

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES,
Vol. X. No. 7.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1865.

WHOLE SERIES,
Vol. XXIX. No. 7.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Victory of Mahanaim.

There was a sound of weeping
Heard in Israel's yet untempled city,
For all the land was rife with direst treason—
And King David robed in sackcloth, and followed
By his weeping warriors, fled in haste
To escape the hand of Absalom.
Slowly to the brink of Kedron's waters
Came the host and passed—then with covered
Head and bared, and burning foot, ascended
To the brow of Olivet—weeping sore!

It was a weary sight!
Unlike his proud and kingly form arose,
To that which Israel's warlike hosts beheld
When at his feet the proud Philistine sank
To rise no more; nor yet when on his brow
The kingly crown arose radiant with that renown
His warlike arm had won; no now; his arm
Was tremulous and weak with age, and years
Had laid a hoary crown of silvery hairs
Upon his wrinkled brow.

The King was stricken sore!
And when there came one forth of Saul's proud race
And cursed him with a bitter curse, he felt
Perchance; his God had him cursed and therefore
Bowed his aged head in deeper woe—
What to him if on his head the deepest
Curse of direst foe might fall, while the hand
His own had pressed with all a parent's pride
Was raised to seek his life? What to him
The faithless trust of perfidious friends, while his
Soul was rent with that deep woe—a son's rebellion?
That son! his best beloved—Had he not climbed
Upon his knee, and twined his arms about
His neck, and called him father?—
Had not his kingly crown and royal robes
Been laid aside that he might clasp within
His arms the childish form that thrilled his heart
With all a parent's joy?

Alas! Alas!
That thus his heart's deep love must be repaid,
And gath'ring his robe of sackcloth more close
About his tottering form, King David
Lifted up his voice and spake.

"Oh Absalom! my son; my son!"
Thou wert the glory of my manhood's years!
Methought thou'dst be the stay of these declining
Days
How couldst thou thus rebel? How couldst thou thus
Forget thy Father's love, thy childhood's happy trust,
And lift thy hand to bring these hoary hairs
In sorrow to the dust?
Hast thou forgot the times I've joined thy
Youthful sports, and laughed to see thy childish
Glee?

Oh I have loved thee with a love too deep,
Too fond; and thus, for this the hand of God
Is lifted up in wrath, and thou perchance
My bitterest curse shalt prove; on whom my
Highest hopes were laid!
And must I lift mine arm to punish thy
Deep guilt?—perhaps to lay thee low? Oh God
Forbid! for I do love thee still, and sooner
Would I lay these hoary hairs beneath the tomb,
Than thus to crush thee in thine early years,
And quench the brightness of thy youthful bloom!

He ceased the agony of words
And falling prostrate, with his face upon
The cold damp earth, sent up a wild beseeching
Cry that God would spare the guilty rebel's life.
In Ephraim's woods the battle raged; by Joab
Led 'gainst Absalom's rebel hosts; while from
The city's gates the king beheld.

It was a fearful hour!
Friend against his dearest friend stood up
Arrayed in horrid conflict; and brother
'Gainst brother lift'd up the vengeful sword,
And there were proud forms forever lowly laid,
And crushed beneath the iron heel of living
Hosts; and brows that but that morn were flushed
With all the dignity of life and youth
Were pale and cold in death! and eyes that flashed,
A proud defiance to the eye that met
Saw not the sun's declining light—forever closed!
Foremost, where the contest fiercest raged
Rode Absalom. He sat proudly erect
And his glorious form seemed all too fair
For death, and "the look of his dark searching
Eye" seemed as if it bid a proud defiance
To the mighty monster's fearful power;
But ere the day was done his proud form was
Stiff and cold upon the reeking earth, by
The hand of Joab slain!—those fiery
Orbs were fixed in death!

From off the city's walls a watchman lifted
Up his voice and cried! "Things my lord, oh king
And ere his words were done, came one in breathless
Haste to tell of victory won; the conflict past—
King David's foe was numbered with the slain!
The monarch's face waxed pale,
In haste he rose, and then with trembling limb
And tottering footstep, upward to the

Inner chamber passed; and, lifting up his
Voice, he wept aloud; while as he wept his
Anguished soul woke to words—
"Oh Absalom! my son, my son! would God
I had died for thee!"
Alas! Alas! that thou shouldst perish thus
With all thy guilt upon thy head! thy youthful
Beauty thus forever crushed, in all
The glory of thine early years; and covering
His face with his robe of sackcloth, while his
Aged form swayed to and fro beneath his
Mighty anguish; his loud and bitter wail
Was heard above the victors' shout!
"Oh Absalom! my son! my son! would God
I had died for thee! Oh Absalom!
My son, my son!"

THALIA,
Round Hill, Annapolis Co.

Religious.

Holy Anticipations.

"I am on the bright side of seventy," said
an aged man of God; the bright side, because
nearest to everlasting glory. "Nature fails,"
said another, "but I am happy." My work
is done," said the Countess of Huntingdon,
when eighty-four years old; "I have nothing
to do but to go to my Father." To one old
disciple it was remarked: "I fear you are
near another world." "Fear it, sir," he re-
plied, "I know I am; but blessed be the
Lord, I do not fear it, I hope it."

Such testimonies as these are not confined
to aged Christians. I know of a Christian
in middle life, active, earnest in every good
word and work, who looks forward to death
with positive pleasure, because it will bring
him nearer to Christ; and I have heard a
young Christian say, who was by no means
weary of this world, nor invalid, nor afflicted:
"To be with Jesus is the highest happi-
ness of which I can conceive."
These were not transient emotions in sea-
sons of high spiritual enjoyment and holy
communion, but the constant temper of the
soul, the expression of a life hid with Christ
in God. Doubtless, such expressions are un-
intelligible to all those whose hope and por-
tion is on earth, and perhaps they seem exag-
gerated to many professing Christians. But
they are the natural language of true and deep
piety. Christ is the dearest friend of the
true believer; and any event which brings
him nearer to us, should be viewed with holy
joy. We delight to live, that we may labor
for him; we rejoice to wait his holy will, and
to finish the work which he would have us do
for him on the earth; but it is sweet to look
forward to that time when every evil shall be
removed, when we can serve him without
sin or imperfection, when we can see him
as he is, when we can behold his glory, and
adore him in a manner worthy of his exalted
character and claims.

And the nearer we come, in the course of
nature, to the time of perfect union to our
Lord, the brighter should be our hopes, the
more blissful our anticipations. As years
pass, the number of our friends and relatives
in the heavenly world increases, till the num-
ber of the family in heaven is greater than
that on earth; and as those whom we love are
multiplied in the "many mansions," our souls
should long for their sacred society, and for
unalloyed fellowship with our mutual Friend
and Redeemer.—*New York Observer.*

A solemn thought.

Not many weeks ago, a Sabbath-school su-
perintendent requested the scholars to select
for the concert that passage of Scripture
which they would prefer to carry with them
through life, and to have in a dying hour, if
they could have but a single verse from the
whole Bible. As might be expected, the
concert was one of great interest, and but a
few verses were repeated by all present, show-
ing a great ability of feeling and of choice.
The sweet verse, "For God so loved the
world that He gave His only begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in Him shall not
perish, but have everlasting life," was repeat-
ed oftener than any other, showing that the
soul, in its urgent need, would cling with pec-
uliar tenacity to that assurance of the Divine
love in giving a sufficient Saviour.
At the close of the service the pastor, in a
happy manner, grouped together the passages

recited, showing how perfectly the Bible is
adapted to human wants, giving to every
soul according to its own peculiar yearnings
and fears. He then added, "You have cho-
sen the verses you prefer to remember in life
and death. It is a solemn thought that if you
are lost, and sink to the world of woe, these
very verses you will wish to forget. They
are ones you long to banish from memory, as
adding to your sense of guilt and the pun-
gency of your remorse."

That thought went directly to the consci-
ence of a young lady present. The idea that
she could ever wish to forget such precious
assurances gave her a new perception of the
woes of a lost soul. She could not shake off
the impression; it followed her everywhere till,
by child-like faith in the promises of Jesus,
she found peace and joy, and began to lead a
Christian life.

What a solemn thought for every Sabbath-
scholar, that, if lost, he will be anxious to
forget the Bible lessons he learned, and the
invitations that almost led him to repen-
tance.

The laugh changed.

It is rarely wise for a young convert to
conceal his feelings, even if exposed to bitter
opposition. It troubles his conscience and
weakens his courage to testify for Christ. It
is far nobler to fling out the new colors, and
walk under them quietly but firmly. The fol-
lowing incident is in point:

A chaplain-general once related an incident
of a young soldier who, on one occasion, had
consulted him on a question of Christian duty.

"Last night," said the young man, "in my
barrack, before getting into bed, I knelt down
and prayed in a low voice, when suddenly my
comrades began to throw their boots at me,
and raised a great laugh."

"Well," replied the chaplain, "but sup-
pose you defer your prayer till you get into
bed; and then *silently* lift up your heart to
God."

A week or two afterwards the young sol-
dier called again. "Well," said the chap-
lain, "you took my advice, I suppose; how
has it answered?"

"Sir," he answered, "I did take your ad-
vice for one or two nights; but I began to
think it looked rather like denying my Sav-
iour; and I once more knelt at my bedside,
and prayed in a low whisper as before."

"And what followed?"

"Not one of them laughs now, sir; the
whole fifteen kneel and pray, too."

"I felt ashamed," added the chaplain, in
narrating the story "of the advice I had given
him; that young man was both wiser and bold-
er than myself."

The Casket of Promises.

When a pious old slave on a Virginia plan-
tation was asked why he was so sunny-heart-
ed and cheerful under his hard lot, he re-
plied:

"Ah, massa, I lays flat down on de pro-
mises, and den I prays straight up to my
heavenly Father."
The solvency of a bank or of a govern-
ment gives the value of its notes. So it is
the everlasting faithfulness of God that makes
a Bible promise "exceedingly great and
precious." Human promises are often worth-
less. Many a broken promise has left a
broken heart. But since the world was made
God has never broken a single promise made
to one of his trusting children. He is not a
man that he should lie. When God promises
pardon to a believing penitent here, and the
glory hereafter, he does it in full view of all
the risks that we can possibly encounter.
When he promises to take care of his chil-
dren, he knows perfectly well how much it
will cost him to maintain so vast and neces-
sitous a family.

Men often repeat their promises. In haste
they make them to repent at leisure. In the
glow of to-day's love, or the flush of to-day's
strength, they pass their word, which becomes
worthless as rags when the love has cooled,
or the ability has run to water. But who
ever heard of God repeating a promise? Every
one of them is "Yea in Christ, and amen in
him, to the glory of God."—*Evangelist.*

Missionary Intelligence.

God working in Africa.

A spontaneous movement of heathen people,
at a settlement near Monrovia, Africa, has
been made to our Christian faith and civilized
habits. At the township of Junk, thirty
miles from Monrovia, a short time ago, a
number of natives, convinced of the vanity of
their superstitions, and the superiority of the
life and manners of the Liberians, determined
of themselves to renounce their heathen prac-
tices and conform to a Christian life and hab-
its. They gave up their greogrees and
fetiches, and put away their superfluous
wives, separated themselves from their heath-
en kin, and formed themselves into a Chris-
tian village. Between fifty and sixty adults,
men and women, made a profession of the
Christian faith, and submitted to baptism.
Since their organization they have accustomed
themselves to the observance of the Sabbath,
and held regularly social meetings for prayer,
conference, exhortation, and hearing the di-
vine word.

The singularity of this case is the fact that
it was a spontaneous movement on the part
of these people themselves. From all I can
hear there had been no Liberian agency what-
ever; no exhortation, no preaching by any of
our citizens. It seems to have been entirely
the work of the Divine Spirit acting upon
the hearts of these simple people, according
to the promise, "convincing them of sin, of
righteousness, and of judgment."—*African
Repository.*

Burman.
A whole tribe calling for teachers.—It
will be remembered by the readers of the
Macedonian that at the beginning of the year
1864, Mr. Bixby, of the Mission to the
Shans, undertook a journey into the country
of the Shans, but was obliged to turn back.
Mr. Bixby, referring to his visit northwards
and return, says:

"But I would ye should understand, brethren,
that the things which have happened un-
to me have fallen out rather unto the further-
ance of the gospel."

The remark of the old Geokho chief, Boghye,
"Teach us; we want to hear your
law," was not a mere compliment. It was
the expression of felt want, as subsequent
events have abundantly proved. The whole
Geokho tribe is now calling for teachers, and
Boghye was the first to build a sayat. On
our return, at the suggestion of Boghye, we
took another road, which led through the
northern section of Geokho land, and there-
by visited and gained the friendship of ten
chiefs and their clans.

The Geokhos are living on friendly terms
with some of the Shan chiefs, particularly in
Mobyae and in the vicinity of Ta-sa-na-toung
(the twelve mountains), and I have Negyay's
promise that he will go with me in person to
these places next year. Thus God "is his
own interpreter." Thus He is "making a
way," and making it "plain."

God interpreting Disaster.—Mr. Bixby
reports a most interesting condition of affairs
among the Geokho tribe, and finds a Divine
interpretation of his recent defeat:

The "Great Interpreter" has made it
"plain" to my mind, what he intended by
our sad defeat. His thoughts are indeed
high above our thoughts. Now I have out-
stations stretching all the way through from
Toungoo to Mobyae in the Shan States. The
people all the way are calling for teachers
and building sayats. The Geokho chiefs and
people, feeling that the peace which they now
enjoy, together with the pecuniary benefits
which follow, are in a great measure owing
to my intercourse with them, and reposing in
me, as they do, the most perfect confidence,
all, as with one voice, say, "Teacher Bixby
must be our teacher, and we will learn books
and worship God." Repeated messages had
been sent me; one Geokho, a relative of the
chief of Shwa-nau-gyee, came down and
spent three days with me. He brought mes-
sages from several of the chiefs, begging me
to come up to see them again. It was late
in the season before I was able to do so; but
I have now finished my third tour among
them.—*Macedonian.*