

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. X. No. 38.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1865.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIX. No. 38.

Poetry.

RESIGNED.

When my weary spinning's done
And the shades of eve grow deep,
And by the bright hearthstone
The old folk sit asleep;
My heart and I in secret talk, when none can
see me weep.

Of times the driving rain,
And sometimes the silent snow,
Beat on the window-pane,
And mingle sad and low
With the hopes and fears, the smiles and tears,
a time long, long ago;

Till they act the tales they tell,
And a step is on the floor,
And a voice I once loved well
Says, "Open me the door."
Then I turn with a chill from the mocking wind,
which whispers "Nevermore!"

To the little whitewashed room,
In which my days are spent;
And, journeying toward the tomb,
My companions gray and bent,
Who haply deem their grandchild's life not joyous,
but content.

Ah me! for the suns not set,
For the years not yet begun,
For the days not numbered yet,
And the work that must be done,
Before the desert path is crossed, and the weary
web is spun!

Like a beacon in the night,
I see my first gray hair;
And I scarce can tell aright
If it is from age or care,
For Time glides silent o'er my life, and leaves
no landmark there.

But perchance 'tis for the best,
And I must harder strive,
If life is little blest,
Then not for life to live,
For though a heart has nought to take, it may
have much to give.

And they are old and poor,
And bread is hard to win,
And a guest is at the door
Who soon must enter in,
And to keep his shadow from their hearth, I
daily toil and spin.

My sorrow is their gain,
And I show not by a tear
How my solitude and pain
Have bought their comfort dear,
For the storm which wrecked my life's best hope
has left me stranded here.

But I hear the neighbors say
That the hour glass runs too fast,
And I know that in that glad day,
When toil and sorrow are past,
The false and true shall receive their due, and
hearts cease aching at last.

—Chambers' Journal.

Religious.

Dr. Livingstone and African Missions.

The evidence of Dr. Livingstone, before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, on Western Africa, which has just been published, is, as might be expected, entirely contrary to that of Captain Burton as to the results of missions. The subject is of so much interest that we give the questions put to Dr. Livingstone and his answers as they appear in the Blue Book without omission or alteration.

The Doctor was asked whether he thought it was possible that an English Government could be established in the neighbourhood of twenty or thirty different tribes, and not interfere in their quarrels? His reply was, I think so. The missionaries whom I have known generally make it clearly understood that they will not interfere in any of the native quarrels, and that they will not interfere in the protection of the country; they are looked upon as part of the superior power, and they are not appealed to.

In the case of Lagos and Abeokuta, have the missionaries practically kept out of the native quarrels?—I am not acquainted with Lagos.

What is your opinion generally of the character and influence of the missionaries in Africa?—I entertain a very high opinion of them.

Do you allude to any particular part of Africa?—I know them better in the interior of the South and in Sierra Leone.

Taking Sierra Leone, what should you say has been the influence of the missionaries there?—I think that it has been very beneficial both to the natives and to the English.

What has it done for the natives?—In the first place, the missionaries always promote trade. Some of them think they ought not to attempt the civilisation of the people, and others think they ought; but wherever I have seen a mission established, that mission promotes civilisation and commerce, whether the missionary professes to be anxious to promote civilisation or not.

Mr. Baxter: You mean promoting civilisation by teaching industrial employment?—Yes.

The Chairman: The committee have heard of two systems of missionary work in Africa; one which adopts education and preaching as its means of action, and one which seems to have been carried on to a great extent on the Gold Coast by the Swiss missionaries, and into which agriculture and industrial training largely enter. To which system do you chiefly allude?—One body of missionaries advocates industrial pursuits chiefly, but they never confine themselves to those. The other professes to be anxious only to preach the Gospel, but their influence is directed also to promote the civilisation of the people.—Even though it is not connected with the industrial pursuits?—Even though it is not connected with any industrial pursuits. One way in which they do that is by their example; they show an example of industry, and in that way promote civilisation, without professing to be industrial missionaries.

Do you believe that the missionaries have ever such a command of the local languages as to be able to preach intelligibly to the natives?—I know many who speak the language thoroughly—far better than any natives who have been born in the mission. Mr. Moffatt has been out there for fifty years, and he knows it thoroughly; he has translated all the Bible into their language; he knows it better than any native-born on the station.

Mr. Chichester Fortescue: Which of the native languages are you alluding to?—The Siyuana.

The Chairman: The committee have heard great doubts expressed with regard to the influence of the missionaries in Sierra Leone upon the native character, and we have had evidence that the natives educated in the mission schools are generally disliked; can you account for that prejudice or that opinion in any way?—It is very common to hear aspersions cast on the character of the missionaries; but I account for it in this way: the lives of those men generally are a protest against the evil conduct of many of the men who go out to trade there. I do not wish to say that there are not good men among the traders but a very large portion of them are worthless, and the lives of those missionaries are a sort of standing protest against the moral conduct of the traders. Mr. Moffatt has been labouring with great success in one tribe for forty-three years, and he is exceedingly annoyed by several of the traders who have settled on the spot, and who have attempted to nullify all his teaching, corrupting the natives by their conduct.

Is the character of the missionaries themselves high and unexceptionable?—You find a few among them who are not men of great ability; some of them have been guilty of improper conduct; but take them as a whole, I think they deserve a very high character.

Should you say that their character is improving, and that the class of men sent out as missionaries is higher than it used to be?—When the missionaries were sent forty years ago, it was believed by many men that any sort of man who could read his Bible, and make a wheelbarrow was sufficient; but it was found that that was a mistake, and better educated men are now chosen, and the more care is taken in their selection the more satisfactory are the results.

He that chastiseth one amendeth many.
The charitable give out at the door, and
God puts in at the window.

I must praise more.

It strikes me that we ought to praise more, as well as pray more. I do not know how it is with others, but I know that I have a great deal for which to be thankful, and to praise God. I feel that it will not do for me to spend all my breath in praying. I should thus, it is true, acknowledge my dependence on God; but where would be the acknowledgment of his benefits conferred on me? I must spend a part of my breath in praise. God has been very good to me. Yes, he has exercised goodness towards me in all its various forms of pity, forbearance, care, bounty, grace, and mercy; or, to express all in one word, "God is love," and he has been love to me.

I do not know why he should have treated me so kindly. I have sought, but can find no reason out of himself. I conclude it is because he "delighteth in mercy." I think I shall be able, without weariness, to spend eternally on the topic of Divine love and goodness.

Shall we not praise God? Shall all our devotion consist in prayer? Shall we be always thinking of our wants, and never of his benefits? always dwelling on what remains to be done, and never thinking of what has been already done for us? always uttering desire and never expressing gratitude? expending all our voice in supplication, and none of it in song? Is this the way to treat a benefactor? No! it is not just so to treat him; neither is it wise. It is very bad policy to praise no more than Christians in general do. They would have much more success in prayer, if one-half the time they now spend in it were spent in praise. I do not mean that they pray too much, but that they praise too little. I suspect that the reason why the Lord did such great things for the Psalmist was, that while he was not by any means deficient in prayer, he abounded in Praise. The Lord heard his Psalms, and while he sung of mercy shown, showed him more. And it would be just so with us, if we abounded more in praise and thanksgiving. It displeases God that we should be always dwelling on our wants, as if he had never supplied one of them.

How do we know that God is not waiting for us to praise him for a benefit he has already conferred, before he will confer on us that other which we may now be so earnestly desiring of him? For one who offers genuine praise, there may be found ten who pray. Ten lepers lifted up their voices together in the prayer, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us;" but only one of the ten "returned to give glory to God." The rest were satisfied with the benefit: this one only thought gratefully of the benefactor.

Praise is altogether the superior exercise of the two. Prayer may be altogether selfish in its origin, but praise is ingenuous. Praise is the employment of heaven. Angels praise. The spirits of the just made perfect praise. We shall not always pray, but we shall ever praise. I charge thee, my soul, to praise him, and he will never let thee want matter for praise. "While I live will I praise the Lord! I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."—Dr. Nevins.

The Testimony of Astronomy.

Would you comprehend the idea of the Omniscience of God, remember that the highest pinnacle of knowledge reached by the whole human race, by the combined efforts of its brightest intellects, has enabled the astronomer to compute approximately the perturbation of the planetary worlds. He has predicted roughly the return of half a score of comets. But God has computed the mutual perturbations of millions of suns, and planets, and comets, and worlds, without number, through ages yet to come, not approximately, but with perfect and absolute precision. The universe is in motion, system rising above system, cluster above cluster, nebula above nebula—all majestically sweeping around under the providence of God, who alone knows the end from the beginning, and before whose glory and power all intelligent beings, whether on earth or in heaven, should bow with humility and awe.

Would you gain some idea of the wisdom

of God, look to the admirable adjustments of the magnificent retinue of planets and satellites which sweep around the sun. Every globe has been weighed and poised, every orbit has been measured and bent to its beautiful form. All is changing, but the laws fixed by the wisdom of God, though they permit the rocking to and fro of the system, never introduce disorder or lead to destruction. All is perfect and harmonious, and the music of the spheres that burn and roll around our sun, is echoed by that of ten millions of moving worlds that sing and shine around the bright suns that reign above.

If, overwhelmed with the grandeur and majesty of the universe of God we are led to exclaim with the Hebrew king, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" If fearful that the eye of God may overlook us in the immensity of his kingdom, we have only to call to mind that other passage, "Yet thou has made him but a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over all the works of thy hand; thou hast put all things under his feet."—O. M. Mitchel.

Frozen to death.

Some years ago a prominent member of an evangelical church in an inland city fell into conversation with a clergyman of his acquaintance settled near the seaboard, and urged him to come and be their minister. "We like you, we will make it pleasant for you, and you will have a fine field of usefulness." The answer was firmly in the negative. "But why do you speak so promptly and positively?" "Oh, for many reasons which I need not specify; but one would be enough, even if there were no others. I am not suited to you at all. You have the reputation of being among the most intellectual congregations in our Church. You have a very large proportion of liberally-educated men. A constant demand exists, therefore, for a style of preaching, elaborate, careful, finished and full of vigorous thought, which it is not in my line to produce. I could not meet your expectations, and hence, if the way were otherwise open, this would be an insuperable difficulty."

"Let me assure you," was the reply, "that you are under a very erroneous impression. You are not mistaken as to the character of our people. The prevailing type is as you describe. Professional men abound with us to an unusual degree. But we do not want learned preaching. This is just the error which the worthy man who is about to leave us has committed. His discourses are elaborated and polished to the highest degree, and everything else is made to bend to this one thing. The consequence is that we are frozen to death. Our hearts are not touched, our spirits are not roused. The whole service is intellectual, often severely so. Now this is not what we need or desire. Sunday is a day of rest. We lawyers, etc., are jaded with hard work in our secular employments, and we do not want a new strain put upon our faculties during the hours of worship."

It is to be feared that the case here described is not peculiar, that it not infrequently happens that the intellect is gratified and the soul starved. True, no effort can be too great to be expended upon the work of setting forth divine truth. No spoils of literature are too precious to be laid upon the altar. The wise householder brings out of his treasury things new and old. But after all, the main thing is to affect the heart. If the truth is so presented that the means usurps the place of the end, that the skill of the preacher rather than the subject of his preaching excites attention, that the pulpit utterance becomes more of a display of human ability than a message from God, the chief design of the ordinance is lost. And this is one of the reasons why the most profound and original preaching is not usually the most successful. The hearers are entertained and often filled with admiration, but the whole process is intellectual. The practical, spiritual results are nil.

Nor in general are persons in our day and country altogether pleased with discourses