate the coming changes, and busy preparations are made for its reception. With the husbandman especially it is full of importance, for well he knows if he does not improve the seedtime he cannot expect a plentiful harvest.

By this season we are taught many useful lessons. As by seedtime we are taught to place confidence in that Providence which presides over and supplies the wants of mankind: so by the annual return of Spring we are taught the swiftness of the march of time, the return of each season bringing us

one year nearer our journey's end. May we also be led to think more of the great object of life, and to prepare to inhabit that blest abode

"Where Winter never more shall blight,
But Spring, eternal Spring shall bloom;
Where virtue knows no second night,
Redeemed by Jesus from the tomb."

Eastville, Stewiacke. M. A.

The Revival.

BY MRS. STOWE.

THE great turning of the public mind to religion forms so marked an event in our present times, that even secular papers are noticing it. For the most part, too, their notices are not scoffing or disrespectful, but tentative, serious, and suggestive. They seem to say, "There is need enough among us of a revival of religion, heaven knows—pray God only that it be real, and of the right kind."

They say, We hope it will do some good to men in a political and business capacity—that it will make them honest, and true, and upright, and magnanimous. "No revival has ever done anything for Wall-street yet," says one—"we hope this may." "We hope," says another, "that prayer for the slave may not be considered an intrusion in these frequent prayer-meetings, and that some penitence may be felt and expressed for the share which Northern churches have had in aiding and abetting a system of robbery and oppression." So speaks the outside world as she looks gravely, sadly, not scoffingly, on the spectacle of thronging churches and opening prayer-meetings,—and her demand is just.

There is something in a right name. The term "revival" seems by general consent to have been adopted into our language as expressive of these seasons; but we should much prefer a term formerly much employed among certain religious denominations—"reformation." Instead of the great revival of 1858, we should be happy to read the great reformation of 1858.

Many worldly people, and some very Christian people, have a prejudice against anything like periodicity in religious impulse. They dislike revivals. Why should the Divine One, who is always love, say they, be considered as operating impulsively and periodically on the human soul, sometimes shining and sometimes withdrawing? It is urged furthermore, that the expectation of such seasons becomes in the end a motive for sloth and inaction, and a neglect of an even and constant culture of the religious nature.

All this may have some truth in it; but, nevertheless, it is a fact that religious impulses, like all other impulses, have always come over the world in waves.—To begin with the day of Pentecost, in which three thousand were converted in one day, we find all along the line of the History of the Church that there were seasons when religious impulses were more than usually fervent, and religious labors successful.

There were revivals under the preaching of Augustine and Chrysostom; and the great force of the Reformation was not merely political or intellectual, but it was the deep upheaving of the religious element, bringing all other reforms in its train. The Reformation was a revival of religion. The revivals in England under the Wesleys and Whitfield inaugurated a new era there, which is felt to-day in the power of the dissenting element and the improved state of things in the Established Church. The preaching of the Wesleys, the Fletchers, and of Whitfield; to the colliers and cottars of England, was the first movement for the general religious instruction of the masses, and led the way to the multiplied labors of that kind with which England now abounds. It is a noticeable fact in all these cases, that they were followed by political and moral reforms;—the work proved itself divine by its beneficent results. This is a fair test. "He that is of God, doeth the works of God;" and by this test should every so-called revival be judged. Revivals which make men better, and bless society, have been and may be realities. But the rule is without exception, that every truly valuable thing has its counterfeit. When we read

of great revivals, where the Christian con-

verts claim as a sacred right the privilege of selling the members of Christ for money; where they defend the breaking of the marriage covenant at the will of the master, and take away from the colored member the right of testimony, and are so lost to all moral sense as to see no harm in any of these things, we hold that that revival has been spurious and counterfeit. So also as to Northern churches, which, for reasons of expediency, and to carry ends of ecclesiastical politics, have refused to testify against these sins, we hold that a revival of religion that brings no repentance and reformation is false and spurious.

We believe in no raptures, in no ecstasies, in no experiences that do not bring the soul into communion with Him who declared he came to set at liberty them that are bound and bruised. Revivals of religion have not been confined to Christian countries. Old heathenism had them. Popish Rome has them. Modern heathenism has them. One and all of these have had turns of unusual fervor in their way. One and all have had their trances, illuminations, and mysterious ecstasies. But those only are Christian revivals which make men like Christ; or, if they do not make them like Him, at least set them on the road of trying to be like Him. We say, therefore, to our friends, that the period of a great religious impulse has come; that there will be revivals all over the land, either false or true—either of a Christian or a heathen type; and by their fruits shall ye know them. We are glad to hear that some of the most effective revival preachers confine their attention very much to preaching to the church. We are glad to hear that. It is quite necessary that those who profess to be the exponents of religion before the community, should have some deeper and higher ideas of what religion is.

So that when they go forth with the Apostolic message, "Repent and be converted every one of you," they need not be met with the scornful reply, "Converted, sir; converted to what? Converted into a man who defends slavery—converted into one who dares not testify against a profitable wickedness—converted into a man whose religion never goes into his counting-house—converted into a man who has no conscience in his politics, and who scoffs at the higher law of God? No, sir, I desire no such conversion. Whatever your raptures may be, I desire no part with them."

And let the solemn question go out to every Christian, to every parent, "Do you want your neighbors, friends, and children converted into such Christians as you have been?" If not, is there not a deeper conversion necessary for you?

A Stale Slander.

The *Puritan Recorder* admits into a recent number the following statement of a correspondent from Illinois:

"The Campbellites profess to believe that there is no salvation without immersion. The regular Baptists declare that immersion is as necessary to salvation as is faith. These two terms seem to amount to the same thing, and to exclude from heaven all that are not immersed."

If the conductors of the *Recorder* know this to be an untruth, we can devise no apology for the insertion. If they did not know it, they deserve to be classed among the fossils of centuries ago.—W. & R.

On the Loss of Children.

The Rev. Mr. Denton had lost an infant. "Supposing," said one of his people, "some one had given you a sheep to take care of and to feed, and by and by they return to you and ask for the sheep, what can you do? You cannot refuse to give it to him. He must take it, because it is his own."

"A noble lady told me herself," says Whitfield in one of his sermons, "that when she was crying on account of one of her children's death, her little daughter came innocently to her one day, and said, 'Mamma, is God Almighty dead, you cry so?' The lady, blushing, said 'No.' She replied, 'Mamma, will you lend me your glove?' She let her take it, and, after that, asked her for it again, upon which the child said,

"Now you have taken the glove from me, shall I cry because you have taken away your own glove? And shall you cry because God has taken away my sister? Out of the mouths of babes God has perfected praise."—(Sermon lxx.)

"Hallelujah."

We dropped into the John street meeting on Friday noon, and enjoyed the pleasure of hearing a few simple, earnest, fervent remarks from the converted pugilist, Gardner. He made an unaffected reference to his own recent experience of converting grace, which had so suddenly transported him, while riding in his wagon, from the horrors of conviction to a blissful view of Jesus, that he instantly cried out "Hallelujah!" in a tone so loud as to frighten his horse, and nearly to have produced a disaster. Said he, "Yes, I shouted hallelujah, then. I shout hallelujah now! I expect to die shouting hallelujah—and by God's grace I hope to shout hallelujah, to all eternity!"—*Examiner.*

The Old Awakening.

The "Great Awakening," as it has been termed, ceases to be significant of the revival which, commencing somewhat more than a century ago, spread its blessings from Maine to Georgia, and from the seacoast to the frontier settlements. We are permitted to behold, with our own eyes, a "Great Awakening" of wider extent and apparently of equal power. The *New* and the *Old* Awakening become the more significant appellations. From the scenes of surpassing interest which lie around us now, the eye of the Christian reverts to the scenes of a hundred years ago, to behold the manifestations of the same Spirit, and to find the suggestive lessons of the church's experience.

That great revival had two centers, though the expanding circles soon crossed each other, and the awakening became universal. One of these centers was at Massachusetts; the other in New-Jersey—one among Congregationalists, the other among Presbyterians. Of Baptists, there were at this time few in the land, nine churches only in Massachusetts, and about as many more in the rest of New-England;—there may have been as many out of New-England as in it, making the total number in the Colonies, at the commencement of the revival, not far from forty. Out of that revival, Baptist churches sprang into existence with surprising rapidity—their growth itself a witness of the vastness and efficacy of that work of grace. In a little over half a century, if we date from the exact middle of the eighteenth, there were in New-England over four hundred Baptist churches, comprising over thirty thousand members, and at this time the total number of members in the United States had reached one hundred and eighty thousand—all this, though in the same period the land had passed through two French wars, the war of the Revolution, and the period of French infidelity. The historian is irresistibly arrested by such facts, and if he fails to see the presence and the power of God in an awakening ripening into such fruits, we can liken him only to the foul bird that hoots at the sun, and cries, "Where is it?"

The rapid growth of the Baptists, however, was but one of the signs and fruits of that great movement. Fully shared by the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, among whom it originated, it at length started into existence the Methodists, whose growth and influence have been among the marvels of the modern history of the Christian Church. It exalted and determined the intellectual and moral life of the country, and prepared us for the wonderful destiny which Divine Providence has arranged. We talk of our indebtedness to warriors and statesmen for the blessings of our Revolutionary triumph, our free government, and our prosperous country, and we offer indeed a just tribute; but if God had not given us the great awakening of the last century, there would have been no adequate moral basis for that triumph, that government or that prosperity, and our history could not have been the illustrious one of which we boast.—N. Y. *Examiner.*