

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES,  
Vol. IV. No. 11.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 1859.

WHOLE SERIES,  
Vol. XXIII. No. 11.

## Poetry.

### The Changed Cross.

It was a time of sadness, and my heart,  
Although it knew and felt the better part,  
Felt wearied with the conflict and the strife,  
And all the needful discipline of life;  
And while I thought on these as given to me,  
My trial-tests of faith and love to be,  
It seemed as if I never could be sure,  
That faithful to the end I should endure.

And thus no longer trusting to His might  
Who says, "We walk by faith and not by sight;"  
Doubting, and almost yielding to despair,  
The thought arose—my cross I cannot bear;  
Far heavier its weight must surely be,  
Than those of others which I daily see;  
O! if I might some other burden choose,  
Methinks I should not fear my crown to lose.

A solemn silence reigned on all around—  
E'en Nature's voices uttered not a sound;  
The evening shadows seemed of peace to tell;  
And sleep upon my weary spirit fell.  
A moment's pause, and then a heavenly light  
Beamed full upon my wondering sight;  
Angels on silvery wings seemed everywhere,  
And seraph-music thrilled the balmy air.

Then one more fair than all the rest to see,  
One to whom all the others bowed the knee,  
Came gently to me, as I trembling lay,  
And "Follow me," He said, "I am the way."  
Then speaking thus, He led me far above,  
And there, beneath a canopy of love,  
Crosses of divers shape and size were seen,  
Larger and smaller than my own had been.

And one there was, most beautiful to behold—  
A little one with jewels set in gold;  
Ah! this, methought, I can with comfort wear,  
For it will be an easy one to bear;  
And so the little cross I quickly took,  
But all at once my frame beneath me shook,  
The sparkling jewels fair were they to see;  
But far too heavy was their weight for me.

This may not be, I cried, and looked again,  
To see if there were any here could ease my pain;  
But one by one I passed them slowly by,  
Till on a lovely one I cast my eye;  
Fair flowers around its sculptured form entwined,  
And grace and beauty seemed in it combined;  
Wondering I gazed, and still I wondered more,  
To think so many should have passed it o'er.

But O! that form so beautiful to see,  
Soon made its hidden sorrows known to me;  
Thorns lay beneath those flowers and colours fair;  
Sorrowing I said, "This cross I may not bear."  
And so it was with each and all around,  
Not one to suit my need could there be found;  
Weeping, I laid each heavy burden down,  
As my Guide gently said, "No cross, no crown."

At length to Him I raised my saddened heart;  
He knew its sorrows, bade its doubts depart;  
"Be not afraid," He said, "but trust in me,  
My perfect love shall now be shown to thee."  
And then with lightened eyes and willing feet,  
Again I turned my earthly cross to meet;  
With forward footsteps, turning not aside,  
For fear some hidden evil might betide.

And there in the prepared, appointed way,  
Listening to hear, and ready to obey,  
A cross I quickly found, of plainest form,  
With only words of love inscribed thereon;  
With thankfulness I raised it from the rest,  
And joyfully acknowledged it the best,—  
The only one of all the many there,  
That I could feel was good for me to bear.

And while I thus my chosen one confessed,  
I saw a heavenly brightness on it rest,  
And as I bent my burden to sustain,  
I recognised my own old cross again;  
But O! how different did it seem to be,  
Now I had learned its preciousness to see!  
No longer could I unbelieving say,  
Perhaps another is a better way.

Ah! not henceforth my own desire shall be,  
That he who knows me best should choose for me;  
And so whate'er his love sees good to send,  
I'll trust it's best because he knows the end.

"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you,  
Thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end."—Jeremiah xxix. 11.

## Miscellaneous.

### Swedish Colporteur's Trials for the Truth.

The following interesting extracts are taken from a recent report of a colporteur of the Am. Bap. Pub. Society in Sweden:

"In the month of September, on one occasion, I preached before a very large assembly; two priests and a district sergeant were present to arrest me, but the sergeant was so deeply affected by the word which the Lord gave me grace to speak, that he went his way and left me in peace.

"While holding a meeting at one place, some ill-disposed persons laid in wait one night to assassinate me. But the Lord verified His promise, so that not a hair of my

head was injured. They discharged a gun at me, several of the shot penetrated my overcoat, but not one was permitted to reach my body.

"At another meeting, however, I was attacked three different times by enemies, and because I was a Baptist, was made to feel the force of blows and kicks. One of the fellows, however, followed me twelve miles and begged for forgiveness, which afforded me an opportunity to speak to him the word of God, by which he seemed greatly moved.

"On another occasion a district sergeant came to arrest me for preaching. I besought him to permit me first to engage in prayer. He consented. On rising from my knees, I observed that his eyes were filled with tears. I asked him if I should prepare myself to leave. He replied, "Neither you nor any other Baptist shall from this day be disturbed by me, pray for me. Farewell."

"Before my conversion I was a school teacher, and organist in one of the State churches. A short time since, on my return home from a missionary tour, I found a bill from the priest of that church of \$50, for the salary of the schoolmaster whom they had elected to the place from which they had expelled me because I had been baptized. This seemed very cruel, but it was not the worst. Soon after I received a sentence from the High Court to pay a much larger amount, as the salary of the man whom they had elected as organist. The fact that for adherence to duty I should first be rejected from these offices, and then made to pay the salaries of men put in my place, seemed very hard and threw me into great perplexity and darkness of mind. I was almost led to doubt the promises of God. But after a time, I was by His good grace enabled to rejoice in the assurance that He ordered all for the best.

"Not long since I met with six persons who had previously received books and tracts from me. One said, 'I have experienced peace from reading your tract, "Come to Jesus."' Three said, "By reading these tracts on baptism, our prejudices against the Baptists have been removed."

"On another occasion a priest acknowledged that the Baptists were right, and asked me to pray for him. Many have thanked God that they were permitted to live in these blessed times, and begged me to thank the Am. Bap. Pub. Society for them, for sending colporteurs to this country. "But for this," said they, "we would still be in darkness."

"I feel it a privilege to travel about and preach the word of God. He has been with me and given me great joy amid all my trials. During the quarter, 90 days, I have preached 111 sermons; held 23 prayer-meetings; sold 495 books, given away 82, and 472 pages of tracts, and visited 417 families. I have also been permitted to baptize 7 persons, and to organize 4 Sunday-schools."

### Better Days for Ireland.

The *Evangelist* of last week contains a letter from a Dublin correspondent, which presents the prospects of Ireland in a very encouraging aspect. Some ten or twelve years ago Catholicism was in the ascendancy in that unhappy country; of its population of eight millions, five were Papists. This number was reduced materially by the extensive emigration during the year of famine. "From that moment," says the *Evangelist*, "the Irish oak pruned of its dead and decaying limbs, began to take a fresh and vigorous growth." The passage by parliament of a bill for the Relief of Encumbered Estates advanced the prosperity of the country, by bringing into market the heavily mortgaged estates, which now are cut up into numerous small farms, and came into the hands of new and thrifty owners. "In the train of this invading army of stalwart laborers, came schools and a vast system of Missionary enterprises. Devoted men have gone into the remotest districts of the island, teaching and preaching. Of the six million of inhabitants, which Ireland now contains, fully one-half are Protestant, while all the influence which

comes from rank and position, from larger wealth and superior intelligence, gives to that half of the nation an immense preponderance. The result of these combined material and moral influences has been marvellous. The whole country begins to wear a new aspect. Industry takes the place of idleness, and education of ignorance. Children are growing up wiser than their fathers; and the most turbulent peasantry becoming peaceable and happy labourers. Even the dreariest parts of Connaught and Munster, where the Irish were half savages, are beginning to show signs of improvement. Industry revives under the stimulus of hope, and already it is beginning to earn its reward. The neat English cottage takes the place of the Irish hovel, and the whole land becomes the abode of peace and plenty."

We have not entire confidence in the reliability of the method of estimate adopted by the correspondent of the *Evangelist*, but hope that it is proximately true. It is certain that any change in the character of the population of Ireland, for several years, has tended directly to diminish the Romanist population, and to increase absolutely as well as proportionately, the Protestant. This remarkable change in the condition of Ireland has stolen upon us unawares, and is calculated to excite devout reflections upon the wonderful ways of God's Providence. What nation was so hopelessly priest-ridden? The Romish religion had obtained every advantage by reason of ignorance and superstition, and was continually strengthened by artful appeals to the passions and patriotism of that lively, easily led people, and by the continual and intimate influence of a numerous clergy. It has been the strong hold of Romanism. Not even Spain was so bigoted and inaccessible. But in His own time, God interposes. When He speaks, when He moves, how vain is human calculation or opposition! We remember His wonder-workings in China, in Turkey, in Burmah, and in the Islands of the far-off sea. Now, in a manner peculiar and unforeseen, His hand is visible in Ireland.

Our hearts warm towards the Irish, with ardent human feeling. What they are to us every one knows. They bring here their warm sympathetic traits, their glowing mercurial impulses, their fun-loving, spendthrift, crown-cracking propensities. They love this country, they are a large and important element of our population, and in spite of the mischief which their wayward and rollicking proclivities make, no hearty human being can help feeling that tenderness for them which just such genial qualities as theirs must always inspire, however a sober judgment disapproves. The Irish are not thrifty—they are Nature's good-fellows, and always will be. But take away from them that soul-crushing incubus of priestcraft and ignorance, and see what a change a few generations of freedom and pure religion will make! They constitute the vivacious element of humanity, and their liveliness stands them in good stead, who by reason of their amiable unthrift, will probably always occupy an inferior position in society. —*N. Y. Chronicle.*

### All about Kissing.

Kissing (says an ancient writer,) was an act of religion in ancient Rome. The nearest friend of a dying person performed the rite of receiving his soul by a kiss, supposing that it escaped through his lips at the moment of expiration.

The sacredness of the kiss was inviolable among the Romans for a long time. At length it was degraded into a current form of salutation. Pliny ascribes the introduction of the custom to the degeneracy of Roman ladies, who, in violation of the hereditary delicacy of the females of Rome, descended to the indulgence of wine. Kissing was resorted to by those gentle, "good, easy" husbands (who knew better than to risk the tumbling of the house about their ears,) as the most effectual and courteous process to ascertain the quality of their wives' stolen libations; and Cato the Elder recommends the plan to the serious atten-

tion of all careful heads of families. The kiss was, in process of time, diffused generally as a form of salutation in Rome, where men testified their regard and the warmth of their welcome for each other, chiefly by the number of their kisses.

Amongst the early Christians the kiss of peace was a sacred ceremony, observed upon their most solemn occasions. It was called *signaculum orationis*—the seal of prayer; and a symbol of that mutual forgiveness and reconciliation which the Church required, as an essential condition, before any one was admitted to the sacraments. The Roman civilians, at length, took the kiss under their protection. The kiss had all the virtue of a bond, granted as a seal to the ceremony of betrothing; and if the husband elect broke the engagement, repenting of what he had done, he surrendered a moiety of the presents received in the ceremony of betrothing, in consequence of the violation done to the modesty of the lady by a kiss.

Will any of our readers plead guilty to ever having acted like foolish Robin, whose stupidity is immortalized in these six lines: "Come, kiss me," said Robin. I gently said "No! For my mother forbade me to play with men so." Ashamed by my answer he glided away. Though my looks very plainly advised me to stay. Silly swain, not at all recollecting—no, he—That his mother ne'er said that he must not kiss me! —*Young Men's Magazine.*

### A Wedding in the Olden Time.

MR. EDITOR—As an accompaniment to the able article on Isaac Backus, in your issue of the 3d inst, I am tempted to quote from Prof. Hovey's book the account of Mr. Backus' wedding, which is sufficiently quaint and unlike those of modern times. It took place at Miss Mason's house, where a goodly company of friends and neighbors assembled. A psalm was read by Rev. Mr. Shepard, of Attleboro', a hymn was sung, and prayer offered. "Then," says Mr. Backus, "I took my dear Susan by the hand, and spoke something of the sense I had of our standing and acting in the presence of God, and also how He had clearly pointed out to me the person to be my companion and a helper meet for me. Then I declared the marriage covenant, and she did the same. Thereupon Eugene Foster solemnly declared that we were lawfully husband and wife." The bridal salutations are described in the following manner: "Brother Shepard wished us a blessing, and gave us good exhortation, and so did some others. Another prayer was offered, after which all united in singing the one hundred and first psalm; this was followed by a short sermon from Mr. Backus himself."

This would be considered rather long-winded at the present day! We join in the congratulations, trusting—though no mention is made—that there was no deficiency of nut cakes, or other more delicate or more substantial edibles.

This book will be extensively read, and is an useful contribution to our New England theocratic, historical and biographical literature.—*ANTIQUARIUS* in *N. Y. Chronicle.*

### Coarse and Fine.

There stands Mrs. Green, at her cottage door, waiting for her Bill to come home from work. "Wretched, slatternly woman!" Now, why call her names? She is not your wife, remember. She is not that perfect model of elegance and propriety in personal or household arrangements, which you have had the good fortune to secure. If she were, you don't suppose she would have married Bill Green, or have added very materially to his comfort if she had so far condescended. She would very soon have put poor Bill's pipe out, you may be sure. In his eyes, possibly, she is all that is desirable as she is. He prefers her in a *neglige*; or, shall we say, doesn't care much about it, provided the bacon and greens be hot. Coarse, but comfortable. She swore at Bill this morning, it is true, just before he went to work—a proceeding by no means to be defended; but remember, Mrs. Rhodanthus—oh no, never swears, certainly not; probably doesn't know how—but conveyed to you this same