

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### THE HARVEST HOME.

"That both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

From the far-off fields of earthly toil  
A goodly host they come,  
And sounds of music are on the air,—  
'Tis the song of the Harvest-home.  
The weariness and the weeping—  
The darkness has all pass'd by—  
And a glorious sun has risen—  
The Sun of Eternity!

We've seen those faces in days of yore,  
When the dust was on their brow,  
And the scalding tear upon their cheek—  
Let us look at the labourers now!  
We think of the life-long sorrow,  
And the wilderness days of care;  
We try to trace the tear-drops,  
But no scars of grief are there.

There's a mystery of soul-chasten'd joy  
Lit up with sun light hues,  
Like morning flowers most beautiful,  
When wet with midnight dews.  
There are depths of earnest meaning  
In each true and trustful gaze  
Telling of wondrous lessons  
Learnt in their pilgrim days.

And a conscious confidence of bliss  
That shall never again remove,—  
All the faith and hope of journeying years,  
Gather'd up in that look of love.  
The long waiting days are over;  
They've received their wages now;  
For they've gazed upon their Master,  
And His name is on their brow.

They've seen the safely garner'd sheaves,  
And the song has been passing sweet,  
Which welcomed the last in-coming one  
Laid down at their Saviour's feet.  
Oh well does His heart remember,  
As those notes of praise sweep by,  
The yearning, plaintive music  
Of earth's sadder minstrelsy.

And well does He know each chequer'd tale,  
As he looks on the joyous band—  
All the lights and shadows that cross'd their  
In the distant pilgrim land— [path,  
The heart's unbroken anguish—  
The bitter sighs and tears—  
The long, long hours of watching—  
The changeful hopes and fears!

One had climb'd the rugged mountain-side;  
'Twas a bleak and wintry day;  
The tempest had scatter'd his precious seed,  
And he wept as he turn'd away.  
But a stranger-hand had water'd  
That seed on a distant shore,  
And the labourers now are meeting,  
Who had never met before.

And one—he had toil'd amid burning sands,  
When the scorching sun was high,  
He had grasp'd the plough with a fever'd hand,  
And then laid him down to die;  
But another, and yet another,  
Had fill'd that deserted field,  
Nor vainly the seed they scatter'd,  
Where a brother's care had fill'd.

Some with eager step went boldly forth,  
Broad casting o'er the land;  
Some water'd the scarcely budding blade,  
With a tender, gentle hand.  
There's one, her young life was blighted,  
By the withering touch of woe;  
Her days were sad and weary,  
And she never went forth to sow;

But there rose from her lonely couch of pain,  
The fervent, pleading prayer;  
She looks on many a radiant brow,  
And she reads the answers there!  
Yes! sowers and reapers are meeting;  
A rejoicing host they come!  
Will you join that echoing chorus?—  
'Tis the song of the Harvest-home!

## Religious.

### THE SOUL-GATHERER.

THE ENEMY.

In no path do we come so closely into conflict with Satan as on that of seeking to deliver his prey. His shares lie thickly around every path; but his personal hostility is fiercest here. How often he has tried to come to terms with you, believer, so as to drive you from this line of work! With how

many has he succeeded in making a compact! Having lost hopes of them as his victims for eternity, he gives them a measure of freedom from annoyance if they agree to let their old fellow-captives alone. He has gained them over to silence; and now, never very sure of their own salvation, and forbearing to disturb the sleep of others, they go on from day to day, expecting that at some period of their lives it shall fare better with them than it does now. You remember what a hard resistance Satan made when you were wrenched from his power. The marks of it may be on you still. But now that he has lost you, he has one strong point still to fight for. He gains much if he makes your piety harmless among your fellows. Consent only to deal with that immortal property of his in the general,—agree not to lay earnest, loving hands on any who are his,—refrain from reading in the ears of his servants individually, the offer of the Prince of life to set them free,—and Satan on his part will abstain from much molesting you. His world will not frown on you, his fiery darts will not fly around your pillow or your path. Jibes and taunts do not assail those who are content to hear from a distance only the hal-lujahs of delivered men.

Satan's history is mysteriously linked with that of our race. His final doom is bound up with our own. The everlasting fire which shall consume the rebellious among men is preparing also for the devil and his fallen legions. His great device is to keep out of sight while he ruins us. How cunningly he accomplishes it! Save when the street is startled by the impious oath of one who hastens openly to claim him as Master, or when sworn friends in his service meet beyond reach of polite check or restraint, the name of the evil one is seldom heard by the world which he possesses. "I was not aware till now," said Orsini with astonishment, a year before he was executed at Paris, "I was not aware till now that any intelligent person believed in the existence of a devil. I thought he was only made to come on the stage, and for monks to frighten women and children with." Yet Orsini had wide experience of men. It is only those who have escaped from his hands who can truly say, "I know there is a devil."

Soul-gatherer! you know it. When, in pleading with an all but yielding fellow sinner, you find his slighter resistance all at once reinforced by a stronger power—when the sword of the Spirit, that seemed to make its way, comes on something harder than the too hard heart—when the will that was apparently aspiring to choose Jesus, flies back all at once to choose the world,—you realise, ah! how terribly, the devil's power. When fallacies are suddenly started by those who seemed already half convinced,—when you hear arguments so trivial and self-contradictory that you scarce can believe you listen to the same voice that on all other subjects speaks so well and wisely,—you realise, ah! how terribly, the devil's power. Does he require to do more than whisper to his slave, in order to draw him back into the darkness? A beckon from this slave-master is enough.

The longer the conflict is prolonged in the case of those whom Jehovah is about to take for his own, the Enemy's power and efforts do but become the more palpable. The time approaches for the victory of grace over the soul you love, but good signs have died out. Your hopes are well nigh dried up, they are absorbed in naked, mighty faith. Encouraging appearances are passing away; the soul you seek, and yourself seeking it, sink out of sight. There is visible only the arm of an adversary. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty? shall the lawful captive be delivered?" asks this Goliath. There is silence then. There is an uplifted eye, a signal of distress and helplessness hung out. Jesus sees. It was His own love that moved you to these efforts, His will determined them, His power is about to crown them, but He will have you anew to realise what the contest is, and where it lies. For it is a perishing creature, justly condemned, that is now held up against the light of God's law. The enemy exposes all its villainy, and asserts his long-held rights.

Jesus hears—from the height of Zion He hears. Jesus speaks, and the devil's challenge, and the captive's moan, and your own

cry of faith, are hushed, as the promise breaks afresh from the Conqueror's lips, "Even the captives of the mighty shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." Lawful captive, believe His word! Loving pleader, rejoice in the new victory of the Son of man!

But this new victory will not greatly lessen the next struggle. We have entered the lists with a never-sleeping foe. Day and night he is fortifying his position in the hearts of his servants; though he cannot furnish his captives with any argument that has not been answered, in the experience of the saved, again and again. There is one heart more treacherous than the deceitful heart of man.

It is the old first lie that Satan buries deep in each human heart. And yet it is a new excuse for not coming to Jesus that rises to the lips of each. The deceit changes colour with each varying phase in the mind of man. Each captive is held to the service by a different secret chain. It may be iron or silken; galling or gilded as for a holiday; yet it is so craftily fixed that the captive cannot unclasp it, nor can you. Only one hand can touch the spring. To that hand it will instantaneously yield.

(To be continued.)

### "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

You hold in your hand a little seed, dry, uninteresting. It falls to the ground. You go your way, die, and pass from the remembrance of man. But the seed; what of it? The soil covered it, the rains fell upon it, the sun shone upon it. Soon the germ sent a tiny rootlet down, and pushed a green blade up. Years come and go, and out of the seed has come the gnarled oak, toughened by storm, in whose branches the birds sing and build their nests, and in whose grateful shade man and beast rejoice. It did not appear what the little seed would be.

A worm crawls at your feet; you turn from it; but soon, in some secluded spot, it spins a gossamer thread, and wraps itself in a silken shroud. By and by it wakes a thing of beauty, and floats away in the sunshine.

The mourners go about the streets carrying their dead. They go to hide their precious dust. The light of those eyes is darkened; the music of that voice is hushed. It doth not yet appear what it shall be. Its sleep may be long, its disorganization complete; but far down the ages there waits for it the resurrection-morn. The vile body shall then be changed—made like unto His glorious body. Death shall be spoiled; that which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power; this mortal shall put on immortality.

The soul begins in feebleness, small in its strength, and fractional in its knowledge. But for all righteous souls "light is sown," and in those coming fields of glory they shall stand in a blaze of life everlasting. Thus it shall come to be that the babe that now sleeps in Christ's arms shall walk in infinite glory and exhaustless fulness. Only in Christ, and Christ in you, and there awaits for you a strength to which all strength this side the flood is but weakness; a beauty here is but mockery; a knowing to which all knowledge acquired in this world is but foolishness; a life to which all other life is but a bubble-breath, a fleeting sight. The believer's life is now hidden, hampered. It shall be opened, made free.

"Oh glorious hour, Oh blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God,  
And flesh and sin no more control  
The sacred pleasures of the soul."  
—Am. Miss.

### "IT IS TOO MUCH."

"Hold," said the venerable Judson, laying his hand on the arm of his wife while his frame trembled with emotion. She was reading to him from a paper some account of missionary operations among a people he himself had once been interested in. He had employed a teacher for them, translated a book into their language, and devoted considerable time to the enterprise. His plans, however,

were interrupted, and he had long since given up the expectation of seeing any fruit.

But now, as he lies on that couch of languishing and suffering in need of consolation, he hears tidings of a movement among that people, not forgotten, though labored for, as he supposed, in vain. One of the natives meets with a book, reads it, is convinced, is converted. He then reads this book to another. His eyes too are opened, and his heart touched with the love of God. They read to others, and they also receive the word and become Christians. The number increases till they feel a demand for a church. And there, without the aid or advice of any teacher, they unite in covenant, and, in the midst of idolatry, celebrate the worship of the true God.

This was the account his devoted wife was reading to him. He listened till he recognized the book that led to this glorious result as the one he himself had translated, when, with emotions too deep for utterance, he cried, "Hold." As soon as he could command himself he went on: "It is too much, I am overwhelmed. I never yet did undertake any thing simply with a view of honoring my gracious Saviour, but he did more than I asked or thought."

### Dr. Guthrie on Local Preachers.

In the first of a series of papers in "Good Words," entitled "Out of Harness," Dr. Guthrie, in discussing the enjoyments offered by a visit to New Brighton, makes the following remarks on Methodism, and one of her most precious institutions, the local-preacher system:—"Of that water 'of which if a man drink he shall never thirst,' New Brighton suffers no lack; but enjoys, on the contrary, a full and very admirable supply. We have tried all the wells; worshipping in the Episcopalian, Congregational, and Wesleyan Churches. Nor, though unaccustomed to instrumental music in church, was our enjoyment of the services disturbed by the organs of the two first, or the modest harmonium of the last. Being placed in a pew which commanded a partial sight of the organ-blower, and of his head and shoulders going up and down at every blast of the bellows, like the piston of a steam-engine, I was only disturbed by my sympathy for this official. While others were singing, I fancied he must be groaning; and could not but wish that in all churches, as in some, where an organ is used, the power of steam or water was employed to supply wind to the pipes. Among the Methodists we had the opportunity of hearing their 'local preachers,' as they are called. This is a class to which all their ministers must at one time have belonged. Nor are any recognised as 'locals' till they have proved themselves, by a twelve-month's trial, able to address men in a way both interesting and instructive—which was just what the Scotchman pronounced wanting in a poor preacher of whom she said that he was neither 'edifyin' nor divertin'.' It is after a young man has gone through this ordeal that he goes into regular training for the ministry, and not till then. No, whatever objections may lie to the plan in respect of its details, the idea appears a sound one. As a recruit is not admitted into the army, and sent to drill, till it has been ascertained that he possesses the physical properties which fit him to be an efficient soldier, so, by the application of an adequate test, the churches should try whether men possess these properties and powers which will make them efficient preachers, before they are put into regular training for the ministry. The timely application of such a test would go far to protect congregations from inefficient preachers; and also save men the pain of discovering when too late, that they have mistaken their profession; a mistake well described by a shrewd countryman, who talking to me of his minister, said that when he left the plough for the Church, the parish lost the best ploughman, and got the worst minister it ever had. Queer stories are told of these 'locals'—how they violate the rules of grammar, and commit shocking murders of the Queen's English. Years ago, at Leamington, I heard an excellent specimen of this class discoursing on the character of Noah. He quite charmed me by his piety, good sense, and genuine, though rude elo-