

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

A SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. MEHETABLE HARDING, WIDOW OF THE LATE REV. HARRIS HARDING;

BY THE REV. A. MARTELL.

2 Cor. 15, 57, "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Concluded.)

But while we thus prospectively celebrate this victory, it is very evident, that it is obtained over enemies that are stronger than we,—gained by the hand of feebleness against a power which is only inferior to Omnipotence. The stripling David conquers Goliath of Gath. The wonderful achievement is attributed to the help of his God. The Christian overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil,—he overcomes death and the grave; and he ascribes his conquests to the blood of the Lamb, and the word of his testimony. This leads to a brief consideration of the second particular (viz.) through whom this victory is obtained, or to whom the glory of it is due.

The text tells us it is given to the saints by the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is very appropriately ascribed to him, as he has overcome death and the grave, and obtained the keys of death and hell.

The Saviour took an important part in the creation. "Paul says all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things and by him all things consist." So he takes an important part in the transpiring events of time. "By him princes reign and judges decree judgement." By him shall the gospel become victorious and the world shall acknowledge him king, so by him shall human affairs be finally brought to a close in this world, and death and the grave be trampled under their feet.

The Christian's victory over death and the grave, is by virtue of the Saviour's conquest over other powers. He had power to lay down his own life, and he had power to take it again. The teachings of the scripture upon this subject is very pleasing. It calls him the Conqueror of death. "He has the keys of the invisible state." "He shutteth and no man openeth and openeth and no man shutteth."

He is our fore-runner, for he hath shown us the path of life. For us he hath entered within the veil. In his person, one in human form, has passed through the dark valley,—has gone over Jordan in a nature over which death can have neither power nor dominion any more,—has gone into the presence of God with a human form and become, the pledge of the ingathering of the full harvest of the church of Christ. "As a conqueror he has gained the right to complete our redemption." As our fore-runner he has shown us in what sense, and to what an extent our redemption shall be complete. "Life and immortality are brought to light by him alone."

Dr. Angus says, "In the gospel, the same act that seals our title to heaven, reveals its nature and proves its reality, (viz.) the resurrection of our Lord. Mortal life with all its humiliation and fears—death with all its anguish and dismay, and hades (the unseen world) were alike included in his victory. He subdued and explained them all, and by a double title—the title of conquest and experience has gained authority alike over the dead and the living." "To the Christian therefore, the hope of immortality is not merely an inference of reason. Nor is it a feeling excited by a mere verbal promise which might be interpreted with latitude of meaning. It is a deduction from an actual fact, all the parts of which have been set before us. Our conclusions are not fancy, nor even reason. They are knowledge."

The future to us in some measure may be said to be unrevealed, but with the glimpses thrown from the resurrection of Christ, and trusting his guidance and committing ourselves to his care, we can feel secure, for on that unseen ground he stands and over it he reigns. We then take part in his victories and conquests. He overcame death and hell, we share in his triumph. He took possession of immortal life and glory,—we share these well-merited blessings. He has led the way, and in single combat has subdued the opposing hosts, destroyed him who hath the power of death (delivering the fearful) and opening up a way from those regions of sin and woe to the Paradise of God and glory, securing a blessed prospect for the whole church of Christ.

Thus it is through his wonderful conquest we become victors. But our triumph over death is not all the victory that we obtain through our Lord Jesus Christ; for ultimately the grave shall be conquered by the same means, and through the same medium. It is written that the time is coming when "all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the son of man, and shall come forth." There is no other voice that can awake the slumbering dead. No other power that can shake the gloomy grave. The gloomy doors of the charnel house, can alone be opened by the Son of God. The dead would sleep on for ever if Christ never came to arouse them. When he comes, with all his saints and angels, he shall call with a voice that all nature shall hear, and his sleeping members shall arise and joyfully greet their descending Lord. "I am the resurrection and the life" saith the Lord "he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him," he shall call the righteous from their long anchorage in their graves. "They shall hoist their flag of faith and hope,

and ride before the sweet gales of atoning merit and redeeming love, and shall safely make the blessed port of eternal life." There, in reviewing past events of life, death and the resurrection,—there, glancing at the mysterious path of their ascension, they will be able more clearly than ever, to realize their indebtedness to Christ, and sing and exult in immortal strains. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." There, with feelings and emotions too sublime and joyous for sinful man here to comprehend, will the whole elect burst forth in strains of exalted praise. "Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me bless his holy name." Then shall the "living creatures and the four and twenty elders fall down before him saying, Thou art worthy O Lord to receive honour and glory and power." "Then shall the head stone be brought on the church with shoutings of grace unto it."

From what has been already said, it is quite apparent that the third particular named (viz.) the celebration of the victory, will require but little space. Its locality being in heaven, in the presence of God and the Lamb, secures its interest and guarantees its splendour and refinement. The finality of the conquest will give joyous interest to the whole scene. When the kings of the earth celebrate their victories, they are not secured from renewed attacks. When victorious generals have reviewed their armies after their victories, how thin and mangled have been their warriors? When the conquest is over and the roll is called, how many there are who cannot answer to their names? How few there are left to participate in the demonstrations of joy?

When the inhabitants of a city are required to give an illumination in honour of some victories; how many there are who do so, with wounded, bleeding hearts, because beloved ones have died on the battle field—now cold in death, having died a soldier's death and found a soldier's grave? Then again how many there are who are compelled to watch by the dim candle, the ebbing life of a mother,—a father,—a sister, a brother, a child, or some dear friend? How many are left to groan and writhe in pain and anguish? How these sad circumstances detract from the general joy? But the celebration here spoken of, being in heaven, there will be none of these painful contingents to mar the general rejoicing. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, the whole army will be there. All that enlisted have seen the end of the war. No desolate hearts there. None sick and none faint. There, all will share in the universal joy. John the beloved, in beatific vision saw the heavenly victors, and represents them as "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing;" and universal nature united in the general rejoicing.

O yes; the celebration will be in heaven; where there will be no sin to mar our peace,—no enemy to dread and no accident to fear. All shall be in the glorious presence of God and meet his benignant smile. There, we shall mingle freely with the holy angels, and surround the throne of our God. There with united hearts and voices sing and exult in the victories of the Lamb. In heaven! Then, there will be no more foes to face. Thus the poet sings,

"When we pass through yonder river
When we reach the further shore,
There's an end of war for ever,
We shall see our foes no more
All our conflicts then shall cease
Followed by eternal peace.

When we gain the heavenly region,
When we touch the heavenly shore
Blessed thought!—no hostile legions
Can alarm or trouble more.
Far beyond the reach of foes
We shall dwell in sweet repose."

This victory is celebrated in heaven. After the last battle is over, the great dragon shall have been cast into the awful pit, and chained down in everlasting fire. There all will be secured from trouble and care, and every anxious thought for ever banished. There it will never be said, "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." No! for we shall there greet our friends and never part again. There, we shall meet our sainted kindred and forever dwell together in holy peace and immortal joy. Thus the Saviour shall reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet and we shall reign with him. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This subject has an important bearing on the scenes and circumstances of this day. A beloved mother has been buried beneath the cold ground. The wife of your lamented pastor. Think of all her toils being over and rejoice. Well has she played her part in the struggles of life. She has raised a large family among you. She has toiled on the faithful companion of your former venerable pastor. She has wept with him when your loved ones have been consigned to the grave. Her joys have been awakened when your hearts have been made happy. In connection with you she has had many struggles, but they are all passed now. During her eventful life she has often been near the heavenly shore, but now, she has reached it safely. Her body you have now laid in solemn silence but her spirit is free. Not many hours before her death I asked her if she did not think that she was almost home? Pausing for a moment or two to gain strength to speak, she replied with great emphasis. Yes. Again she would rally and say, "Yes!" several times in succession, while a smile which the dying only can give, played over her features.

Her mortal conflicts were about closing, and now have been fully completed. The monster aimed a fatal blow but lost the victory. Her prison has been demolished, but the spirit has been freed—has escaped to heaven. Her warfare has ended and her peace eternally ratified in heaven. Already has she saluted her sainted companion. Already has she laid her crown at the feet of Jesus. The remaining conquest over the grave will be more easily obtained.

Again she shall stand in this yard and reluctant death shall give up her body which to day has been deposited in the grave. Then the victory will be complete. What joyful congratulation will then take place in this grave yard on the morning of the resurrection? What happy greetings between the mother to day buried and her rejoicing family. Then sorrow not as those without hope; for our kindred in Christ shall arise from the dust, and our victory over all our enemies shall be final and complete.

We present those truths to the bereft family to day replete with divine consolation. Your mother, or grand mother, has before this hour passed into heaven. She will never struggle again with death. No more will the death rattle indicate approaching dissolution. While she is absent from the body she is present with the Lord. Therefore rejoice in the goodness of God that has granted her such a triumphant entrance into heaven, and happy escape from her foes.

She no longer requires your sympathies, nor needs your care. Yes she is surrounded by friends and companions, and every longing satisfied, with full salvation blessed. God has given her the mastery over the difficulties with which you contend, and possession of the joys for which you sigh. Then rejoice with her, in her exaltation and sing, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

How awful will be the sinner's conflict with sin, death, and hell forever. No victories in hell. No joyous greetings there. But foiled in every attempt of freedom,—in every effort for peace. Down trodden, despised, and conquered by sin and Satan forever. These are serious considerations, and should lead you all to seek an interest in Christ, by which alone you will be able to prosper. May God grant it for his name's sake. Amen.

For the Christian Messenger.

Plain Letters, on a plain subject,
to plain folks.

[No. 9.]

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Oh, that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people!"

It is lamentable to know that covetousness is not confined to the world, but that many who profess to love God are worshippers of Mammon. Covetousness is one of the greatest enemies of the Church. If we read the seventh chapter of Joshua, concerning Achan and the troubles which he brought upon Israel, we see a standing illustration of this. The money was intended for the treasury of the Lord, but when Achan saw among the spoils of Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment, the shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold, he coveted them and took them. And what was the consequence? Israel was smitten by the enemy, till the accursed thing was put away by the punishment of Achan. The present condition of some parts of our Zion could not be better described than in that account. Ministers are ground with poverty in the midst of plenty. Benevolent institutions are drooping. Truth is suffering. The enemy triumphs. Why? From the covetousness of church members. The churches contain a few whole hearted Christians, a few among the rich, and more among the poor who confess that they are not their own. But there are exceptions to the general rule. Who sustain the burden of maintaining the worship of God, building our sanctuaries, supporting our ministers, missionaries, benevolent societies, and institutions? The few,—while the many stand aloof unaccustomed to the yoke of Christ. Israel was slain because they had one Achan in the camp. But we have many. This sad confession is made almost annually in the letters from the churches to the Associations. There letters often speak of large additions to their numbers, and of only a few shillings to the treasury of God, pleading as an excuse the old adage, "Charity begins at home."

How often is the candidate for church membership, on the day of his espousal, asked the important question, whether he is willing to consecrate his property as well as himself to the Lord? Why is it that our large increase of numbers does not proportionately increase our strength for promoting the glory of God? As an army is weakened by raw recruits without fidelity, so a church is made less efficient by the addition of members without genuine piety. Such a church, instead of sending the gospel of peace abroad, cannot even maintain peace at home. Instead of being like a city on a hill, full of inhabitants living and acting for God,

she is like a graveyard in the wilderness, full of rottenness and dead men's bones. The leprosy of covetousness adheres to her, benumbing her limbs, and paralyzing her energies. Such is not the idea which Zachariah had of the church of Christ,—"In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord. And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Juda shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein. And in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts."—Zachariah xiv. 20.

Instead of presenting this bright picture we resemble the visions of Malachi. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. But ye say wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and in offering. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me even this whole nation. Bring ye also the tithes unto the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

How long O Lord how long before this thy word shall be fulfilled? May the Lord hasten it, is the prayer of

CHARITY.

Nova Scotia, Feb. 6th, 1860.

For the Christian Messenger.

MESSRS EDITORS,—

I claim a small space in your paper. In "Jottings by the Way No. 3." H. has thought proper to write as follows: "Many publications have been in circulation which poisoned the minds of many, such as the 'Christian Gleaner.'" He also names some others, but with them, I have no concern.

Having been one of the persons, principally concerned in issuing the *Gleaner*, I do not feel disposed to allow either H. or any body else to circulate such slander, without calling upon him to furnish the proof or to retract his words. If he adopts the former course, your readers will be able to judge for themselves, provided he does not furnish them with garbled extracts.

He need not fear that he will get engaged in a newspaper controversy with me, as I would not care to commence a lengthy correspondence in a publication, which shuts up its columns, at times, by a very short metre rule.

This is not the first time that H. has been too lavish in the use of improper epithets, towards those who differ from his orthodoxy. If some of the Baptist preachers had heard his remarks upon Total Depravity, when holding forth in the North Baptist Chapel last Fall, perhaps they would have brought him to book.

JOHN NAYLOR.

Feb. 29th, 1860.

[Our friend Naylor does not complain of our "rule," but merely refers to the "metre." We have a notion that, at times, "short metre" may be as proper as "long metre," "6s and 7s," or any of the other peculiar metres. We have the impression that he likes short metre as well as most people.

When four or five of our columns are occupied in one week in the discussion of a subject, as was the case in that to which, we presume, reference is made, and when that discussion degenerates into personality, and ceases to be, such as will be likely to edify our readers, we think it time to use some "metre" likely to promote more harmony.—Eds. O. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

Currency versus Tobacco.

MR. EDITOR,

This speculation is on tobacco. The people of Nova Scotia are excessively addicted to the use of the weed, the people of Cape Briton likewise; and the Scotchmen of Prince Edward Island worse. The habit is abominable—an intolerable nuisance—disgraceful and degrading to the slave who is under its narcotic influence; and disgusting to all cleanly people in the vicinity. Besides, the cost of the article is enormous. More money is spent for tobacco, in the variety of its loathsome uses, than for all religious purposes whatever, and (I write without adequate statistics,) I believe I might add, educational also. Now would it not be much more advantageous to have the odious tobacco expelled, and have the currency, the shiners, in the place thereof? We should then have more cleanly people—more decent houses,