

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XII. No. 30.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 1867.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXI. No. 30.

Poetry.

A Dream of Summer.

Bland as the morning breath of June:
The south-west breezes play;
And through its haze, the winter noon
Seems warm as summer day.
The snow-plumed Angel of the North
Has dropped his icy spear;
Again the mossy earth looks forth,
Again the streams gush clear.

The fox his hillside cell forsakes,
The muskrat leaves his nook,
The bluebird in the meadow brakes
Is singing with the brook.
"Bear up, O Mother Nature!" cry
Bird, breeze, and streamlet tree,
"Our winter voices prophesy
Of summer days to thee!"

So, in those winters of the soul,
By bitter blasts and drear
O'er swept from memory's frozen pole,
Will sunny days appear.
Reviving Hope and Faith, they show
The soul its living powers,
And how beneath the winter's snow
Lie germs of summer flowers!

The Night is mother of the Day,
The Winter of the Spring,
And ever upon old Decay
The greenest mosses cling.
Behind the cloud the starlight lurks,
Through showers the sunbeams fall;
For God who loveth all His works,
Has left His Hope with all.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

Religious.

Mr. Spurgeon on Colportage.

On Monday, June 24th the usual prayer-meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, was made for the purpose of bringing under the notice of the congregation the work of colportage, and of soliciting an interest in their prayers. Several earnest prayers were offered for guidance to those who manage the society, and for God's blessing to accompany the agents on their daily rounds.

Mr. J. Goodwin, secretary, then gave a short outline of the history and progress of the association. Letters from the agents were read, describing their work, and stating a few results with which they had been acquainted.

Mr. Spurgeon gave an address, in which he referred to the work of the colporteurs in the time of the reformation. He said:—

The word "colporteur" is an horribly ugly name. It is a French word which I wish we were rid of, for it is an abominable name. I have heard people call it "coal-porter," and they have thought that a colportage society was a society for carrying coals. Well, that is quite correct. It is a society for carrying live coals about, and these live coals set many a place on fire. Still it is an ugly name, and "book-hawker" is not much better. There is no good name for it. It is a sort of unmentionable thing, but still unmentionable blessings have certainly come through its agency. In our own country, since those times, the sale of religious books has always been a main help to the cause of truth. You may be sure that this would naturally be so, because the sale of irreligious books is a mainstay to the cause of evil.

Why how to this day do the Romanists scatter those little books of Dr. Challoner against Protestantism amongst young people, and on the cover it is stated, and very properly stated, I think, by the author, that we ought not to wonder at Romanists giving away books because we are always doing it. They say that the whole reformation was got up through the distribution of books, and why should not they adopt the same means that we adopt for the spread of the truth? Quite right; if they believe their teaching to be right they ought to spread it, and they are wise in their generation to spread it in this way. Think of the infidel publications of England, and what is worse than that—the silly trashy novels, from which people learn all sorts of mischief and which debauch the mind of England—these things do infinite damage, I believe, to people's souls, and the only way by which we can meet the damaging effect of the books is

to scatter good books all over the land. As I have already said, there are large districts where the ordinary bookseller is not within reach, and there are a great number of people who would not buy if there were a bookseller right opposite, but who feel as if they cannot help buying when the man calls at the door and shows the book. I like those colporteurs who sell the most, I must confess. I like them to pray and to teach and all that. That is all excellent in its way, but still to leave the book behind, while it is the best help to the society, is also, I believe, the best help to the house and to the people who buy, but who would not read what is given to them. In Scotland there is a similar society, which was started about twelve years ago by three men and which under the grace of God has so grown that they have now more than a hundred and fifty agents, who go all over Scotland scattering thus the truth as it is in Jesus. Our friends here have got the ambition into their heads of having a society in England as big as that in Scotland. I know they have. They keep that idea rather quiet, but I know they have it somewhere. I only wish they may get it. I will not say I am half afraid whether they will. However, prayer and faith can work wonders, and if they can find friends all over the country, as the Scotch society has done, who will support the agents, why, there is no reason why, without burdening us at home, the work should not go on *ad infinitum*. It seems to be just the right sort of thing to take up. There are many of our earnest brethren who might not do for preachers who might perhaps be scarcely adapted for even wandering about as preachers, but who are just the right sort of men to sell a book, to pray with the sick, to comfort the desponding to guide the anxious, and to lead sinners to the cross of Christ. We do not look for brethren of great oratorical talents, who would make ministers. Of course they would naturally get into the ministry. We want to employ another class of men—men who are quick with a ready answer, who have a love to souls and who are not ashamed to look a man in the face and tell him the way of salvation. I should sometimes like to see the colporteur going from house to house with his forty-pound pack of books, selling as many as he can, and wherever he cannot sell offering a tract; and if wished offering prayer and going on his way again.

Knowing and Feeling.

"Do you feel that your sins are all forgiven?"

"Indeed I do not; but I know they are."

"Now, I cannot understand that. How can any one know it?"

"If you had wronged me and I told you that I forgave you would you not know it?"

"Most certainly; but how can you say that God ever told you that he forgave you? Did you just feel at a certain time something that you thought was God's voice, inwardly telling you that your sins were pardoned?"

"I certainly did not."

"Then how can it be? I have tried to get converted as hard as any man could; I have prayed for grace, for strength, for pardon of my sins, and for the Holy Spirit, and I do not yet feel any difference, and I never could feel as I have heard some men speak about."

"I quite understand you; I was for years in the same condition."

"Then how did you get out of it? I know all about the plan of salvation, about the work of Christ, the necessity of the Spirit; that we must be justified by grace through faith alone, without the works of the law; that the promises are all most certainly secure to them that are in Christ; but how am I ever to know whether I am in or no?"

"I know that you may have heard some Christians say that they feel they are pardoned, they feel they are saved; but this only tends to mislead. It did mislead me, and I have no doubt it is misleading you. These Christians may mean a right thing, but they state it wrongly. I feel happy because I know that my sins are pardoned. Suppose a case. A poor widow has no money to pay the rent of her small dwelling. The landlord comes on the rent-day demanding his righteous debt. A friend steps in, and says to the landlord, 'I'll pay you the widow's rent;' he puts down

the money, and the landlord hands him a slip of paper, on which is written, 'Received from Widow—the sum due, settled,' and the landlord's signature is affixed. The receipt is handed to the widow, and she feels very happy because she knows that her debt is paid. If you were to call that day, and say to the widow, 'Do you feel that your rent is paid?' What would she say? 'Feel it! What do you mean? there is the receipted account. I don't feel that it is paid, but I feel very happy because it is paid.' Now, don't you see the difference? The feeling is all right, but I do not feel my sin pardoned. I know it, and hence feel happy."

"Well, I think I see what you mean, and it clears up quite a difficulty. I am not to examine to see if I feel better, feel saved, feel forgiven, or feel happy; but here is the next difficulty—how am I to know it?"

"I will remember that when I began to try and feel converted, I began to feel worse and worse, and that my heart was getting farther and farther from peace. Then I began to study this and that theological question. I knew all about what Calvinism and Arminianism were,—studied my Bible till I knew its contents very well, till at last I found that I was not on the right track for salvation at all. I was thinking that salvation came *intellect-wise* and not *faith-wise*."

"Well now, tell me shortly what 'believing in the Lord Jesus Christ' is. Of course I believe he is able and willing to save anybody. His atonement is sufficient, and his offer free and full; but how is it to become mine?"

"What is it to believe in a man? What is it to believe in a bank? You don't believe in one who is in the black list,—but you can look around and say to yourself, 'Well, I believe in so and so,' and it is just the same with Christ.—I believe in him, not merely in his historical existence,—but I trust him, I receive I rest upon him alone for my salvation."

"In a word, then, what should I do? I am wishing to take God's way, and willing to take God's way, and willing now to do it.—When I begin to go through trains of thought I feel I get confused, and I should just like to know in a sentence what my path ought to be?"

"Take the lost sinner's place, and claim the lost sinner's Saviour. It was only when I saw this simple plan that I got rest to my weary soul. Before I used to get comfort when I found my heart not quite so bad as before, but now I take comfort from the fact that my sins were laid on Christ,—I do not feel they were laid there, but God says it,—He was wounded for our transgressions.—He is a real Saviour for real sinners. Your only qualification for such a Saviour is that you are such a sinner. And now I believe my sins are not on me,—not because I feel them gone, for that I do not,—but because God says they were on Christ. May God show you the simplicity of his glorious good news, the reception of which gives life."—*British Herald.*

Praying and Trying.

Two little girls went together to school.—One always said her lessons well, and was commended; but the other was always getting into disgrace, because she could not say hers. She replied that she always said her lessons so well. She replied that she always prayed that she might be able to say them well, and the found them quite easy. Well, the little girl thought this was easy enough; she would pray, too, and then she would be able to say her lessons well, and being commended, she did worse than ever, and could not say a word of them! She soon came in tears to her companion, complaining bitterly of her having been deceived. Her schoolfellow heard what she had to say, and then quietly asked her if she had tried to learn her lessons.

"O, no," said the little girl; "I only prayed that I might be able to say them, I thought that was all I had to do."

The next day she tried the better plan of bringing work into her religion, and religion into her work, and she succeeded.

The Bible teaches us that whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God; and it also teaches us that *trying* and *praying* should go hand in hand.

They won't trouble you long.

Children grow up—nothing on earth grows so fast as children. It was but yesterday, and that lad was playing with tops a buoyant boy. He is a man and gone now! There is no more childhood for him or for us. Life has claimed him. When a beginning is made it is like a ravelling stocking: stitch by stitch gives way till all are gone. The house has not a child in it—there is no more noise in the hall—boys rushing in pell-mell; it is very orderly now. There are no more skates, or sleds, bats, balls or strings left scattered about. Things are neat enough now. There is no delay of breakfast for sleepy folks; there is no longer any task, before you lie down of looking after anybody, and tucking up the bed-clothes. There are no disputes to settle, nobody to get off to school, no complaint, no importunities for impossible things, no rips to mend, no fingers to tie up, no faces to be washed, or collars to be arranged. There was never such peace in the house! It would sound like music to have some feet to clatter down the front stairs! O for some children's noise! What used to ail us, that we were hushing their loud laugh, checking their noisy frolic, and reproving their slamming and banging the doors.

We wish our neighbors would only lend us an urchin or two to make a little noise in these premises. A home without children! It is like a lantern and no candle; a garden and flowers; a vine and no grapes; a brook and no water gurgling and gushing in its channel. We want to be fired, to be vexed, to be run over, to hear children at work with all its varieties. During the secular days this is enough marked. But it is Sunday that puts our homes to the proof. That is the Christian family day. The intervals of public worship are long spaces of peace. The family seems made up on that day. The children are at home. You can lay your hands upon their heads. They seem to recognize the greater and lesser love—to God and to friends.—The house is peaceful but not still. There is a low and melodious trill of children in it.—But Sunday comes too still now. There is a silence that aches in the ear. There is too much room at the table, too much at the hearth. The bedrooms are a world too orderly. There is too much leisure and too little care. Alas! what mean these things? Is somebody growing old? Are these signs and tokens? Is life waning?—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

The Editor and his Readers.

The relation of the editor of a religious newspaper to his readers is a semi-pastoral relation. They are a people whose temporal and spiritual interests he sincerely desires to promote, and prays God that he may promote. There is a regular, friendly Christian intercourse between them. He steadily addresses them through its columns on the most interesting and important of all subjects. He brings his mind in contact with theirs as directly as though he preached to them from the pulpit. He works indeed to some disadvantage, in that he has not the aid of a personal presence, or voice, gesture, and a sympathizing audience; nevertheless the words of his pen, put into type, speak to the eyes, and through them to the heart with most potent effect.

We love to feel that between most of our readers such a relation exists: and to know that if what we write is read by all the members of those households which the paper visits, we preach to a larger congregation weekly than any minister in the State. This consideration should encourage those who contribute to our columns, and stimulate others to do likewise. What is thus communicated may by divine grace be of intellectual, moral and religious benefit to thousands. Copied into other papers these articles may be circulating far and wide for the good of the church and the community, long after the contributors have departed this life and gone to a better world.—*Chr. Sec.*

Never neglect one duty under pretence of attending to another: you honor God as much in attending to your calling in a proper spirit, as you do when upon your knees, or in his house.