

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

"WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THESE?"

"Dear Saviour may I call thee mine"
My friend, my hope, my trust,—
Crumble, whate'er my love divides,
In ruins to the dust.

My Saviour's pardoning voice I'd hear,
His saving power adore,
And feel his kindling love inflame
My own, yet more and more.

My Saviour's cross I'd meekly bear,
Who bore it once for me;—
For me, in shameful agony,
Expired upon the tree.

My Saviour's lowly mind I'd have,—
Ambitious thoughts at rest,—
And following his heavenly ways,
Be with his Spirit blest.

Upon my Saviour's arm I'd lean,
His strength alone I'd trust;
And at my Saviour's blessed feet,
Lie humbled in the dust.

My Saviour's "gracious words" I'd hear,
And mark each silent trace;
Till called to dwell forever near,
And gaze upon his face.

Pastor's Evening at Home.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

OUR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

No. 4.

Two questions are involved in the one, "Is there a field suitable to our circumstances open to us?" One is, Whether there is a field not too expensive for our resources? The other is, Whether there is a field in which we can employ our present means and missionaries?

Both these questions are unfavorably answered in regard to the Burman Mission, even if that field were not pre-occupied. In many respects the Burman Mission is expensive; while Sister DeWolfe, our only Foreign Missionary, is disqualifying herself for that Mission, by acquiring the Karen language.

The same might be said also of the Telooogo Mission. Though in some respects this Mission would be more inviting and more suitable yet the difficulties in the way of selecting this field,—if we adhere to the idea of establishing an Independent Mission,—seems almost insuperable.

These difficulties claim some notice; as the thoughts of some may be already turning in connection with our Baptist Brethren of Canada, to the Telooogo Mission.

If we select this field, however, one of two things must be chosen. Either, we must send our men and money to be employed by the American Missionary Union, and relinquish the increasing hope and desire for an Independent Mission;—Or we must purchase, in connection with the Canada Baptists, the American Union interest in the Telooogo Mission. Against our adoption of the former plan, we have already stated some arguments in a former article, in agreement with which, the sentiment of our people is, I think, advancing.

If we adopt the latter plan, even should the American Missionary Union, and their Telooogo Missionaries, be agreed to such an arrangement, we must endeavor to supplant with the Telooogo claims, our people's interest in their Native Teachers, in Sister DeWolfe, and in those of our own who are now rising up in answer to our prayers, echoing in our ears the Saviour's last Commission, and calling upon us to send them to the Siam field, to the Karen Mission.

Should we adopt this course, and hand over to the American Union, these inter-

ests, as we would have to do; could we replace, for the warm sympathy, and deep interest which we naturally feel for our own begotten,—equally strong sympathy and interest in the adopted Telooogo Mission?

If "things follow their tendencies," then ours, would seem to be, the KAREN MISSION. In this Mission, all the converging lines of Providence seem to meet: Sister DeWolfe is acquiring this language. Several Native Teachers supported by our funds, belong to this tribe. Some of these, doubtless a sufficient number—and those the very cream, or those richest in the Missionary spirit,—would be found qualified and willing to remove to Siam, and engage in an Independent Mission.

Another argument in favor of this Mission, is, its extreme cheapness. The Rev. H. J. Ripley, says "The Karen Mission is the cheapest of American Foreign Missions in the world."

Some reasons for this may be given. Their traditions give them a faint idea of their condition as sinners, and lead them to expect deliverance through the teachings of white men. Hence in many instances they receive the Missionaries joyfully, and eagerly listen to their teachings.

Again their ideas of human depravity,—of many of the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, place them in advance of almost any other heathen tribe or nation, rendering their religious training, even after having been converted, of far less time and labor, and hence of less expense, than that of almost any other heathen people.

Again "The Sgaw Karens, unlike the Nagas, the Garos, the Makirs, and other petty tribes, are a great people, with a well defined language; the Bible, and a very respectable body of religious literature, all ready to our hands." This work involving much labor and expense, would be available for the facilitation of an Independent Mission.

Again, their language is not difficult to acquire.

Another feature of this Mission, is, that, when converted at least, they manifest a great willingness to contribute of their means, toward sustaining and extending the interests of education and religion. Indeed we have it upon good authority, that two thirds of the expense of the American Karen Mission, is now borne by the native Christians.

This fact, when placed in contrast with the apathy of others, when converted from heathenism, contributes largely to the prospective cheapness of the Karen Mission.

Another argument in favor of this Mission, still more forcible, is, its exceeding successfulness. In no Foreign Mission of modern times, has a greater amount of good been accomplished, by the same expenditure of means and labor.

Even the sublime results of the Mission to the Sandwich Islands, falls far below the unparalleled successes of the Karen Mission. In 1823, "the conversion of a Karen slave in Rangoon, first brought Dr. Judson into contact with that people." "Now they have 340 churches with 18,500 members, 350 Native pastors and preachers, and 80 promising young men studying in the Theological School." The Rev. Dr. Malcom sent out by the American Missionary Union to survey the different Mission fields, in order to collect such information as might enable the Board to employ their men and means most successfully,—says, "I know of no other Foreign Mission, that holds out as great encouragement as the Karen Mission."

The Rev. Mr. Norris, a Karen Missionary, says, "God has made our Mission to the Karens, the most successful, perhaps of all Modern Missions."

The question may arise, "If such be the labors and successes of the Karen Mission, is there still an opening for the establishment, among this people, of a separate and Independent Mission?" We answer,—"In the newly discovered territory of Siam millions of Sgaw Karens have never heard of Jesus. Amid the zeal and efforts for the perishing of other heathen tribes and regions, none seem to weep," over the poor wandering and oppressed millions of Sgaw

Karens in Siam. If one of the distinguished features of that religion, the privilege and duty of disseminating which, is entrusted to its possessors, is, that "the poor have the gospel preached to them," and of whose Divine Author it is said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives;" then may we say in the language of the Burman Baptist Missionary Report, speaking of the Sgaw Karens as a most inviting field; "an interesting but every where oppressed people;" "Why should we not hasten to give them the gospel?"

The next question,—and one the consideration of which, most forcibly sustains the decisions of this,—is, "Are there those who are particularly interested in this field, looking to us, and saying, "Here am I, send me."

W. H. PORTER.

For the Christian Messenger.

ABOUT SPECIAL PROVIDENCES, MIRACLES, AND OTHER THINGS.

Mr. Editor,—

Don't you think the readers of the Messenger would better understand and appreciate the controversy being published in your columns, if the writers would explain the meaning of some of the terms they use?

I, for one, should like to know first, what idea is intended to be conveyed by the word "Providence." The word is used but once, if I mistake not, in the translation of the New Testament. I am not quite sure if used at all by the translators of the Old Testament. Then what is to be understood by a "Special Providence" in contradistinction to, a Providence, or, a general Providence?

Then again as to a miracle, what constitutes a miracle? And in what respects, if any, does a miracle differ from a Special Providence?

When your correspondents commence to enlighten your readers by their learned disquisitions as to the existence of Miracles, Special Providences, and the like, it is essential to the right understanding of the controversy to know what meaning they respectively attach to the phrases, and whether they all use them, meaning thereby precisely the same thing.

Milton in opening his grand Poem, Paradise Lost 1st Book, 22 to 26 lines, says:—

"What in me is dark
"Illumine, what is low—raise and support
"That to the height of this great argument
"I may assert Eternal Providence.
"And justify the ways of God to men."

In the closing lines of the 12th Book he says:

"The world was all before them, where to choose
"Their place of rest, and Providence their guide."

In the first quotation, it is not improbable, I think, that the word "Wisdom" as used by King James' translators, conveys an equivalent idea, or nearly so, of the grand old Poet.

Whether "Providence" in the latter quotation was used as a personification for common sense, or for heavenly inspiration, as that phrase is commonly understood, or how otherwise, let each decide for himself. Worcester. Johnson gives the word "destiny" as a synonym for Providence, but I much doubt if that be quite correct. That the word is derived from the Latin verb *Video*, to see, and the prefix *pro-* for, there is no room for controversy, and the literal equivalent in English is therefore to "foresee" and the noun's equivalent is "fore-sight." But then what meaning can be attached to a special foresight? None, I think.

Tertullus the orator, who came down under a special ratiator, to use the language of modern lawyers, in his opening address and accusation of Paul before Felix, sought to propitiate the judge, by declaring "that very worthy deeds are unto this nation, by thy providence;—*pronoias* in the original; *pronoias* is twice used in the New Testament once in Romans 13, chap. 14: there

translated "provision." What they were, the world I believe has yet to discover, and what he meant by "thy Providence,"—Which this Governor had exercised, so that worth deeds had been done to the Jews in consequence, is about as much a mystery to this hour probably as what the writers in the "Messenger" mean by "Special Providences."

I am apt to think that some of your correspondents, who write learnedly about *Special Providences* and *Miracles* &c. have not bestowed quite enough thought and consideration upon the terms, to make the perusal of their lucubrations as profitable and intelligent as could be desired. I may be in error in this respect, but I think it far from improbable, that if they will undertake to submit a clear, correct definition of the term "Special Providence," a goodly number of readers will coincide in my views.

By divine arrangement the good providence of God, I will say, the seasons succeed each other Spring succeeds Winter, Summer Spring, and Autumn Summer. Each has its own characteristics. But now that the science of Astronomy has placed all this in the category of cause and event, as certainly and intelligibly as the results of falling bodies are explained by the laws of gravitation. Why it must be so.

The tide rises high—higher than usual. That is caused by the change, or full of the moon, and the moon's perigee, or propinquity to the earth, occurring at the same time—a result perfectly explicable by induction, and thoroughly understood without resorting for aid, or explanation to any system of *Special Providences*. But then the tide rises higher than was ever known and overflows all the lowlands near its channels.—Well, suppose it does? Was there not an unusually high wind at the time, and as winds act on waves, waters are often blown from their levels and driven in great masses up rivers and basins to account for such a phenomenon. But how, it may be said, is such a wind at such a time to be accounted for? Why atmospheric disturbances are produced by well known causes, such a sudden rarefaction, and the like all intelligible and explicable enough I say by simple induction.

In one sense, as the word is commonly used, we are surrounded with *miracles*. "O what a miracle to man," is man but it is a little too late in the world's history, methinks, for enthusiastic people to put forth in the columns of the press the doctrine that any occurring event they cannot demonstrate or understand, is therefore related to the miraculous.

Persons may be slow to assert that such a thing was exactly a miracle, as the word is used and understood, and so they designate it a *Special Providence*, a kind of halfway house, or perhaps cross, between a miracle and a *General Providence*.

The Almighty brings about his wise purposes by means. Some of them we see and partially understand. Then we say the effect is produced by such a cause. Others not being seen, or if seen perhaps not so well understood as to enable us to explain the matter satisfactorily to ourselves or others—are conveniently described as "*Special Providences*." The tower of Siloam falls, and kills a multitude of people, but other towers had fallen before and will doubt, less fall again, from the same, or similar causes, bad foundations, or unskilful masonry. Elijah prayed, and it rained, but the vapours were collected by the same agencies doubtless as they ever were before, or since and by the universal law of attraction, down they fell in drops to the earth in form of rain.

We may not be able to understand it, but the machinery under the management of the great Architect is all in harmony, and all in obedience to laws, some understood in whole or in part, others not understood by us at all, yet not the less existing, and operating with unerring sequences.

But don't let us mystify ourselves or others, by words either without meanings, or capable of various meanings and constructions. What the canon of revelation contains I believe, whether I can account for