

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. IX, No. 10.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 1864.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXVIII, No. 10.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

EVENING THOUGHTS.

'Tis evening hour, pale Luna glides in majesty
on high!
The stars look calmly, gently down, to light the
azure sky,

At eventide.

Refreshing zephyrs gently blow, and waft a rich
perfume.
And bring enlivening thoughts to those whose
hearts are filled with gloom,

At evening's hour.

How sweet it is at this still hour to view the
landscape o'er,
And watch the gentle moonbeams fall as in the
days of yore,

At eventide.

When our first parents peaceful dwelt in Eden's
moon-lit bower,
Lulled by the murmur of the breeze at twilight's
happy hour,

Of blissful thoughts.

Far back to ages past and gone, o'er fancy's
wide domain,
Of thoughts and musings of the past, doth run
the golden chain.

Of memory sweet.

We think not of the present hour; our minds
now far away,
On some transaction of the past our thoughts
are wont to stray

At eventide.

The rise and fall of empires great pass on be-
fore our mind,
Like some great wonders of the past writ on
the page of time,

Long, long ago.

Fancy hath led our wandering mind by her
resistless power,
In thought we saw the misty years in mighty
grandeur tower,

Far back in time.

Why should our thoughts so far run back, as if
by magic led,
On memory of some loved one now lain with
the early dead,

So sweet to rest.

Each bird and beast seek out some place where
they are free from tears;
The train of thought is broken up, the twilight
disappears;

The day has flown.

LALLAH CLARKE.

Margaretville, Wilmot.

Religious.

PROFESSIONS AND ACTS.

The want of a clear apprehension of the true relation between saying and doing, professions and acts, is the frequent source of egregious incongruities of life and conduct. A delusion on this point may lead not only to personal disappointment, but to ultimate ruin. Heaven is not to be won by fair words and gracious promises. Yet there is a general tendency to put words in the place of deeds. It is easier to say to the suffering, "Be ye warmed and clothed," than to give them shelter, and fire, raiment, and food. Pity and help, when they go together, are of inestimable value, but pity alone is of little account. Professions and prayers in religion may be well or ill, as they are sustained and recommended by corresponding acts, or otherwise. The condition of Christian acceptance is, "Having done all." And our Lord, on one occasion, taught those that hung on his lips that our state hinges not on the duty which we profess, but on the extent to which we do his will. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The doing Christian, that is to say, the practical Christian shall stand, while the empty boasters shall come to nought. Yet it is notorious that the greatest talkers in religion are often the very least in action. When men speak of bearing the cross, they very generally refer to religious harangues

rather than to sacrifice and silent labor, in which the true burden of the cross lie. We do not think that we put the case too strongly, when we say that the conscience of the churches is more sensitive about what a man says than about what he does, so that he shuns immoralities and scandals. The lack of deeds is not judged if the due quantum of profession be given. In receiving members to our churches, we ask two questions as to what the candidates believe where we ask one relating to their life and action. And we are quite as apt to visit ecclesiastical penalties on a denial of some doctrinal formulary, which men have drawn up, as on a neglect of the highest precepts which God has enjoined. We exalt the creed, and grow indifferent to the command. Somehow, we have too generally come to regard religion as a set of notions to which a man must publicly subscribe, rather than as a rule of conduct which he should publicly exemplify. So, when we hear men speak of the strong meat of the gospel, we understand them as referring to those grand and rugged doctrines of the Pauline theology, sometimes named after Augustine and Calvin, which none but the most robust and reverent intellects are able fully to master. But in fact, as has been well remarked, the strong meat of the gospel consists in those precepts which enjoin sacrifice, self-denial and labor in the cause of Christ. It is of giving and doing, of using our substance and ourselves in the service of humanity and religion, that men complain, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?"

Let no one understand us as encouraging loose thinking in religion. We have no sympathy for latitudinarian beliefs. We give our hearty accord to what the stoutest defender of the faith may say in depreciation of them. But the great danger to Christianity, in our day, does not lie in the direction of loose formularies of doctrine so much as in loose habits of living. It is the latitudinarian conduct of those who profess an orthodox belief that leads to so sad a decay of spiritual power. The men who follow Christ, and din the ears of others with the cry of "Lord, Lord," do not heed his solemn commands. Though the path which he trod is blazed with deeds of self-denial and self sacrifice, so that he that runs may see it, what multitudes assume to follow him in the way of self-pleasing, self-seeking, and self-serving! They call themselves after Christ, but not one Christly deed marks the royalty of their heavenly birth. This is what makes the grand and awful truths of Christianity seem like fictions. This is what loads the Christian name with reproach, and changes our strength into weakness, and our glory into shame.—*Examiner.*

ABSENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Much is said and sung respecting the absence of the Holy Spirit which will not bear a strict scrutiny. When there is an apparent suspension of the Spirit's agency in conversion, it is common to speak of Him as having withdrawn. But as it is the indwelling of the Spirit which distinguishes a Christian from one who is not, if we believe in an absolute withdrawing of the Spirit, we believe that the regenerate lose all grace and become again unregenerate. No believer in electing, effectual and preserving grace can admit this.

But though "the theology of the intellect" condemns such phraseology, there is something in it which is congenial with "the theology of the feelings." In other words, it is a figure of speech. We speak of the Spirit as having withdrawn, when we mean nothing more heretical than that we do not enjoy the comfortable and blessed effects of His presence as we wish to. Nothing untrue, non-scriptural is meant. Yet it is worth inquiring whether the use of such language is not in danger of leading to the indulgence of a sentiment near akin to ingratitude. The operations of the Spirit are manifold. We ought to recognize them, confess them, and thankfully to rejoice in them. A church may report to an Association that during the year there has been "a suspension of Divine influences," while it is confessed in the same letter that they have "enjoyed the stated ministry of the Gospel." What kind of enjoyment did they have, if the Holy Spirit withheld His presence? A more habitual and grate-

ful recognition of His working might prove a condition of the more ample enjoyment of His gifts.—*W. & R.*

GREEK SABBATH SCHOOL IN SMYRNA.

A gentleman by the name of Timagenes advertises in the *Amalthea*, a Greek paper published in Smyrna, that he proposes to open a school for scriptural instruction to be called the Sabbath school. He will hold a session every Sabbath morning, commencing at 10 o'clock, the public services in the church being concluded usually before that hour. He proposes to begin with the Old Testament, and to receive all, without distinction of age or attainments, the only condition being the contribution of a small sum to remunerate him for the time he will be obliged to spend in preparing himself for the lessons. If, at the conclusion of a year's trial, the results should be mutually satisfactory to teacher and pupils, he promises to go on with the work. In the preface to his statement, he laments the decline of that catechetical instruction which occupied so important a place in the primitive church, and emphatically recognizes the inculcation of religious truth as the foundation of private morality, social progress, and national prosperity.

THE DANNEWERK.

Our readers will have seen reference to this famous line of earthwork in the accounts of the war now going on in Germany. The following description will enable them to understand something of its nature, history and uses:

The "Danneverk," the bulwark of Holstein, is thus described in a letter from Flensburg:—The Dannewerk is of very ancient origin. It is situated at the extreme southern part of the duchy of Schleswig, and is now an enormous earthwork that stretches almost across the entire country. The length of the peninsula of Schleswig-Holstein, to the end of Jutland is said to be near 300 miles; so that it extends almost as far as the base line of our country from the North Foreland to the Land's End. The breadth of the peninsula, however, is but one-third of its length and the Dannewerk is a fortification that reaches very nearly across the land from the German Ocean to the Baltic. This "border wall" is said to have been erected in the ninth century, and, according to the accounts given of it in "Olaf Tryggveson's Saga," it was built of wood, stone and earth.

In the year 987, the wall, we are told, was built by Queen Thyra, whom the people in their thankfulness for the national defence, christened Danabod, which literally translated means the pride of the Danes; and, as a proof of the extreme antiquity of the structure, I have myself seen at Flensburg a splendid collection of flint arrow heads and axes which have been collected from the barrows of earth mounds in the neighborhood. There were spear points wrought out of splinters of flint no thicker than paper knives, and worked sharper than the best steel. Here, too, we were shown the knuckle-bone like stones which had been used to separate the fine layers of siliceous earth from the solid mass, and which were found embedded in these same barrows with the very flint chip beside them, that the people, thousands of years before, had broken from the integral block.

Here, moreover, we saw the slabs of stones that the old Celts had used to grind their spear-heads on the sharpest points, grooved with the toils of the workmen, and seeming as if they were destined to tell the present age how this wonderfully fine workmanship of the hardest possible material was executed. Indeed, in this collection of works long precedent to history, I saw arrow-heads made out of flint, hardly thicker than the mother of pearl, and wrought as sharp as a needle. The fortress at the present day (with-out going into all the niceties of historical detail consists of three enormous earthworks stretching across the entire length of the land. They are so arranged as to form the neck or funnel, with a long outwork to protect the narrow channel through which the troops are ultimately intended to be driven.

Toward the Baltic or East Sea, there runs the "Oster-Wolden" (or east rampart); this lies toward the "Eckenforde," and is sometimes called the "Camel-Danneverk." It is about two English miles long; the earthworks being from four to five feet high, and 10 yards broad, and beset with a ditch, the depth of which varies from 6 feet to 10 feet. Beyond this is the great bay formed by the river Schley, which is so wide that no troops could possibly attempt to pass it. Stretching immediately in front of this is the "Kuragraben," which is upwards of a mile in length, beginning at the end of the Selker lake; it is from 10 to 12 feet broad, and from 4 to 6 feet high. Behind this lies the great Dannewerk itself, which consists of an earthwork not less than 14 miles long. In some parts it is from 20 to 36 feet high, and the ramparts are from 16 to 20 feet high.

The whole of these earthworks are immediately in connection from one side of the peninsula to the other, with the river Schley on the eastern side, and with the river Treene, which falls into the Northern Ocean; so that the Danish forces have it within their power to flood not less than 64 square miles of land in front of the great bulwark of Schleswig. "But," said the Saxon soldiers to the writer, "what are the uses of the sluice gates in this time of frost?" On talking with the Danish engineers, however, they told us they had flooded the country a fortnight before with the thinnest pellice of ice, and let the water out immediately afterwards, so that any troops attempting to cross the country would be mowed down by the artillery-like corn. Indeed, from what I heard during my stay in Schleswig, there is not the least doubt that 40,000 men could hold the Dannewerk against 100,000 opposing troops, and from what I saw myself of the fortifications and heard from the engineers as to the means of flooding the country, either with a thin sheet of ice or slough of water, I am convinced that it would require as strong an army as united Germany could possibly muster to wrest Schleswig from Denmark.

STARTING THE TEARS.

To be good is the surest way to do good. One may labor diligently a long time with little apparent good result, and then in the twinkling of an eye, or perhaps, by a mere glance of the eye, effect immediate and lasting good.

Some years since, a minister who was holding protracted meetings went to a town where the people were so few and scattered that he thought it not best to remain longer than to preach a single sermon.

Accordingly, the next morning he took coach and departed. During the ride, a friend who accompanied him remarked that the announcement of his decision "made the tears start."

"Whose tears?" he inquired.

"The tears of a pious woman, a member of the little church you have just left," was the answer.

"Then," said he, "I am going back to labor there if the tears have started."

He immediately returned, and, for the size of the congregation, there was a great work of grace. Twenty-five or more gave evidence of conversion.

The love of Christ in that woman's heart was the source which sent forth those tears, and that involuntary expression of her piety lead to rejoicing in Heaven over a godly company of penitent, believing sinners.

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN?—If not, do you ever expect to be? If so, when? If God should soon call you to your final account, what reason could you give for being impenitent? Might you not be a Christian now? Delay not, then, to seek salvation now, lest you should put it off too late. Receive these questions kindly from one who may never meet you till the day of judgment. Think of them seriously. Think now. Act now.

THE family is the school for heaven. How dear is every word in the household vocabulary! Parent and child, husband and wife, brother and sister, lover and friend—a virtue is in each. They are steps in the heavenly ladder.