

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. V.....No. 33.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1860.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIV.....No. 33.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

In Memory of Mercy A. Stronach.

Thou art gone from our sight, yet our hearts hold thee still,
And thy loss we most deeply deplore,
Yet while in submission we bow to His will,
We must weep, though tears cannot restore.
We can never forget thee, we miss thy sweet voice,
And thy image so lovely and mild.
Thy place is left vacant, thy parents feel sad,
Yet with joy they can think of their child.
Their loss is thy gain, for in bright realms above,
Where no sorrow nor sighing can come.
Thou art looking on those whom on earth thou didst love,
And art ready to welcome them home.

Dear Sister, we would not recall thee to earth,
For we know thou art happier there,
Than to dwell in this world of sorrow and sin,
And be grieved here with many a care.

Thou wast given us here that our thoughts we might bend
Upon Him who such gifts could bestow,
And entwining our hearts with thy own, didst ascend,
Having finished thy mission below.

Dear friend, we will cherish those words thou hast left,
With pure heart-felt love they were given,
When weeping, thy friends stood around thy death-bed,
Thou didst tell them to meet thee in heaven.

In that bright abode where thy pure spirit's gone,
Thou art singing the song of the Lamb,
Arrayed in white garments made pure by his blood,
Thou art now with the heavenly band.

Where no death nor dismay, neither sorrow can come,
Where sighing and parting are o'er,
Where a long summer's given, and bright flowers bloom,
And saints sing around that fair shore.

Though the clods of the valley now cover thy head,
And thy dear form is hidden from sight,
Yet thy kindred can think whilst they sigh o'er thy grave,
Thou art living.—An Angel of light.

HANNAH L. FALES.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Baptist views of the Old Testament.

MR. EDITOR,—

Your judicious remarks on this subject, (C. M., July 25th.) prompt me to offer, if agreeable to you, a few additional thoughts on the same topic.

To men who have read extensively and reflected candidly it is well known, that misapprehension is very prevalent, and that it does a vast amount of harm. It is evidently a fruitful source of prejudice, contention and animosity. Those, therefore, who are aware of its existence in any case affecting the mutual good understanding and harmony of Christians, are under obligation to put forth prompt efforts for its removal.

To me it is not at all surprising that some of our Pedobaptist brethren have been led to entertain the idea, that Baptists do not duly regard the authority of the Old Testament. The occasion of this mistake may be easily discovered. In our debates with them relative to baptism, while they frequently endeavour to adduce proofs in favor of their views from the Old Testament, we are accustomed to maintain, that on this point the New Testament is the sole authority. The limitation of this principle to gospel institutions is liable to be overlooked. Perhaps it is not always indicated with sufficient clearness. Hence the inference is incorrectly drawn, that we undervalue the authority of the Old Testament.

To remove this misapprehension, and to place the subject in a distinct light, it may be remarked, that the path of duty with reference to ordinances peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation, was obviously to be learned from the Old Testament itself. In like manner the general view entertained by Baptists, so far as I am acquainted with it, is, that the

Divine will, in reference to ordinances peculiar to the New Testament dispensation, is to be learned from the New Testament; in which alone they are enjoined, the actions to be performed specified, and the character of the persons required, or entitled, to observe them described.

We readily receive all the light that can be derived from the Old Testament with reference to the discharge of every Christian duty. It is, however, notorious, that the judaizing scheme of attempting to amalgamate the ceremonies of the Mosaic law with the ordinances or institutions of the gospel, has tended to corrupt Christianity. Great care should therefore be exercised to avoid this pernicious error.

Accordingly, whatever similarity may be thought to exist between the ancient institutions of circumcision and the passover, and the present ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, we deem it inconsistent and perverse to undertake to decide who shall be admitted to the latter from the laws relating to the former. By the law of the passover all the Israelites that were capable of eating flesh and bread, whether old or young, pious or impious, were to partake of it.—(Ex. xii. 3, 4, 15.) But it would obviously be a gross perversion and desecration of the Lord's Supper hence to infer that little children, who cannot "discern the Lord's body," and ungodly men, notoriously destitute of faith, should partake of this sacred ordinance; to which, according to New Testament instructions, none are admissible but such as possess faith in Christ.—(Matth. xxvi. 26-29; 1 Cor. xi. 23-29.) So likewise an indelible mark was to be put upon Abraham's male children by circumcision, at the age of eight days, or if neglected during early life, in manhood, however unbelieving and profligate they might be.—(Gen. xvii. 10-12; Josh. v. 2-8.) But to us the inference appears wholly incorrect and groundless; that infants, both male and female, or unbelieving adults, ought to receive baptism, for which, faith is an indispensable prerequisite, according to the plain teachings of Christ and His Apostles, and which, as an act of personal obedience, is "the answer of a good conscience."—(Matth. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 41, 42; viii. 36-38; x. 47, 48; xvi. 31, 33, 34; xviii. 8; 1 Peter iii. 21.)

It does not, however, by any means follow from our views of this subject, namely, that the value and extent of gospel ordinances are to be ascertained from the New Testament, that we value the Scriptures of the Old Testament less highly than others do. All evangelical bodies are agreed in the principle, that Christians are not bound to observe abrogated Jewish rites. Yet the inspiration of the portions of Scripture which relate to these rites, is fully recognized by us all. These, as well as all others, may be studied with profit. Moral precepts and all duties not peculiar to a former dispensation, are equally obligatory at this time, in whatever part of the inspired volume they may be enjoined, or in any way inculcated.

It is my sincere desire that the explanations now given may aid in dispelling the prejudice that has existed in the minds of some persons, and in promoting mutual esteem and kindness among the followers of the Lamb, to whatever particular denomination they may be attached. Undoubtedly all would do well to venerate the whole Bible more deeply, and to study it more diligently, devotionally and practically. Then would the truth of the Apostles' statement, which relates directly to the Old Testament, be happily realized:—"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."—(Romans xv. 4.)

Ever yours in Christ,
CHARLES TUPPER.
Aylesford, Aug. 1, 1860.

SYRIA.

CHRISTIANS—DRUSES—MARONITES.

While reading the heart-sickening accounts which we have given from Syria of the persecution and murder of Christians by thousands, the question has doubtless arisen, Who are these Christians? They cannot be Protestants, for Syria is almost uncultivated missionary

ground. Who are the Druses by whom they are so cruelly murdered? These questions we will briefly answer.

There are in Syria but a few American missionaries, and although the gospel has been taking effect there for some years past, there are as yet comparatively few Protestant churches or evangelical Christians there. There is a very general disposition to respect the American flag, and the American missionary when under its protecting stars; but amid such excitement as now prevails there, the half civilized rabble can hardly pause to respect anything. Hence the American missionaries, and their disciples, so far as possible, have taken refuge on board the ships of war in the harbors. This outbreak was not wholly unlooked-for.—Mr. Bird, an American missionary wrote home some time since, that "a storm seems to be brewing;" though none expected it to burst upon that ill-fated land with such desolating fury.

The Christians massacred in such large numbers, are members of the Greek church—degenerated and corrupted from what it once was. They resemble the Roman Catholics in that they make tradition equal in authority to the written law. They encourage little or no preaching, and their religion is more in form than spirit. Their number is estimated as high as seventeen millions.

The Druses are regarded as heretical Moslems, or Mohammedans. They originated many centuries ago in the Wady el Teim, among the sources of the Jordan, and they have spread Eastward through the Hauran, as far as the Leja, South of Damascus, and perhaps farther, and Westward, over the Southern part of Lebanon, where they live, intermingled with the Maronites, both, frequently, occupying parts of the same village. Deir el Kour, for instance, the place of Rev. Mr. Bird's mission, was for many years reckoned as a Druse village, being under Druse government, though a majority of its inhabitants were Maronites.

The Maronites are a sect of the same Arab race, and substantially of the same character. They follow the Syrian rites, and are subject to the Pope; having reserved in this submission to him the privilege of adhering still to their former heresies, which is never made an obstacle in the propagation of Romanism in pagan lands.

There are some minor sects. There are the heretical Moslem Metawilch, much like the Druses, and the Greek Christians, some of whom still adhere to the Greek church, while others have acknowledged the Pope's supremacy, like the Maronites, and are called United Greeks. But they are all of the same Arab race, and the same general character.

These sects have been jealous of each other, and hostile to each other, from their origin, and though their animosity sometimes slumbers for several years, it is always ready to break out, and often does break out, in bloodshed and devastation. When, some years since, Ali Pasha of Egypt was advancing through Syria into Asia Minor and threatening Constantinople itself, his progress was facilitated by a similar war in Mount Lebanon, between the Druses and Maronites, excited for that purpose by European intrigue.

We have elsewhere stated that there is at least some reason to believe France has had something to do in fanning the flame that is now desolating towns and cities. It is easy to see how French Jesuits, of whom there were several on the mountains, might excite such a people to tumult and bloodshed. And there is believed to have been a motive for them to do it. The French have been intriguing to get up a war, as an excuse for taking possession of the country in order to stop war. The Russians are very probably concerned with them in the business. The French, having possession of Syria, will command the route to India by way of the Euphrates. If France also gets possession of Egypt, or of the Red Sea, by means of her Suez Canal, she will have command of all the routes to India, except that by the Cape of Good Hope. To this England cannot consent. It is not improbable, therefore, that the excitement of these hostile and superstitious sects to such scenes of carnage and blood, may yet involve in war several of the more enlightened and powerful nations of Europe.—*Christian Era.*

The Sailor's Story.

"Behold I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."—EXODUS xxxiii. 20.

This narrative, substantially as given below, was related a few weeks since, in the hearing of the writer, at a seaman's prayer-meeting in this city. It is the homely utterance of a rough, but generous heart, melted to submission by the love of Christ, and as such will be perused with pleasure by the Christian reader.

"My name is Sam Hardin; I am but eighteen years old, but I was turned adrift when a mere lad, and have cruised over the continent of America, or navigated on the blue water, ever since, and seen and heard enough to make me a wiser and a better boy than I am by odds. Mother died fore I remember much, and father has been in California ever since I was eight years old. One o' my sisters is an actress, and the other lives in Charlestown. Here's a letter she wrote to me about religion, though she isn't pious herself. I've one brother, and he's mate of a vessel, and here I am—the youngest of 'em all. But I ain't alone, and I'll tell you why."

"Two years ago I was fore the mast on board the ship Adelaide. She was struck with a gale off Florida, and in spite of all we could do for her, she threatened to go down with every soul of us. Then I began to think—

"Here I've been for eight years beatin' about by sea and land, and yet I'm alive, (for that wasn't the first peril I'd been in, I assure you, but it proved to be the narrowest, afore it was through.) 'no thanks to me,' thinks I, 'that I'm not in Davy Jones' locker long years ago, and if I go down now, as there's no reason why I shouldn't, all the warnin's I've had go for just nothing.'

"At that I was terribly afraid, you may believe, and the storm kept risin' and the ship rockin' up and down like an egg-shell, with the wind on her larboard-quarter, and her helm unmanageable. I kept prayin' in my heart all the time, and busied myself doin' what I could for the craft, but it was little use. Close-roofed, we let drive as well as we might till the second day, when the storm didn't abate any, and the fore-top-gallant mast went off, and by-and-by the main-top-mast went by the board, and, to make it all worse, pretty soon the ship sprung a leak. We all looked at the captain, for not a soul of us believed we'd ever get into New York. Captain was a rough, wicked man (and, indeed, I may say there wasn't a pious man aboard,) and he stood by the binnacle with his wife, and says he to us with a great oath—

"You'd bet'er go below and say your prayers, for you'll all be in hell in less than half an hour."

"Upon that Billy Sly, a stout-hearted sailor, spoke up and said he'd not been used to hearin' such talk at such times. For his part, he felt more like prayin' than swearin', for he remembered his old mother that had been fourteen years under the sod, (God bless her!) and she used to pray for him, and now he should pray for himself right in earnest, and hoped shipmates would do the same. So down he got on the quarter-deck, and I never heard such a prayer. We all prayed, too, and wept, and when we'd finished, tears stood in the eyes of the cap'n himself."

"Well, the storm lulled presently, and we worked the ship into New York. She was water-logged when we left her, but we all landed safe, and somethin' in my heart told me it was God's answer to our prayers. I've heard something read in church since, about sailors cryin' unto the Lord in a storm, and He deliverin' them out of their distresses, and what was I spared for? I thought I'd leave off swearin' I said at once 'That's me.' So I began to think, 'What and drinkin', for it had always made me feel like a dog to go on so; and one Sunday as I was cruisin' round New York, (as true as I am a sailor the Lord was overhaid takin' my latitude and shapin' my course then) I fell in with a well-dressed man, who hailed me, and asked me 'if I were goin' to church.'

"Only think, if it had been a land-shark instead! Where would I be now, like enough! But the Lord don't send such boarders. The devil sends them."

"Well, I said 'yes,' in a careless enough