

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXIII, No. 9.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 27, 1878.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLII, No. 9.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

This piece was not intended for publication; it was sent to a friend who thinks it too good to keep to himself, and therefore (without consulting the author) sends it forth to the light.

Twilight Thought.

BY HARRIET COLE, MILTON.

I thank my Heavenly Father
For all His gifts to me;
Each day of my life more clearly,
His goodness I can see.
But 'mid all the earthly blessings,
That from time to time He sends:
There's none to my heart more precious
Than the love of Christian friends.

Some in my room can gather,
But others are far away;
Yet the same kind Heavenly Father
Is with them all each day.
When I ask a blessing on them,
Through the dear Redeemer's name:
I feel that they're often asking
For me the very same.

My heart goes off on a journey,
Through many a weary day;
And gathers up the dear ones
Who have gone so far away.
And I oft look longingly forward
To that happy joyful time,
When all God's people will gather
In Heaven from every clime.

Had we no hope of meeting
In that land so bright and fair;
The partings on earth that grieve us,
Would be more than we could bear.
There's much that is happening daily,
That we cannot understand;
But our God will clearly explain it,
When we get to the better land.

We must pray and wait with patience,
And trust the Lord for the rest:
For we know that He loves us always,
And will give us what is best.
We are safe in His holy keeping,
And have no cause to fear;
Clouds may often gather around us,
But the sun will again appear.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Notes on the Lord's Commission.

No. 2.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

In the first paper we propounded a theory on the form of words used by our Lord respecting baptism, maintaining that the gospel dispensation presents an enlarged view of the divine character and government, to which the convert is introduced when he is baptized, in which ordinance he is consecrated to the service of the Triune God. But we must not allow ourselves to speculate on these high points, or to imagine that we understand them. All we know is that the Deity is revealed to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If we attempt to draw distinctions, and to show how this or that can be, we do but lose ourselves among unthinkables, and shall most probably use words bordering on the profane, as they did who invented the creeds called the Nicene and the Athanasians, and then did worse by imposing them on others, at the cost of goods and life, and to the reproach of Christianity. The utmost humility and reverence become us in the discussion of these subjects. We should never be ashamed of confessing our ignorance. Jeremy Taylor's words are admirable:—"He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention; talking of essences and existences and personalities, priority, co-equality, and unity in pluralities, may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk something he knows not what: but the renewed man, that feels the power of the Father, and to whom the Son is become wisdom, sanctification and redemption, in whose heart the love of the Spirit is shed abroad. . . this man, though he understands nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone truly understands the doctrine of the Trinity."

And even that good man, though he may be said to understand the doctrine, so far as regards its moral aspects, does not comprehend it, any more than he or any other man comprehends any of the divine perfections, such as eternity or omnipresence, which no created being can grasp. The language of the sage of the land of Uz is most appropriate—"Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job xi. 7.). The philosophers of the middle ages thought themselves very wise, but "the light that was in them was darkness." In the whole range of our knowledge there is much more room, and even necessity for faith, than is commonly supposed; we are called on continually to believe, in all branches of science; we know very little. It is greatly to be regretted that many an ignoramus fancies himself, exceedingly wise. An inspired Apostle once said, "If any man think he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. viii. 2.). Doubtless, Paul was right, for it is the testimony of all ages that "knowledge puffeth up."

We return to the Commission:—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This is very comprehensive. Those who teach Christianity are bound to "declare all the counsel of God," especially to communicate to the Church the words and thoughts of the Master. The Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26). This included the teachings of the forty days. The writers of the New Testament have preserved the Lord's instructions. The holy book comprises the substance of his lessons, as given in Judea and in Galilee. And there was a separate revelation made by the Lord himself to the Apostle Paul (Gal. I. 11, 12.) and by him committed to writing. The New Testament, therefore, is the book of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Teaching them all things." That is, all truth and all duty. Truth is to be received. Duty is to be performed. It is fair to suppose that in the apostolical writings we have the benefit of the remarkable interviews between the Saviour and his disciples, and that in reading the productions of Paul, and Peter, and John we do even now sit at Christ's feet and learn his words. And we may believe that holy apostles retained to the end of their lives the savour of their communings with the Lord, and often refreshed their memories by reproducing, in their conversations the recollections of his tone and manner, particularly when he emphasized anything. Christ's emphasis was a thing of power. It fell with weight on the ear.

"ALL THINGS." We seem to hear Him say—"Do not assume a right of choice. Let there be no selections from my lessons—Teach them ALL. The lessons relate to the state of the heart—the harmony of truth—the regulation of temper—the various displays of brotherly love—the avoidance of offence—the duties of self-denial, forbearance, forgiveness, zealous activity, and the manifold traits of Christian character. Omit nothing. No point is to be regarded as insignificant or beneath notice; none so difficult as to be beyond the reach of the promise of 'grace sufficient.'" Whatever the Head of the Church has thought fit to enjoin, his Church is bound to obey; and let it not be forgotten that the obligation extends to every member on the list. None are too young; none, too old. The rich hold their money as stewards for God; the poor will not be exempted from giving 'out of their penury,' though it be but "two mites, which make a farthing." "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

The commission closes with a gracious declaration;—"And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." It wears the aspect of a promise or a prophecy, and was spoken in anticipation of difficulties and sufferings which were sure to occur, and which in fact make up a large part of

the history of the Church. The Saviour had already fore-warned his disciples that persecution awaited them. "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." They went forth to their labours as men doomed. The sentence of death was upon them, and its execution was often preceded by frightful torments. Other sufferings also came upon them affecting the mind, which are generally harder to bear than those which inflicted bodily pain. The Apostle Paul recites very calmly the list of his endurances—his scourgings—his shipwrecks—his multifarious perils; but when he comes to the mental part of the pressure he uses language which indicates deep feeling, amounting to anguish. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"—"I have great heaviness of heart and continual sorrow in my heart."—The Lord knew what his servants would have to pass through, and he prepared them for the trial. His presence was the preparation. The ancient Church recognized the same general truth, and joyfully celebrated the bestowment of the blessing. "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early" (Psalm xli. 5, 11). So we find in the record of the early Christian body: "They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" (Mark xvi. 20). When Paul was labouring at Corinth, he seems to have been oppressed by the iniquities of the place, and the unfruitfulness of believers: "Without were fightings, within were fears." It was a fit occasion for the Lord's appearance on his behalf. "Thus spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision. 'Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city'" (Acts xviii. 10). His experience on the voyage to Rome was similar. The ship was in imminent danger. She had been tossed up and down "in Adria" for a fortnight, during a terrible storm, and now "all hope that they should be saved was taken away. Two hundred and seventy-six passengers expected every moment a watery grave, and no possibility of deliverance appeared; when an angelic messenger brought an announcement from heaven that their lives were all safe, for they were secured to the Christian preacher. And so it proved. They ran the ship ashore. They that could swim cast themselves into the sea, and the rest, some took to boards, and some to broken pieces of the ship, and it came to pass that "they escaped all safe to land." God had promised, and Paul believed God.

Another scene presents itself. It is at Rome, and the apostle was placed on his trial. The terrors of Nero had fallen on the Roman Christians, and they all forsook the man of God; but, says he, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear, and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim. iv. 17, 18).

At length the day of deliverance came. On the 29th of June, A. D. 11, a melancholy procession passed out of the Ostian gate of the city, headed by a centurion. Paul was there, walking in the midst of the soldiers. And Jesus was there, though unseen, comforting his servant. Arrived at the place of execution, the headsman did his office, and Paul had departed, to be "forever with the Lord."

The annals of martyrdom are full of such details. Stephen fell under the stones of his Jewish murderers—the Lord was with him, and condescended to be seen by him in his glory. And he was with Ignatius, when thrown to the wild beasts at Rome; with Polycarp, in the blazing pile at Smyrna; with Tyndale, at Vilvorde; with Ridley and Latimer, as they glorified God in the fire at Oxford; and with all "the noble army of martyrs" who in successive ages died unto the Lord—now in the flames—now in the floods—and

then, having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," took their station before the throne of God, "to serve him day and night in his temple."

(To be continued.)

Growing Grey Gracefully.

So shall the sun in smiles decline,
And bring a pleasant night.
All must grow old, unless they die early. Manifestly there is no other alternative. How shall we best do it with pleasure to ourselves and profit to others?

1. *Consent to grow old.* Age cannot be repelled, and it should not be concealed, denied, or disguised. We cannot, in these middle years of life, apprehend its peculiar peace and joy. Spring blossoms with flowers, and summer blooms with ripening fruits, but neither season reveals the joy and pride of harvest. So early life gives little token of the happiness of age, yet reason assures us it must have a happiness of its own for those who attain it in harmony with its conditions. Remember! when we were children the labors, the studies, even the pleasures of grown men and women around us were repellent, or incomprehensible; we could not feel the robust, vigorous happiness with which adult life assumes its responsibilities, performs its labours, and bears its burdens. But when, in due growth, we came to these, we took the same joy in them, which puzzled us children so much in the lives of our fathers and mothers. So we can demonstrate (as surely as the astronomer computes an eclipse) that age is not less happy than youth, if it is met and borne aright. And observation confirms what reason alleges; for who does not know some among the old appearing happier than the young! But age must be met somewhat cheerfully. To shrink from it, to contrive evasions and disguises of its approach, to conceal it to ourselves and deny it to others, is no way to enter happily within its restful shade. *It must come. It is coming.* Away, then, with the devices and disguises the fictions and pretences, which falsify advancing years. Let the white hairs bloom, accept the glasses or the helpful cane, yield up willingly whatever of faculty or power age withdraws and look for the compensations which it brings, for some such assuredly there are. *Consent to grow old.*

2. *Plant happy memories.* To live aright in the days of early life will go far towards making age happy, for the conduct of to-day is the root of the memories of to-morrow. We can compute this again from what we already know of life. In youth, as we all remember, hope was our guide, anticipation and expectation were the animating sentiments; the mind looked constantly forward, plans and purposes were its chief activity. In mature years, as most of us now know, realisation takes the place of hope; the mind concerns itself more with now. Clearly there must be, as years accumulate, a gradual turning of the mind towards the past; memory will become the chosen companion, we shall live more and more in what we recollect. Youth dwells in the future; manhood in the present; age in the past. To ponder upon former years enters into the heart-life of age just as does the hope and prospect of years to come, into that of youth. Each person is forming that clement for his age by his life now. The hasty words, the foolish deeds, the neglects and omissions, the transgressions of to-day are the seeds for so many mortifications and sorrows to grow rank in the white-haired years. Whatever is wise, right, generous, self-sacrificing, honorable in the life of to-day, is a plant which will ripen thick with peaceful and pleasant memories in the days when, memory is chief factor in happiness. *Plant happy memories.*

3. *Learn lasting pleasures.* Of the recreations, the pleasant occupations for time, there are some which depend very much upon physical vigour, and ordinarily must be early relinquished;

and others which retain interest even when powers and activity have considerably failed. Fortunate, therefore, in age is one who has cultivated some lasting pleasures; who has learned, during early life, to enjoy some occupations which can be still continued. Some of the happiest pictures of human life are those in which the student, philosopher, or writer is seen prosecuting the studies which gave him eminence far down the hill. A taste for reading, a fondness for art, for music, or for the lighter kinds of hand-work, an enthusiasm for one's garden, or fresh greenness and good order of trees and walks around a country-home of one's own, a kindly love and care for animals around one's house, a hospitable dinner-table for one's friends may fill with cheer-giving occupation many long months no longer available for business or active life. But these pursuits and tastes must be acquired before the season of youth is quite flown. Reader, pause a moment; call to mind someone whom you know, or of whom you have read, whose life is an example of serene and happy age. What does he or she have for occupation? Are you learning to do that thing, or something like it, with enjoyment? If not, you are lacking in one important preparation; you are behindhand in your lesson, and will lose your place in the class. Learn lasting pleasures.

4. *Cultivate younger friends.* Again computing what must come to pass from what we have already witnessed, we foresee that age will be lonely unless there is some timely cultivation of friendships appropriate for it. Where are the friends of our youth? What has become of the ties upon which we once so much depended? What then must be the continuance of this process of change, operating upon the social affinities in which we now live? Granting that we could avoid all loss of friendships from estrangement, removals, and social changes, yet, looking forward to the extreme of life, it is clear that one is liable to become alone by the stern necessity to outlive one's friends. Why should we not turn, winningly, while we can, towards those who in due time are to take our places in life, and seek, somewhat advisedly, to make friends among those who are younger than we? Why not make ourselves useful to the young, that we may retain a welcome among them when we have become the old? Let us cultivate young friends.

5. *Turn towards heaven.* Age is the long avenue through which we slowly walk towards another life, and death is the gate at the end which admits us to the world beyond, to the society of the departed and the immediate presence of God. This is a weary, painful, dangerous walk if we persist in walking backwards with eyes longingly fixed only on the life that must be left, and no vision of the way that lies before us and the life which we approach. Turn round! Set the face and the feet towards the world to come! It is well to glance backwards sometimes, and refresh the memory with glimpses of the path we have trod, of the heights we are leaving, on which the declining sun still casts a lovely light, but which we shall not, with quite the same clearness, see again. But let the steady, watchful gaze be upon the road before us, and the goal beyond. Let the thoughts fly forward to the heaven for which we hope, to its renewed youth, its reunion with friends, and its companionship with Jesus. We shall not bewail age if we can heartily turn towards heaven.—*Baptist.*

The Reformed Episcopal Church of America, which now has seventy-eight ministers, including five bishops, has had an important accession in the person of the Rev. William Newton, of Philadelphia. Mr. Newton has resigned the rectorship of the Church of the Nativity and withdrawn from the Protestant Episcopal Church. Mr. Newton and sixty-four of his parishioners have organized the Reformed Episcopal Church of the Covenant.