

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XIV. No. 47.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, November 24, 1869.

WHOLE SERIES  
Vol. XXXIII. No. 47.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### WAITING CHURCH.

BY REV. JAMES SPENCER.

We're waiting for the Sabbath,  
The long expected rest  
Remaining for the weary,  
In the city of the blest;  
Where the congregations gather  
Within the pearly gates,  
And the praise is there accepted  
Which for God in Zion waits.

We're waiting for the sleeping,  
The dead in Christ, to rise  
And brush the dust of ages  
From off their sightless eyes;  
For He hath bid the dwellers  
Of the dust to wake and sing,  
And give a joyful welcome  
To their returning King.

We're waiting for the angel  
Of the morning, clothed in white,  
To draw the sable curtains,  
And admit the holy light.  
We'll then not need the candle,  
Nor sun nor stars require,  
For before the face of Jesus,  
All the darkness shall retire.

We're waiting for the Master,  
Our ear would catch the cry—  
"Behold the bridegroom cometh."  
His light illumines the sky.  
We long to enter with Him,  
And at His feast recline,  
And taste the holy vintage  
Of Christ the Living Vine.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### PEN SKETCHES NO. 15.

OBSTINATE PERSONS.

There are several kinds of this class; without using Latin words to specify them we will refer in plain English to two kinds. There are *wiffully obstinate* persons. Those who have made up their minds to oppose any plan or theory that did not emanate from their side—they *pretend* to see no excellency in the same. "None are so blind as those that won't see." Let a plan be proposed in some church and up starts Bro. Obstinate and at once vetoes it, says it will produce painful results. No matter if the majority carry the matter he pledges to oppose it at every opportunity. It is a kind of dogged opposition—more of the bull-dog element, or pig headed. Then there are those who are *intelligently obstinate*—that is they are conscientious in the avowal of their convictions and not to be easily moved. There comes some with rushing error into a community and some are soon carried away with the novelty and plausibility of the doctrine propounded, but thank God there are those in the community that are not so easily moved. They wait, and quietly examine, and because they do not endorse what *seems* so reasonable they are at once stigmatized as obstinate. "Prove all things—hold fast that which is good" is counsel worth heeding in these days.

JOHN.

### THE SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY OF A GERMAN BAPTIST PASTOR.

"The Seventieth Birthday." This is the title of a well-known poem of the German scholar, Voss, the translator of Homer; a poem that is read in all German schools, and is distinguished as much by the beauty and minuteness of its descriptions, as by the masterly manner with which the celebrated philologist makes use in it, in German, of the old classical hexameter. In this poem one finds the septuagenary asleep, after a good dinner, in the old arm-chair near the stove, while the old lady is preparing the coffee against the arrival of the young folks, their son and his wife, who are riding through the snowstorm on a ledge, intent upon taking the old gentle-

man by surprise, who is to be awakened from his slumber by a kiss of his fair daughter-in-law. It is a perfect idyl.

Far different, but not the less interesting was the scene that opened on the seventieth anniversary of the birthday of a German Baptist pastor who is no longer a stranger to your readers. It there was not much to be seen on that day of those outward comforts described by Voss, yet there was something more noble and glorious. There was not an old man bowed down by age, but a veteran in the service of his God, in spite of his years strong in body and joyful in spirit. There were not a few particular friends only, come to cheer his declining days, but there was a whole church, most of them his spiritual children, full of gratitude and praise that the Lord had spared their beloved pastor so long. I am speaking of the 23rd of October last, the day on which my dear father, the Rev. G. W. Lehmann, of Berlin, finished his seventieth year. Will it interest your readers to hear a little more of a celebration so peculiar and so characteristic of the life and manners of our German Baptist churches?

Well, then the scene opens at six o'clock in the morning, when the choir of the church and a goodly number of the people are assembling in the chapel, that has been decorated in the quiet of the night with garlands and flowers, a silver wreath on the pulpit cloth being the most conspicuous ornament. A deputation of two deacons is now sent down to fetch the pastor from down-stairs, and while he enters and is taking his seat on the platform, some verses, made for the occasion by the writer, are sung by the whole meeting. It is a song of praise. And is there not an occasion for it, when—"the days of our years" have become "threescore years and ten"; when in spite of incessant labours in the vineyard of the Lord "the eye has not become dim, nor has the natural force abated"; when amidst continual journeying on land and at sea "no evil has befallen the traveller?" Is there no cause for praise, when you see on your seventieth anniversary that a work, which you have begun under the most trying circumstances and the greatest opposition on all sides, has not only struck its root deep into the ground, but, like a tree, has stretched forth its branches in all directions, so that in consequence of the formation of this church at Berlin, many other churches have sprung up in Prussia, many a herald has gone forth to proclaim the true gospel, and so many thousands of souls have been saved? And is there no reason for gratitude and wonder, when in a country where dead formalism and infidelity are prevailing everywhere where the laity is so much at variance with their clergy that a murderous attempt could be made on a minister while officiating at the altar in the first cathedral of the kingdom, where in the capital of the very same country you see a church of believers held together by the voluntary principle alone, and eager to show to the pastor of their own choice how much the shepherd and the flock are one, where the word of God has built up a living temple of living stones?

Such must be the thoughts of him who is now sitting at the table of a chapel, which is a monument of all this—a chapel, which is an evidence as well of the indefatigable zeal of him who has collected the funds for it, as of that British liberty and Christian brotherhood, that contributed so largely towards them. The song of praise is ended. Psalm xci. is read. A chorus that has been studied, in order to be performed to-day, is sung, and then prayer is offered by a grey-headed good brother, a deacon of the church. Then follows the congratulatory address by the writer of this report and the answer of my father. Another prayer, another psalm of triumph ("God is our refuge and strength"), and then the members crowd round the table, and express their joys in particular by the shaking of hands and the brotherly kiss. Nor is there wanting a birthday present. A carpet in a room is a luxury not to be found in many German houses. But to-day a fine specimen of it is bestowed upon the

pastor for the floor of his study, and so an expression of the sympathy of the people is given, as great as their poverty will allow.

The first part of the festival is concluded. The second part takes place on the following Sunday evening, when the church has prepared a "love-feast," a celebration somewhat similar to an English tea-meeting, but differing from it in several respects, inasmuch as addresses are not only given by the pastor and the members while tea is partaken of, but hymns also are sung, choruses are performed, pieces of sacred poetry are recited, prayers are offered. It gets very near midnight before the meeting will break up and leave the happy place of Christian fellowship and joy. In his address at this occasion my father stated, as a proof of the goodness and power of God, that while all the friends of his youth and his relations, who have led a far easier life than himself, have sunk into the grave, he has been kept vigorous and strong in the midst of labors and struggles. Another incident that "crowns with loving kindness" this seventieth year of my father's, is the fact that in the course of it a brother of mine, who had been a backslider for a long and gloomy period, had been brought back to his God and Saviour, so that my father has now the happiness of seeing all his six children (two of whom reside in England) gathered in the bosom of the Good Shepherd.

Your readers will see from this account that my father has returned from England. It was with great reluctance only that he has interrupted his important labors of raising funds for some very urgent chapel cases in the German mission. But he yielded to the desire of the Conference of our "Middle and South German Association," who wished him to be present at the opening of our Prussian House of Deputies, in order to be able to exercise all his personal influence in promoting a new petition for rights of corporation, which are so great a desideratum of our German churches. This petition has now been sent up to the Chamber, and will, we hope, meet with a favourable reception. From the tabular list appended to it it appears that in the whole of Prussia alone there are now 51 Baptist churches, with 10,067 regular members, and a congregation of about 22,380 persons; that the members have a church property worth about 183,213 thalers (about £27,000), and that they have raised last year 27,350 thalers (about £4,150) in voluntary contributions. \* \* \* \*

I am happy to say that on the first Sunday on which my father was in Berlin again he found ten believers, who had been converted in the meantime, ready to be baptized in the evening, and that the chapel was very full at the baptismal service. Others are waiting to follow. The project of opening our college at Hamburg for another year's course of study has been postponed a little by Mr. Oncken's departure to the South of Russia, where he is still at the present moment, where he is occupied with the important task of organising churches of the New Testament out of very promising elements. Your readers will see, then, that the work of God amongst us is still in the course of progress. It still proclaims to all its supporters at home and abroad: "Work while it is day." I hope that our friends in England will not forget that cry. I beg especially to send my affectionate regards to those among them who were my former fellowstudents at Regent's Park College.

Berlin, Oct. 27.

JOSEPH LEHMANN.

### ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

A good woman has somewhere made the wise remark, that when God promised to answer prayer, he at least knew quite as much about the laws of nature as did the philosophers. This blow of Jael's hammer certainly shatters a great deal. How God does in his providence answer prayer and yet preserve unaltered the order and course of nature, is a subtle question which has exercised the keenest intellects.

An eminent Christian philosopher has supposed that prayer and its answer may be connected together as cause and effect, with a sequence so subtle that it may be incognizable for ordinary observation, or God may interpose among the physical agents in such a manner that human sagacity may not detect the operation of his hands. Of such a casual connection between prayer and its answer, it may be said that it can never be proved, and of the second hypothesis, that it can never be disproved.—Rev. F. Arnold.

### GAVAZZI TO MERLE D'AUBIGNE.

The approaching Council at Rome is awakening a great deal of consideration. Father Gavazzi writes a very earnest letter to Merle D'Aubigne on the subject, which we find in an exchange. In reference, especially, to Italians, he says:—

I am anxious that you should raise your voice for us, proving with your authority that not to prepare ourselves against the machinations of the Council, is to will our own destruction; and that to prepare ourselves singly, without method and without union is a certain loss of time, and a sure cause of defeat. Let no Christian brethren despise the help of Italy, but let them encourage us by precept and example, that we may be found at our post, all united, in the not very distant day of furious combat. My opinion, since 1851, has always been that whilst Italy, at least for the most part, is not re-Christianized, the Papacy will always have a standpoint from which to tyrannize over the conscience of all the world; from which it follows that whatever the brethren shall have done to arouse and sustain Italy in her return to the Gospel, will be a common gain to the cause of Protestantism throughout Christendom.

I earnestly desire also that you would insist, with your eloquent voice, not only upon the method you have suggested in anticipation of the Council, but likewise upon those which ought to accompany and follow it; because I should be of opinion (and have even proposed it to our Alliance Committee) that during the Council there should be instituted a Christian association for prayers and sermons throughout the world, as in Epiphany week; and if the Council were to last a long time, arrangements should be made for these meetings two or three times a week, at least, during its continuance. At the conclusion of the Council a central committee ought to be appointed of all Christian denominations, who might issue formularies of counter-propositions to any decrees of Councils hostile or irreverent to the Bible, with authority to convene at any time and place the general assembly of all the Churches dissenting from Rome, in which should be drawn up a new protest against her new errors, and a solemn re-assertion of the orthodoxy of all those who stand aloof.

Thus acting, I think that the iniquitous hopes of Mastai's Council would be entirely annihilated, or at least reduced to the lowest possible minimum. At first without doubt, there will be seen a sort of galvanic revival of the dying Papacy; but it will be ephemeral and short, and unable to stand against the firm attitude of the Christian churches united for the common defence.

### "DOES BRAIN-WORK SHORTEN LIFE?"

1st. Our answer to this question is as follows:

No, when performed in a proper way. Yes, when performed in an improper way. Any pupil in school, or any man or woman out of school, who labors more than four or five hours a day at hard study without recreation or relaxation, will find it injurious to health, and to shorten life. But the hardest student may live to extreme old age if he will observe the following rules; of which this is the

First. Mingle labor with recreation. Second. Never study or apply the mind closely, immediately after eating.