

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XX., No. 12.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, March 24, 1875.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXIX., No. 12.

Poetry.

THE SAILING OF A MISSIONARY.

As I watched the ship when it stood out
To sea with a missionary on board, a worldly
Friend at my side seemed impressed with
The scene, and spoke of the grandeur of the
fact that the missionary had embarked for
a distant shore on the bare word of Christ.

"On the bare word of Christ!" and what more
Did he need for sustaining his soul,
As his life-work he sought on the shore,
His spirit had marked for its goal?

"On the bare word of Christ!" in that ark
It is safe to encounter the wave,
Now dashing in rage o'er his bark,
Now yawning, a fathomless grave.

"On the bare word of Christ!" ay, the word
That all things uphold by its power,
Can surely His herald defend
In the perils of life's little hour.

Though his ashes at last may not sleep
With his loved "neath the tear-sprinkled sod,
To the far-distant land where he goes,
Just as near are the angels of God.

"On the bare word of Christ!" who hath said
"I call thee not servant, but friend,"
Whose command with the promise is blent,
"I am with thee, Lo! e'en to the end."

"On the bare word of Christ!" let the truth
As a banner be freely unfurled,
Till to loving allegiance restored
Is each kingdom and tribe of the world.

Let that word as an ensign still float,
And each soldier that falls hand it down,
Till the emerald earth shall be won
As a gem for Immanuel's crown.

"On the bare word of Christ!" we may rest,
As we sail for the glorified shore,
To meet our beloved with the blest,
And to dwell with our Lord evermore.

S. A. J.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

THOUGHTS FOR THE TIMES.

NO. XV.

MODERN HEROISM.

It was foretold by Daniel that under certain circumstances the people of God would "be strong, and do exploits," (xi. 32): that is, heroes would arise and be renowned in the world. The prediction has been abundantly fulfilled. Of other heroes we have often heard: the secular historians have recorded their names and magnified their deeds. Of heroes in God's cause we have ample information, first in the sacred volume, and then in the pages of authentic church history. Religion, however despised and maligned by those who do not understand it, and who too frequently choose to misunderstand it, is the finest element of heroism. Nothing can exceed the power of faith in human character. The "elders" who "obtained a good report" obtained it through "faith." The list of their names in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the most remarkable document of the kind in human literature. The heroism of the Apostle Paul shone at the brightest when he stood on the deck of the doomed ship, announcing to the affrighted crew and passengers the assurance of their safety which he had received from a heavenly messenger, and exclaimed amidst the roaring of the storm and the dashing of the waves, "I believe God, that it shall be given as it was told me," (Acts xxvii. 26). The "noble army of martyrs" is a holy host of heroes, whose exploits, in daring, doing, and enduring, have been unmatched in the world's annals. Tyndale was a hero. Latimer was a hero. Buoyan was a hero.

The race is not extinct. Christian heroism is a perennial plant. We have seen and heard of heroes in this century. There were heroes in Jamaica fifty years ago, who "feared their God and knew no other fear, braved the tortures so mercilessly inflicted on them by black-hearted planters, and persevered in serving Christ at all risks. There were

heroes in Madagascar. A heathen queen sought to banish the gospel and turn believers into apostates; but the servants of God were undaunted: some were burned: some were hurled down the precipices and dashed to pieces: all were subjected to degradation and dishonour: yet their loyalty they kept, their love, their zeal." There are heroes now in Russian dungeons—our brethren in the faith—suffering for the avowal of our principles. One case is thus described:—A brother named Baladan, "was walled up, like the mural saints of old. The stones in the walls were so laid that the sharp points were turned inward; and the space within was made so narrow that the sufferer could only stand upright, or assume a squatting position, but could neither sit nor lie down, and when weary and overcome, he stretched himself a little, the sharp points of the stones only gave him fresh agony. There was a little opening on one side through which his scanty food was passed to him; with this exception he was closely walled in, around and above. In this situation he was obliged to remain for two months." (*American Baptist Missionary Magazine*, March, 1875, p. 87.)

I have just read "The last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, from 1865 to his death." He also was a hero. The aim of his travels, the discovery of the sources of the Nile, was not indeed accomplished, but he made many important additions to our geographical knowledge, so that the interior of Africa, which was almost a blank in our maps, begins to show in its lakes and rivers, and in the general contour of the country, a resemblance to other parts of the world. His journals are full of and its dense population is presented to us as claiming the kindest attentions of Christian sympathy and zeal. Dr. Livingstone's qualifications as an explorer were known and admired by the best judges; but it would be unjust to his memory to overlook his claims to our admiration as a philanthropist and a Christian missionary. His exposure of the iniquities connected with slavery in Africa, and particularly of the horrors of the slave-trade, aroused public attention and led to active measures on the part of the British government for the suppression of those abominations. The slave merchants were fully aware of the detestation in which he held their traffic, and feared his influence with the ruling powers. If they met with him in the course of his journeyings, they got out of his way as soon as possible, lest he should make known their atrocities and bring them under the power of public vengeance.

Dr. Livingstone had been engaged in missionary work for twenty-five years when he started on his last journey. He had become celebrated as a discoverer. That, however, he regarded as subordinate to a higher object. "As far as I am myself concerned," he says, "the opening of the new central country is a matter for congratulation only in so far as it opens up a prospect for the elevation of the inhabitants. As I have elsewhere remarked, I view the end of the geographical feat as the beginning of the missionary enterprise. I take the latter term in its most extended signification, and include every effort made for the amelioration of the race, the promotion of all those means by which God in his providence is working, and bringing all his dealings with man to a glorious consummation" (*Missionary Researches*, p. 748.)

But I referred to his heroism. His whole life was a hero's life, and the memorials of his closing years, contained in those "Last Journals," form a fitting conclusion to one of the most extraordinary records extant in our language.

Let us glance at the difficulties he had to encounter, and the sufferings which he endured in meeting and overcoming them.

Travelling in Central Africa sub-

jects the traveller to numberless inconveniences and privations. The country abounds in rivers and streams (it has been called a "network of rivers"), which in one part of the year are commonly flooded. These have to be crossed, often several times in the day, owing to the windings of their courses, and that not by boat but on foot, the depth of water varying from a few inches to four feet or more. Between them are large tracts of boggy ground, called *sponges* by Dr. L., passing over which exposes to the danger of sinking into mud-holes, from which it is not easy to be extricated. On the other hand, where the soil is dry it is rocky, and the scorching heat is well-nigh unbearable.

The food-supply is uncertain, and far from satisfactory. It mostly consists of vegetables, and those not always of a nutritive kind. For that supply travellers are dependent on the natives, who frequently refuse to deal with them. Dr. L. was near starvation more than once. He tells of dreaming of a feast, and awaking to a sense of his destitution. He had at one time four goats, whose milk afforded him nourishing diet: they were stolen, and the loss reduced him to great distress. It "affected me," he says, "more than I could have imagined. A little indigestible porridge, of scarcely any taste, is now my fare, and it makes me dream of better."

The slave-trading Arabs who infest the country are a murderous set of villains who show no regard to human life. If slaves faint under the fatigues of travel they are killed on the spot, or left to perish of starvation. Opposition to the traffic is sure to excite un governable rage, and general blood-thirstiness. The records of the escapees from death by murder in one day.

Dishonesty is universal: a man's property is in constant jeopardy. Thievery is the normal condition of society, and is openly practiced. Large quantities of goods which had been sent to Dr. L. at great expense were taken possession of and appropriated to their own purposes by those to whom they were consigned. The burden-bearers could rarely be trusted. They were always watching opportunities to slip away and take their packages with them.

The unhealthiness of the climate, particularly to the white races, is well known. Dr. Watts's lies are literally verified:—

"Dangers stand thick 'round all the ground
To push us to the tomb;
And fierce diseases wait aroid,
To hurry mortals home."

A good supply of medicine is essential to safety. We judge, therefore, of Dr. L.'s distress when one of the bearers deserted, ting with him the medicine chest. "It is difficult," he said, to say from the heart, "They will be done; but I'll try." And these are the words of man, be it remembered, who was wading through mud and water every day, and labouring under repeated attacks of disease which so enfeebled him that "he could not walk without totting." At one time he was confined to his hut for months by ulcerated feet. It was scarcely possible to swim life without frequent doses of quinine, and of that he was deprived for me by the abstraction of his medicine chest. The struggle for existences painful and continuous.

To all this must be added the privations and discomfort of a spiritual character. He was essentially associated with men whose destitute of principle, or steeped in ignorance and superstition. He for the Mohammedans, like the Crees of old, to be "always liars." Lack of Christian intercourse was sorely felt. He suffered alone, and heard and saw very much that grieved him to the heart. The language of the writers of the Psalms has been adopted by him, "soul is among lions; and I lie evening them that are set on fire, evensons of men, whose teeth are sped arrows, and

their tongue a sharp sword" (Ps. lvii. 4).

Yet, notwithstanding all this he pressed on with indomitable perseverance. Friends saw that he needed rest, and some urged him to return home to recruit his strength, so that he might resume his task under more encouraging auspices. "But my judgment said," (the *Journal* is now quoted) "All your friends will wish you to make a complete work of the exploration of the sources of the Nile before you retire." My daughter Agnes says, "Much as I wish you to come home, I would rather that you finished your work to your own satisfaction than return merely to gratify me." Rightly and nobly said, my darling Nannie. Vanity whispers pretty loudly, "She is a chip of the old block." My blessing on her and all the rest."

It was not by virtue of constitutional tendencies, alone, that this heroic life was formed and sustained. True, Dr. L. had an iron-like mind, tough and strong. But it was his god-like character that was the real secret of his firmness. He was working for God. A greater freedom than the civil emancipation of the slave was the object at which he aimed, "Africa for Christ" was his motto. All his plans and wishes centred here: and doubtless he will hereafter look down from his high place in glory, and see it realised, for Africa, too, belongs to the Lord.

In illustration of these statements reference might be made to numerous passages in the Journals which reveal Livingstone's inner life—the earnestness of his aspirations and his full reliance on the providence and grace of God. We have only room for a specimen.

13th May (1872). He will keep his word—the gracious One, full of grace and truth—no doubt of it. He said, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out; and 'Whosoever ye shall ask in my name I will give it.' He will keep his word: then I can come and humbly present my petition, and it will be all right. Doubt is here inadmissible, surely.

D. L."

"25th March (1873—37 days before his death). Nothing earthly will make me give up my work in despair. I encourage myself in the Lord, my God, and go forward."

Livingstone was a hero. His bones found a fitting resting-place in Westminster Abbey. And on the tablet erected there to his memory, are appropriately inscribed the words written by him May 1, 1872, just one year before his death—"All I can add in my loneliness is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal the open sore of the world" [slavery].

SENEC.

HOW WILL THEY SETTLE IT?

The following article from the *New York Examiner and Chronicle* is full of significance, and well worth the attention of our Presbyterian brethren:

Our Presbyterian friends have a "communion question." Dr. John Hall having declared in the *Observer* that children should be brought to baptism, Dr. Tryon Edwards—another distinguished Pedobaptist—asked him why he did not go further, and urge that children be brought to the Lord's Supper also just as soon as they "can understand its meaning." The *Examiner* asked Dr. Edwards why it was necessary to delay the communion any more than the baptism till the child could "understand its meaning"—suggesting that (as is done in the Greek Church) the child might be brought to the communion in the same unconsciousness in which he is baptized, and the bread and wine be administered with the pap-spoon. In last week's *Observer* Rev. Erskine N. White, the lately installed pastor of

Twenty-Third street Presbyterian church in this city, essays to show why it is that "baptized children," being "members of the church," are yet excluded from the communion table.

But all he gives us is an unsupported declaration. He says, "Though members of the church, it by no means follows that children are immediately entitled to all its privileges." This does not meet the case. One member of an organization is entitled to all the privileges of every other member, unless there be some explicit statute to the contrary. He who denies to one member a privilege enjoyed by the rest must say why such privilege is denied. Now no one can point out any Scripture intimation that the Lord's Supper is to be withheld from certain ones who are full members of the church. Nor is there anything in the nature of the case which furnishes a ground for such exclusion. Why must one be "mentally competent to understand" the Lord's Supper, more than baptism? If the mental competence of the parent or sponsor can be taken in the one case, why can it not be accepted in the other? Or what necessity is there for a moral preparation for the one ordinance more than for the other? He who is spiritually prepared to be baptized in Christ's name, is spiritually prepared to receive the communion of his body and blood. What ground is there for saying that he who has received the symbol of Christian birth cannot also receive the symbol of Christian nurture?

It does not avail to refer, as Mr. White does, to the fact that the insane or feeble-minded may be members of the church, but not admitted to the communion. One who should refuse to baptize and church membership when that person was in sane or idiotic, ought not to refuse to give the communion to him. On the other hand, if it would be improper to give the communion to an unfortunate man whose reason had left him, then baptism and church membership ought to be withheld from such a one, and also from unconscious children who are like him in mental deficiency.

Mr. White allows that the officers of the church "cannot legislate, but they must administer the laws as set forth in Scripture." Now, where does he find it set forth in Scripture that the communion may be withheld from persons who are full members of the church—"not members merely 'in some sense,'" "not probationers awaiting full membership"—but members in every sense of the word. He allows that "there is no authority in the Scriptures for two classes of church members" to admit some to the communion, and to exclude others from it.

The whole question is just here—Where do you find in Scripture or in reason any authority for excluding from the Lord's Supper those who may be admitted to baptism? What mental or spiritual prerequisite is there to the one ordinance which is not also a prerequisite to the other? Dr. Hall did not answer when Dr. Edwards asked him. Mr. White has failed to answer the question. It is waiting for some one else to take it up.

The Christian world has but two parties which act consistently in this matter. The Greek Church, holding that infants may properly receive baptism, gives them also the communion. Our Baptist churches, holding that only professed believers can come to the Lord's Supper, admit only professed believers to baptism. The Presbyterian Church stands in a position thoroughly inconsistent. It should admit babes to the Supper, or should exclude them from baptism. And the Presbyterians (of this country) are more inconsistent than the Episcopalians and Romanists. As the latter require no change of heart as a precedent to baptism, they require none as a prerequisite to the communion. Each one whom they regard as baptized they admit to the communion simply on the maintenance of a good moral character, and without any profession of a change of heart. So do