

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XXV., No. 25.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, June 23, 1880.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XLIV., No. 25.

## Poetry.

### Inquiry and Answer.

I.

Why am I so discontented,  
Wearied with so many cares?  
Why should life oft seem a burden,  
And my pathway full of snares?  
Why my lot so very lowly,  
And my hands so closely tied?  
That which seems to me so noble  
Must I always be denied?

Must I be contented ever  
With this ceaseless tiresome care?  
And each day's routine of labor  
Must I always patient bear?  
Is it true my Heavenly Father  
In His wisdom placed me here?  
Learner in this school of trial,  
Christ my Lord to love and fear?

II.

Child! 'tis thy Father that speaks,  
From the glorious mansions above,  
"O faint not when thou art rebuked,  
Or chastened; 'tis only in love."  
Thy Father can make no mistakes,  
But knows what is fittest for thee,  
And that which to thee seems so dark,  
Thy Father in heaven can see.

The Saviour has bid thee come,  
When wearied with labor and care,  
And although you are heavy laden,  
Has promised thy burden to bear;  
Then patiently, faithfully wait,  
Till thy Saviour shall make it plain;  
Trusting with patient submission,  
And you shall the victory gain.  
*Christian Secretary.*

## Religious.

### Saints Tempted in all Ways.

Brethren, the saints who are in heaven were tempted in all ways. They were tempted by threats, but they were equally tempted by promises. They were put into prison, or they were banished. They were deprived of their goods or their good names, but they stood fast and firm, and would not yield up Christ, threaten as men might. Then they were tried by bribes: if they would forsake Christ, and turn from the truth, they should be rich and honorable, they should be restored to their families they should have in some cases every indulgence which the monarch could grant. They were equally deaf to either form of solicitation: they could not be driven and they could not be drawn: however the net might be spread they could not be taken in it. Standing at the stake with the flames kindling, and the faggots beginning to burn, the tempting monk has held up the crucifix and said, "Kiss it, kiss it, and your life shall be given you, and you shall have great honors;" but they put away the idol from them, and would not dishonor God by worshipping any material substance, whatever it might be. Or else the martyr on his way to die, has been confronted by his wife and children, kneeling down, and praying their father to have pity upon them, if none upon himself, and not to die and leave a widow and fatherless children. But though natural love struggled in their hearts, they overleaped that temptation, for they loved Christ better than the dearest relatives. They have been tempted in subtlest fashion: reason and rhetoric, threat and scorn, bribe and blandishment, have all been used, and used in vain. Against them the enemy has sent forth the arrow which flieth by day, and the pestilence which walketh in darkness, but the Lord has kept their souls alive, and they have glorified His name. Yet very sorely "they were tempted."

They were tempted both with trials peculiar to themselves, and with trials common to us all. We are apt sometimes to say that this age is not congenial to the strength of grace, and I think there is truth in the remark. We are a set of dwarfs, and it seems hard to grow to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus in the atmosphere which daily surrounds us. We have fallen upon an evil age, in which principle is treated like a football in the streets, and bluster rules the hour; but then the ages in which saints lived long ago had their peculiar temptations too, and they were tempted. Every period since the world began has had its own

form of spiritual danger; as weapons of war have changed, so have temptations, but the old enmity remains. Not always does the swordsman make his cut at the head, sometimes he stabs at the heart, or at another time he drives at the feet: always aiming to wound, but not always aiming at the same part of the man. One age is dark, and ignorance would chill the heart; another is philosophical, and by its false wisdom would overlay the Gospel. The points from which the wind blows may differ, but it always blows against the servants of God who are voyaging to heaven. Say not, therefore, O child of God, that others who lived before thee were not tempted as thou art, for they endured temptations which to them were as keen and as powerful as any which have fallen to thy share.—*Spurgeon.*

### What Agnosticism is.

Several friends have written to us inquiring the meaning of the words *agnosticism* and *agnostics*, which they have been unable to find in dictionaries or encyclopedias. *Agnostic* is from the Greek, and is composed of two words which mean *not to know*. An agnostic is therefore a "know-nothing," and agnosticism is "know-nothingism." This is the literal meaning of the words.

The thorough-going Agnostic is accurately described by the English word *know-nothing*. He holds that all positive knowledge is impossible. The senses and consciousness are untrustworthy, and all that we know is a series of sensations. Whether there is any external world that produces these sensations, whether there is such a thing as spirit apart from matter, whether there is a God and a future life, he neither affirms nor denies. All that he says is, I do not know anything of them. But most Agnostics do not go as far as this. Their agnosticism applies only to religion. Of this type Mr. Herbert Spencer is a fair example. The fundamental principles of religion, such as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, he relegates to the domain of the Unknowable. He does not deny that there is a God or that the soul is immortal; he affirms that we do not know anything on the subject, and our faculties are such that we can never know anything. But men are not under obligation to believe and act upon anything which they do not and cannot know. Hence the true rule of life is to regard only established facts, and that which is right from day to day. If there is a God and if there is a future life, one who does this cannot fail to fare well hereafter. Such is agnosticism.

Agnosticism ignores the testimony of consciousness, and that is its weak point. The philosopher who denies the credibility of the testimony of the senses is laughed at by the hard common sense of mankind. People feel certain that their senses are, on the whole, truthful, and give them correct testimony concerning the world around them. Even Berkeley and Hume, who denied the existence of matter, practically believed in it, and acted on that belief whenever they walked a crowded street and "turned out" for others. So philosophers who deny or question the existence of God run counter to the convictions and experience of the whole human race. It may not be easy to prove by argument that a stone wall exists, but let the skeptic run his head against it, and he will need no further argument. It may be hard to establish the existence of God by arguments merely, but the fact of his existence may be known by experience. Devout men in all ages have actually known him, have talked with him face to face, have received his commands and made them known to others, have been helped by him to live lives of peculiar uprightness and self-sacrifice.

The ordinary Agnostic receives the testimony of the senses and of consciousness—up to a certain point. In every day affairs he does not question their testimony, but in religion he dis-

trusts it utterly. When the senses testify, for example, to the performance of a miracle, or consciousness testifies to the regenerating power of the Spirit of God, the Agnostic declares that this is pure delusion. In so doing he affirms that the majority of the race has always been deluded, and will continue to be deluded to the end of time. This is modest in him. The only unprejudiced, clear-headed men who have ever lived are the Agnostics. It must be so, for they say it themselves.

Agnosticism is no new thing. It has lately been resuscitated after a sleep of 2,500 years or so. It is merely the newest and most fashionable form of skepticism. But the fashions of Paris are hardly more fickle than those of skepticism, and agnosticism will go the way of its predecessors in a few years. It is a trifle more arrogant and pretentious, perhaps, than its predecessors but it is sure to be outlived, and Christian people can afford to look calmly upon its self-sufficiency as it passes off the stage.—*N. Y. Ec. and Chronicle.*

### Materialism and its Progress.

At the Annual Meeting of the Bible Society in Toronto, Dr. Lorimer, of Chicago, delivered an able and eloquent address, a brief sketch of which is as follows:—

It is unreasonable to suppose that, by any restraint or personal impotency, God was not able to make Himself known to His creatures. The Psalmist declared that the heavens declared the glory of God and the firmament His handiwork; and, undoubtedly, He discloses Himself to His children by His works. But the manifestations of the Almighty were not limited by the Universe. "He who made the eye, shall He not see?" "He who made the ear, shall He not hear?" "He who made the tongue, shall He not speak?" The world had replied in the negative to these questions; but when it was assumed that the manifestations of the Almighty were limited and that He could not make human thoughts the vehicle of His own, the assent of all thoughtful men to that proposition must be withdrawn. The very books claimed to be revelations from God, if they had no other significance indicated, at least, that deep down in the human heart there was an abiding conviction that God would be heard among the nations of the earth. The Book which had descended to us claimed attention not only from our belief in the divinity of its origin, but from the fact that in the minds of its enemies it had received such testimonies as corroborated the divinity of its origin. Theodore Parker, speaking of it, said, "You can mark its course as you can know the progress of a stream, by the verdure it creates." Huxley, in discussing the question of education, asked where the morals of England would spring from when evangelical faith was overthrown, laid his hand reverently on the Bible as the true source of ethical life. Emerson, while disdaining to own that the Scriptures were inspired, spoke of them in that beautiful, poetic, and sentimental tone which characterized his writings, and led his readers to suppose that if they were not divine, they ought to be. These were testimonies to the Bible. And now that there was a movement, widespread and deep, to undermine its authority and paralyze its influence, and to impress the minds of men with the idea that nature was sufficient for the moral illumination and moral elevation of humanity, the time had come for every thoughtful Christian to take steps to counteract a tendency so fatal to the happiness and morality of the human family. In a recent work by Strauss, entitled "The Old Faith and the New" an effort was made to create the impression that nature was sufficient for all our necessities. Dr. Draper in his science and religion carried out the same idea. Sir John Lubbeck contributed a volume to the same stream, while magazines had been established and regularly published whose mission was anti-Christian and anti-Biblical.

He claimed that the world had little to hope for and much to fear from the present anti-Christian movement, the object of which was to caricature and misrepresent theology, to propagate delusions and to corrupt and paralyze the spiritual life of the world. Nature was in this movement, as he had before remarked, elevated above religion. He thought He knew what nature could do, he knew at all events, that religion could exalt and inspire the soul, while nature never did and never could change the spots of the sinner, or make the depraved heart pure. Nature could enchant the poet, delight the student and fill the heart with joy, but it could not blot out one sin or correct one vice. Byron loved nature and sang of her sweetly, but still Byron's was not a model character. Burns was an admirer of nature, and yet, after singing to her praise, he could mingle with bad companions in drunken revels.

Neither were men converted by convulsions of nature. It was recorded that when an earthquake created considerable consternation in New England hundreds of people rushed to Boston and other towns to see a minister and join the church. Still the confession of the pastors was that the conversion was only temporary. In a storm at sea he had seen people engaging in such earnest and boisterous prayer that it appeared for a moment as if everybody was rapidly assuming saintship. But when the storm was over, the ear was defiled with as much blasphemy as before. The fact was that nature, though seen and admired, had no voice. As Tyndall stated, man's mind was very much like a musical instrument with a certain range of notes, beyond which, on both sides, nature was silent. The outcome of the placing of nature and the world above religion was materialism, which destroyed all ideas of elevating the human race and aimed at rendering humanity miserable and vicious. The tendency towards materialism was widespread. How few of our churches were filled. In American cities how had the Sabbath degenerated into a day when vice and crime ran riot and business men aimed at making money at the expense of their fellow human beings. While commercial men formed cliques to keep up the price of wheat and other articles, and thus to deprive poor men of their cheap food, rich manufacturers looked after their workmen as parts of their machinery, and called them "hands," instead of "souls," as they used to be called in England. This was materialism. It gave the President of the company \$20,000 a year, and the workmen who earned the dividends, just sufficient to keep them out of the poor-house. It spent thousands in luxuries and grudged a dollar for the sending of the Bible to the heathen abroad, or the heathen at home. It drove the poor to crime, and the unsuccessful to suicide. The more a man believed in materialism, the less, after he had quenched his thirst for riches, he desired to live. "If," said the rev. gentleman, "there is, as the materialists claim, no God, no Christ, no angels; no ideals to sustain us; nothing but a pauperized existence for us, then give me, as speedily as possible, my dismissal from this earthly pauperized state, this human poor-house, and let me sink into the pauper grave of annihilation." He did not believe such a fate as that suggested by the materialist awaited humanity, and therefore had much pleasure in moving:—

"That as vigorous efforts are being made in our times to disseminate in the name of science and advanced thought a literature antagonistic to Christianity, subversive of morals, and only favorable to godless materialism: Therefore an unprecedented obligation rests upon the followers of Christ to circulate in all the languages of earth the Holy Scriptures, whose teachings are indispensable to human welfare, and whose influence can alone counteract the pernicious effects of every system of error, especially of those systems which are grounded in false views of natural religion."

## ALIIUS ET IDEM.

### Valedictory Address.

BY WALTER BARSS.

Graduating Class of Acadia College, 1880.

Immutability can be predicted only of the Infinite Being, and of the laws which he has called into existence to govern the universe of mind and matter. We can affirm, however, that, in many phases of nature and life, the law of mutation seems to exert but feeble sway.

*Alius et Idem*—another and the same,—an apparent paradox, but not one in truth. Though the element of change does exist, it affects the circumference, not the centre,—the husk, not the fruit concealed within,—the outward conditions,—not the inward principle. The truth of this statement is amply attested by natural phenomena, by historic records, as well as by our own consciousness and experience.

Let us in imagination take a rapid glance over the physical appearance of the globe. We can clearly perceive the workings of the principle of change; on the other hand we are able to observe many prominent features and characteristics, little altered by the hand of time.

In the old and new worlds great changes have occurred. Large cities and manufacturing towns have sprung up; a net-work of railways supplemented by canals, covers the face of the earth; an increase in the number of inhabitants has compelled extensive emigration. The recent settler has caused large forests to disappear, has made the waste places fruitful, and the newly cultivated soil laughs with abundant harvests. We exclaim, surely, we behold a different world!

Different! yet the same. The forest-clad Alleghany and Rocky Mountains remain unaffected by the raging elements. The Alps—source of many streams—describe their magnificent crescent as of old, affording themes for the poet, pictures for the artist, and inward delight to the tourists who resort thither. The *fluvius Tiberis* of Horace's time still continues to discharge its yellow waters into the Mediterranean. Herculaneum and Pompeii have long since been hushed and buried in lava and ashes, but Vesuvius, unaltered, lifts its threatening head, and stands as the grim sentinel over the placid waters of the Bay of Naples. Old Oceanus, although now ploughed by many a keel, and dotted with numerous sail, still rolls its mighty billows as in past ages, unaltered and unsubdued by the puny hand of man. As Byron has expressed it:

"Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play,  
Time writes no wrinkle on thy azure brow;  
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now!"

Niagara with its voice of thunder flows on unfathomed and resistless:

"Thy stormy tide  
Faint not, nor e'er with failing heart forgets,  
Its everlasting lesson night nor day."

Difference we can plainly notice, but the prominent features, outlines, and characteristics remain unaltered during the lapse of ages.

The records of ancient, medieval, and modern history furnish us with abundant evidence to prove that the human race has made great social advancement. Centuries ago, the little spark of civilization in the East was kindled into a flame which, at length, triumphant over all obstacles, burst into a blaze of light, which has illumined far distant nations. Comparing society as we find it to-day with its condition in the remote past, we are compelled to acknowledge that there has been a vast and radical change.

Man being individually improvable, is therefore collectively progressive; and, in the search after truth, men have raised themselves, and others by their influence to a more extended sphere of culture and refinement. In the domain of literature, science, art,