

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XIX., No. 37.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, September 16, 1874.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXVIII., No. 37.

## Poetry.

### SABBATH DAY WITH CHRIST.

How still the restless world has grown!  
How fair its outward face!  
This footstool of the eternal throne  
Shines with a royal grace.  
The heavens smile in celestial calm;  
The air is sweet with wondrous balm,  
Earth is a holy place,  
My soul is solemn rapture waits  
The unrolling of the eternal gates.  
Oh! not on far unmeasured heights  
The walls of Jasper glow,  
So near the pearly door invites,  
That angels come and go;  
I feel their presence, all serene  
With heavenly port and radiant mien,  
They walk with us below;  
And One above the seraph's sphere  
Reigns with more glorious presence here.  
O Sun of the eternal day!  
O Star of mortal night!  
How deign'st Thou on our earthly way  
So to reveal Thy light!  
O King of the crucified, for whom  
This little world had lack of room,  
How stoop'st Thou to our sight!  
Earth is transfused with Thy gaze,  
And life transfused to love and praise.  
If such the glory earth may wear  
When Christ unveils His face;  
If angels, by the golden stair  
Their red and purple trace;  
If joy to rapture soars, and sings  
Her Sabbath song with heavenly things,  
From such a holy place,  
What must the eternal Sabbath be  
Before the throne, O Christ, with Thee!  
—E. Elizabeth Lay.

## Religious.

### SOME MINOR VIRTUES.

A Lecture delivered before the Ministerial Institute of N. S. and N. B., of Portland, St. John, N. B., Aug. 26th, 1874.

BY REV. D. A. STEELE.

(Published by request of the Institute.)

While others dilate upon the higher themes of Christianity, like the poet Cowper, "I sing the soft." It is my province to descend to lower grounds, — to keep upon the plane of actual life.

It may be objected, that it is beneath the dignity of a body of learned and pious men, at such a time, when themes of transcending import might be discussed, to bestow their attention upon a topic apparently so trifling. Yet, even here, it may be well to remember that religion has not only its roots, but its out-growth, its blossoms, and its fruits; that we are not only to consider its grand doctrines, the framework of the edifice, but may spend a little time in contemplating what may be termed its *finish*, to behold the adornments of Christianity, which spring from the complete exhibition of its principles by those who profess its precepts.

It is, perhaps, necessary to refer to the word *anastrophe*, which embraces the main idea of this discussion, and which was in general use by the apostles, as will be seen by a reference to the following passages of the New Testament: — Galatians i. 13; Eph. ii. 3; iv. 22; 1 Timothy iv. 14; Hebrews xiii. 7; James iii. 13; 1 Peter i. 15, 17, 18; 1 Peter ii. 12; iii. 1, &c., &c. Translated in the authorized version "conversation," but by the Bible Union, "deportment," "walk," "conduct," &c., according to context.

Manner-of-life—*anastrophe*—is the great argument with the multitude. The only Christian evidences most men read, are the evidences manifested in the lives of the Christians who are around them. "The Christian is the world's Bible," it has been said. In vain do we of logical proclivities cry out: "This is illogical." Vainly do we ask the world to judge Christianity on its merits as a system. They have not time, for one thing, no inclination, for another, to consult first principles. Perhaps we,—who with all our logic, are very much impressed

by practical illustrations,—should make allowance for those who are thus affected by the actual workings of a system. After all, have we not the highest authority for saying: "The tree is known by its fruits." A student once preached a sermon describing very eloquently the ideal Christian. Riding homeward with a brother who was a business man and a capital specimen of a Christian, he remarked:

"You preachers describe the Christian of the Bible, not the real one;" and he proceeded: "A man said to me the other day,—'Your Christian business men are a hard lot; they drive tighter bargains than anybody else.'"

In treating this matter, I shall not be able in the short space allotted me, to deal comprehensively, nor on the other hand to dwell minutely upon the points which may suggest themselves, but shall rather touch upon some things that are included within the range of the general subject: Some minor points of the scheme of Christian manners (*mores*.)

It is the boast of the Baptists that they proclaim the radical doctrines in their simplicity, that they keep the ordinances as delivered, and follow the practice of the apostles in its simplicity. The regeneration of the sinner by the Holy Spirit, the justification on the ground of the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, the baptizing of none but believers, the administration of the Lord's Supper to none but the baptized in their church-capacity, are the main points of our belief, as contradicting us from others. But there is, at least as far as my experience goes, a deficiency in setting forth the works and virtues demanded by the gospel. We betray an over-cautiousness in insisting upon works and duties, lest we should in any measure invalidate the salvation by grace. We are like good Dr. Gill, who is represented in his portrait with nose slightly turned upwards, to show, as Spurgeon wittily remarked, that "he hated even the smell of Arminianism." The apostolic epistles commence with doctrine, but they always end in practical admonitions for the conduct of every day life. So in preaching and teaching we should insist upon this other side of the gospel, even treating of those points which may appear trivial. The apostles were wise men writing by inspiration, and spoke for all time. So that what they wrote concerning these things to the churches at Rome and at Corinth could not have a merely local significance. When it is said, Rom. xii. 10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another," or when the apostle writes to the Galatians, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness," we take it, that the same is true for us in North America in the 19th century as for those of Rome and Galatia in the first.

Rightly, in all our discourses, the greatest prominence is given to *faith in God*. But should there not be a proportionate stress laid upon the necessity of keeping faith with our fellow-men? of being faithful in every relation in life? It may be insisted, that Faith presupposes and includes the virtues, and that its possessor will certainly manifest them. Well, Faith ought to be the mother of all excellence of character. But as a matter of fact, there are a great many Christians whose views are lax, and whose practice adverse to the teachings of the Saviour and His apostles. There are many who do not seem to consider the precepts regarding the necessities of the Christian life "Be courteous," "Comfort the feeble minded," "Be long-suffering toward all."—1 Thess. v. 14. There are those, too, who cannot see the distinctions between the various kinds of crime; for example, that adultery is a greater crime than others. Stealing is just as much a sin therefore no greater punishment is demanded. Sin is sin, and there the matter ends. Without arguing the point, I quote a very apt remark from Spurgeon's Comm. on Ps. xix. 13,

"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins!"

"It is wrong to suppose that because all sins will condemn us, that therefore one sin is not greater than another. While all transgression is a greatly grievous and sinful thing, yet there are some transgressions which have a deeper shade of blackness and a more double-dyed scarlet hue of criminality than others."

Robert Hall says in his Preface to *Modern Infidelity*: "Betwixt vice of every sort and in every degree and the religion of Jesus, there subsists an irreconcilable enmity, an eternal discord."

The grosser crimes, licentiousness, theft, drunkenness, are by common consent amenable offences. It is unamenable ones that go far to negative our influence. Once shave a man, and your religious ascendancy over him is gone. But a man may be upright in his dealings, and an irreproachable member of a church, whose manners may be so bad as to shock people not over sensitive. We have seen men whom we believe to be Christians, whom we as firmly believe to be moral hedge-hogs, whose crabbed ways utterly nullified any influence for good. Jack Blunt is no doubt a very estimable fellow—in his own esteem—but will be shunned as much as possible by others. He who prides himself on his plainness of speech is often a man of little feeling himself and regardless of the feelings of others.

In reference to the truths of the Bible we have no option; we must deliver them as they are revealed. We must reprove, too, and rebuke wrong doing. But even this is to be done in a right spirit. It does not need that a man should be rough or boorish in rebuking the imperfections of his fellow-sinners.

We would especially insist upon the necessity of delicacy in dealing with others. If older, let us remember the respect due to age for its own sake, as well as for the experience which age brings with it. If younger, we should make allowance for the impetuosity of youth, and also bear in mind that young people are sometimes wise, that the world's battles are fought by young men, and that therefore the old and young are bound respectfully to consider the projects that may emanate from either. Then, as between brother and brother there should always be respectful attention to opinions, however widely differing, and the best possible construction of each other's motives. "Ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder, Yea, all of you submitting to one another, be clothed with humility"—as slaves put on the long coarse frock or apron, the badge of service (*egkombosathe*), so put on the lowly garb of humility.

### LIABILITY TO MISSTATEMENT AND OVERSTATEMENT.

It is scarcely credible how many of us are laughed at, owing to an undue use of the faculty of rhetorical exaggeration. There must be more or less use of color in all public speaking that is attractive. Bare recital of facts, and rigid elucidation of truth will soon compose to slumber even the soundest of deacons. But it is hardly necessary to affirm and asseverate as we sometimes do, that God Almighty is indubitably on the side of every little idea that takes possession of our craniums, and perhaps it is unwise to make a public statement, as a minister is said to have done, that he felt so sure that the Lord was calling him to a certain country that he would start even if he knew he would sink to the bottom of the ocean in reaching it!

'E'en ministers they have been kenne'd  
In holy rapture;  
A rousing wind at times to vend,  
And naid 'twit Scripture."

Let us beware of falling into the error of the good brother, who when rebuked by his brethren for his undue display of this faculty, replied, "Well, brethren, I know it, and I have shed barrels of tears over it."

These are extreme illustrations; but are there not occasions when every public speaker feels that he has been

carried beyond the bounds of truthfulness, to such a degree, at least, as to weaken his position as a public man, and to take away the fine edge from that confidence which must be reposed in him who undertakes to lead men?

I speak not now of the hurt a man does himself, of the weakening of his perceptions, of the blunting of some of the finest sensibilities of his nature, which inevitably follow any distortion of the truth; but merely point out the loss of influence—a thing very dear to any man—sustained by him who allows his tongue to run riot even in a pulpit.

### RETICENCE AS TO THE FAILINGS OF OTHERS.

Included somewhere within the realm of christian virtue is the thought that men should be reticent as to the failings of their fellows. It seems to be a weakness of average human nature to be exceedingly blatant in reference to folly. The tongue of man itches to utter what the ear has heard to the disparagement of another. Oftentimes it is a mere impression of a failing, rather than any actual one. But the impression has gone forth, colored with the hue of each medium through which it has passed, and thus an ever-growing wrong has been done to an innocent man. Or, it may be that the failing is a reality. Would it not be better to be silent about it? Our talk over the blemishes and weaknesses of others, never tends to edification. It injures two parties, him who is spoken of, and those who dwell upon his foibles. A man who harps upon the meanness of others will himself inevitably grow mean. A left handed way of damaging a man is to give him a good name, and then throw in one qualifying expression, which will neutralize the whole. Suppose I go to my neighbour's shipyard, and after inspecting the barque nearly ready for sea, I express my approbation of her model, build and rigging: "Yes, a beautiful ship, but she is not fit to go to sea; she'll never cross the Atlantic." Even so do men in speaking of one another. Did the Apostle James mean anything when he said "Speak not evil one of another, brethren"?

### GIVING TO OTHERS THEIR DUE.

A still finer shade of this infirmity of our natures is the difficulty of acknowledging the merits of others. Even where there is confessedly strength of nature, and results to show that there must be positive genius, how slow we are to acknowledge it, how chary of our applause! If ever we get into the mood of praise, it is so faint that it is questionable whether it is not injurious. A gentleman, having heard Dr. Wayland, coolly remarked: "That Wayland has some mind!" After Spurgeon has sustained himself for twenty years in the most important position in the metropolis of the world, after building churches, founding a college and an orphanage, and superintending them, publishing many practical religious works which are read everywhere, and among them the best people's Commentary on the Psalms extant, besides being pastor of the largest church in christendom, men are found who are willing to acknowledge that there is something in him! Now, I say, brethren, this sort of thing is not fair, and Christians should rise above the petty feeling which withholds a full meed of praise from those who deserve it. Indiscriminate eulogy may now and then puff one up, to the point of explosion, but where is one such case, there are many who suffer for lack of encouragement. When we see one doing a good work, let us give him the credit of it. Don't let us be forever trying to find some way in which to account for his success, short of attributing it to his own ability. Honor to whom honor—even if we are eclipsed.

### JUDICIOUS ENCOURAGEMENT.

I wish to devote a few lines to a virtue not generally spoken of by sages, and perhaps not at all included in the category of philosophers; to wit: *The virtue of judicious encouragement.*

Whenever in a country so blank of genius as ours, there is discovered talent of any kind, it should immediately receive a recognition. It may be that the young man who seems afflicted with a plethora of language, may in time

become so depleted as to present quite a respectable appearance. Those who have become famous, have in their younger days, been noted for an exuberance of diction, not always in keeping with the rules of rhetoric. Flowers and poetry are rather good auguries, for there has sometimes lain beneath these manifestations a royal imagination. The usual course is to look grudgingly on, to be captious, to criticize unmercifully, to sneer, and sometimes to snub. Many a young fellow would have benefitted immensely if an elder brother had attempted to suggest, or tried to direct his blazing enthusiasm. It is better to press into the service these rollicking irregulars, who oftentimes do as good work as the staid and stately troops of the line. Whenever, therefore, we discover one who gives sign of extra life in any particular direction, whether it be for learning, or teaching, or preaching, let him see that he shares our regards and that we take a hopeful interest in him,—that the worst thing we could hear of him would be that he had not succeeded. I remember with a great satisfaction the kindness of a ministering brother, now alas! no more with us, who, after driving me a distance in Prince Edward Island, set me down in a place to labor for the summer, spoke a few words of commendation, gave me half-a-sovereign, and bade me goodbye. Such an incident is one that sheds a charm over the struggling period of one's life, and is like a bit of poetry nesting amid over-much prose.

We need not be afraid of sapping the self-reliance of young men. I have met some very fine specimens of high-minded men who have been aided all through their educational course. One instance in particular, I remember of a brother who often found his board-bill settled by an unknown hand, and I could not discover that his manhood was in any measure deteriorated. Self-help is no doubt a very fine thing, but we need not allow it to go so far as to expect young men to lift themselves by their own suspenders across every stream in their way. It would very much facilitate their progress to bridge the chasms for them. It does not injure the self respect of the preachers over the border when their congregations hand them a thousand dollar check, and bid them seek rest and recuperation across the Atlantic. I daresay many of my brethren would be happy to have the experiment tried upon them. I believe that we are most likely to err in the direction of leaving young men to struggle unaided. Let us, then, as pastors, keep an eye on the promising ones, and give them such advice as may seem best. Let us remember that there are yearning hearts in our flocks, who long to engage in the service of the Lord Jesus. It is not the least important part of our work to develop the talent of the churches, and so increase the resources of the kingdom.

### SELF-RESTRAINT.

On one other point only does it seem necessary to dwell, in order to complete the little circle which I have marked out for myself. *The virtue of self-restraint as applied to conversation.*

I think we are all liable to fall into the mistake of supposing that the word "temperance" of the authorized version of the New Testament, (also of the Bible Union version, except only in 2 Pet. i. 6, where it is properly translated "self-control,") refers exclusively and primarily to abstinence from intoxicants, whereas it is really a general term to denote self-restraint.

It need not derogate from any other of the various forms of self-control to say, that one of the most important is a guardedness in reference to the use of one of the most active of our members. How full of truth are the words of James: "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the