

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

STANZAS

On the death of Major Clark, who was drowned in a small mill-pond near his father's dwelling, in July, A. D., 1860.

Assist me, sacred Muse, while I shall write;
Give language meet, and kindly help indite
A sad heart-rendering tale,
A tale of death, which, if 'twas pictured well,
Would warn the youth, and in the future tell
The scene, if memory fail.

Thoughtless of danger, full of life and glee,
Two sprightly, loving lads, joyous and free,
Left homes on pleasure bent:
Diversion sought by swimming to and fro
Across a pond—proposed to leave, when lo!
From heaven a summons went.

The dread, pale horse and his stern rider came,
Destruction marks his way—his breath-like fan
Consumes the small and great—
Upon the hardest youth he laid his hand,
The waters closed about him, and the land
Of spirits was his home.

Then, "He is drowned—Major, alas! is drowned,"
Was said with faltering voice—with death-knell sound
It fell upon the ear:
Hearts throbb'd; the rosy cheek of youth grew pale,
As friend to friend rehearsed the plaintive tale,
And wiped the falling tear.

"Drowned! Drowned!" the voice of silly mirth was
hushed,
The laugh of all was still'd—the tear-drop gushed;
And fell from many an eye.
Friends strove, but strove in vain, to find the breath,
But 'twas not there—to the fell-monster, Death,
The youth had fall'n, to die.

"Oh, is he drowned?" the father asked in haste:
Hurried to know the truth—the boy was placed
A corpse upon the floor.
Yes, unexpected, dreaded, death had come,
The palid lips were closed—the tongue was dumb,
Never to utter more.

"Oh! is he drowned?" loudly the children cry,
As to their father's door the doleful tidings fly.
"Your brother Major's drowned."
"Oh, is he drowned?" the mother screams with grief,
Trembles to know, and groans, nor will she seek relief
To heal the grievous wound.

"Drowned! Drowned!" Ye thoughtless ones, be
wise, beware;
You're drowned in sin—reflect—this hour prepare,
To meet your dying day.
Asleep,—awake,—abroad,—where'er we are,
Death comes with hasty stride and noiseless car,
To sweep your life away.

Oh! ne'er forget, young friends, this solemn call,
But know, ere long ye'll need the shroud and pall,
And sleep beneath the sod.
Youth die,—no mortal is exempt from death,
He comes,—he counts his time by every pulse and
breath.

"Prepare to meet thy God."
P. W.
Wilmot, Annapolis Co., Sept 22nd, 1860.

Religious Intelligence.

Baptists in France.

The following is an extract of a letter to the editor of the *Baptist Magazine* for October:—

"Our Baptist brethren in the Aisne and the Oise have still their principal places of worship closed. At Lafere their church is open to their one hundred and thirty converts. At Verberie and at Demain they have no official difficulties; and two hundred meet at the latter place, and thirty at the former; but at Chauny, where there are about one hundred and fifty baptized members, and about as many adherents, the church has remained closed ever since 1853. The municipality acknowledges that no complaint can be made against any one of them. The Emperor assured the pastor, who appealed to him some years ago, at Compiègne, that no hindrance could stand in the way of their public worship. The Minister of Worship said that the temple should be re-opened. Other officials of high standing have declared the same; but, although the keys are in the pastor's hands for the edifice to be duly swept, and the taxes paid, the authorization is de-

layed. The 15th of August, however, gave the opportunity for the experiment. As the people have always met without hindrance at the pastor's house for worship, even to the number of one hundred and forty, a few resolved quietly to enter the forbidden temple, and pray for the Emperor. The pastor was there, the Bible was opened, and the Lord's commands to his people, respecting constituted authorities, read; prayer was offered by several brethren, and hymns sung, when all withdrew silently. There were more than twenty in number, in order to try the experiment fully; and, though it was done in sight of the gendarmes, whose post is opposite the church, no notice was or has been taken of the circumstance. If nothing occurred before Sabbath, they intended in the same quiet manner to return to their house of prayer. These Baptist churches are bright lights shining steadily amid the surrounding darkness. Pastors, as well as flocks, have been converted from Romanism, and they are walking worthy of their high calling. It was at Chauny, that, last year, the gendarme Dohy refused, when on military duty in the Roman Catholic Church, to kneel before the wafer. This year, another brigade was called to the same duty in Chauny Church, and so the worthy man has not had to give up all for Christ. His choice, in which his excellent wife fully concurred, was however made. Had the order been given, he would have persisted in his integrity, though it would have cost him his rank, and broken up all his earthly prospects. The decision of the Central Council, mentioned in my last letter, has brought a blush to the forehead of every Protestant in France. Protests are coming in against it from many quarters, and petitions are being made by consistories to the Government for the dispensation of Protestant soldiers from forced attendance at Romish ceremonies. This circumstance will also open many eyes to the necessity of re-establishing the national synods. The Council is composed of men chosen by the Government as a channel of communication between it and the Reformed Church; but it can have no power whatever to decide on questions of dogmas or conscientious scruples. In such matters it is in all points incompetent, and should have declared itself so in the case of the uncompromising soldier."

Progress of the work in Ireland.

From the Chronicle [October 1860.] of the London Baptist Irish Society.

LONDONDERRY, COLERAINE, AND BALLYMENA.—During the months of July and August the Secretary visited several of the stations occupied by the Society. He found much cause for encouragement in many places, especially at Londonderry, Coleraine, and Ballymena, three important towns in which the efforts of the Society have lately been put forth.

In Londonderry a few friends united in church fellowship in May last. On the interesting occasion when, by their own spontaneous action, they were formed into a Christian Church, our esteemed friend and brother, Mr. Storey, of Letterkenny, presided. Eighteen members constituted the church thus gathered. The number has been subsequently increased, so that now forty are united in Christian fellowship. Of these not less than twenty are the fruits of the recent Revival. A public service is held on the Quay every Lord's-day evening, when large congregations are gathered, among whom a considerable number of Roman Catholics are to be found. Seven out-stations, from two to nine miles distant, are also regularly visited by nine young men members of the church.

It is matter for grateful recognition that this religious movement began among the people themselves.

At Coleraine, the Rev. T. W. Medhurst, late of Kingston-on-Thames, has commenced his stated labours as pastor of the church. He enters on his work with much to cheer and encourage him. Congregations are large and attentive, and hopeful indications are afforded of great usefulness.

At Ballymena, since Sept. 1859, a congregation has been gathered, averaging from 400 to 600; the church consists of upwards of ninety members; a spirit of deep and earnest piety pervades the community; and every

prospect is afforded of a vigorous and prosperous cause being established there. The tenure of the building now occupied is very uncertain; it is not unlikely it will soon be terminated; the resolution has therefore been taken to arise and build; an eligible site has been secured, and the people, almost entirely from their own resources, have raised the sum of five hundred pounds towards this important object. An interesting narrative will be found below, supplied by Mr. Parsons, who has for some weeks been labouring in Ballymena.

Ballymena, Aug. 23rd, 1860

MY DEAR SIR,—In accordance with your request, I came on to Ballymena on Saturday last.

On Sunday we had a large gathering of earnest and attention listeners in the Store, which you know so well. After the Lord's Supper, arrangements were made for the administration of the ordinance of baptism to several candidates, who were desirous of thus putting on the Lord Jesus, and publicly professing their faith in him.

Accordingly, to-day (Thursday), at five o'clock, we gathered, for this purpose, on the bank of a deep brook, which flows through some secluded fields, at the north of the town.

Having taken my position in the water, I had the privilege of baptizing nine—five females and four males—into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It was impossible not to feel assured, from their whole demeanor, that they counted it all joy to keep their Lord's commandment.

And when one is acquainted—as a very short residence in the north of Ireland serves to acquaint the most unobservant—with the strong feeling—not to use a harsher word—of the Presbyterians against baptism, and the persecution, and mocking, and jeering which each who espouses it has to endure, one knows that it is the taking up of a real cross, a going without the camp to bear the Saviour's reproach.

Each of the candidates to-night were brought up in the tenets of this body, and have come to this ordinance by a way neither smooth nor easy.

Doctrines instilled into their minds from earliest childhood, have first had to be confessed erroneous, and then forsaken; and, now, others adopted which, from earliest childhood likewise, they have been taught to despise and ridicule.

This enhances the value of each addition to our churches here, because the act must be taken as the result of stern conscientious conviction, and of glad and loving obedience to the Saviour.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN PARSONS.

BELFAST.—The Secretary of the Baptist Irish Society also met a considerable number of the members of the church at Belfast, to confer with them on the present relation of that church to the Society. The church have engaged to raise a sum quite proportioned to their means.

Belfast is now a most important centre of religious influence. It contains about 120,000 inhabitants, including 40,000 Roman Catholics. It has been matter of deep regret that, in such a large and influential town, the Baptist denomination should be the only one without a suitable place of worship. The prospects of the church are encouraging. During the last two years eighty persons have been added to the membership, and sixty have been baptized.

Above 500l. have already been subscribed for the Building Fund.

RESULTS AND PROGRESS OF THE REVIVAL.—The following are extracts from a letter, addressed to *The Nonconformist*, by some one, the Secretary remarks, entirely unknown to us:—

SIR,—Having recently returned from a visit to Ireland, I should like, with your kind permission, to furnish your readers with a few jottings in reference to the results and progress of the 'Revival' in that land.

It has been supposed by many, and affirmed by some, that a very large defection has taken place amongst the converts who were

added to the churches last year. From personal and minute inquiry I am able to declare that such is not the case.

I have not met with a minister of any denomination who could conscientiously estimate the declension at 5 per cent.; in fact, at Ballymena, and Straid, and Coleraine, the declension has not been 2 per cent. During my visit I made a point of inquiry of all persons—car-drivers, farmers, shopkeepers, as well as ministers—whether the work had stood, and the nearly universal testimony was that it was a real blessing and a permanent good.

"Is religion advancing?" said I to an intelligent car-driver at Ballymena. "O yes," he replied. "But how is it, I rejoined, 'that we hear little of the Revival now?' It is progressing *silently* and without observation," was the reply, "and that is best, sir."

"Can you," said I, "personally attest the benefits of the movement?" "Oh, yes," said he, "I was converted to God last year, and so was my brother. Ah! sir, he was *nine* days in the most intense agony of soul—the *pains of hell* got hold upon him."

Even men who professed nothing were very decided as to the change which had come over the people.

In the county of Down, it was my privilege to witness, and to take part in some interesting services in connection with a beloved friend who accompanied me, a gentleman of high social position in the city of London.

Calling on the Rev. W. Eccles, the devoted and energetic pastor of the Baptist church in Banbridge, we were invited to accompany him to an open-air service in an out of the way place called Edenagarry, about ten English miles distant.

On arriving at the post we found a large concourse of people assembled—at least 500 persons—though where they came from was to me a mystery, for there were not twenty cottages within sight.

The service, which was held in a field (the rain had poured down in floods the previous night), was commenced by Mr. Eccles with a beautifully appropriate prayer. I addressed the people from the Pulpit of Prayer, and my friend addressed them from "Choose ye this day whom you will serve." The addresses were calm in tone, but earnest in spirit,—yet not more so than an ordinary ministration at home. But the effect! Never shall I forget that. During the service three persons were stricken after the manner of last year. They were, however, judiciously removed, and the service proceeded to the close, without the least confusion.

On a subsequent evening we held a service in a blacksmith's shop in the town of Banbridge. And what a service! The place was filled with the poorest of the poor, and though the clock struck eleven (p.m.) and the service had lasted three hours, the people were unwilling to go home.

About twelve o'clock that night, Mr. Eccles was sent for to see a poor man who had been 'stricken' on reaching his cottage. The apostolic man hastened to the house, and found the doors crowded by people who had been attracted by the piercing cries of the man for mercy and salvation. On listening at the window, he heard a neighbour reading the parable of the Prodigal Son, and expounding it, with a view of imparting some consolation. The following is a specimen which caught the minister's ear:—"Ye need not be so sad, man; did not the Father run and meet the poor lost one? and if he did that, he will just run and meet ye, poor prodigal as ye have been, now ye are returning!"

Nor was this the only result of that result of that remarkable service in the smithy, for I have since heard that several others were awakened, and have found peace with God.

Passing from Banbridge, let me mention our visit to Straid. Mr. Bain of this place, has been honored of God to effect a remarkable work in this romantic locality. Educated for the Presbyterian ministry, he left it twenty years ago, and formed a Congregational church. He began with three persons. But God has blessed him. Twice has his church been enlarged, and even at the present time enlargement is in progress. For three days and three nights Mr. Bain was prevented the enjoyment of his bed during the late Revival,