

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

{ NEW SERIES. }
{ Vol. XX., No. 27. }

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, July 7, 1875.

{ WHOLE SERIES. }
{ Vol. XXXIX., No. 27. }

Poetry.

WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

What might be done if men were wise—
What glorious deeds, my suffering brother,
Would they unite
In love and right,
And cease their scorn of one another!
Oppression's heart might be imbued
With kindling drops of loving kindness;
And knowledge pour,
From shore to shore,
Light on the eyes of mental blindness.
All slavery, warfare, lies, and wrongs,
All vice and crime might die together;
And wine and corn,
To each man born,
Be free as warmth in summer weather.
The meanest wretch that ever trod,
The deepest sunk in guilt and sorrow,
Might stand erect
In self-respect,
And share the teeming world to-morrow.
What might be done? This might be done,
And more than this, my suffering brother;
More than the tongue
E'er said or sung,
If men were wise and loved each other.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

CHRISTIAN FRUITFULNESS.

A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE
NOVA SCOTIA WESTERN ASSOCIATION
BY REV. W. H. RICHAN, AND
PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST
OF THE ASSOCIATION.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye
bear much fruit."—JOHN XV. 8.

A well disciplined and victorious
army brings glory to its commander;
and a skillfully managed and progres-
sive school reflects credit upon its
teacher, and causes men to praise him.
Thus, in every department of human
enterprise and industry, man is glori-
fied by his achievements. In like
manner God is glorified by his won-
derful works. "The heavens declare
the glory of God, and the firmament
sheweth his handywork." Every
being and object which he has created
manifests his power, wisdom and skill.

"In all our Maker's grand designs,
Almighty power with wisdom shines;
His works through all this wondrous frame,
Declare the glory of his name."

But especially is God glorified in
the works of his grace; by which the
ruined creature man is rescued from
degradation and woe, and raised to
"heavenly places in Christ Jesus," to
shew forth the praises of Him who has
called him out of darkness into his
marvellous light.

"Thy noblest wonder here we view,
In souls redeemed and sins forgiven."

When sinners thus redeemed ex-
hibit in their lives the spirit of Chris-
tianity, their light shines before men,
who, seeing their good works, are led
to glorify their Father who is in
Heaven.

"Herein is my Father glorified,
that ye bear much fruit." The
Saviour, in this connection uses the
beautiful similitude of the vine and
branches to illustrate the relationship
existing between him and his disciples,
and one result of that relationship,
is *Fruitfulness*. This is the theme
to which I now invite your attention
while we consider its source, the means
for its cultivation, and the glorious
results.

1. Its source. The fruit of a tree is
something evolved from within, not
added from without. There is some
mysterious principle in the nature of
every tree, causing it to produce its
own peculiar kind of fruit; so that
"every tree is known by its fruit." So
is it amongst men. In so far as the
conduct and conversation are
spontaneous and unassumed, they ex-
hibit the condition of the inner man.
All genuine Christian fruit is the out-
growth of principles implanted in the
heart by the Spirit of God. There
may be religious acts, and manifesta-

tions of apparent piety, which are no
more the legitimate production of the
man who exhibits them, than a wig is
the production of the head upon which
it is worn, or a bunch of grapes of the
bramble bush upon which it may be
hung. These are "apples of Sodom
and grapes of Gomorrah," bringing
neither glory to God nor good to man.
Man's nature is so corrupt that he can
produce no fruit to the glory of God
until that nature is changed. "A
corrupt tree cannot bring forth good
fruit." "Out of the heart of men
proceed evil thoughts, adulteries,
fornications, murders, thefts, covetous-
ness, wickedness, deceit, lascivious-
ness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride,
foolishness." Mark vii. 21, 22. Such
is the description given by him who
knew what was in man; and the pic-
ture presented by the prophet Jeremiah,
"The heart is deceitful above all
things and desperately wicked," is not
more favorable. As well may we ex-
pect "grapes from thorns and figs from
thistles," as fruit to the glory of God
from such a source as this. But when
man is brought into contact with Jesus
by a living faith, as when the dead
body touched the bones of the prophet
Elisha, or the diseased woman touched
the hem of the Saviour's garment, a
radical change is effected. The foun-
tain of iniquity is cleansed. We are
thus made partakers of the Divine
nature. Then appear the fruits of the
Spirit, which are, "love, joy, peace,
long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,
faith, meekness, temperance" Gal. v.
21, 23. Jesus himself is the source of
all that is good in man, "Who of God
is made unto us wisdom, and right-
eousness and sanctification, and redem-
ption." Such being the case, the
degree of our fruitfulness will be pro-
portionate to the intimacy of our rela-
tionship to Him. "As the branch
cannot bear fruit of itself, except it
abide in the vine, no more can ye,
except ye abide in me. I am the vine,
ye are the branches: He that abideth
in me, and I in him, the same bringeth
forth much fruit: for without me ye
can do nothing." But while he
hath wrought all our works in us, Is.
xxvi. 12, he uses *means* for the accom-
plishment of his glorious purposes,
which leads us to inquire,

II. What are the means which God
has ordained for promoting fruitfulness
in his people?

An answer to this question may be
found in the first psalm, "Blessed is
the man . . . whose delight is in
the law of the Lord; and in his law
doth he meditate day and night. And
he shall be like a tree planted by the
rivers of water, that bringeth forth his
fruit in his season; his leaf shall also
not wither, and whatsoever he doeth
shall prosper." He who can with
David say, "Oh how I love thy law!
The law of thy mouth is better to me
than thousands of gold and silver,"
who prizes the truths of revelation
above all the productions of human
genius, who, instead of confining his
attention wholly or chiefly to the works
of men, takes frequent and copious
draughts from the river of Divine
truth, "the streams whereof make
glad the city of our God," whose mind
is stored, and his heart richly imbued
with the treasures drawn from the
sacred word,

"He like a tree shall thrive,
With waters near the root;
Fie-h as a leaf, his name shall live,
His works are heavenly fruit."

The Bible is God's grand depository
of truth for the instruction of men.
All other books are more or less
diluted by human imperfection, and
however excellent they may be as
helps to a better understanding of
the Book, they should always be kept in
subordination to the oracles, of which
they are at best but imperfect inter-
preters. Rather may we throw them
all aside, than to neglect the careful
and prayerful study of the sacred text,
to learn the truth at second hand. A
passage similar to that we have been
considering is found in Jer. xvii. 8,
"For he shall be as a tree planted by
the waters, that spreadeth out her
roots by the river, and shall not see

when heat cometh, but her leaf shall
be green; and shall not be careful in
the year of drought, neither shall cease
from yielding fruit." This is said of the
man "that trusteth in the Lord, and
whose hope the Lord is." This is a
trusting Faith which credits the testi-
mony and confides in the promises of
the written Word, and Hope which
feeds upon the anticipation of the
blessing yet unseen. As no tree can be
nourished by the water with which
its roots come in contact, unless en-
dowed with power to appropriate the
nourishment derived therefrom, so no
soul can be benefitted by Scriptural
knowledge, without an appropriating
faith. We take an accredited bank-
note as an equivalent for gold not be-
cause of any inherent value in the
paper, but because of the promise it
contains. So faith takes God's prom-
ises as "the substance of things
hoped for, the evidence of things not
seen." When the truth as it is in
Jesus, is thus apprehended, the soul is
nourished and fruitfulness is the result.

The Word of God is the instrument
whereby the work of sanctification is
carried on in the hearts of Christians,
as we may learn from a petition in the
Saviour's parting prayer, "Sanctify
them through thy truth, thy word is
truth." It is the incorruptible seed,
which, when sown in good ground,
that is, hearts prepared for its recep-
tion by the Spirit of God, "beareth
fruit, and bringeth forth in some an
hundred fold, in some sixty, in some
thirty." It is the "sword of the
Spirit," wherewith the Christian
soldier fights the battles of his Lord.
Armed with this we may say with
Paul: "The weapons of our warfare
are not carnal but mighty through God
to the pulling down of strongholds." It
is also a faithful mirror in which we
may see depicted, not only our own
deficiencies and necessities, but the
Divine lineaments of our blessed Lord,
which it is our privilege to study until
"beholding as in a glass the glory of
the Lord, we are changed into the
same image from glory to glory even as
by the Spirit of the Lord."

We are apt to imagine that we can
promote our own holiness and advance
the cause of God by schemes of our
own devising, which are not according
to the pattern 'shewn in the mount,'
and human devices, for which we can-
not find a, "Thus saith the Lord." To
this source may be attributed many
errors in doctrine and practice, which
characterize large numbers of professing
Christians. When we repose un-
wavering confidence in God, feed upon
his truth with delight, and yield un-
questioning obedience to his require-
ments, we may "rest in the Lord, and
wait patiently for him." If ye abide
in me, and my words abide in you, ye
shall ask what ye will and it shall be
done unto you," ver. 7. This leads us
to the consideration of another
means of promoting fruitfulness, viz:

Prayer. In his word, God speaks
to us; in prayer we speak to God, and
thus our intercourse is mutual. It is
not enough for the nourishment of our
bodies, that we eat wholesome food, and
imbibe suitable drink. We must also
inhale pure air; by which the food is
vitalized and rendered nutritious.
Equally necessary is prayer as a means
of sustaining spiritual strength, de-
veloping the graces of the Spirit, and
rendering us fruitful in the Master's
vineyard.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,

Carnal men may tell us that prayer
is useless. That God governs the uni-
verse by fixed and invariable laws, and
that the petitions of mortals cannot
possibly effect any change in the Di-
vine procedure. But God's word is
a sufficient answer to every such cavil,
to say nothing of the heartfelt expe-
rience of every child of God. Where
is the Christian who cannot say with
"Verily God hath heard me; he hath
attended to the voice of my prayer.
Blessed be God, who hath not
turned away my prayer, nor his mercy
from me?" Ps. lvi. And shall we
not say with the same man of prayer,

"I love the Lord because he hath
heard the voice of my supplications.
Because he hath inclined his ear unto
me, therefore will I call upon him as
long as I live?"

If we do not bring the clouds of Di-
vine blessing nearer to us by prayer,
we bring ourselves underneath those
clouds, so that the gracious rain falls
upon us and our souls are refreshed
and made like watered gardens.
Truly, "They that wait upon the
Lord shall renew their strength; they
shall mount up with wings as eagles;
they shall run, and not be weary; and
they shall walk, and not faint, Is. xl.
31.

And not for ourselves only but for
others we are encouraged to pray.
If we would win souls to Christ, we
must, like our Divine Master, be often
and earnest at the throne of grace.
Oh for more of that earnest prayerful-
ness, which characterized our Lord!

"Cold mountains and the midnight air,
Witnessed the fervor of his prayer."

And for whom did he entreat so ear-
nestly? He sometimes prayed for
himself, in view of that fearful cup of
which he was about to drink, but
doubtless the great burden of his
prayers, was in behalf of the souls he
came to redeem. In John xvii. we
we hear him saying with reference to
his Apostles, "I pray for them;" and a
little farther on, "Not for them
only, but for all who shall believe
on me through their word." That
comprehensive petition embraces all
the redeemed, even sinners yet un-
born, down to the end of time. Al-
though we cannot pray as he prayed,
any more than we can preach as he
preached, or suffer as he suffered, may
we not bear on our hearts to the throne
of grace the cases of those for whom
his blood was shed. He has promised to
'take away the stony hearts and
give hearts of flesh, but for these things
he will be inquired of by the house of
Israel to do it for them," Ezek. xxxvi.
While the Jacobs are wrestling with
the Lord; the Esaus will be subdued
by the power of his love.

As a minister was one day watching
a laborer upon his knees breaking
rocks, he remarked, "I wish I could
break the hearts of my hearers as easily
as you break those stones." "Per-
haps, sir," said the man, "you do not
work enough on your knees. Alas!
it is not this the fault of too many of us.
We work with our brains and our lungs,
but we scatter the seed too dry. It
needs to be steeped in earnest prayer."
"He that goeth forth weeping and
bearing precious seed, shall doubtless
return bringing his sheaves with him."

III. Frequent self-examination and
meditation upon the character, purposes
and demands of our Divine Master are
means of fruitfulness. Amid the at-
tractions, the bustle, and the cares of
domestic, social, and public life, we are
very apt to forget what we are, what is
our relationship to God, and our obliga-
tions to Him in whom we live, and
move, and have our being. We need
to look back to the rock from which
we were hewn and the hole of the pit
from which we were digged, that the
pride of our hearts may be humbled,
while we remember our deplorable
condition when in our sins and our
blood. We need to look back over the
past of our Christian career, and com-
pare our lives with the requirements
of God's law, that we may see our
shortcomings, and be stimulated to
more consecration of heart and life to
the service of our Redeemer. We
need to contemplate the feebleness of
every effort, and the imperfection of
every service that we may renounce
self-righteousness and self-dependence.
We need to reflect upon our relation-
ship to our Head, as co-workers to-
gether with Him, and our dependence
upon Him as branches upon the vine,
that we may be encouraged to go forth
"Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His eternal Son."

We need to dwell upon the infinite
efficacy of the atonement, and the un-
failing promises of Jehovah, which en-
sure the perpetual increase of Christ's
kingdom and the ultimate triumph of

the Gospel over all opposing influ-
ences. We need to ponder upon the
matchless love of Him who gave his
Son, and Him who gave Himself, until
our hearts glow with responsive love,
constraining us to spend and be spent
for the honor of his name.

IV. If we would be fruitful we must
labor for our Lord. Jesus was a man
of incessant toil. He went about con-
tinually doing good, leaving an ex-
ample that we should walk in his steps.

His command to his disciples is,
"Go work to-day in my vineyard." Every
Christian should aim to find his
place, and fill it. There is such a
variety and such an abundance of work
to be done, that none need be idle.

In a large manufacturing establishment
there is a department for every degree
of skill, from the boy who kindles the
fire, to the man who performs the most
delicate operation. So is it in God's
great workshop. There is a great di-
versity of endowment in the church,
but as in the case of the human body
the feeblest members are necessary.
He who has but one talent has no
more right to bury his endowment in
the earth than he who has five. Yes
Christian, there is work for you and for
me. Work in the family, work in the
social circle, work in the church, work
in the Sabbath school, work in the
study, work on the street, work at home
and work abroad, work wherever sin-
ning humanity exists, and it is work
that pays, for, "he that reapeth re-
ceiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto
life eternal," and he that sows beside
all waters shall not lose his reward.
As bodily exercise increases muscular
strength, so Christian activity expands
and develops the graces of the Spirit,
and increases the fruitfulness of the
Christian. And we are called upon to
work, not only with our brains and our
hands, and our tongues, but also with
the pecuniary means which God has
placed at our disposal.

When a young man asked the Savi-
our: "What good thing shall I
do that I may inherit eternal life?" a
part of the reply was "Sell that thou
hast and give to the poor." To many
a covetous professor the same advice is
now applicable; but alas! how many go
away sorrowful, because they have not
yet learned the lesson which Jesus
taught: "It is more blessed to give
than to receive," Acts xx. 35. I
know a professing Christian who can
outdo his brethren in religious rapture
until asked for a contribution to aid in
spreading that Gospel which gives him
so much joy, when immediately his
harp is hung upon the willows. App-
ropriately may such close fist'd
Christians sing:

Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these earthly toys,
Our souls can neither fly nor go,
To reach eternal joys.

It is not so strange if those who have
their portion in this life only are un-
willing to contribute liberally of their
substance for the glory of God and the
good of man, but it is strange that pro-
fessed heirs of God and joint heirs with
Christ cannot find it in their hearts to
devote liberally for the propagation of
the truth and the salvation of man.
When will Christians, generally, learn
that: "There is that scattereth, and
yet increaseth, and there is that with-
holdeth more than is meet, but it tend-
eth to poverty?" "The liberal soul
shall be made fat, and he that water-
eth shall be watered also himself"
Prov. xl. 24, 25.

The Apostle Paul in his epistle to
the Romans xv. 28, in referring to the
carnal things ministered by the Gen-
tiles for the benefit of the Jerusalem
saints, calls them "fruit," upon which
Mr. Henry remarks: "It (their gifts)
is one of the fruits of righteousness;
it sprang from the root of grace in the
givers, and redounded to the benefits
and comfort of the receivers." And
the same Apostle in his epistle to the
Philippians ch. iv. 17, referring to
their contributions for his own support
says: "I desire fruit that may abound
to your account." Here he intimates
that the donors would derive the great-
est benefit; and in the following verse
he speaks of their gifts as, "An odor