

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### The Service of the Lord.

"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be. John xii. 26.

How blessed, from the bonds of sin  
And earthly fetters free,  
In singleness of heart and aim,  
Thy servant, Lord to be!  
The hardest toil to undertake  
With joy at Thy command,  
The meanest office to receive  
With meekness at Thy hand!

With willing heart and longing eyes,  
To watch before Thy gate,  
Ready to run the weary race,  
To bear the heavy weight;  
No voice of thunder to expect,  
But follow calm and still,  
For love can easily divine  
The One Beloved's will.

Thus may I serve Thee, gracious Lord!  
Thus ever thine alone,  
My soul and body given to Thee,  
The purchase thou hast won.  
Through evil or through good report  
Still keeping by Thy side,  
By life or death, in this poor flesh  
Let Christ be magnified!

How happily the working days  
In this dear service fly,  
How rapidly the closing hour,  
The time of rest draws nigh!  
When all the faithful gather home,  
A joyful company,  
And ever where the Master is,  
Shall His blest servants be.

SPITTA.

—From "Hymns from the Land of Luther."

## Selections.

### Much in Little:

OR FOUR DOCTRINES IN FIVE WORDS.

BY REV. JOHN GRAY.

"I shall go to him."—2 SAM. xii. 23.

Who can condense as does the Holy Spirit? In these five little words of the inspired prophet, four scriptural and heart-cheering doctrines are contained and taught.

I. *Infant salvation* stands forth in bold relief. "I shall go to him." Whoever might doubt or call in question *infant salvation*, David, the prophet of God believed it. "I shall go to him." Whither? To the grave to him? No, no! What communion is there there? Whither, then? To purgatory, as some teach? David, prophet of God, knew nothing of such a place. Whither, then, was he to go to him, but where he was in *heaven*? How strange that any, with the Bible in their hands, should be found calling in question that which the Holy Ghost so plainly teaches in the above Scripture! David, the inspired prophet of God, says, "I shall go to him." Besides, special promises are made by God to children. No threatenings of eternal misery are to be found in the Word of God against them. Nineveh, that great and wicked city, was spared for their sake. They are not subjects of a judgment to come. They have done no "deeds in the body." It is only they who have, who "shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give account," &c. And the Apostle speaks of "a generation (infants) who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's first transgression. And Christ's (and will not that satisfy every one?) "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." He does not say that *infants* shall make a part of it, but that they mainly constitute it. "OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN." The following epitaph, copied from the tombstone of four infants, does much, also, to set the subject at rest:

Blind infidelity, turn pale and die,  
Beneath this stone four infant children lie,  
Say, are they lost or saved?  
If death's by sin, they sinned, for they are here,  
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.  
O reason! how depraved!  
Reverse the sacred page, the knot's untied:  
They died 'cause Adam sinned,  
They live 'cause Jesus died.

That is, the imputation of Adam's guilt slew them, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ saved them.  
*Infant salvation* is the doctrine of all the Reformed churches, and ever has been taught, and sung in holy song, by all their sainted fathers. For how long, and at the funerals of how many infants, in every Christian country, have these verses been sung:

From adverse blasts and lowering storms  
Her favored soul he bore,  
And with yon bright angelic forms  
She lives, to die no more.  
Why should I vex my heart or fast?  
No more she'll visit me,  
My soul will mount to her at last,  
And there my child I'll see.

Cheer up! cheer up! bereaved heart-stricken  
Christian parents, weeping your infants dead;  
The separation is not forever. Soon you shall go to them, there to adore Him who, "by his blood," made them and you "kings and priests unto God and his Father." Amen!

II. Not only is *infant salvation* taught in these words, but also *personal recognition* in the future state.

"I shall go to him."

But if *personal recognition* were not a fact, what better off had David been in heaven than on earth? But David believed in it, and comforted his stricken and bereaved heart by it. "I shall go to him." And does not Christ teach the doctrine in his parable of the rich man and Lazarus? Did not the disciples know Moses and Elias on the Mount? And the wicked, we are taught, shall look into the kingdom, and see their friends and parents there. Shall we know less in heaven than we do on earth? Or as the Welsh minister said to his wife, who, when he was deep in study, was teasing him with the question, "John, my dear, think ye we shall know each other in heaven?" "Jane," said he, impatiently, "shall we be greater fools in heaven than we are on earth?" Jane was satisfied and comforted. And surely we should be greater fools there than we are here, if *personal recognition* is denied.

III. *Personal assurance* is like wise taught in these words, "I shall go to him." Not a single doubt does he entertain of it. "I shall go to go to him." And is not this personal assurance the privilege, bought by the blood of Christ, for every Christian believer? Adam in innocence enjoyed it; and do the blood-bought sons of God enjoy less blessing? Nay; says Christ, "I am come that ye might have life more abundantly." And says the Apostle, "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." And "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God." Besides, their faith, their repentance, their love of God, say it; and the Holy Ghost, both in Scripture and in their hearts, says it. "I shall go to him."

IV. A part from all these, the doctrine of the *final perseverance of the saints* is also taught in these words, "I shall go to him." Some call this in question, but David, prophet of the Most High God, did not. "I shall go to him." Were our salvation of ourselves, we might call in question the doctrine, but as it is WHOLLY of God, he will perfect his own work. Moreover, Christ taught it. Where would he the lost sheep? When found, where did he place it, and where did he lay it down? On the shoulder of Omnipotence did he lay it, and on it did he carry it till he brought it to the ninety and nine who had not left the fold. Hear Him "who cannot lie": "I give unto my sheep eternal life." "They shall never perish."

Besides, how can God condemn those he has pardoned and justified, or how cast off those whom he has adopted as his own, when he assures us that his "gifts and calling are without repentance?" Hence says the Apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Well, then, might David say, and every Christian parent mourning their infant dead, "I shall go to him."

What a book is the Bible! How green its pastures! How refreshing and life-giving its waters! It has a balm for every wound, and a cordial for every fear.

### The world's Opinion.

We all know that there are great and important things in which the world thinks wrongly; take issue *there* with the world if you like; but it is not worth while to do so in small matters of dress and behaviour. It is not worth while to take a beard into the pulpit where it will interfere with the congregation's attention to the sermon; nor to appear in the same place in lavender gloves, in such a locality, if they are unknown. It is wis to give into the little requirements on which the world's opinion has been plainly expressed. If you are resolved to take a part of opposition to all the world, do so in the behalf of things which are worth the trouble of the strife. Let it not be engraved on your tombstone, Here lies the man who confronted the human race on the question of the wide-awake hat. Stand up for truth and right; if you are fond of fighting, you will have many opportunities in this life. Smite the flunkey, pierce the humbug, violently kick the aristocratic liar and seducer, and probably you will find abundant occupation. But though you know it is a pleasant and enjoyable thing for yourself

and your children to sit on the steps of your country-house in the sunshine after breakfast, you will not gain the approval of wise men by doing the like on the steps of your town house in a much frequented street in Edinburgh. And though you often roll on the grass with your little boy in the country, do not attempt the like on the pavement of such a public way. For in that case it is conceivable that you may be jeered at by the passers by and apprehended by the police. And while you are being conveyed to the station-house, instead of being esteemed as a philosopher, and revered as a martyr, it is not impossible that you may be laughed at as a fool. "We sat on the bridge and swung our legs over the water;" with these words an elegant writer lately began an essay. Of course, the bridge was quite a rural spot. If the writer and his friend had done the like on London bridge, the small boys would have hollered at them, and the constable would have moved them on. Yet the merits of the deed are the same in either case. Only in the one case the world says, You may; in the other case it says, You must not. And the human being who resists the world's judgment in these little matters shows, not strength but weakness. Where principle is involved it is noble to swing your legs, but not otherwise. But doubtless you have remarked that it is a common thing to find great obstinacy in petty concerns in a man who has no real firmness. You will find people who are squeezable and facile in the great affairs of life, and in their larger opinions have not a mind of their own, but adopt the opinion of the last person they heard express one; yet who persistently stick to some little absurd or bad habit which they have often been entreated to leave off, which annoys their friends and makes them ridiculous. You will find a man whom you might turn round with a straw in his belief on any question political, moral, or literary, but who having taken up the ground that once one is three, would go to the stake rather than give into the world's way of thinking on that point.

### How to reduce a Congregation.

It is uncomfortable being in a church that is so densely crowded that all the standing room is occupied. If any of our brethren in the ministry are troubled by such congregations, and cannot do dull preaching enough themselves to reduce them to a comfortable size, that kind of prosy sermonizing which leaves vacant seats may be procured without great expense or trouble and with no doubt as to the results, for the same old manuscripts have been repeatedly tried without a failure. Even convicts in a State-Prison cannot endure this sort of preaching for a great length of time, without getting uneasy and discontented.

Greyson says: "It is melancholy to think of the havoc which a dull speaker will soon make in a crowded audience. The preaching of some good persons is like reading the riot act, or reminds one of that ingenious method by which it is said the magistrates of St. Petersburg sometimes cool the zeal of the mob in that genial climate—that is, by playing on them with a fire-engine.—I cannot see of what use this poor clergyman can be, unless our churches and chapels were crowded to suffocation; then one or two like him might be employed to itinerate about the country, and bring down crowded congregations to par. A very few, however, would be sufficient; the effect of the sermon, and consequently its length might be regulated by a thermometer. But great care would be necessary in the application; for a little excess in the duration of the humdrum might end in the extinction of the audience altogether. In any case, I think, it should be provided by law that no such enthusiasm extinguisher should be permitted to play more than an hour, lest the congregation should be annihilated. One might then read such announcements as these:—'The church of that lively preacher, Rev. —, was on Sunday sennight so excessively crowded, even to the aisles and pulpit stairs, that it was necessary to send for the most "distinguished of the extinguishing" preachers to counteract the effects of his oratory last Sunday night. So effectual was the eloquence of this gentleman, that in twenty minutes the thermometer fell ten degrees in the gallery, and the air of the church before the benediction became delightfully cool and salubrious.'"

A French prisoner, an hour before execution, was urged by the priests to make confession of his crimes. This he refused, saying that if he had anything to confess he should not have waited for this "echeance,"—a French term signifying the last moment at which a note is due. Alas! how many immortals wait as it were for the last moment, before they prepare to meet their God! Remember what the Eastern sage says—"A man should repent the day before his death; but, as he knows not when that to-morrow will be, he must repent to-day."

## Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A Nova Scotian in Bermuda.

It was with joy, I hailed the vacation at old Acadia, after the long process of study, through which we had passed; being quite worn down, with pursuing my studies, and labouring at the same time on the Sabbath days, it was thought advisable by my friends that I should take a short sea voyage. Therefore on the twenty-eighth of May, I took leave of my friends, to go by coach to Halifax, and thence to Bridgewater, where the ship in which I was to sail for Bermuda was loading. I remained in Halifax several days, waiting an opportunity to cross to Lunenburg. On Saturday evening about eight o'clock, we set sail; and after a pleasant night on the water, we were surprised by the cry; "gold fields a head." After landing a few enterprising gold diggers, we sailed for the town, which we reached about eleven o'clock. The little town was silent with the sacred stillness of the holy Sabbath. I made my way to Bridgewater; where I found my friends anxiously waiting my arrival. There I spent several days with the brethren endeavoring to preach the gospel to them, as they had no stated preaching at that time.

After the expiration of a few pleasant days with my friends at Bridgewater, we set sail for Bermuda. The voyage was an agreeable one.—Our Captain being a devoted christian, made it much more pleasant than it otherwise could have been. Every evening there was a group of hardy whole hearted tars listening with all attention to the reading of God's word and prayer; no vulgar or profane language was to be heard. All were cheerful and happy. After eight days pleasant sailing, we made the group of the Bermuda Islands, which are so void of mountains or even hills, that they are scarcely to be seen at the short distance of twelve miles, even at the mast head.

The swarthy faces of the pilots were hailed with joy by us all, and we were safely piloted through the many windings and the rocky part of the coast, to Ireland Island, where we discharged our cargo of deals and lumber for the Government Dock-yard.

Sabbath morning came; I had not begun to miss my sweet home in Nova Scotia until then. Being a stranger, and quite unacquainted with the inhabitants, I could not hear of any meetings except the Episcopalians. I went to Church, but it was unlike what I had been accustomed to enjoy in our Baptist meetings. In the afternoon, however, I was quite unexpectedly invited to attend a prayer meeting in the evening at the market house. After making enquiry I was informed that they were Wesleyans—a little band of christians quite alone. They could not build a chapel on the Island, as they were not able to obtain a grant of land from the Government. Nevertheless God deigned to come and visit his people, I endeavoured to preach the Gospel in the little delapidated room to an attentive audience—Bermudians—who seemed very anxious to hear the story about Jesus Christ the Saviour of poor sinners. We also had prayer meetings and the blessed uniting Spirit. Jesus was there to warm and cheer the heart.

After spending a week with the kind friends and brethren, I left the Island for the city—Hamilton—on another Island whither the vessel had gone to take in freight for Halifax.

On Sabbath morning after breakfast, a man having the appearance of a clergyman entered our cabin, and enquired if there was a preacher on board. Having received an answer in the affirmative, he invited me to officiate for him that day, as he was quite unwell. After making the necessary preparations I went to the preacher's house. After spending a few minutes in social conversation with the family the time for meeting came. The preacher announced our going, when I was immediately ushered into the presence of a large and intelligent looking audience. There were also Wesleyans present, and after trying to speak as well as I knew to an attentive people, we were pro-