

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Summer.

"The time of the singing of birds is come."

Merrily rises from nest and tree
Eager song of the happy bird,
Skimming lightly o'er land and sea,
By the summer breezes gently stirred;
They have their songs in the land of flowers,
And we who listen to them have ours.

Cheerily rises the blackbird's note,
The nightingale carols at twilight dim,
Music drops from the skylark's throat,
And the thrush is singing her merry hymn;
But we have songs of a meaning deep,
Songs we are singing when they're all asleep.

Ours are songs which the angel lyre
Cannot learn, as our lips can do;
Born of celestial quenchless fire,
Rising up to the arch of blue.
These our songs are of mighty love,
To the Friend and Father who smiles above.

Songs sing we of redemption nigh—
Songs of heaven and perfect bliss—
Songs of rapture, though friends should die.
Can we have better theme than this?
Even the joy of earth grows strange,
But the love of the Holiest cannot change.

Sing, then, friends, of the happy way
Christ is leading us evermore;
Soon shall we see the brighter day,
Soon shall our wanderings be o'er;
And happier songs than the summer lays
Shall be ours, of high and rejoicing praise.
MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Thoughts on Suffering.

No. II.

BY THE REV. JOHN OUDERS.

I am not an invalid, yet, like many of my fellows, I can say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction." I have witnessed the ravages of the Destroyer in many stages and forms of disease, I have experienced some of them and have calculated for myself the chances of an early dissolution. On looking back, I would not have it otherwise. There is in pain a spiritualizing tendency. It helps to make us realize that there is a Divine Being, and to say with emphasis, "I believe in God!" to draw us off from the earthly, and fix our gaze on the unseen and eternal, to widen our sympathies, so that we feel ourselves a part of the great host who have passed, and are passing through the deep waters. We are prone to forget Him, and nothing so quickly as pain will cause the recognition; we are wont to forget our fellow-creatures, and suffering is just adapted to break up the selfishness, which otherwise might become habitual. I shall never forget the words of a dying brother who had been very successful in business, "I am becoming worldly; my prayers were formal; I felt that I needed affliction, and I asked the Lord not to come in judgment, but in mercy. He has come in judgment, but it is well, I needed this." Yes, my friend, we need these afflictions, and a watchful and loving Father, understanding our wants, deals out according to our needs. Perhaps you remember that this is a scriptural view: "Though now, for a season, it need be ye are in heaviness through manifold trials."

No one has such an appreciation of life and its blessings as the restored invalid. He seems to begin anew, to be thrown back to the days of childhood again. The old feeling of newness is thrown over every thing. The warmth of the fire, the flicker of the light, the sunbeams, the gambols of a child, (Reader! I hope you have a baby in the house—) as well as the murmur of bees, the ripple of waters, the lowing of cattle, are all as fresh as when a boy. Like a child, you stand and feed the chickens at the door; you are helped to the barn, and look with child-like interest on the black colt, and quietly smile as you witness the tangled rush of sheep, following a silly leader. What a fragrance comes from the hay! How beautifully clear-looking are those eggs, which Tommy triumphantly brings from the mow. Every thing is fresh, the dumb creatures look quietly happy, and Nature herself seems to be newly-attired.

I have sometimes felt, in that dawn of joyous repose which precedes full restoration, before again buckling on the harness for renewed contention, that pain is not an unmixed evil, that it is a benefit in many ways,—and chiefly to the soul. Is it not the Psalmist who says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted"? We have thus been taught lessons that we could have learned in no other way. Mr. Beecher has somewhere a remark like this: "As the beautiful figures upon the porcelain are made durable by the action of fire, so the graces of the Christian have been burned in by the furnace of affliction." If you are a Christian you have been glad at these tokens of your Father's love, "for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not?"

There are a great many good people who are altogether too worldly. It is difficult not to become so. We are attracted by the glitter of fashion, and our hearts are set upon keeping side by side with our fellow-men.—Dazzled with the glare of wealth, we make haste to be rich, and fall into many a snare. Buried about the cares of life, modern Marthas must be reminded that of "one thing" there is absolute need. The words of the Book, the voice of the Preacher, passing judgments, the decease of friends seem to be lost upon us. We seem more selfish, more hardened, more formal, and God sends His keen messenger Pain to bring us to our senses. In the writhings of agony, in the prospect of Eternity, we start with horror as our position is clearly defined. Nothing so quickly as personal affliction reveals a Christian man to himself. Nothing so effectually manifests the true nature of the gew-gaws of of earth. In health, we view the world as we would wish it to be in sickness, the vision of the reality. Upon a couch of pain, many a one has said, besides the poet:

Earth's joys are but a dream, its destiny
Is but decay, and death, its fairest form
Sunshine and shadow mixed, its brightest day,
A rainbow braided on the wreaths of storm.

Not a few have risen up with new ideas of consecration to the Redeemer, and have begun to "work while it is day."

THEY OUDERS, July 18, 1867.

For the Christian Messenger.

An evening in the Vestry of the Windsor Baptist Church.

Mr. Editor,—

Presuming that none of the parties concerned will be offended, and believing that what I am about to communicate may be of use to other churches, I take the liberty of informing your readers of the plan pursued by the Windsor Church in conducting its Benevolent operations as learned from the exercises of a meeting I had the privilege of attending with the members of that Church a few evenings ago. This plan was published in the *Messenger* not long since, as the Report of the Committee on "Benevolent Funds," presented before the Central Association. For the benefit of those whose notice that report may have escaped, I would observe that it proposes "that printed slips, properly headed, be prepared, and that in each church a committee be appointed to call on all the members of the Church and Congregation, asking them voluntarily to say what sums they will agree to pay quarterly or half-yearly to the different objects named on these slips, and such sums having been entered under their respective heads, and a slip left with each individual or family as the case may require, that duplicate copies of these slips as thus filled up, be then placed in the hands of efficient collectors who shall quarterly or half-yearly, at the regular time agreed upon, call upon the parties whose names they hold."

The objects embraced in this scheme as adopted by the Windsor Church are "Home Missions," "Foreign Missions," "French Mission," "Ministerial Education," "Acadia College," and "Sabbath Schools,"—the Windsor Sabbath School being intended in the last named.

On the evening above mentioned, after the reading of the 72nd Psalm and prayer by the pastor, he presented a written report of the first year's operations of the church under the plan above named. Although it had been only imperfectly initiated—one purpose of the

meeting being to secure its more general and hearty adoption by the Church and Congregation—still under it nearly double the money of any previous year had been collected.

The Report, after expressing the shame and mortification of its author on listening to the Association letters, from which it appeared some of the wealthiest churches were contributing only the meanness pittance to our Denominational objects, proceeded to a discussion of the great importance of *system* in raising moneys for benevolent purposes. The different objects named in the scheme before the meeting were then separately considered, particular prominence being given to Acadia College, and to its important bearing on Home and Foreign Missions. In this connection the following language, as nearly as I can remember was employed. "If Home and Foreign Missions be important, we think that Acadia College must be regarded as sustaining under God, a very vital relation to their progress in these provinces. We have no sympathy with the process by which men are *manufactured* for the ministry as for the secular professions. But reason and Scripture show that ministers who are called upon to lead and mould public opinion, and combat the ten thousand subtle and erudite errors which are threatening to undermine morals and religion on every hand should not be novices and ignoramuses. We believe in sanctified learning. The most successful preacher and missionary among the Apostles was the most learned,—was the man brought up at Gamaliel's feet. Perhaps nineteenth of the missionary schemes which have blessed the world have had their birthplace in the hearts of pious students. How fervently should our prayers ascend to the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth laborers into his harvest and that all our young men engaged in Collegiate studies might be baptized with the spirit of Missions."

Among the moneys contributed by the Windsor Church the last year for benevolent objects, I perceived from the report that \$85 had been given to the Endowment Fund of Acadia College, that is, twenty-five cents for each member of the Church. This was in accordance with a recommendation of the Convention at its last meeting in St. John.—How easily and soon Acadia College might be endowed if all the Churches were to act upon it. I doubt not, if, in each church, the matter were put into the hands of a few zealous, warm-hearted sisters, it would be attended to. But they can hardly be expected to act when unsystematic, indifferent, and immovable ministers and deacons stand in their way.

After the reading of the Report, short and spirited addresses were delivered by several of the brethren—members of the church.—It would occupy too much space to give even an outline of these addresses. Each was on a distinct theme which had been put into the hands of the speaker by the Pastor.—Among those themes I remember the following:—"The importance of system in raising funds for benevolent objects. Freely ye have received freely give." "The importance of indoctrinating the young in Christian benevolence." "Christ a Home Missionary." "The Church a Missionary Society." "The value of missionary work in promoting the spiritual life and health of the Church." "The relative importance of Acadia College to denominational progress." These topics were ably discussed by the several speakers, and I could not but think that the minister had devised a happy expedient for promoting our denominational enterprises, and at the same time, for developing the talents for usefulness of those under his care.

The exercises were agreeably interspersed with choice music.

At the close the Pastor of the church announced that a similar meeting would be held at the end of six months. When the time comes round, if circumstances permit, I shall endeavor to be

ONE PRESENT.

Fast Asleep.

In a certain town, not far from us, there lives, or rather there vegetates, a most noteworthy man. We seldom pass through the town without seeing him loitering about the railway station. If we go by on the steamer

he is generally leaning against a post on the wharf, and looking out of his idle, dreamy countenance as if he wondered why people should take the trouble to travel so busily, while he had nothing to do but sit still, and save the pounds his old father left to him.—He belongs to the race of the time-killers, and is committing a slow suicide "by inches." Occasionally, as we see him dozing over a newspaper on his shady piazza, we feel like shouting in his ears the sea-captain's trumpet-call to Jonah, "What meanest thou, O sleeper?"

Unless we are sadly mistaken, this man has his counterparts in nearly every church. They are the drones of the Christian hive, with hardly life enough even to buzz. They do not *live* in the grandeur of that word as it applies to such an epic of glory as the career of a Luther or a Wilberforce; they only exist. They lounge at the station-houses and beside the stream of active benevolence, and let human plans go forward, and yet never embark themselves in a single scheme to glorify the Creator, or to save perishing humanity! What is more trying to a pastor of open eye and active spirit than to have the avenues of duty in his church blocked up by such masses of spiritual inertia? What is more provoking than to go to a nominal Christian with a plan of charity, and find his eyes so drowsy that he cannot scan it over, his ears so heavy that one might as well exhort a mummy into activity? And within this slumbering form of professed godliness is a voice that *might* speak out for God and truth, and a heart that might break forth in prayer; and to it belongs a purse that might yield up its "shekels of silver" to the Lord's service. In looking at the idle, listless piety which in times of need and of peril "goes down into the sides of the ship," to sleep like Jonah of old, we often wish for a Gabriel's peal to ring in such heavy ears. "What meanest thou, O sleeper?" What is on every side; woes are on every hand. More than half the world is spiritually famished. Five hundred millions of immortal men have never seen a Bible, or heard of a Saviour. Intemperance is dragging its tens of thousands to death.—Oppression clanks its fetters in every clime. Heathenism is found in the alleys of our cities and under the shadows of our chapels and churches; and every hour beholds hundreds of souls bursting into eternity to meet their doom!

How can a Christian sleep in such an age as ours? when life looks grander every year by the increasing knowledge and extended facilities for achieving great results for God and humanity? when so many harvest-fields of labour invite the sturdy arm and glowing heart? when the wails of a world's sorrow rise on every gale? To lie like a rotten weed along the shore at such a period of earth's history is a fearful crime. Truly it is "a sin against heaven to have no pulse that beats in the palpitations of an age that trembles with the foot steps of an advancing God."

Rev. John Girdwood.

The *Montreal Daily News* of July 10th 1867, contains a notice of a Funeral Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Cramp, at the First Baptist Church, Montreal, on the Lord's Day previous, from which we make a brief extract or two:—

On Sunday forenoon the Rev. J. M. Cramp, D. D., President of Acadia College, Nova Scotia, delivered a discourse in the First Baptist Church, Beaver Hall, on occasion of the death of the Rev. John Girdwood, for several years pastor of the Church when meeting in St. Helen Street in this city. Dr. Cramp gave out as his text John xi. 25, 26, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." After a thorough and able exposition of the doctrines contained in the text, Dr. Cramp closed his sermon with the following remarks:

John Girdwood was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in the year 1809. Of the time, and manner of his second birth, or conversion, we have no information; of its reality, none