

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

{ NEW SERIES. }
{ Vol. XXII., No. 26. }

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, June 27, 1877.

{ WHOLE SERIES. }
{ Vol. XLI., No. 26. }

Poetry.

Trust.

I cannot see, with my small human sight,
Why God should lead this way or that
for me;
I only know he saith, "Child, follow me."
But I can trust.

I know not why my path should be at
times
So straitly hedged, so strangely barred
before;
I only know God could keep wide the door.
But I can trust.

I find no answer often, when beset
With questions fierce and subtle on my way,
And often have but strength to faintly
pray.
But I can trust.

I often wonder, as with trembling hand,
I cast the seed along the furrowed ground,
If ripened fruit for God will there be found;
But I can trust.

I cannot know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its
wrath;
But this I know, God watches all my path
And I can trust.

I may not draw aside the mystic veil
That hides the unknown future from my
sight;
Nor know if for me waits the dark or light;
But I can trust.

I have no power to look across the tide,
To see, while here, the land beyond the
river;
But this I know, I shall be God's for ever;
So I can trust.

—Evangelical Magazine, May, 1877.

Religious.

Mahomet and the Turks.

Beyond the fact that he was the most successful impostor, sensualist, and hypocrite the world has ever seen, English-speaking races know very little about Mahomet or of the vast fabric of superstition and absurdity which is associated with his name. No doubt there are enough of books on the subject, but, as a rule, they have not come under the popular eye, being too learned, too expensive, or too something else to command an audience in a day when the literary sensationalism of the West rivals or eclipses the inventions of "The Arabian Nights." To supply the desideratum Dr. Marcus Dods was prevailed upon to give a course of four lectures at Queen's-square College, London, and these are now published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton—"Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ." As the last days of the "Sick Man" appear to have arrived, those who would know something about his principles and practice before the final collapse may very profitably consult the Presbyterian Doctor's succinct account of the False Prophet's grand imposture. It is not improbable that more will be known of him when his system is dead than is the case at present, while that system is the eyepiece of moralists and the master perplexity of politicians, shocking the world in turn by the venal corruption of its Government officials, and by the hereditary cruelty of the people in general.

It is not easy to analyse the character of a man like Mahomet—in common with Swedenborg he is a psychologic puzzle—but there are those who apologise for the man, while they are ready enough at denouncing the enormities of his system. To our mind this procedure savours of inconsistency; for the man and his imposture are manifestly one, and the only reasonable excuse that can be offered for the Apostle of Islam is to say he was an enthusiast, driven mad by brooding over one consuming idea. Of this inconsistency Mr. Carlyle is a prominent specimen when he makes a hero of the man who has proved a curse to millions he might have reformed. We also think that Dr. Dods errs on the side of over-admiration, though what some will account to be a failing, others will recognise as that generous impartiality accorded to an opponent which is characteristic of penetrative genius. At any rate, for our own part

we are not inclined to believe that Mahomet was any more sincere, while promulgating his heresies, than Philip the Second was sincere while stimulating the fiendish work of the Inquisition, and we harbour as much admiration for the one as the other. If Mahomet was sincere, so were all the other fanatical impostors who figure in history, many of whom were as enlightened as "the Prophet" was grossly ignorant.

If we would intelligently understand the character of "the unspeakable Turk" as he lives to-day, we must go back to Mahomet, who is the type of the entire nation. If by way of courtesy, or for the sake of argument, we speak of Turkey as civilized, does not the ignorance of the people strike one as being more appalling than that of any other community professing to have emerged from barbarism? Why should we expect the disciples to be more in this respect than their master? If the Koran may prefer a claim to any sort of inspiration, it is the inspiration of ignorance which rested on a basis of wild fanaticism. The system is an incomprehensible contradictory jumble of Deism and Socinianism.

Dr. Dods tells us that Mahomet "believed the Virgin Mary (whom he also confounded with Miriam, the sister of Moses) to be the third person worshipped by Trinitarians as the mother of God, with the Father and the Son." The man's blank ignorance throughout life was in complete accordance with this curious fact. He professed to accept the Gospels, of which he had no accurate knowledge, while "of the great and enlightening history of Israel, as a history, he knows nothing, and has merely caught up some childish tales from the Talmud and some garbled legends of the Hebrew patriarchs and great men." This all points to indolence, a vice which has been the curse and the ruin of the Moslem nation. Mahomet never took the trouble to examine those Christian books he declared to be inspired, and, as such, worthy of reception, so that, by a mischance he never suspected, he accepted writings which proved his own to be a cheat and a lie. He was a charlatan as licentious in practice as he was fanatical in creed, and lest his beast-like amours should be arraigned against him, he added passages to his puerile Koran granting himself indulgence in immorality. He became indeed a kind of Pope, the chief part of whose religion consisted in sensual pleasures, and it is because they have so thoroughly reflected his character that the Turkish nation has become what it is, a by-word in the world, enervated, contemptible, even devilish in bigotry and cruelty. And yet Dr. Dods is able to ask, "Who can doubt the earnestness of that search after truth and the living God, that drove the affluent merchant from his comfortable home and his fond wife, to make his abode for months at a time in the dismal cave on Mount Hira?" If the impostor had possessed any of this apostolic spirit, why did he not give some attention to the writings of the Old and the New Testaments? It is difficult to believe that, unless he be stark mad, any man can be an impostor without knowing it. Of course, it would be idle to deny that there have come down to us from Mahomet many sentiments and aphorisms beautiful in themselves, jewels which certainly owe none of their lustre to the heap of dirt in which they are found. The "Prophet" had both the cant and genius of a rabid enthusiast. We are told that "When he and Abu Bekker were lying concealed in a cave, and heard the angry voices of their pursuers coming closer and closer, his brave and steadfast companion whispered, 'What shall we do?' We are but two against so many," Mahomet whispered back, "Not so, we are three; God is with us!"

If Islamism has been a more insuperable bar than Paganism to the advance of civilisation, it is now sick unto death. Propagated by the sword, and founded in sensuality and indolence, rewarding

its believers with a paradise that could only be a heaven to creatures without souls, the system is now generally acknowledged to be the plague of the world as the disturber of the peace of nations. Decay and ultimate extinction are as natural to such a system as they are to the rotting trunk of a time-spent tree. While the power remained to fight and plunder, the Crescent might appear to be in the ascendant; a further lease of life was given so long as the Turk could prevail on others to fight for him, or while capitalists were willing to grant enormous loans, destined never to be repaid. But only leave him to stand alone, require that he shall find his own resources—in fine, as the leading journal would advise, let the Eastern Question settle itself—and a collapse will occur at which we may point as a retributive fulfilment of prophecy.

The present outbreak of the wars shows at every point the idiosyncrasies of the Turkish character. Lethargy and incompetence are seen in every department, and the insolent superiority that regards Christians as "infidel dogs" is for ever fomenting trouble. One by one the iron-clad gunboats are being destroyed on the Danube by Russian daring, and when they cross the great river the foe will only be opposed by men whose unpaid wages tell them they are fighting for a bankrupt state and a falling cause. That the Pope should order prayers "for the success of the Turkish arms against schismatic Russia," is what might have been expected. The Romish Church has in its time massacred more followers of Christ than the hordes of Islam have done, and it is therefore very natural that the two systems should so far work together in sympathy. They are mentioned side by side in Scripture, and the hope of patriotic hearts must be that they fall together in one common ruin.—London Baptist.

Wedding Fees.

The great embarrassment in weddings is that the principal parties thereto, "the party of the first part, and the party of the second part," have usually had no experience in that line. Occasionally, an old widower will come forward, who is used to it, and go through the whole ceremony with the coolness of an adept. We are told of one old veteran who, when requested by the clergyman to rise, replied, "I usually sit." Another "usually employed Dr. Spring for such services." But these specimens are as rare as springs in the desert. Generally the parties are inexperienced. They may have "talked it over," and "practised," and "rehearsed," but to practise on the parade-ground is very different from facing the enemy. Besides, it adds to the embarrassment to feel that it can be done but once. There is no chance to correct mistakes "next time." No doubt many a couple have felt with the poet,

"All things could be done so nice,
If we could only do them twice."

The giving of the wedding-fee to the clergyman ought not to be embarrassing, one would think, as it is not a public performance. But the very privacy of it, and the attempt to do it slyly, and to seem entirely unconscious of what both clergyman and groom are most intensely conscious of, makes this part of the ceremony often the most awkward of the whole. The ways of doing it are most infinitely various, and some of them almost infinitely comical. Sometimes there is a business-like frankness about the affair which is refreshing. The bridegroom himself, when he engages the services of the minister, wants to know "what the charge is." This is embarrassing again for the minister, as there is no standard charge, and the best he can do is to give the legal fee which a justice-receives, and feels he ought to receive. Often the bridegroom has an eye to business even then, and wants to know if less will not do. Of course

it must do. We read of a Methodist preacher who replied to one who asked as to how much was the customary fee, that "liberal people would give twenty dollars; some only gave ten, and once in a while a stingy fellow would come and offer five dollars." Another Methodist preacher, who had received a one-dollar bill, wrote on the back of it, "This dollar bill is all I received for marrying — — —," giving their names, and then set the bill circulating. One gentleman paid a dollar, and blandly remarked, "I suppose you would like all you could do of this work." As the recording would cost fifty cents, and the certificate twenty-five, the remark might have been intended as a piece of grim humor, but it was not so intended. One intensely practical youth stepped boldly forward at the conclusion of the ceremony, and unfolding a roll of bills, demanded, in a clear voice, "What's the damage, parson?" He was informed that he must find the damage out for himself, but that the legal fee was so and so. His new-made bride blushed as if she scarcely knew whether the question was complimentary or not. One day a man accosted the minister in the street, and wanted him to go at once and marry a couple. They had been waiting ever since the day before, and had not been able to find a minister. The minister wished to go home and adjust his toilet, but the stranger said "it would make no difference, and the young people were getting nervous." The minister then hinted at a carriage, but the man said "it was not necessary; it was only a few steps, just across the river." So they went together on foot, "just across the river," then "just down the river a few steps," until they had walked about three miles. It was an intensely hot day, still, and sultry, and dusty. When they reached the house, the parson was covered with perspiration and dust, and almost as much out of patience as the couple who had waited so long for his clerical services. He wasted no words in the ceremony, and there was no superfluous sentiment, "unuttered or expressed," in his manner. The services ended, and the "two waiting souls made one," the "business agent" of the affair appeared on the scene again, and wanted to know what the charge was. He was told the amount of the legal fee, but at once said that was too much, but he wanted to do the liberal thing. He then proceeded to count out into the minister's hand one dollar and fifty-three cents, handing it over as deliberately as if he were paying for a sack of flour, or a beef roast.

Once in a while one strikes an economical youth who wants "time"—or wants to "pay in trade." One asked, when he came to make the arrangements, if the minister could not wait for his fee till "after-corn-husking," and then "after-corn-husking" he forgot it. Another said his future wife was "a very fine butter-maker, and he would like to pay the fee in butter, if it was all the same." The coolest thing of this kind, however, was where the bridegroom, who owned an ice-house, "wanted to pay the fee in ice." It was a good, liberal fee, but the coolness of the thing was quite refreshing. But perhaps the most embarrassing way is where the bridegroom, or his friend, holds the fee in the palm of his hand, and slyly passes it into the parson's palm as they bid each other good-by. The effort of the minister to do two things at once, secure his fee and at the same time give a hearty shake of the hand, is a very sure test of his steadiness of nerve. A man who can do these two things well, and at the same time as if utterly unconscious of doing anything, is a man fit to command an army, or rule a State.

In conclusion, let me add that he who can devise an unobjectionable method of transferring the wedding-fee, and make that method known to all expectant bridegrooms, will confer a favor on his race equal to the man who makes "two spears of grass grow where but one grew before."

[The Church of England Prayer Book makes provision for this by putting in the rubric—perhaps not quite plainly enough for some people: "Then shall they again loose their hands; and the man shall give unto the woman a ring, laying the same upon the book with the accustomed duty to the Priest and Clerk.

Parties getting married by other clergymen may take the hint and give the fee to the minister at the same time as they present the ring.—Ed.]

Good Society.

Many parents who have sons and daughters growing up are anxious for them to get into good society. This is an honorable anxiety, if it interprets good society after some lofty fashion. Parents, your daughter is in good society when she is with girls who are sweet and pure and true-hearted; who are not vain and frivolous; who think of something besides dress, or flirting, or marriage; between whom and their parents there is confidence; who are useful as well as ornamental in the house; who cultivate their minds, and train their hands to skillful workmanship. If society of this sort is not to be had, then none at all is preferable to a worthless article. See to it that you impress this on your children, and above all, that you do not encourage them to think that good society is a matter of fine clothes, or wealth, or boasting to be somebody. As you value your child's soul, guard her against these miserable counterfeits; and impress upon her that intelligence, and simplicity, and modesty, and goodness, are the only legal coin.

The same rule holds for boys as well as for girls. You would have these enter into good society. Do not imagine that you have accomplished it when you have got them in with a set of boys whose parents are wealthier than you, who dress better than your boy can afford to, and who pride themselves upon their social position. Good society for a boy is the society of boys who are honest and straightforward, who have no bad habits, who are earnest and ambitious. They are not in a hurry to be men. They are not ambitious for the company of shallow, heartless women, old enough to be their mothers, and are not envious of their young friends who fancy there is something grand in dulling all the edge of their heart's hope upon such jaded favorites. There is nothing sadder than to see either young men or women priding themselves upon the society which they enjoy, when verily it is a Dead Sea apple that will choke them with its dust, when they need some generous, juicy fruit to cool their lips and stay the hunger of their souls! —Christian Register.

The Sin of Worry.

There are men in the world who wear a girdle of fret, as trying as any friar's, to annoy themselves. They fancy that in such experience is to be found the highest fulfilment of religious duty and the truest expression of this world's probation. Some one has said that they procure their tickets and then carry their luggage with them, always encumbered with it, wherever they go, while there is provided a proper and capacious receptacle for all encumbrances. Oh, what domestic infelicity this spirit of worry occasions! Mary and Martha are always in confession, never able to comprehend one another. What business impatience and misunderstandings are inspired by this same contradiction, as it exists in common forms!

The assurance needs to be taken home by every one of us, that worry is the deadly foe of the gospel and of common sense. In both the general and the special providence of God, which are revealed to us on every page of the Bible, there are distinct utterances against this tendency by which we are all plagued. But in addition to these promises there are positive precepts which make it most evident that