

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Why stand ye here all the Day idle.

BY REV. W. MORLEY PUNSHON, M. A.

Two fields of labor—the outer and the inner,
Both overgrown with weeds ;
Who to the labor hastes, to be the winner
Of all the laborer's meeds ?

To bathe in radiant mornings, daily spreading
Over the heavens anew ;
To sit 'neath trees of life, forever shedding
Their bounteous honey-dew.

To rouse a spirit, formed from God from slumber,
And robe it for the light ;
The heirs of heaven from clay to disencumber,
Which cloves their upward flight.

To lift a world, 'neath sin and sorrow lying,
And "pour in oil and wine ;"
To warble, in the dull ears of the dying,
Refrains of hymns divine.

Work for a lifetime, in each path up-springing,
In low or lofty spheres !
Hark to the Master's summons, always ringing,
In quick and heedless ears !

Cool brain, strong sinew, heart with love o'erflowing
Shall all in sloth-escape ?
Like vine, which fruitless through its wanton
growing,
Ne'er purples into grape !

The daylight wanes and dies—"Why stand ye idle ?"
Life hasteth to its bourne !
The bridegroom tarrys—will ye greet the bridal,
Or in the darkness mourn ?

Lo ! in the fields the yellow harvest drooping,
Like lilies in the ram ;
Where are the reapers, that they come not, trooping
To gather in the grain ?

Some, in the festive hall disporting gaily,
On slothful pillow, some ;
Some, in delays most blameful, and yet daily
Exclaiming, "Lo, I come."

And some, infatuate, 'mid the alien's scoffing,
Quarrel about their toil ;
As wreckers, when ships founder in the offing,
Grow murderous over spoil.

Meanwhile the harvest waiteth for the reaping,
God's patience hath not tired.
Ye cannot say—extenuate of your sleeping—
"We wait, for none hath hired."

Through the hushed noon-tide hour the Master
callest ;
Ye cannot choose but hear ;
Still sounding when the length'ning shadow falleth,
"Why stand ye idle here ?"

Up ! for a while the pitying glory lingers !
Work while it yet is day !
Then rest the Sabbath rest—where angel-singers
Make melody for aye.

Religious.

Religious Newspaper Publishing.

The following extracts from the organ of the Methodists in Canada, is instructive in many respects, and will show some of the grave responsibilities incurred in publishing a denominational newspaper.

THE CANADIAN CONFERENCE OFFICE.

The *Guardian* of the 24th ult. gives the following report of the action of the Canada Conference in relation to a change in the publishing Office of that Connexion:—

The report of the special committee on the Book Room was read by Rev. Thos. Keough showing a very gratifying increase in the business. The report also set forth that the printing establishment had proved a serious loss to the concern, and recommended that the type and presses be sold, and that the *Guardian*, *Sabbath School Advocate*, and *Banner* be given out to be printed by contract.

The Balance Sheet of the Book Room and printing establishment was read by the Rev. S. D. Rice, D. D. Some conversation arose as to the proper disposition to be made of these reports. On motion, the report of the Book Committee, i. e., the Balance Sheet, was adopted.

The Rev. Dr. Rice then moved the adop-

tion of the report of the Special Committee, and in doing so went on to argue against the continuance of the printing establishment, and in favor of its abolition. He quoted the testimony of the Book Steward of the British Conference, who told him he could not be induced, on any consideration, to connect a printing establishment with their Book Room in the City Road, London. He admitted that if that establishment was in the hands of a practical man, who would go about through the day and hunt up work, he might make it pay ; but of course this could not be expected of the minister occupying that post.

The Rev. Dr. Green was opposed to the proposed changes. He admitted that he had not given very special attention to the subject lately, but from all that he knew he was not by any means convinced that such sweeping changes were necessary or prudent. He thought the committee must be mistaken.

Dr. Jeffers also spoke in opposition to the recommendation of the Committee. He expressed his doubt in respect to the correctness of the deductions and conclusions of the Committee. He was astonished to find that it was alleged that the *Guardian* had been a loss, especially when it was admitted that there was not only an increase in the number of subscribers, but that it had paid more this year than during any year in the past.

The Rev. Thomas Keough defended the Committee from certain implications he fancied he perceived in the Editor's remarks, but admitted there was ground for difference of opinion upon certain points.

Rev. George R. Sanderson had been long convinced that the printing establishment was carried on at a loss. It was impossible to make it pay without the unpleasantness of grinding the employees of the establishment. But this was not the case ; they had the machinery, presses, type, &c., and he therefore was understood to recommend great caution in meddling with the matter now.

The Rev. D. Ryerson argued in favor of the proposed changes. He referred to the course pursued by the educational department and other similar institutions, who had carefully investigated these matters, with a view to conducting their business in the most economical manner. In every instance they gave out their printing by tender.

The Rev. H. Biggar made the point, that if they sold out their printing material they would have to do so at a great sacrifice, and that if they found it necessary to retrace their steps, as he believed they would have to do they could only do so at a great loss.

The Rev. John Gemley thought there would be at least this advantage connected with the adoption of the recommendation of the Committee, which would be to show whether the *Guardian* was, as had been asserted, a loss or gain.

The Rev. Dr. Rice explained that it would have no bearing upon that question. It has nothing to do with the *Guardian*. The things were entirely distinct. The *Guardian* was not a loss to the Connexion ; looking at it fairly it was a great gain ; and if all the work that it has done in the way of advertising for the Circuits, the missionary cause, the Book Room, &c., was taken into account it would prove to be a great financial gain. The reason why it appeared to pay nothing, but rather be a loss, was that it did so much unpaid work.

The report was adopted with a single alteration. The Committee recommended that four ministers be associated with the Book Steward, in the sale of the property ; but was so amended as to substitute the Book Committee instead of the Committee of five.

Upon the foregoing the *Evangelical Witness* remarks :

On a question of this nature there is something to be said on both sides. As a mere question of pay we have no doubt the printing office of the *Guardian* has been a loss, as was stated by the advocates for the sale.

—One thing is certain, a religious printing office, or an office used only or chiefly for church purposes, does not pay, and never can pay in the strictly commercial sense of the word.

Wherefore then is their use, and wherefore the sense of having them ? This side of the question is not all sunshine, as we shall see when it is discussed ; and as the Wesleyans

will find, and as we shall find before the next ten years are over. It is all very well to talk about certain agencies not paying in the Church, but that view of the question is a many sided one, and we fear it the question is to be looked at in all its aspects, some considerable preaching does not pay, nor horse feed, nor chapel building, nor parsonage building nor other church appropriations—in fact, nothing of this kind pays in the commercial sense, but it pays in a higher sense—as a gift to promote the highest interests of humanity.

An incident in a church.

The *Inverness Courier*, Scotland, tells this incident:—

In a parish church on the west coast there is to be seen at present a rather curious and interesting sight—namely, a swallow's nest attached to the cornice of the upper wood-work of the pulpit. The birds having discovered that there was ready ingress and egress by a small movable pane in one of the windows, left open during the summer for ventilation, took advantage of the circumstances to explore the building, and, being satisfied upon the whole with their survey, they commenced their operations with all diligence ; and on a certain Sabbath, when the minister and congregation had assembled, lo ! the nest was finished ; nor did the swallows seem at all put about or greatly disturbed by the presence of the people, the eloquence of the preacher, or even the singing of the psalms which, if anything, one would think, should have startled them. The minister ordered the nest to be left unharmed, and its builders in undisturbed possession of their "clay bigging." In due time a brood of young ones made their appearance, which are now nearly full-fledged, and no doubt will soon, piloted by their parents, pass through the open window-panes into that light and liberty which is the peculiar heritage of the race. On a recent Sunday the minister admirably improved the occasion ; for with special reference to the circumstances, the swallows flying in and out with a homely twitter that made every allusion to them tell with particular force, he preached an eloquent sermon, taking as his text our Saviour's beautiful words—"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings ? and not one of them is forgotten before God ;" and very appropriately concluding with the singing of the verses of the 84th Psalm, beginning—

"How lovely is thy dwelling-place,
O, Lord of Hosts, to me !
The tabernacles of thy grace
How pleasant, Lord, they be !

"B. hold, the sparrow findeth out
A house wherein to rest ;
The swallow, also, for herself
Hath purchased a nest ;
Ev'n thine own altars, where she safe
Her young ones forth may bring ;
O thou Almighty Lord of Hosts,
Who art my God and King."

The people at once took up the reference, and were delighted.

Heaven.

A living divine says : "When I was a boy, I thought of heaven as a great shining city, with vast walls, and domes, and spires, and with nobody in it except white angels, who were strangers to me. By and by my little brother died ; and I thought of a great city, with walls, and domes, and spires, and a flock of cold, unknown angels, and one little fellow that I was acquainted with. He was the only one I knew in at that time. Then another brother died, and there were two that I knew. Then my acquaintances began to die, and the flock continually grew. But it was not till I had sent one of my little children to his God, that I began to think I had got a little in myself. A second went, a third went, a fourth went ; and by that time I had so many acquaintances in heaven, that I did not see any more walls, and domes, and spires. I began to think of the residents of the celestial city. And now there have so many of my acquaintances gone there, that it sometimes seems to me that I know more in heaven than I do on earth."

Remarkable Release.

The Spanish journals publish an account of the release of a captive to brigands, after an

imprisonment of more than two months, under most extraordinary circumstances. At the beginning of January last a wealthy inhabitant of Priego, near Cordova, named Chavarri, aged 78, was carried off by bandits, who demanded a sum of more than 200,000 francs as a ransom. Notwithstanding a minute search made by the authorities, no traces of the missing gentleman were obtained until about a week back, when the Commander of the Civil Guard named Ajona, discovered the mouth of the cavern in which, from information received, he had reason to suppose M. Chavarri was concealed. Taking with him a party of his men, he got himself down by a rope to the floor of the cave, at a depth of about 16 feet. He then lighted a lantern, and, on looking around, saw an opening to a second subterranean cavity still deeper. Ajona now called for aid, and, with one of his men, was let down by the same means to the second cavern ; they, however, found no signs of any prisoner, and were about to abandon the search when they heard some groans from behind a heap of stones at one extremity ; they then set to work, and after an hour's labor, had made an opening to a third cavern, in which they found the unfortunate prisoner, who was then drawn up to the surface with the rope. He stated that he was provided with food every two days, and that he had suffered but little from cold.

Influence of Newspapers.

A school-teacher who has enjoyed the benefit of a long practice in his profession, and watched closely the influence of newspapers upon a family of children, states, as the result of his observation, that, without exception, those scholars of both sexes who have access to newspapers at home, when compared to those who have not, are :

1. Better readers, excellent in pronunciation, and consequently read more understandingly.

They are better spellers, and define words with ease and accuracy.

3. They obtain a partial knowledge of geography in almost half the time it requires others, as the newspaper has made them familiar with the location of most important places and nations, governments, etc.

4. They are better grammarians, for the newspaper has made them familiar with every variety of style, from the commonplace advertisement to the finished and classical oratory of the statesman ; they more readily apprehend the text, and consequently analyze its construction with more alacrity.

5. They write better compositions, using better language, containing more thought, and more clearly expressed.

From these important facts three important things can be deduced :

1. The responsibility of the press in providing literature which is most healthful in tone and understandingly expressed.

2. The absolute necessity of personal supervision of the child's reading by the parents.

3. Having once got a good, able paper, no matter what the price, don't begrudge it a hearty support.

Sudden death—sudden glory.

Three eminently good ministers in England—Mr. Hall, father of the celebrated Robert Hall, Mr. Evans and Mr. Christian—attended a ministers' meeting at Sutton, Leicestershire. After a day of interesting services, they passed the evening together in social fellowship. Among other subjects of conversation, one of them proposed the passage in Job ix. 23 : "If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent." When it came to Mr. Christian's turn to give his views, he spoke with unusual feeling. He regarded the passage as referring to the sudden death of the righteous, and was dwelling largely on the desirableness of such an event, and the happy surprise with which it would be attended, when, amid a flood of rapturous tears, he was seen to falter, and while the words were passing from his lips, he expired, and that "happy surprise" was his own experience.