

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. III. No. 47.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1858.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXII. No. 47.

Poetry.

Let your light so shine before men.

MATTHEW V. 14.

Raise the Christian standard higher,—
Higher be the Christian's aim,
And to nobler things aspire,
Than a mere professor's name;
Always be an humble Christian—
Never be a lifeless one;
Imitate the bright example
Of Jehovah's only Son.

Let your piety be active—
Let your love be pure and strong,
Your deportment so attractive,
As to draw the world along;
For the inconsistent Christian—
One whose practice and whose creed
Form but a remote connection,
Is a stumbling block indeed.

Almost-Christians never flourish,
But the saint in word and deed,
God's own promises will nourish,
And their willing footsteps lead;
Those who idle in his vineyard,—
Those who seek the world's applause,
Never will be counted faithful
To the Great Redeemer's cause.

Hartford, Ct., Oct. 1858.

JUSTITIA

LINES

presented to Charles and Sarah Cuttle, on the death of their eldest son JAMES, who died at Onslow, of whooping-cough, September 20th, aged 6 years and 2 months.

Though your cherished one is sleeping,
With the pale and silent dead;
Though you miss his wished-for presence
And the tear of sorrow shed:

Yield him meekly to the Saviour,
In his blessed arms to rest;
Whose affection far surpasses,
That which fills a mother's breast.

Ye could not, with ceaseless vigils,
Shield him from the ills of life;
Now with Jesus he is sheltered
Safely from earth's pain and strife.

Oh! then love him, who so lov'd you,
As to call your child away;
And you will with holy gladness
Meet him in the realms of day.

Miscellaneous.

The Rev. Isaac Backus, A. M. HIS CONVERSION.

We referred in our last to "The Life and Times of Isaac Backus." The following account of his conversion will afford our readers a glance at his character. The account given in this work of the origin of those called New-Lights will be interesting to many of our readers:—

In the Great Awakening which we have briefly noticed, Backus was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth. He had no opportunity to hear either Whitefield or Tennent, but the revival which attended their labors, reached Norwich in 1714, under the preaching of Dr. Wheelock and others. "This work," says Mr. Backus, "was so powerful, and people in general were so ignorant, that they had little government of their passions. Many cried out and fell down in meetings. But I had so much doctrinal knowledge, that I never was overcome in that manner. Neither could I put off concern, as I had done before, for a more convenient season. No though I was in good health, I saw that life was forfeited by sin, and that God had a right to take it away in a moment. I saw also that he had now given me an opportunity to repent and turn to Him, and that, if it was neglected, I was lost for eternity. Time was then taken out of the way, and a vast eternity was directly before me, without any hope of ever having another day of grace, should this be neglected. This moved me to the earnest use of all the means, public or private, within reach, that I might get a good heart to come to Christ with. For all the sound teaching with which I had been favored

had given me no higher ideas, than that a good disposition of mind was necessary in order to come to Christ for salvation. But all the awakening preaching that I now heard; and all the books which I read, were so far from producing any such disposition, that my heart seemed to grow worse and worse daily; and I saw seeds of all the evils of the world in me. While others were crying out and falling down in distress, I felt like a stupid beast before God; and nothing was more terrible to me than the fear of losing my convictions and being left of God to a hard heart and reprobate mind; for I fully believed that now was my only time to obtain salvation, that I should have another day of grace. Neither could I bear to be deceived with a false hope. When a minister once stated a case, like mine, and then said to his hearers: "If this be your case, be not discouraged, but see if God does not appear speedily for your help," I was powerfully tempted to cast off my concern and to hope for help hereafter. But this appeared plainly to come from the adversary, and it increased my distress. Again, one morning these words came into my mind like an audible voice, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." But my soul was alarmed thereby, through fear of being settled down in something short of a union with Christ, and this alarm made me cry out to Him for help.

In the beginning of August, Mr. John Davenport came to Norwich, where he was met by Doctors Wheelock and Pomeroy, and meetings were held incessantly for three days. People were greatly affected and many hopefully converted, while I grew worse and worse in my own view. Powerful preaching, and the sight of many in distress or joy, while I remained a hardened sinner, caused such anguish as words cannot express. Yet hereby God laid open to me the plague of my own heart and the folly of seeking life by my own doings. My tears were dried up, and I could find no good in me. Instead of this I felt inclined to quarrel with the sovereignty and justice of God, and the freeness of his grace, a grace so free that he was not obliged to have mercy upon me after all my doings. A sight of these corruptions increased my distress and filled me with confusion before God. And as I believed this to be my last opportunity, and my convictions seemed to be going off, and the work of God to be abating among us, how awful did my case appear! But God's thoughts are as high above our thoughts as the heavens are above the earth; for He thus drew me off from all trust in myself or any creature, and led me to embrace salvation in His own way.

As I was mowing alone in the field, August 24th, 1741, all my past life was opened plainly before me, and I saw clearly that it had been filled up with sin. I went and sat down in the shade of a tree, where my prayers and tears, my hearing the Word of God and striving for a better heart, with all my other doings, were set before me in such a light that I perceived I could never make myself better, should I live ever so long. Divine justice appeared clear in my condemnation, and I saw that God had a right to do with me as he would. My soul yielded all into his Hands, fell at His feet, and was silent and calm before Him. And while I sat there, I was enabled by divine light to see the perfect righteousness of Christ and the freeness and riches of His grace, with such clearness, that my soul was drawn forth to trust in Him for salvation. And I wondered that others did not also come to Him who had enough for all. The word of God and the promises of His grace appeared firmer than a rock, and I was astonished at my previous unbelief. My heavy burden was gone, tormenting fears were fled, and my joy was unspeakable.

Yet this change was so different from my former ideas of conversion, that for above two days I had no thought of having experienced it. Then I heard a sermon read which gave the characters of the children of God, and I had an inward witness that those characters were wrought in me; such as, a spirit of prayer, a hatred of sin, an overcoming of the world, love to the brethren,

and love to enemies; and I conclude that I then had the sealings of the Spirit of God, that I was a child of His. New ideas and dispositions were given me; the worship and service of God and obedience to His will were the delight of my soul. I found such happiness therein as I never had in all the vanities of the world; and this I have often experienced since."

Mr. Backus then proceeds to speak of those alternations of spiritual joy and despondency, to which every Christian is peculiarly subject in the beginning of his course. He observes, that although darkness at times overspread his mind, he was unable to revive his former terrors; although doubts in respect to his piety were experienced, he sought in vain to recover his previous state of conviction. He attributes his depression and distress to a want of watchfulness and to a neglect of known duty.

Sketch of Lord Elgin's visit to Japan.

[From The North China Mail.]

Before entering the Bay of Simoda, where we arrived on the 10th, we saw a volcano in feeble action. The country is pretty, but the town mean, and not likely to become an important trading port. There is a breakwater to protect the anchorage against the heavy rollers that occasionally set in. A large bazaar of lacquered ware, superior to that at Nagasaki, tempted many of the staff and others to invest spare dollars. All the articles chosen were taken to an office at a short distance, where some government officials were seated, who, on ascertaining the price, charged a percentage and weighed our dollars against their current coin—*itzebens*—three of these being equal to the dollar.

Here we met Mr. Townsend Harris, the Consul-General of the United States, and his secretary, Mr. Hewsen, who kindly offered his services to Lord Elgin as an interpreter, which, with his knowledge of the language, were most valuable.

On the 12th we left for Jeddo, Mr. Hewsen accompanying us, and on the same day anchored about five miles off the capital of Japan. Several boats with Government officials came on board very soon. No foreign ships had ever before anchored so near the town, the American and Russian ships having always remained about fifteen miles off. Here we found a paddle-wheel steamer, given by the Dutch to the Japanese Government; she had the national (Japanese) flag—white, with a red ball in the centre—and a white pendant. Several officials of rank visited Lord Elgin, and invited him to take up his residence ashore, where communication would be more easy, as the distance to the ships was great, and the weather sometimes boisterous.

The Commissioners, six in number, having had an interview with Lord Elgin at his residence respecting a treaty, his lordship and staff, with some other officers, visited the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Emperor's palace, where we were received in the presence of several official personages. Having been requested not to go into the room with the same shoes that we then wore, we put slippers over them. Pipes, sweetmeats, &c., were provided in a separate room, to which most of the party were invited, leaving Lord Elgin in conference with the Japanese Minister, after which we returned to our quarters.

During our stay at Jeddo we made excursions into the country several miles. The scenery was charming, and the land highly cultivated. The houses and persons of the people are extremely clean; in the villages are bathing houses. The people exhibit much curiosity, but no incivility. At a spot where there is a pretty water-fall and stream, tea and refreshments may be had, served by young women who are far from ugly; being unmarried, they exhibit a set of beautifully white teeth and black arched eyebrows; some whiten their faces, neck, and upper part of the chest by means of chalk. The appearance of the married women with blackened teeth and their eyebrows removed was in ungainly

contrast to them. At an entertainment there was introduced a strong frothy tea, made by pulverising a teaspoonful of a very superior kind, and whipping it into a frothy beverage, but it was too strong to be agreeable; the remains of former served sweetmeats, &c., were served a second time, the names of the parties having been placed in the boxes containing them. The servants who brought in these things each wore a sword, made a low bow on placing them before us, and retired, placing the palms of their hands upon the upper part of their thighs. Presents of silk, lacquer ware, porcelain, &c., were made to the different persons of the embassy and officers of the ships. Among the former were some pieces of silk that may only be worn by the Japanese nobles, no inferior person being allowed to buy or possess it; it is said to be made by banished nobles. It is not better in quality nor handsomer than Chinese silk. The easy, affable, kind manner of the Japanese officials, as compared with the self-conceited airs of the Chinese, is remarkable, and impressed us greatly in their favour. They were jolly, too; drinking to the Queen, the Emperor, and the Commissioners in champagne, as if they liked it, with a hip-hip hoorah! They expressed their feelings of satisfaction at the visit of the Ambassador, and hoped that one of them as Ambassador from the Court of Japan might meet him in England, Moriama being the secretary.

On the 11th of July the treaty was formally signed by Lord Elgin and the six Commissioners. At an interview held for the purpose, some days previous, Lord Elgin delivered to the Prime Minister the letter of Lord Clarendon, presenting the steam yacht to the Emperor of Japan from her Majesty the Queen of England; preliminary arrangements were then made for transferring her, and it was proposed that her name should be changed to any other that they might suggest. Accordingly, after the treaty was signed the party went on board. A salute of twenty-one guns was fired, in excellent time, from the fort, and the British colours were hauled down and the Japanese hoisted, the *Retribution* and *Furious* each saluting the flag with twenty-one guns. The name of *Dragon* was then given to the yacht by request of the Commissioners. They expressed great pleasure at the beautiful fittings and furniture, and gave Lord Elgin a letter for Lord Clarendon in reply to the one they had received from him. They visited the *Retribution* while steam was getting up on board the *Dragon*, and after steaming about until dark the parties returned to their respective ships and homes, the Japanese firing rockets and exhibiting blue lights at the yardarms of the yacht.

On the following day (27th) we left Jeddo for Shanghai, and arrived here on the 2nd of September, after a most delightful and satisfactory trip.

We saw the Fusiama mountain, said to be 12,000 feet high, which is represented on their porcelain and in many of their picture books. The population of Jeddo is about 2,000,000, the streets of the city are wide, and the people kept in good order by numerous police and military attendants.

The medium of communication is the Dutch language, which is spoken fluently by the Japanese.

There's nae strife up here.

An old Scotch elder had been disputing with his minister at an elders' meeting. He said some hard things, and almost broke the minister's heart. Afterwards he went home, and the minister went home too. Next morning the elder came down, and his wife said to him, "Eh, Jan! ye look very sad this morning. What's the matter wi' ye?" "Ah!" said he, "you would be sad too if you had had such a dream as I've had." "Weell, and what did ye dream about?" "Och! I dreamed I had been at an elders' meeting, and I said some hard things and grieved the minister; and as he went home I thought he died and went to heaven. A fortnight after I thought I died, and that I went to heaven too. And when I got to the gates of heaven, out came the minister and put his hand to take me, say-