

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXI., No. 46.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, November 15, 1876.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XL., No. 46.

POETRY.

Speaking for Jesus.

Have you not a word for Jesus? Not a word to say for Him? He is listening through the choir of the burning seraphim. He is listening; does He hear you speaking of the things of earth, Only of its passing pleasure, selfish sorrow, empty mirth? He has spoken words of blessing, pardon, peace, and love to you, Glorious hopes and gracious comfort, strong and tender, sweet and true; Does He hear you telling others something of his love untold, Overflowings of thanksgiving for His mercies manifold?

Have you not a word for Jesus? Will the world His praise proclaim, Who shall speak if ye are silent? Ye who know and love His name. You whom He hath called and chosen His own witnesses to be, Will you tell your gracious Master, Lord, we cannot speak for Thee? Cannot I though he suffered for you, died because He loved you so! Cannot I though He has forgiven, making scarlet white as snow? Cannot I though He stands beside you, though He says "be not afraid."

Have you not a word for Jesus? Some perchance while ye are dumb, Wait and weary for your message hoping you will bid them "Come;" Never telling hidden sorrows, lingering first outside the door, Longing for your hand to lead them into rest forevermore. Yours may be the joy and honour His reclaimed ones to bring, Jewels for the coronation of your coming Lord and King. Will you cast away the gladness thus your Master's joy to share, All because a word for Jesus seems too much for you to dare?

What shall be our word for Jesus? Master give it day by day; Ever as the need arises, teach Thy children what to say, Give us holy love and patience; grant us deep humility, That of self we may be emptied, and our hearts be full of Thee; Give us zeal, and faith, and fervour, make us winning, make us wise, Single-hearted, strong and fearless, Thou hast called us, we will rise! Let the might of Thy good Spirit go with every loving word; And by hearts prepared and opened be our message always heard.

Yes we have a word for Jesus! Living eyes we will be, Of Thine own sweet words of blessing, of Thy gracious "Come to me." Jesus Master! yes we love Thee and to prove our love, would lay Fruits of lips which Thou wilt open at Thy blessed feet to-day, Madly at effort it may cost us, many a heart-beat, many a fear, But Thou knowest, and wilt strengthen, and Thy help is always near. Give us grace to follow fully vanquishing our faithless shame, Feebly it may be, but truly, witnessing for Thy dear name.

Yes, we have a word for Jesus; we will bravely speak for Thee, And Thy bold and faithful soldiers, Saviour, we would henceforth be. In Thy name set up our banners, while Thine own shall wave above, With Thy crimson name of mercy and Thy golden name of love. Help us lovingly to labour, looking for Thy present smile, Looking for Thy promised blessing, through the brightening "little while." Words for Thee in weakness spoken Thou wilt here accept and own, And confess them in Thy glory when we see Thee on Thy throne.

WHERE LIES THE FAULT.—President Smart of the Indiana Teacher's Association, lately expressed the opinion that: "The moral tone of our young people is not as high as it was 10 years ago, that they have less respect for rightful authority and less regard for the rights of others; that they care less for truth and honesty, and are more inclined to disregard the law of obedience to their parents; that they are influenced less by their moral obligations and more by their passions and prejudice. Supposing this to be true, as it probably is, who is chiefly to blame for it, parents or children? The writer quoted regards this state of things as an argument for teaching morals in the schools. —National Baptist.

RELIGIOUS.

(From the National Baptist.) Watering the Sap.

BY REV. L. PHILETUS DOBBS, D. D.

Once on a time there was a work of grace. It was in a rural district (say Vermont). It was a time of confession. One, after another arose and told what he had done or left undone; told of bad words, bad thoughts, bad deeds; of opportunities neglected. Among them arose a deacon, a man of an agricultural turn, against whose uprightness even slander had been dumb. With deep contrition and with many a sigh and tear, he said:—

Last spring I had agreed to deliver a certain amount of maple sugar. But the sap did not run well, and I found I could not make out the quantity. It weighed on me night and day. At last I went after nightfall to my hired man and told him that he might water the sap just enough to make up the quantity.

The good man little knew what an example he was setting. Ever since then, and indeed for many a hundred years before he was born, people have been imitating his malign example. It begins, I may say, from the cradle. The child of infant years must write a letter to his grandfather, to his aunt, to his absent father, a letter of respectable length. So he proceeds to tax his little tender brain for all manner of prolix and long-winded expressions, and ingenious ways of saying the same thing (or the same nothing) over and over. At school, at college, the demand for composition engenders the same crime, though with advancing years there comes perhaps a little more skill in concealing the dilution.

The young minister is placed often in an embarrassing position. He must occupy so much time, at least half an hour. Less than that would subject him to the charge of levity, or eccentricity, or heresy. But he is short of material. It is too much to expect that he would stop short and frankly say, "Brethren, this is all that the Lord has given me to say at this time." Satan whispers in his ear, "Water the sap." Too often he yields.

As he grows older, not seldom he finds himself on Saturday evening in the same strait, through natural poverty of mind or through laziness (which a great theologian has pronounced identical with original sin). He must water the sap by bringing in extraneous matter, or by carrying matter that is legitimate beyond all reasonable lengths. Every allusion must be carried out in detail. If he speaks of Washington, he explains that he is a native of Virginia; that he was educated a surveyor, etc., etc. There is no such thing as touching on a subject. Now and then he will go off in a digression that is well enough in itself, but that has no bearing on this subject; or that would be at least as germane anywhere else. He illustrates, with a slight difference, the language applied to Goldsmith:—"He touched nothing that he did not adorn." He touches nothing that he does not make tedious.

I am afraid that people who write for the papers (other papers, I mean) water the sap a little. There was one thing to be said in favor of our deacon. All the water put in did not damage the sugar. If only cost a little more time and fuel to reduce the sap. It was good, pure water, too; he didn't put in sticks and stones and dirt and rubbish. But his imitators just spoil the whole thing. They exhaust the power of attention, of which the reader or the hearer has but a given amount; so seldom they distract the attention so that it takes a very perceptible wrench to bring it back.

Were I an instructor of youth, were I charged with the education of our rising ministry, I should often whisper in the ear of my favored catechumens:—"Don't water the sap."

The truly great stand upon no middle ledges: they are either famous or unknown.

Mr. Spurgeon and Working Men.

THE MISSION OF NED WRIGHT.

A short time since, a memorial stone or the new hall for the Christian Workers' Mission, in Camberwell, was laid by Mr. Robt. Alexander Gray. This mission is conducted by Ned Wright, who has been gradually extending his work until his present hall, which is only a temporary one, has become too small to accommodate the numbers who meet there, and it has become necessary to build a larger one. The estimated cost of the new building, which is to hold 1400 or 1500 people, is £1000, of which over £300 is subscribed. Among those present at Tuesday's ceremony was the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, who delivered an address on the subject of preaching and attendance at places of Divine worship. He said that he was very pleased to come over and help a neighbour. He thought they ought all of them to do that in the ordinary way, but still more so when they were working for Christ in the same neighbourhood. He thought they ought to rejoice in the diversities of operation, and he believed that the present existence of various denominations in the Church was not one-half the hurt that some people supposed it to be. He had heard it said that the great problem was to get the working classes to go to hear the Gospel on Sunday, but he did not believe it to be a problem at all. He denied altogether that the working classes were less frequent in their attendance at the House of God than any other class. The main portion of his congregation were working people, though some people could not believe it, because they were so respectably dressed. (Laughter.) And who should not they be? He had always found that the first thing a reformed drunkard did was to put on a respectable suit of clothes. Perhaps he might have had it before, but he had been so fond of leaving it at his uncle's that he had not often been able to wear it. (Laughter.) The problem they had to solve was not how to get the working classes, but how to get all sorts of classes to hear the Gospel. Some people said they could not go because they were so stived up in chapel that they were half stifled. That very often, unfortunately, was the case. He himself had once been preaching in a chapel where there were iron-framed windows that would not open, so he asked those sitting near them to kindly break half-a-dozen panes of glass each, which being done the bad air went out and the fresh air came in, and he could go on preaching. He paid the bill afterwards like an honest man. (Laughter.) Some people said, too, that they did not go to the house of God because they could not understand what was said. He had often wished that some of his brethren who mumbled out their sermons at a great rate would get a new set of teeth—(laughter)—and that if they could not get a new set of lungs they would make better use of those they had. He thought, too, that there was a good deal of truth in what was said about the "high falutin'" style being too much used in pulpits. It only made people of good ordinary intelligence scratch their heads, and say of the preacher, "What can he be at?" After some further remarks, an adjournment was made to the spot where the stone was suspended, and where it was duly laid by Mr. Gray.

THE MOTHER OF THE SPURGEONS.—The Rev. Dr. Ford, recently paid a holiday visit to London, and thus alludes to his visit to the Stockwell Orphanage:—"There were five Spurgeons present, and all said a few words. The father, John Spurgeon, his two sons, J. A. Spurgeon and Charles, then the two sons of Charles H., Masters Thomas and Charles. It was an interesting sight. After the meeting Mr. Spurgeon introduced me to his father, and we conversed together as we walked about the grounds, for some considerable time. Of course I asked him of his family. He is sixty-

six years of age. He has eight living children. He has spent his life in the ministry. In the course of the conversation he said, 'I had been from home a great deal, trying to build up weak congregations, and felt that I was neglecting the religious training of my own children while I toiled for the good of others. I returned home with these feelings. I opened the door, and was surprised to find none of the children about the hall. Going quietly up the stairs, I heard my wife's voice. She was engaged in prayer with the children. I heard her pray for them one by one by name. She came to Charles, and specially prayed for him, for he was of high spirit and daring temper. I listened, said the old gentleman to me, tearfully, 'I listened still she had ended her prayer, and I felt and said, 'Lord, I will go on with Thy work. The children will be cared for—'

Religious Liberty in Spain.—The recent active hostility of Roman Catholics against Protestants in Spain, has called forth several expressions on the subject in English newspapers. The Rev. J. B. Gillies, Secretary of the Spanish Evangelization Society, writes to the Freeman:—"I find the impression prevailing that the work of evangelization is practically stopped, for the present, in Spain. This is a mistake. I dare say those who have instigated the Government to prevent what are called 'public manifestations' would willingly carry their enmity as far as that if they had the power; but they have been constrained to stop considerably short of that point, and private letters which have reached me from Spain, as well as the statements appearing in the Madrid papers, agree in representing that there is more reason to expect that restraints imposed upon the Protestant religion will be relaxed than that they will be followed by any attempt more seriously to hinder the work of evangelization which has been going on. I need not refer to the fact already known to your readers—the excuses of local governors for such acts of intolerance as stopping the singing in Protestant churches and schools, shutting the doors upon the worshippers, and so forth. These excuses generally take the form of denying or disguising the facts; and whatever other purpose may be served by them, they show that the perpetrators of these acts do not expect that the Government will homologate their procedure. But in regard to the acts of the Government itself—consisting in forbidding the use of sign-boards, public announcements of church services and school instruction, &c.—the effect hitherto has certainly been the very reverse of what has been intended. I may say that I learn from the agents of the society of which I am the secretary, that, with one exception, they have never used sign-boards, and have never felt the want of them. The church in Madera Baja, Madrid, once presided over by Senor Carrasco, and now by our agent, Senor Cabrera, was the only place of worship with which we have to do where a sign-board—of a very modest description—existed; and the pastor, whether right or wrong, did not think it worth while to contest the order for its removal. In another of our church buildings, that of Granada, the Scripture texts upon the walls are conspicuous enough through the windows, and are read and commented upon approvingly by the passengers, without demur on the part of the authorities. The work of our agents is going on in precisely the same way as before the law regarding 'public manifestations' was applied in the manner which has attracted so much attention. Indeed in the Madera Baja Church, the attendance has decidedly increased since the sign-board was removed, and I understand that this is not the only Protestant place of worship which has had that experience. The discussion in the public press of Madrid, which has been,

Quench not the Spirit.

At a Teacher's Bible Lesson at Rochester a few weeks since:—"The Rev. Mr. Weed, the leader, in the application of the lesson to teachers of obedience to the promptings of the Spirit, illustrated it by an interesting experience of his own. He was at one time pastor of a church in a town where the richest and in every way most prominent man was notoriously a neglecter of religion, and openly hostile to the minister. Seeing the old man in his carriage before a store in the place one day, he felt a strange impulse 'to go near and join himself to this chariot,' and ask the liberty of visiting him, that he might preach the Saviour. Fearing a scene, he refrained, and was conscience-smitten. Six weeks later he met the carriage on the street again, and the impulse was renewed, and the same words suggested. He immediately consulted one of his judicious deacons, who advised him not to visit him. He would be driven from the door—"