

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXII., No. 8.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 21, 1877.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLI., No. 8.

Poetry.

No Time to Pray.

No time to pray!
Oh, who so fraught with earthly care
As not to give to humble prayer
Some part of day?

No time to pray!
What heart so clean, so pure within,
That needeth not some check from sin—
Needs not to pray?

No time to pray!
Mid each day's danger, what retreat
More needful than the mercy-seat?
Who need not pray?

No time to pray!
Must care or business' urgent call
So press us as to take it all,
Each passing day?

No time to pray!
Then sure your record falleth short:
Excuse will fail you as resort
On that last day.

What thought more drear
Than that our God His face should hide
And say, through all life's swelling tide,
No time to hear!

Cease not to pray;
On Jesus as your all rely.
Would you live happy—happy die?
Take time to pray.

Home.

BY THE REV. JOHN YOUNG.

"Our home is not where we are, but
where we wish to be."

'Tis Home where the heart is, wherever
that be.

In city, in desert, on mountain, in dell;
Not the grandeur, the number, the objects we see,
But that which we love is the magical
spell.

'Tis this gives the cottage a charm and
a grace,
Which the glare of a palace but rarely
has known;

It is this, only this, and not station or
place,
Which gives being to pleasure, which
makes it our own.

Like the dove on the waters, a rest-
place to find,
In vain for enjoyment o'er nations we
roam;

HOME only can yield real joy to the
mind,
And THERE where the HEART is, there
only is HOME.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Death—What then?

Death is the end of our probationary state; the suspension of the union that exists between soul and body till the Resurrection. It is generally looked upon with feelings of gloom and horror, arising probably from the mysteries which surround it; or the dread of the pain which is supposed to attend it, or more probable still, the consciousness of sin which gives the sting to death. "The sting of death is sin." A proper view of what follows immediately upon death may help to remove these dark forebodings, and the Word of God is not without good cheer on this question for all who are serving the Lord.

The moment the "silver cord is loosed" the soul—the MAN—goes to happiness or misery according to the character of the life lived in the body.

There are some, however, who hold that the soul falls into a state of sleep or unconsciousness, which has no warrant from Scripture.

1st. The wicked pass into a state of conscious misery. The rich man (Luke 16) is represented as lifting up his eyes, being in torments, and seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me, &c. We find Abraham answering him, to whom he again replies. Experience has taught us,

that during sleep, the senses as well as the mental powers are suspended; yet we find in the case before us that three of the five senses were in full operation. Dives felt the tormenting flame; he saw Abraham; he heard him speak. He perceived that Abraham was in a state of happiness; he felt sympathy for, and interest in, his brothers still in the flesh; he was conscious they were in a position of danger, and where they had opportunity to escape his doom. If, therefore, after death the soul falls asleep, as some say, then we have here a conversation carried on between two men, both asleep, and both conversing intelligently with each other, which is opposed, I think, to all experience. The cities of the Plain are said to be "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." If they are asleep, they are not suffering, for as is happily well known, sleep takes away, for the time at least, the sense of pain, and no one can be said to suffer what he has no sense of.

2. The righteous pass into a state of conscious happiness.

Paul writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xii. 2-4) says:

"I knew a man in Christ above 14 years ago. . . such an one caught up into the third heaven. And I knew such a man. . . how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, &c." Here he evidently teaches that the soul separated from the body, both perceives and thinks beyond the natural apprehension of mortals; and when he speaks of the revelations given unto him, and of the unspeakable things not lawful (that is, not possible) for a man to utter, he plainly shews that this state is so far from being one of slumber, silence and oblivion, that, on the contrary, it is a place of exquisite delight and enjoyment; where mysteries may be heard and learnt far surpassing the reach of frail mortals, and which it is impossible to reconcile with the theory of sleep.

The conviction of conscious enjoyment, and that immediately after death, animated Paul when he said to the Corinthians, "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," (2 Cor. v. 6) and to the Philippians, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better" (ch. i. 21-23). If on leaving the body he should fall into unconsciousness, it is difficult to see how it would be better, far better, to depart from the body than to remain in it. It would surely be 'far better' to remain and enjoy the presence of Christ and the comforts of the Spirit, than depart where he could enjoy neither. His desire to depart was to be with Christ, and enjoy His presence in a manner he could not here.

The body and the soul, although so intimately connected are distinct and separable, which those who contend for the sleep theory seem to forget; and this fact Paul sets forth very clearly, particularly in the verses just referred to, Phil. i. 21-23, 2 Cor. v. 6. Peter, in his first epistle, chapter i. vs. 13, 14, is equally clear, "I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle. . . knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, &c.," and in verse 16, he speaks of his 'decease,' literally, *exodus*, or going out, from the tabernacle or tent of his body.

Dr. Guthrie referring to his old age said:—"They say I am growing old because my hair is silvered, and there are crow's feet upon my forehead, and my step is not so firm and elastic as of yore: but they are mistaken,—that is not me. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not me. This is the house in which I live, but I am young,—younger than ever I was before."

It may be further shewn that the soul passes out of the body and into a state

of consciousness from the Saviour's answer to the thief's prayer, Luke xxiii. 43. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The Jews, when their friends died, would pray that their soul might be in Paradise, or, might be gathered unto the Garden of Eden; and Christ would naturally speak to the thief in language that he and all who heard would understand. If Christ did not intend that he should enter into a place or state of extraordinary happiness and pleasure, to what purpose was it told him that he should on that day, the very day he should die, be with him in Paradise, if he were to fall asleep till the resurrection? It would be no Paradise to him if he had no sense to taste and enjoy its pleasures. If, as some hold, the body and soul sleep together in the grave till the resurrection, then the grave must be the Paradise. Christ spoke of, and he himself must be still asleep in the grave, inasmuch as he told the thief he should be with him. It is held, however, that there should be a stop after 'to-day'; thus—"Verily I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise." To mention this is enough to shew the folly of it. How could he but speak on the day he did speak? The Saviour said what he meant, and meant what he said, which was, that on that very day that thief should be with him in Paradise. Christ died first, and the thief followed him to that place of bliss shortly afterwards.

Let every Christian heart be cheered from the very blessed fact that when they quit this mortal scene they shall be with Christ, and let the same sweet assurance cheer their Christian friends under the visitation of Death.

"With those we love 'tis hard to part,
The flesh will feel, the soul must smart,
And grief wrings from the stricken heart,
A mournful cry;
And yet our loved ones but depart,
They do not die.

They live, the beautiful, the dead,
Like stars of fire above our head,
They truly live who have been led
To God's right hand;
Have found above earth's doubt and dread,
The better land."

Death is the gate of Life. The first step out of grace is the first step into glory. What we call Death is but transition, going out of this pent up house into the clear, free air of Heaven. We are now without the veil, death snaps the cord, and we are within; and as there is no time between one moment and the next, so no time elapses between the time we leave the body and our entrance upon the spiritual state. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

Milton.

J. BROWN.

A Sermon on Sermons.

Theme: Sermons are like guns—
1. In respect to size, and qualities, and condition.—Some are large, others are small; some are long, others are short; some are new, others are old; some are bright, others rusty; some are made to be looked at, others to be used; some are loaded, others empty; some are owned, others borrowed.

2. In respect to kind, calibre and power.—Some are air-guns, some pop-guns, some of every size, from the pocket pistol to the Paixhan gun. Some are charged only with powder, and make a great noise and smoke. Some send only small shot that irritate rather than kill. Some carry heavy metal, that does execution. Some discharge chain-shot, mowing down whole platoons. Some are wide-mouthed mortars, throwing only bomb-shells. Some are duelling pistols, used only at controversy:—vile things!

3. In respect to their discharge and execution.—Some go off half cocked. Some flash in the pan. Some make a terrible fizz, the charge all escaping at the priming hole. Some shoot too high, some too low, some sideways, a few directly at the point. Some are aiming at nothing, and hit it. Some scatter prodigiously; some kick their owners over. Some are unerring; others always hit the wrong object.

Some have too much wadding, and vice versa.

IV. In respect to their being dangerous, useful, or hurtful.—Some are alarm guns; others are complimentary guns, used only for salutes on special occasions. Some are in a series, constituting a battery; others are swivels, made to turn in any direction. Some are useful, some useless, some dangerous. Some amuse, some frighten, some exasperate, some explode, some gain the victory.

APPLICATION.—Very much depends upon the manner in which they are made and managed.—*Christian Watchman.*

Let the Book speak.

The Rev. Dr. Culross in the *Scottish Baptist Magazine* says: "The opening up of Scripture has not hitherto been all that it might have been. There has been plenty of 'lecturing,' 'expounding,' 'commenting,' and so forth; but not quite so much of letting the Book itself speak. Undoubted exhibition of truth there has been, but too often of truth cramped by logical swaddling-bands, if not actually in dead clothes; too obscured in the presenting, like a giant seen through a fog. Sometimes the creed, accepted beforehand and hereditarily, has given unconscious bias to the interpreter; and the Bible has become the fiddle on which he has played the tunes of his own church, or of his own party. What the churches need, and what many souls are longing for, is not eloquent preaching, or passionate appeal, or philosophizing, or the ransacking of the Bible for 'proofs' of our doctrinal views, or for stones to fling at our theological adversaries, but the speaking out of God's Word, as apprehended in the deepest experience of our heart and conscience; the speaking of it freely and fearlessly, in language that all men can understand; which is to be done by those only who, being something more than grammarians, or theologians, are spiritually *en rapport* with the Book, and have unflinching confidence in the teaching of God himself. The gain of all this world would be immense. It would be the counteracting of these tendencies, perpetually asserting themselves, which would turn God's blessed Word into a kind of clever children's puzzle, as if God had given the Bible for a small sharp ingenuity. It would put a stop to the trade of blowing religious soap-bubbles in the pulpit, which the pew is expected to admire; and of that 'spiritualizing,' such as finds the doctrine of the Trinity in the baker's dream of three baskets, and which is one of the most mischievous accomplishments a man can have. It would be the answer by anticipation to all the heresies. It would do very much to secure and consolidate the results of 'revival,' for any revival will be shallow and evanescent, and associated with things to deplore, and followed by double lassitude, if we do not bring out for use the mighty meaning of the Book, and that in the shape and connection which God has given them. And I am sure it would contribute greatly to the clearing away of doubts and perplexities, and the deepening of Christian joy."

Prayer-Meetings in Gaol.

BY LAVINIA GOODELL.

When it was first proposed, by a few enthusiastic workers for the Young Men's Christian Association, that we hold weekly prayer-meetings at the gaol, the suggestion was received by many with that cool scepticism so much more trying to the earnest worker than any amount of vigorous and hearty opposition. Had the project been to send a delegation down to the infernal regions to convert his Satanic majesty and all his hosts, it could scarcely have been looked upon as more utterly futile and impracticable. There were just three women and two men who believed in it, and were ready to lead off. The sheriff gave his

consent to the experiment, with the comforting assurance that we should only be casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs. And so, at first, it seemed.

When Will Elliott, and George Colman, and Julia and Nellie Stevens went there the first time, full of fresh, generous enthusiasm of youth, it seemed to them almost that they were going into a den of wild beasts. Before they reached the door, shouts and screams, bits of roisterly singing and coarse jests were wafted to them on the air. The room, as they entered it, was redolent of tobacco, and the floor covered with expectations of that seductive weed. Soiled cards were lying around, and the prisoners had an unwholesome and dishevelled appearance. They became quiet and orderly at the command of the sheriff; and our brave little band, nothing daunted, went up to each man and shook hands with him, with a smile and pleasant word. When it was announced that a meeting would be held, seats were arranged in a circle around the stove, and the prisoners took their places quietly and respectfully. "Hold the Fort," "The Ninety and Nine," and other sweet hymns of the Sankey collection were sung; then each of the young band spoke a few words of the love of Christ, and the joy of following in His footsteps, and knelt on the dirty stone floor in prayer. The prisoners were all young men—there were about half a dozen of them—and, though some of them laughed slyly, and winked at each other, the presence and genial cordiality of these young men and women who had come to see them seemed to interest and sober them. Another large room, containing about the same number of prisoners, joined this; though there was no communication between them except by a small opening in the wall through which they could converse, and small articles could be passed. The prisoners on the other side, discovering that a meeting was being held, proceeded to shout and scream, singing wild snatches of coarse songs, and making all the disturbance possible, till reduced to submission by the sheriff. At the close of the meeting our little band again shook hands, spoke a few kind words to each of the prisoners, and left a quantity of papers and magazines for them to read.

The next week they visited the other side with an experience quite similar to the first. Week after week, with little apparent effect, the meetings were continued, and large numbers joined our pioneer band. After a time it was observed that the prisoners looked neater than at first; that the floor had been newly scrubbed before our arrival, and neither dirty cards nor tobacco juice were to be seen. The prisoners on the opposite side ceased to disturb the meetings, and finally came to the opening in the wall to listen quietly, and even join in the hymns. Tom Riley told me, when he came out, "The boys love to have you come. They look for it, and anticipate it every week. They didn't use to scrub the floor once a month, and now they scrub it every time just before you come, and are careful not to spit on it afterwards till you are gone. They like the singing best of anything."

We left Bibles and hymn-books with the prisoners, and found they were read; and our papers and magazines were very eagerly devoured. We began to lend them books; one of the prisoners agreeing to be responsible for them; and every week they have been returned to us in good condition, and with scarcely the odour of tobacco about them.

One day Nellie asked "any who wanted the prayers of Christian people for them, to raise their hands;" and nearly every hand went up; and a few days ago she received a letter from one who had recently come out and left town. This is the letter:

"DEER MISS STEVENS,
"i dont think it rite not to thank you for all you have dun for us. i have bin a verry bad man, but now i