

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XIX., No. 21.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, May 27, 1874.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVIII., No. 21.

Poetry.

SPRING.

BY REV. W. H. PORTER.

Spring comes! I hear her music,
Low murmuring from the hills,
And gushing down along the vales,
In myriad blended rills.

Her light steps touch the mountains,
And roam amid the vales;
Her breath unseals the fountains,
And soothes the boisterous gales.

Her glance beams through the curtains
Of many a reptile's nest,
And lures to life the sleepers,
Like morn on mortals' rest.

Her soft hand weaves the network,
With matchless taste and skill,
Which, for earth's emerald mantle,
The summer weft shall fill.

Her fingers wander over,
The great harp's trembling strings,
Till nature's full orchestra,
In tuneful cadence sings.

And is it thus, from sterile earth,
Frost fettered, wintry earth,
Such charming sounds, and scenery,
At spring's approach take birth?

O, what shall be the transports,
When ransomed hosts shall sing,
Earth's stormy winter over,
Hail! heaven's eternal Spring.

A WORD FOR THE LOWLY.

BY REV. JOHN CLARK.

If you cannot sway the masses
By your eloquence and skill,
And with lofty thought and feeling
Move and lead them at your will;
You can speak a word in season
To the weary and distressed,
And inspire a ray of comfort
In some lonely mourner's breast.

If you cannot lead to battle,
Hosts of warriors, strong and brave,
And o'er conquered towns and cities
Make the flag of triumph wave;
You can conquer evil passions
Which, at times, will rise within,
And by earnest prayer and effort,
Gain the victory over sin.

If you cannot rule the nation,
Or advance its glorious cause,
And in parliament and senate
Make or modify its laws;
In your lowly sphere of labour,
Living as for God alone,
You can be as truly happy,
As the King upon his throne.

If you cannot feed the thousands,
As the Master did of old;
Or to needy friends and neighbours
Give your silver or your gold;
You can tell of One whose mercy
Never fails in time of need;
And by kindly words and actions
You may prove a friend indeed.

If you cannot boast of treasures,
Large estates or rolling wealth,
You, perhaps, can bless your Maker
For the greater boon of health:
You, through grace, can claim a mansion
In yon City out of sight,
And, on promised strength depending,
You can always do the right.
—Eyes, Suffolk, G. B.

THE END OF LIFE.

We shall come down to the time when we have but ten days left, then nine days, then eight days, then seven days, then six days, five days, four days, three days, two days, one day. Then hours,—three hours, two hours, one hour. Then only minutes left,—five minutes, four minutes, three minutes, two minutes, one minute. Then only seconds left,—four seconds, three seconds, two seconds, one second! Gone! The chapter of life ended! The book closed! The pulses at rest! The feet through with the journey! The hands closed from all work! No word on the lip. No breath in the nostril. Hair combed, to lie undisturbed by any human hands. The muscles still. The nerves still. All still. You might put the stethoscope to the breast and hear no sound. You might put a speaking trumpet to the ear, but you could not break the deafness. No motion. No throb. No life. Still! Still!—Talmage.

Religious.

BAPTIST ANNIVERSARIES IN LONDON.

April and May are the season for the great religious festivals in the English metropolis. The various denominations, by common consent, hold their general assemblies at this time, and it becomes a most convenient arrangement, enabling the ministers and brethren to come from all parts of the country and participate, and visit each others' anniversaries, this arrangement thus facilitates fraternal intercourse, promotes fraternal feelings and helps each others' joy.

The appointments in the old Jewish economy for all going up to Jerusalem for the observance of the three great festivals seems remarkably adapted to promote needed stimulus for religious organization. Under the christian dispensation the same principle has its development in the annual gatherings at the great centres in the different countries of Christendom.

These May meetings were originally in connection with the more modern Foreign Missionary Societies, but now embrace other objects of a kindred character. The Baptist Foreign Missionary Society being the earliest formed it is conceded to that body to lead in the holding of their anniversaries. We have pretty full reports of the speeches in our English exchanges. The *Freeman* says:—

The Baptist Union began its session with a long-continued and very earnest devotional service. We have never before seen so large an assembly to hear the chairman's inaugural address. The gallery was crowded. Ministers and delegates were there in considerable numbers, and the meeting was most enthusiastic throughout. In a few happily chosen and gracefully complimentary words Dr. Underhill introduced the Rev. Charles Stovel to the session, and the ringing cheers of the brotherhood were so many hearty welcomes to the chairman. Mr. Stovel was much affected by the reception. It almost unmanned him, and the tremulous emotion it excited imparted a characteristic tone and manner to the reading of the address. No reader can fully appreciate this year's inaugural. It was like the man, to be seen as well as heard to be understood. The intense interest of the speaker in his theme, his impassioned delivery, the nervous energy with which he spoke, and the flashes of oratorical genius which so frequently, notwithstanding the reading, lighted up and fired the more remarkable passages cannot be reported. The address should not be compared with any other that has been delivered from the chair of the Baptist Union. It is, as its author, altogether unique. We do not care to criticise it. As the Rev. S. Green remarked, there are passages which challenge contradiction, and now and then, statements and arguments looked in the direction of consequences and conclusions to which not a few Baptists demur. But the theme—a loyal acceptance of the authority of Christ the one bond of union among Christians—is so lofty and apt; the spirit of loving yet unflinching fidelity to the Master which was breathed and expressed in almost every sentence; and the happy combination of individual faithfulness to the Lord with the love of the brethren, which is one of the excellencies of Mr. Stovel's "word of exhortation," so commend this year's inaugural to our heart and conscience that, without reserve, we ask for it a careful and devout study. "What is the chaff to the wheat?" He who will may discover chaff, and we wish him joy in the discovery—we prefer to gather the wheat and store it, and of good ripe grain there is plenty in the address before us.

Amongst the strangers present were the Revs. Dr. Olmstead, editor of the *Watchman and Reflector*, of Boston, U. S., and Dr. Cote, of the American Mission in Rome.

It might be interesting to many of our readers to have a photograph of the man elected to preside over this great denominational organization. The editor of the *London Baptist* draws the following pen-picture of

MR. STOVEL AND HIS EARLY SURROUNDINGS.

Mr. Stovel was born in 1799, in Southwark, London, and is now, therefore, in his seventy-sixth year. He spent his youth in trade, but having evinced rare powers of mind and heart, he was induced to turn his thoughts to the ministry, and after careful and conscientious home study, he entered—by the advice and assistance of his pastor, Mr. Dawson, of Staines, Middlesex—Stepney College, and went through the prescribed course of training. A clever essayist has divided mankind into pokers and willow-wands; and if the classification be admitted, there can never have been any doubt in the mind of even the most vacillating as to which category would include the name of the Rev. Charles Stovel. For men without any moral backbone, he has ever evinced an undisguised contempt, and the "rugged" and the "gnarled" were perhaps not more often met with in his pulpit vocabulary than suggested to more casual observers by his own sturdy individuality. On leaving Stepney College in 1826, Mr. Stovel settled at Swanwick, Derbyshire, whence he removed to Prescott-street, Goodman's Fields, entering upon his stated ministry there on April 1, 1832. Those times were far removed from those degenerate days of twenty minutes' sermons, and the gifted and ardent preacher was certainly not one who was ever given to stint in this direction. He gave his hearers full measure, piled up, sometimes running over, and we have a very lively remembrance of being stowed away, as was the custom then with Sunday scholars, in the queer, old straight-backed pews of the gallery, and trying to keep awake as best we might, until, as not infrequently happened, the rattle of the passing train told us that the quarter to one o'clock was passed, and the end could not be far off. We can recall, too, something of the mental anguish experienced on one occasion when, on waking in a dim corner into which we must have accidentally slid, we found preacher and people alike gone; and the old chapel looking more grim in its solemn, menacing loneliness, than we had ever known it before. Happily, our cries brought to the rescue the good old saint, long since gathered to her rest, who we for years had named the "Black-satin Lady," from the stately rustle of her imperishable dress. There are but comparatively few directly connected with the church now who communed with it then; death has claimed many; others sought homes in distant lands, and they or their families are now known as the active and useful members in the Baptist churches of the various colonies and the New World. Looking round the assembly on Monday, we could notice many faces honourably known to the denomination, who received their earliest religious training at the feet of the "old man eloquent."

At a meeting of his church, a few years since, Mr. Stovel gave some interesting particulars of his early life and struggles. "It pleased God," he said, "at an early period of my union with the church to give me a sort of inspiration. I had heard of the mutineers of the Bounty, and of their occupation of the little island of Pitcairn; and I thought, boy like, that I could tell these thirty or forty people of that Jesus whom I loved, and I wished my pastor to join and send me there. He said, 'No, we cannot spare you for that'; and I was sorry. I was, by my pastor's advice and introduction, led to the Baptist Missionary Society, and offered myself for service there." Mr. Stovel, like others who have since risen into note, was rejected; but it was not long before the way was opened for him to enter Stepney College.

On commencing his London ministry

Mr. Stovel kept his pen as busy as his voice—his "Letters on Christian Baptism," "Hints on the Regulation of Christian Churches," "Lectures on Puseyism," and on "Christian Discipleship," with his "Baptismal Reconciliation," the rejoinder to Dr. Halley's addresses, being amongst his principal writings.

We should be pleased to give the Inaugural Address in full, but must content ourselves with an extended synopsis. The subject of that valuable document, "Christian Union," was probably suggested by Mr. Stovel being present and participating in the session of the Evangelical Alliance held in New York last year. No subject could be better adapted to commence a session of the Baptist Union than that of Christian Union. He began his

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

by saying:—
"Union, when organised in obedience to God, procures increase of power in all that He ordains. Assurance of it induced the labour and encouraged the hopes of brethren in this society from its beginning. They entered upon the work as learners and servants of the Christ whom God ordained; and experience not very limited now has led them to desire no more honourable or advantageous designation amongst the fraternities of mankind. The responsibilities thus accepted in this Union make its members thankful for simplicity in its constitution. Learners and servants under Divine authority enjoy immense advantages over all who presume to legislate for themselves. Christ, when embraced as supreme, will make stability combine with progress and the unfolding of eternal truth. Men who profess perfection in knowledge with infallibility of judgment, while guarding their creeds by limitations of their own contriving, prepare for themselves perplexity. Learners at the feet of Jesus are assured of His direction in present duty; clearer revelations of His mind bring only joy to them; and when operations in His kingdom extend and complicate beyond their thought, they can be earnest and peaceful notwithstanding, because He can never be mistaken, nor withhold from them His guidance and support. (Hear.)

Obedience to Christ the only true basis of union.—These principles, when properly revered, confront and reprove uncharitable imputations. Careful obedience has provoked the charge of sectarian exclusiveness; but this trial should only induce more careful wisdom and watchfulness. Faithfulness in a steward is not really a disgrace; it intensifies his union to the faithful Lord. Faithfulness, moreover, is not perfect without love; but loving faithfulness is cheered in Christ with blissful hope; its conflict, if severe—which it may be—is destined to recover the truth which men have been permitted to abuse. Not one religious sect exists which does not live by joining its favourite dogma to revelations which God has given for far nobler use. These partial submissions to portions of the truth, indicate not obscurely by their results the righteous claim of Jesus to unlimited command. The Christ of God must rule wherever God Himself maintains His throne. Moral power, even to catholicity, and to more than so-called catholics appear to have imagined, righteously belongs to our Redeemer, not in theory alone, but in experimental realisation and judicial effect. Those who do His will completely and exclusively are, indeed, the only real catholics that exist. When Christ ordains His bishops and their discipline, Episcopacy will emerge from the corrupting cant which has so long disgraced that ancient ordinance. Churches in which He presides will have freedom without licentiousness, and order without tyranny. His next head was,

Our basis authorised and defined.—Brethren, this rule of our fellowship is not unauthorised. God, who withheld not His own Son, delivering Him up for us all, said, "Hear ye Him." The

call to follow Jesus came from heaven, and heaven only knows as yet what consequences hang on the obedience which it claims. That call may lead to humiliation, such as He embraced; to sufferings like those which He endured; to shame which He despised; and even to death, which He conquered—such possibilities of service may also create alarm in mortals; but the order, "Follow Me," supported by the commandment, "Hear ye Him," retains its force with its just endowment; it excites the soul which it subjugates; it lifts the man to oneness with his Lord; it draws forth pure and self-devoting love; it points though sufferings to a joy that charmed the Saviour—a joy which fixed His purpose, unveiled His wisdom, sustained His constancy, and leaves for obedient sinners now the blessedness of His great redemption. Our Union, therefore, is based on nothing frivolous—the faith which finds these treasures in the Christ appears, first, in the admission of His truthfulness; it then advances to a personal trust in His sufficiency; this grows to obedience and admiration. The whole man is there captured by the love which God reveals in Christ.

Christian Union and the New York Conference.—To declare the fact, the nature, and the value of Christian union, formed the object of a conference held but recently by witnesses from many lands. No former convention of the Evangelical Alliance will bear comparison with that of New York in 1873. This Baptist Union had no official representation in that conference, as far as I know; but its aim and interests were promoted there beyond all expectation. The moral power to be obtained by only an advance towards Christian union, was forcibly illustrated; the simplicity of the requirements and the value of its results were placed beyond dispute. The principles on which this Union has acted, from its beginning, have thus gained a sanction where it was least expected, and, furthermore, from those who scarcely yet desire the reputation which is, justly, due to their performance. From well-selected positions, the enemies of our Gospel, and of the faith by which it is received, were met, and rolled upon each other in happy preparation for a general defeat. (Laughter.) Baptized believers are, especially, bound to grateful remembrance of the service done for them in the Conference of New York. The efforts there made to explain the basis of Christian union led to a result which cannot be to highly valued. The pleadings of brethren there show the universal value of the truths we hold in trust, on which our union stands, and on which its members look, with patience, for the reward of faithfulness. Our advocates in the conference advanced still nearer to the truth on which we live. We pretend not to create unity; certainly not by artificial ligatures, but to testify to that which exists already. God is one; the Redemption of Jesus Christ is one; the body of Christ is one.

The unity of faith and life, is a clear advance on unity resting upon dogmas and creeds of any kind. It is not an effect of ritualistic formalities. It is the action of a soul drawn forth towards God by that which God reveals.

To be owned of God in the dominion of His love is a gift which comes from God alone; but witnesses to that sovereign work of grace must be confessed before their testimony is admissible. The men who would not own their faith in ancient time had, therefore, no commendation from the Lord. Their faltering in the open and social act of faith was fatal to its fellowship as to its testimony; it is walking in the light, as God is in the light, that saints have fellowship with each other. (Hear, hear.) Why the advocates in New York should stagger at this point could not be ascertained. They prove that faith is indispensable; for communion without confidence is a sham, if nothing worse. Why this should be maintained with reference to God, and