

The Christian Messenger.

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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLIII., No. 49.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

MR. EDITOR,—

The following verses were composed by MR. WM. A. D. MACKINLAY, and constituted his Graduating Essay at Acadia College. On account of feeble health he was excused from speaking upon the occasion of his graduation. Consequently comparatively few, even of his friends have heard these stanzas which were written as he thought of saying Farewell to his Alma Mater. He has gone to rest. But we doubt not there are numbers of his student friends and acquaintances of after years, who will find satisfaction in perusing these lines.

Yours &c.,

W. B. BRADSHAW.

North River, P. E. Nov. 20, 1879.

A Farewell.

'Tis evening's pensive hour. The College bell,
Whose well-known sound soft has met
my ears
In plaintive tones rings out a sad farewell,
And calls up memories of other years.

I gaze with tearful eyes upon those walls
By long familiarity made dear,
Each fondly lingering glance to me recalls
Remembrances of joy or sadness here.

The happy hours forever passed away,
The kindly memories that can ne'er depart,
And ah! the pang the world cannot allay,
The deed unkind that sinks into the heart.

All crowd upon me, as I trembling stand
About to launch upon a treacherous sea,
Where many wrecks bestrew the barren
strand,
And sad forebodings bring of what may be.

Dear Alma Mater, must I say farewell?
And shall I tread thy quiet halls no more?
Nor hear the mellow chime of evening bell
The peaceful shadowy valley floating o'er?

No more shall I from yonder hill behold
The rich warm hues that glow in sunset
skies,
Deep orange, violet and burning gold,
'Neath which the distant dark blue moun-
tains rise.

The fertile meadows stretching far to view,
And grand old Blomidon around whose
shore
The beauteous Minas pours its waters blue,
All must be looked upon by me no more.

And hearts long bound in friendship now
must part,
On earth perhaps no more to meet again,
But though wide sundered, yet with magic
art
Will Memory join them with her golden
chain.

Oh Memory that links us with the past,
And casts the shade or light of other days
Upon the present, how distinct and fast
Thy visions start before my wildering gaze.

Thou carriest me back to childhood's hours,
And leavest me to linger there awhile
'Mong sunny fields and groves and smiling
flowers,
Where all was quiet bliss and free from
guile.

There I drank deep at Nature's fountain pure
And let my soul go out in sympathy
With all creation, from all harm secure.
And from all worldly cares and trials free.

The rainbow painted on the azure sky,
The cow-bell tinkling from the distant lea,
The forest where the wandering breezes
sigh,
The gentle rippling of the moonlit sea.

These with the home friends ever fond and
true
My sole companions were, and oft at even,
When star-light gleamed and softly fell the
dew,
A loving mother spoke to me of heaven.

To me all earth was heaven, nought did I
know
Of bitterness, of turmoil and of strife,
Manhood seemed distant, and I thought to go
To rest before I travelled far in life.

I pictured out some green and quiet spot
Where I should rest ere youth's bright
dreams were o'er,
Where bloomed the violet and forget-me-
not
For one by whom they should be seen no
more.

O happy, happy days for ever fled,
Could I get back thy bliss for one short
hour!
Vain thought! As soon to raise the silent
dead
From their last long repose would'st thou
have power.

O blame me not ye fearless hearts and strong,
Who look with hope upon life's battlefield,
If I with ceaseless, hopeless yearning long
For that pure joy the days of childhood yield.

And say not that the heart corrupt has been,
And false that looks with fond regret to
youth,
That those are always hopeful and serene
Who faithful are to virtue and to truth.

That buoyancy of soul I ne'er have known
That on good health attends. From early
years
A weight oppressed my heart, and oft alone,
I yielded to the impulse of my tears.

It wanted but a drop to overflow
The cup already filled up to the brim,
And who without one bitter drop of woe
Could have so many years pass over him?

I've stood beside the cold and silent tomb
That hid dear friends forever from my
sight,
I mourned but not in bitterness of gloom,
For through the darkness gleamed a ray
of light.

No 'tis not death that sends the keenest dart
To sever ties of sympathy and love,
It is the living dead that breaks the heart,
And drives away the last gleam from
above.

The coldness, and selfishness, and sin,
And the false hearts that everywhere
abound,
And ah! the consciousness of wrong within
Have bowed my spirit low upon the ground.

To me no clearer evidence is given
That man has fallen from a higher life,
Than that those sympathies but meet for
heaven.
Are closely linked with hatred and with
strife.

And that the hearts most tenderly alive,
To sentiments of friendship and of love,
By some repulsive dispositions drive
The most loved objects from them to remove.

A cloud has crossed the sunshine of my days,
A cloud that ne'er on earth will pass away,
And now I look ahead with fearful gaze
On the wild sea that looms up in the ray.

Already do I feel its chilling breath,
And hear the hoarse voice of its roaring
surge;
Its breezes have the iciness of death,
Its music is a never ceasing dirge.

But courage! Let me launch my feeble bark,
The voyage of my life may not be long,
There may be light ahead though all is dark
And victory is not always to the strong.

Almighty Father, by whose power we live,
Who knowest all our weakness and dis-
tress,
To this frail spirit strength and comfort give,
And keep me in thy love and tenderness.

If on the sea upon whose brink I stand
I meet with any feebler sinking soul,
May I not shrink to give a helping hand;
Aid save him from the darksome billows
roll.

And when this earthly voyage shall be o'er,
And the light breaks upon another day,
May I have reached that yet untroubled
shore,
Where sin and pain and sorrow flee away.
May 1st, 1868.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Pulpit Elocution.

No. 4.

RUSSELL—READING THE SCRIPTURES.

The mechanical and unmeaning style of reading which arises from prevalent defects in early education, is nowhere more perceptible or more injurious than when exemplified in a passage of Scripture. With the language of the sacred volume are associated all the highest thoughts and profoundest emotions of which the soul is susceptible; and our utterance in the reading of its pages ought to be the expression of such states of mind. But no book, generally speaking, is read with less of appropriate feeling or expressive sense.

The Scriptures are not unfrequently read with tones which do not indicate any personal interest on the part of the reader in the sentiments he is uttering. The effect of the cold, dry style commonly adopted in reading the Bible is often indeed rendered utterly absurd, when the attention happens for a moment to fall on the oriental fervor and sublimity of the style in contrast with the meagre and shabby effect of the reader's voice. The words in such cases speak of God and of eternity in strains which the uneducated mind associates with the vastness of the overhanging firmament and the grandeur of the reverberating thunder; but the reader's

tone is that of the coldest indifference or of a matter ordinary and trivial. The fault of a cold, inexpressive voice, is often the result of an anxiety to shun all appearance of assumed and imposing style, and to allow the hearer to feel for himself the solemnity of the subject. But as it is destitute of the natural indication of earnestness in the reader, it deadens the sympathy of the hearer.

Another error in the style of reading, is that of reading the words of Scripture with a formal, unwieldy, and unmeaning tone, which aims at a certain solemn dignity of effect, but only reaches a very unmusical song.

Sometimes a third fault is incurred by a desire to break through the trammels of conventional restraint, and produce a lively impression by familiar and vivid tone, which savors too much of ordinary talk by the fireside. But coldness and familiarity are alike forbidden, on subjects which appeal to the deepest susceptibilities of the heart.

Who can ever forget the impressions left on the mind by hearing, even once, a passage of Scripture read by the late Dr. Nettleton, with that characteristic depth and vividness which seemed to bepeak a soul communing face to face with the Invisible? Who that was ever present on such an occasion can forget the hushed and profound attention with which a congregation would listen to the deep and quiet, yet thrilling tones of Channing, in the exercise of reading the sacred volume?

Could we for a moment, standing aloof from things as they are in the "second nature" of habit, fasten our minds on the great thought that the world contains a volume stamped with the legible impress of revelation, would not one just expectation be that those whose duty it is to minister at the altar would covet above all acquisitions the ability to read it worthily and impressively?

At present the thing is not even thought of. The very idea startles the theological student as something odd. No true heart can tolerate the idea of using the Word of God as a theatre for the exhibition of vocal effect and artistic accomplishment. While the reader shrinks however, from such results, he can derive from this just repugnance to desecration, no plea for the cold, lifeless and heartless style of mechanical reading, which is so prevalent in the pulpit, and which effectually paralyzes the power of the Bible over the human heart. While all artificial and fancied excellence is, in the utterance of the words of sacred truth, a thing that only disgusts or shocks a sober mind, it is not less true, that genuine cultivation and diligent practice, are as successful in this, as in any other form of human effort, and that where the occupants of our pulpits shall have acquitted themselves in this as in other parts of their public duties, the power and authority, and the daily influence of the sacred volume, will penetrate society to an extent corresponding to the difference between a dormant and an active life, a latent and an operative power.

For the Christian Messenger.

Education and Religious Teaching.

MR. EDITOR,—

We are informed by the papers that the principal address at the opening of each of the two Presbyterian Colleges of Halifax, was connected with the books of Moses. That the lecture at the opening of the Theological College should be an examination of different theories concerning the authorship of those Books is quite natural and proper, and the friends of the College will be gratified in learning that the lecturer holds such safe and conservative views on the subject. Perhaps we ought not to be surprised that the lecturer at the opening of Dalhousie should take his text from Genesis, and attempt the reconciliation of Science and Revelation; but when the President of the Board of Governors of the College makes use of the occasion to declare what must be the theory of the correct interpretation of the first chapter of that Book, the

action is a little remarkable. He may be regarded as speaking for his Presbyterian brethren, and the majority of them will probably accept his opinion, though there are some who will prefer another view. Noticeable as such discussions are at such a time, we may admit them to be in place in a denominational College. But a moment's reflection will show how much out of place they would have been before a State College. The servants of the State are not appointed to interpret the Scriptures. If such deliverances as we have referred to were to be made before a State College, the adherents of the Church of Rome, who form so large a part of the population of Halifax, would say that the speakers are trenching on the jurisdiction of another tribunal, the Broad-Church people would say that the speakers were making improper use of their official positions to give currency to various exploded notions, and the No-Church party would say that these men were not paid to force on the public attention the discussion of irrelevant and unimportant questions. The denominational College enjoys a liberty in teaching that is reasonable, safe and useful. The relations of the State College necessarily demand that it shall abstain from religious teaching. What the natural consequences of this condition of things is, has been so clearly set forth in a recently published letter from a correspondent from Michigan, that I append an extract.

"Our State University is coming more and more under the moulding power of teachers, who, if not openly hostile to Christianity, are sceptically inclined; and it is found that the students under their instruction, imbibe their religious views. In this fact, which does not stand alone, there is found a potent argument for the liberal support of our truly Christian Colleges. We must furnish facilities of the highest order for the education of our children, or they will drift into other institutions which are offering flattering inducements, but are worse than Christless in their religious tone and influence—are radically anti-Christian."

For the Christian Messenger.

A Great Preacher, or a "Good Minister," which is preferable?

Not long since the remark was made to me, with reference to preachers: "A man ought to make as much of himself as he can." It is true, indeed, that a preacher of the gospel ought to improve the talents bestowed on him, and the opportunities afforded him, for the cultivation of his intellect, as far as is consistent with the discharge of other duties. But this should by no means be done with a view to self-aggrandizement. Though Baruch, a friend and assistant of Jeremiah, was unquestionably a good man, yet the LORD saw fit to send, by special revelation, the admonition and charge, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." (Jer. xlv. 5.) It is evident, therefore, that a ministering servant of the meek and lowly Saviour must not seek great things for himself. The frailty of depraved human nature, and the need of watchfulness against a spirit of worldly ambition are evinced by the conduct of the apostles themselves, of whom we are informed "there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." (Luke xxii. 24, 27.) But Jesus rebuked them and set them an example of humility, requiring them to follow it. (Matt. xi. 29; Prov. xiii. 13-15.) How very important is it, then, that every professed minister of Christ should strictly regard the injunction of the apostle Peter, "Be clothed with humility." (1 Peter i. 4, 5; Phil. ii. 3, 5.)

If a man strive to become a great preacher, and, as is sometimes the case, after years of toil, attending renowned Institutions of learning, and incurring much expense, finds himself unable to gain the continued attention of any considerable church and congregation, disappointment and chagrin will naturally

ensue. If he succeed to his heart's content, he will be very liable to be "lifted up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil."

Moreover, if the desire of applause be discovered in a preacher, as it doubtless will be by discerning hearers, he will be quite certain to sink in their estimation.

There are, indeed, exceptions, but as a general rule, men much admired for oratory and elegant diction, are not as successful, either in winning souls to Christ, or in the edification of believers as some others less pretentious in these respects.

In many cases such men are drawn away from the direct preaching of the gospel to the delivering of lectures, frequently, (as in the case of a visit recently made to these Provinces,) not at all adapted to foster self-denying piety.

And those who do continue to devote themselves to the ministry, are apt to require and obtain high salaries. This too has a baleful influence; as it tends to promote infidelity, by leading the unconverted to regard the gospel as priestcraft, and to deprive the poor of the privilege of it.

It is obviously desirable that we should have some men thoroughly educated and qualified to defend truth, and to confute error; and "who shall be able to teach others also." (Titus i. 9, 2 Tim. ii. 2.)

But the view of the learned and judicious Dr. F. Wayland, with reference to the gospel ministry, appears to me worthy of attention and adoption. With extensive knowledge of the subject, and ripe experience, after being the President of Brown University for a number of years, he says, (Baptist Principles, &c., p. 48.) "We have no right to establish any rules regulating the ministry, which Christ has not established." He subsequently remarks, "Our Lord chose as the first preachers of the word, men of all variety of attainment, and of very different grades of intellectual culture." An inspired Apostle of Christ has distinctly specified the requisite qualifications of gospel ministers. (1 Tim. iii. 1-7. Tit. i. 5-9.) According to Dr. Wayland's view, which is evidently the scriptural and correct one, the man who possesses the qualifications required in these portions of Scripture, and is disposed to devote himself to the work of the ministry, whether he has received a regular course of literary and theological training or not, ought to be regarded by his brethren as called of God to the work, (Matthew ix. 38; Romans x. 15,) and set apart to it. If he continue to demean himself with propriety, to labor faithfully in word and doctrine, in public and in private, whether he be an eloquent orator or not, he ought to be "esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake," and received a competent support. (1 Thes. v. 12, 13; 1 Cor. x. 14; Gal. vi. 6.) It is not to be expected that all desirable qualities will be concentrated in one man. Some may be specially successful, as evangelists, in the gathering of souls into the fold of Christ; and others as pastors, in feeding the flock. But he who "studies to shew himself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth," evidently ought to be regarded as "a good minister of Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. ii. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 6.)

To be such a one evidently ought to be the highest aim and ambition of every one who enters upon the sacred and highly important work of the gospel ministry. Infinitely better than all the applause that mortals can bestow on any, will be the final plaudit of the Judge to every good minister of Jesus Christ. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. xxv. 21.

C. TUPPER.
Aylesford, Nov. 22, 1879.

"Money does everything for a man," said one old gentleman pompously. "Yes," replied the other one, "but money won't do as much for a man as some men for money."