

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.  
VOL. VII. No. 51.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1862.

WHOLE SERIES.  
VOL. XXVI. No. 51.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Flowers on the coffin of Prince Albert.

"It was not left to the gloom of its dark and narrow home, till some dear memorials of love and fond regret from the bereaved Queen and children, whom he has so untimely left, were deposited by kindred hands upon the coffin. On Monday a Queen's messenger brought from Osborne to Windsor three little wreaths, and a bouquet. The wreaths were simple chaplets of moss and violets, wreathed by the three elder Princesses. The bouquet, of violets, with a white camellia in the centre, was sent by the widowed Queen. Between the heraldic insignia, these last tributes from his widow and orphan daughters were laid upon the coffin; and the royal vault was then closed."—*London Times.*

What laid they there  
With such fond care?  
Was it some jewels rare  
Such as a kingly race might love to wear?  
There was a gleam  
Of glowing brightness round the solemn tomb;  
And crowns that glittered mid the funeral gloom  
With mocking beam,  
That seemed to speak the glory of the dead,  
Yet woke the grief of stricken hearts instead.  
For they were nothing now  
To him who slept with death stamped on his brow,  
Beneath the coffin lid  
By all the pomp of royal burial hid—  
Nothing the pride of birth,  
And all the fluttering pageantry of earth.  
Worth more to him,  
Who came to slumber 'mid the shadows dim,  
Were those pure, precious things  
Than all the wealth of Britain's greatest kings,  
Those flowers so fair  
And fragile in their drooping loveliness,  
Oh! what a depth of mute, meek tenderness  
Was treasured there!  
For tears were nestling in those folded leaves—  
Tears such as stricken woman sheds who grieves  
A cherished one  
From her embrace and earnest loving gaze.  
Not as a queen  
Did she, the regal lady of our land  
Bind those soft flowers with her imperial hand,  
To shed amid the sheen  
Of glittering crowns that decked the princely tomb  
Their faint, but sweet perfume.  
Not as the daughters of a kingly race  
Did those fair girls  
Wreath into chaplets of such loveliness  
Those simple flowers that made a resting place  
For tear-drop pearls.  
The wife, the daughter wept  
A wife's, a daughter's tears for him who slept  
To wake no more,  
And greet them in fond love tones as of yore,  
Oh! who may know  
The sighs that from those breaking hearts were riven,  
And to the keeping of those pale flowers given;  
To bear their weight of woe,  
And love, and tenderness, to rest above  
The pulseless heart that never more might move  
To earth-born sighs  
Of e'en the fondest love below the skies?  
Emblems of immortality they seemed,  
To bear the soul away from all that gleamed  
In earthly splendour there,  
To dreamings of a land whose flowers fair  
Might never fade away,  
But bloom undying in eternal day.  
Such hope as this  
Might cheer our widowed Queen's heart loneliness,  
That there the loved one dwelt,  
Safe from the agony her spirit felt.  
Thus sighs, and hopes, and tears  
Breathed in the fragrance of each fragile flower  
With depth of meaning, and a magic power  
That brightest pomp ne'er bears,  
And freighted thus they shed  
A secret influence round the silent dead  
Of holiest feeling from a sad heart torn  
Of love and sorrow born.  
These laid they there  
With such fond care.  
They shone not with the light of jewels rare,  
Such as a kingly race might love to wear,  
Those flowers fair  
And fragile in their drooping loveliness.  
These shed their wealth of love and tenderness  
Amid the gleam  
Of princely crowns that glittered o'er the tomb,  
And shone from out the deep funeral gloom  
With mocking beam.  
Were not those simple things  
Worth more than all the wealth of Britain's kings  
To him who slept  
Beneath that lid, by a whole nation wept?  
Charlottetown, P. E. I. MAUDE.

## Miscellaneous.

### Omissions in the Scriptures.

BY REV. J. M. McCULLOCH, D. D.

The absence in Scripture of every thing of a mere speculative nature, is not the only omission indicative of wise reserve. There are various omissions with reference to matters of practical instruction, which equally bespeak "the spirit of a sound mind."

1. Take as an example the remarkable silence of the New Testament as to the labours, sacrifices, and deaths of the greater part of the Apostles. It cannot be doubted, that an inspired biography of these Founders and Fathers of the Church would have been read with the utmost avidity by Christians; and it may be thought that a record of their holy lives and noble exertions and happy deaths, would have been invaluable as a model and exemplar to missionaries and pastors in all ages. But a little consideration will probably satisfy the candid enquirer, that the real benefit of Christians has been best consulted by the method actually adopted of keeping the glorious exertions of these human instruments of the Spirit in the shade! A full detail of the labours and fate of the Apostles would have kept the human agents too prominently before us, and tempted us to overlook the true source of the gospel's success. The work in which they were engaged would have been viewed as the result of human virtue, more than of Divine power; and Christ's servants would have been exalted to that place in our regard which their Master alone ought to occupy. As God hid the body of Moses, that the Jews might be prevented from worshipping their departed leader; so a veil has been left on the exploits of the Apostles, to remove a similar temptation from Christians. And the lesson taught by this omission, is the same with which our Lord rebuked the inquisitiveness of Peter regarding the fate of the beloved disciple:—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me."

2. An omission still more singular, considering the position and habits of the sacred writers, is the absence of precise and authoritative directions as to forms of Christian worship and ecclesiastical polity. In the Koran, we find minute regulations concerning fasts, prayers, ablutions, the amount of alms, and all other points of Mahometan observance; and the same is represented to be the character of the Hindoo Shaster and other sacred books of the Heathen. But in the statue-book of the Christian Church there is no directory of worship and government—not even a detailed account of the constitution and canons of the Apostolic Church. How is such an omission to be accounted for in the writings of persons who were brought up as Jews—who were accustomed from infancy to a prescribed and fixed ritual—and who moreover were in the habit of instituting and "setting in order" specific modes of religious observance in the various churches which they founded or visited? Is it credible that these writers, if left to their own discretion, would have abstained from prescribing a fixed and permanent rule of worship for the Christian world? To us indeed who live in an advanced period of the Christian dispensation, the wisdom of the omission is obvious. It is now clearly seen that a fixed and unyielding system of forms and canons would have been unsuitable to a religion designed for all times and places, and for men in every stage of social improvement. To us the wise fore-sight is apparent, which left it to each church "to steer its own course by the chart and compass which God's Word supplies, regulating for itself the sails and rudder according to the winds and currents it may meet with." But whence got these unlettered Galileans this wise and far-reaching fore-sight? It is plain from their own writings that they were dull in apprehending and slow in admitting the universal character of Christianity: nor is there any evidence that the idea ever occurred to them, that a religion of universal and unchangeable truths must of necessity be plastic and variable in its forms. But even supposing them to have perceived that the universality of its character required its ritual and polity to be left at large, how came they to abstain from recording, in their accounts of the primitive church, the modes of worship and administration which were actually in use under their own directions? Is it supposable that they were sufficiently far-sighted to perceive, that even such a record as this would have been perilous to the liberty of the church; that it would have been regarded as part of Scripture, and therefore scrupulously followed as a directory of ecclesiastical forms even after a change of circumstances rendered it inapplicable? The conduct of the sacred writers in this matter can be explained only on the theory that they were supernaturally withheld from recording the usages of the apostolic church—restrained from it by that Divine Spirit whose penmen this, in common with countless other evidences, proves them to have been.

### Dr. Chalmers' power.

We remember well our first hearing Dr. Chalmers. We were in a moorland district in Tweeddale, rejoicing in the country, after nine months of the high school. We heard that the famous preacher was to be at a neighboring parish church, and off we set, a cartful of irrepressible youngsters.

As we entered the kirk we saw a notorious character, a drover, who had much of the brutal look of what he worked in with the knowing eye of a man of the city. He was our terror, and we not only wondered but were afraid when we saw him going in. The kirk was full as it could hold. The minister comes in, homely in his dress and gait, and having a great look about him, like a mountain among hills. He looks vaguely round upon the audience, as if he saw in it one great object—not many. We shall never forget his smile; its general benignity; how he let the light of his countenance fall on us.

He read a few verses quietly; then prayed briefly, solemnly, with his eyes wide open all the time, but not seeing. Then he gave out his text; we forget it, but its subject was, "Death reigns." He stated slowly, calmly the simple meaning of the words; what death was, and how and why it reigned; then suddenly he started, and looked like a man who had seen some great sight, and was breathless to declare it. He told us how death reigned—everywhere, at all times, in all places; how we all knew it; how we would yet know more of it. The drover, who had sat down in the table-seat opposite, was gazing up in a state of stupid excitement; he seemed restless, but never took his eye from the speaker. The tide set in; every thing added to its power—deep called to deep, imagery and illustration poured in; and every now and then the theme, the simple, terrible statement, was repeated in some lucid interval.

After overwhelming us with proofs of the reign of death, and transferring to us his intense urgency and emotion; and after shrieking, as if in despair, these words, "Death is a tremendous necessity," he suddenly looked beyond us as if into some distant region, and cried out, "Behold a mightier!—who is this? He cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, speaking in righteousness, travelling in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save." Then in a few plain sentences he stated the truth as to sin entering, and death by sin, and passing upon all. Then he took fire once more, and enforced with redoubled energy and richness, freeness and simplicity, the security, the sufficiency of the great method of justification.

How astonished and impressed we all were. He was at the full thunder of his power; the whole man was in an agony of earnestness. The drover was weeping like a child, the tears running down his ruddy, coarse cheeks—his face opened out and smoothed like an infant's; his whole body stirred with emotion. We all had been insensibly drawn out of our seats, and converging towards the wonderful speaker. And when he sat down, after warning each one of us to remember who it was and what it was that followed death on his pale horse, and how alone we could escape, we all sank back into our seats. How beautiful to our eyes did the thunderer look—exhausted, but sweet and pure. How he poured out his soul before God in giving thanks for sending the Abolisher of death. Then a short psalm, and all was ended.

We went home quieter than we came—we thought of other things. That voice, that face; those great, simple, living thoughts; those floods of resistless eloquence; that piercing, shattering voice; that "tremendous necessity!"—*Dr. John Brown.*

### The outside and the heart.

It was quite an annoyance to a fashionable family, in our church, that two old ladies, who adhered to a very ancient mode of dress, occupied the pew before them every Sunday. They wore narrow black silk dresses, wide collars, and old-fashioned bonnets. The children had drawn several caricatures of their neighbors in the hymn books. These thoughtless young people did not notice the sweet peace which illuminated the faces of the two old ladies, while they "worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

When we were sent out on a collecting tour for the Missionary Society, we presented the book very gladly to the rich lady who dressed so beautifully. She received us in an elegant drawing-room, but a cloud shadowed her face on learning our errand. After making many excuses about her want of faith in such far-off missions, and her preference for home charities, and the times, which limited her expenditure, she returned with a silver half dollar.

At an unpretending little house we stepped rather unwillingly. Here lived those old ladies who looked so antiquated; it was almost useless to solicit their aid. The room was plainly fur-

nished, with well-worn furniture and a home-made carpet; there were no pictures on the walls, no books visible, except an old family Bible which looked as if it was always open. At the sight of the little subscription book, it was unnecessary to mention our object; the younger sister went to some distant bureau drawer, and brought back an old leathern purse. It was full of bright gold pieces. With a radiant face she gave ten shining eagles into our hands, saved by self-denial and numberless economies, by sales of fruit and eggs—by constant remembrance of the injunction, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." We had been disposed, sometimes, to laugh at the two old ladies, but never again did we think of them without reverence and love.

When we were preparing to send a present, to the hospital, a chaise stopped at the door, and the two old ladies appeared, bearing a goodly store. The old chaise was filled with cups of jelly and bottles of currant wine, with soft linen and warm blankets. They had brought enough to fill a generous box. It was easy to see why the dear old people wore the same dresses year after year, and carried such faded parasols.

We heard of a very poor family, and went to ascertain what they especially needed; we had been anticipated by the same charitable hands. There was the willow basket familiar in all the houses of our poor, which had brought bread and meat, and cordials for the sick. With our two old ladies, it seemed very true that "giving does not impoverish;" their cresset of oil was never empty.

Again we called at the old house to beg something for the soldiers' tracts and books; still one gold coin remained to send us on our way rejoicing. They were quilting in the clean old kitchen; this must be designed for themselves; but they asked us to walk into the parlor, and see a few articles they were about to send to a home missionary's family. For many months they had been sewing and kitting, until a table was covered with garments for the unknown brother in Christ.

That was a sacred house; it reminded us of the one where Jesus used to resort. We never failed to find gold in the worn purse, food in the closet for the hungry, wine and soup for the sick, whenever we applied to the women who were "poor, yet making many rich."

When jewels and costly dresses will have lost their charm, when the white robe of Christ's giving will be the only one desired, our two old-fashioned ladies will find their gold and silver, hoarded for his sake, safe for them, and all their charities, given so noiselessly that the left hand did not know what the right hand did, repaid a thousand-fold!—*Tract Journal.*

### Variety in experience.

The universe is full of variety. We meet it everywhere, and it charms us. In all the world, among all the works of creation, there are no two things which are exactly and in all respects alike. It was England's sweetest poet who sung—

"Variety's the spice of life, that gives it all its flavor."

But we speak now of variety in the experience of individual Christians. And we do it because so many are doubting and hesitating because they were not converted just as some others were. They do not discriminate between what is essential and what is merely incidental; and because the circumstances in their experience differ from those related in the experience of others, they are ready to conclude that they are not Christians. Many true disciples stumble at this point, and abandon hope when there is no good reason for it. There is variety here as elsewhere, and it is natural to expect it. From the first it has been so. We read of Paul's conversion, so marvellous, so sublime, when he was overawed, overpowered, by the divine majesty, and at length receiving light and comfort through a devout man sent specially to him; and then we read the account of Matthew's conversion, so brief, so simple, and ask, Can it be that these two conversions were alike genuine, introductory to the same new life and Christian discipleship? And we learn that it was even so; that though the attending circumstances were more grand, impressive and sublime, in the conversion of Paul, they led only to this one result—he was willing to leave all and follow Christ, and that the same result was reached in the case of Matthew. Both were sincere converts, true disciples, and both became faithful apostles, useful men, and gave their life-long service to their Redeemer. Christian experience is thus varied in its incidental and attending circumstances. The attention of different persons is not arrested in the same way, conviction for sin is not always alike protracted and severe, the evidence of pardon is not equally clear and conclusive, but still in their grand results, all genuine conversions are the same. It leads to just this, which is the one essential thing to conversion—it leads to the hatred of sin, the forsaking of all things to follow Christ and obey his commands. Wherever we find