

The Christian Messenger.

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
The Soul's Questionings.

I stand alone beneath the solemn stars,
Their gentle beauty soothes my heart to rest,
The yearning hills stretch upwards to the skies,
And night lies pillowed on earth's loving breast.

Over fair Nature's face the shadows creep,
Veiling her loveliness from careless eyes,
Her starry mantle folds her sleeping form,
Beneath the quiet of the purple skies.

I mark the nightly orbits of the stars,
Each has its circuit, each its place, and time;
And now my longing spirit fain would know,
The mystery of its destiny sublime.

For there are some would teach me to believe,
That there is naught beyond this earthly sphere;
That all of happiness we e'er can know,
And all of pain, is what is giv'n us here.

They tell me that the ponderous wheels of Time,
Shall crush this mighty thing which we call soul;
That when o'er earthly scenes death draws the veil,
Of all life's mysteries, we know the whole.

And is it thus my soul? Oh can'st thou live,
By this world's groveling pleasure sheld in thrall?
Dost thou not look beyond thy prison bars?
Art thou content believing this world all?

No; this created, yet immortal thing,
In its own dignity throws back the lie,
The breath of the Eternal, who shall dare
To circumscribe its immortality?

Man's brow is crowned with majesty of thought,
He bears his Maker's image on his face,
He seeks to know the infinite, and aspires
Heaven's written language in the skies to trace.

He reads the stars, and calls them by their names,
And knows the secrets of the earth and sea;
But all his knowledge is but ignorance,
To thy revealings, oh Eternity.

ALICE SHARLAND EMMS.
Sussex Vale.

Religious.

Rooted in Principles.

See how Christ rooted himself in great principles, and never looked upon life as something that happens one way when it might have happened in some other. He takes the days as gifts from God. He does not say, "What a pity I did not think of this or that, and then my whole life would have changed in its current and purpose." The fool may say that; the wicked man may in some sense say so, for he follows the flickering light of his own insanity; but the man who in all his ways acknowledges God, need not, may not say so, for God is his guide and light. This is the meaning of divine election. It simply means putting God in His right place—that is all. God is the sum total; he fore-knows, and fore-does, and back-reckons, and back-pardons—he fills the circle of completeness. When therefore, I speak of divine election, fore-knowledge, fore-ordination, I simply put God in his right place. "Things are uncertain," we say; "when we go out in the morning, it is very uncertain if we may return in the eventide." The uncertainty is on our part, and not upon the part of God. We say, "No one can tell what a day may bring forth; it is impossible to say what we may see tomorrow. All things here are so uncertain."

Great God, to thee there's nothing old,
To thee there's nothing new.
A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a

watch in the night. A thousand years are as one day, one day as a thousand years. Our time reckoning is unknown in heaven; God sees the end from the beginning.

Then what is my duty? To accept my life as a revelation. I cannot push the lines of my plan over the darkness of to-night into the brightness of tomorrow. In my audacity I do so, but I cannot with any certainty appoint that it shall occur thus and no otherwise. All my plans have to be connected with the words, "If the Lord will," or "God willing," or "Providence permitting." I always have to connect myself with the everlasting and the inevitable, and I cannot take a day ahead into my keeping and regulate its affairs. I must, then, receive my life as a revelation. To-morrow I may have a great loss: it is God's gift. To-morrow my dearest friend may die; it is God's order. To-morrow the well may dry up, so that I shall have no water, and for a long while my lips shall be afire with thirst; it is the Lord's doing. To-morrow I may lose the one ewe lamb: it is the Lord's taking. Life is not an accident or a series of chances, it is a scheme beginning with the unbeginning God, and stretching on through the endless time. So then I will say to the temptation of accidents, "The Lord reigneth;" to the tragedy of sin, I will say, "God's grace is brighter than this cloud;" to the momentary interruption of death I will say, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Always have a great principle behind you; always have a great rock under your feet; always have a broad sky above your head, and be not tossed about like a loose feather or a leaf fallen from the living tree. Jesus Christ, I repeat, rooted himself in a great principle, and was shaken only in the branches, not in the root.

Advantages of a Religious Newspaper.

A minister's power for usefulness is greatly augmented if his people are religiously intelligent. They know better how to appreciate the truth preached, for the seed of the kingdom will not fall on stony ground, but in a genial soil, where it will quickly germinate, grow, and bear abundant fruit. A Christian's worth depends largely on his intelligence, sympathy and activity, and these are all enhanced by the weekly visits of a good paper.

We may then ask, What responsibility or duty has the pastor or stated supply in seeing that his flock is not suffering for the lack of good religious papers? The pastoral relation is of divine appointment—not human—and his duties are two-fold: to feed the flock with knowledge and understanding and care for it "over which the Holy Ghost has made him an overseer."

We have been led to put a higher estimation on the religious press, from what we have seen and experienced. Other things being equal, beyond a question those congregations well supplied with our church papers are the most useful and prosperous, and it is a marked feature in them that their pastors have taken it upon themselves, in the pulpit and in private ways, to encourage their circulation. The interests of the pastor and flock are inseparable in this. The truth is, ministers cannot afford to be indifferent toward a subject of such vital importance to themselves and their congregations.

We are familiar with churches and families that are suffering for this kind of culture. They know but little what their church is doing, and the wants of our benevolent schemes. Their spiritual sympathies are withering for proper nutriment.

By a little effort a good paper may be placed in a household, that may continue its weekly visits for a generation, freighted with blessings to parents and children. For such effort this is a most favorable time.—*Amer. Pres.*

A concordance to the revised New Testament is being prepared in London.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.
Varia from England.

Dear Editor,—

The death of President Garfield has touched the whole heart of England. While he struggled so bravely with the enemy, the hopes and fears of the nation gave place to each other, as favourable or unfavourable telegrams were received, and sent throughout the country through the press. It were difficult to decide which most prevailed, sympathy for the sufferer or abhorrence of the man who fired the fatal bullet. Now that the illustrious sufferer has passed away, even the heartless murderer is forgotten for the time, in the universal and deep feeling of genuine sympathy everywhere felt for the heart-broken widow. I think I may say that when our beloved Queen (whom God preserve) sent the following message to Mrs. Garfield, she was uttering the sentiment of her many loving-subjects:—

"Words cannot express the deep sympathy I feel with you at this terrible moment. May God support and comfort you as He alone can."

Such words, weighty with meaning, from the widowed Queen of England to the widow of the President, in common with similar messages from many in high places, cannot but tend to strengthen and cement more and more closely together the two mightiest nations in the globe, between which feelings of peace and good-will seem to be growing stronger and stronger as time rolls on. May God indeed comfort the wounded heart of the widow, and of the nation, and so over-rule this tragic event for the highest and best interests of the Great Republic.

THE SALVATION ARMY

is still marching along, and while much unfavourable criticism is indulged in, and not without some reason, still they increase and multiply at a marvellous rate. They have now 230 stations, and 470 officers who receive pay. Money flows in. Only five years ago the total income was £4,000, (\$20,000.00), it is now £50,000, (\$250,000.00), "which sum" says General Booth "isn't much." Whatever else the Army means to do, it evidently does not mean to turn back. Well, although they work on different lines from the most of us, and do things which we more sedate folk would not, yet if they are doing good, and winning souls, who will refuse them a "God speed you?" If a beggar ask for bread and it be cut from the loaf with the awkward unorthodox, unfashionable left hand, what matter, so he get the bread? A detachment is coming to our town in a day or two. May they prove a means of blessing. "Quick march" appears to be one of their standing orders, or more properly, marching orders. Let us hope that other regiments will learn from the example of the soldiers of the Salvation Army, to march a little more quickly, although they may not be able always to keep step with them. One feature of the Army is, they go in heavily against both tobacco and drink, and I believe require all who join them to quit both.

THE WESLEYAN ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE

just concluded in London, was a great success. It was marked by great unanimity and zeal. Beyond doubt much good will result from the Conference. May the day soon come when there will be a similar gathering of Baptists. Why should it not be?

NEXT MONTH COME

OUR ANNUAL UNION MEETINGS to be held at Portsmouth and Southampton. It is expected that they will be unusually interesting. So may it be, and unusually blessed and profitable too. Mr. Spurgeon is to preach at both places. His health appears to be in good order just now. Long may it continue so, that he may still be a blessing to the Church and the world.

A RECENT VISITOR TO ENGLAND.

I was only this morning wondering what had become of Bro. Steele, whether he was still in England, and I might yet hope to see him, or on the sea, or in Nova Scotia; when on opening the ever welcome Messenger, I discovered that he was safe at home. I had hoped to have the pleasure of a visit from our esteemed brother, but I suppose the attractions of London were too weighty. I hope he had a very happy and profitable visit both physically and mentally, and spiritually also. I anticipated the pleasure of shewing him a few of the "lions" of Wiltshire, and other parts. An old baronial residence hard by, to wit, nearly 500 years old, in majestic decay, and occupied by a right worthy Baptist deacon. Also some of the famous "seats" of men of renown: to the grave of Thomas Moore; to one of the old Roman roads, near by Melksham, and a famous old oak where Cromwell hanged some soldiers whom he thought deserved that fate, and the ancient seat of "Long-leaf, in this historic county, where the same famous man occasionally stopped in his peregrinations through the country; and to "Haven's Gate," near by, which commands one of the most charming scenes imaginable; and the world-renowned "Müller's Orphanage," on Ashley Down, Bristol, with its 2,500 orphans. But I must not lengthen the list, hoping however that I have said enough to bring my good brother Steele to repentance. Revenge is sweet.

WHAT CHARMING WEATHER

we are having just now. Simply glorious. A great deal too good "for such unworthy creatures as we are," as our brethren say at meeting sometimes—The harvest, notwithstanding the heavy rains during the harvest weeks, has been much better than it was expected, and although it was supposed then to be the worst for many years, yet according to Mr. Brand, the speaker of the House of Commons, it has been better than either last year or the year before. For this let the Lord be praised. The apple crop is very good, on account of which let no Nova Scotia pomological farmer heave a sigh, or blame us, for really we could not help it. I hope however a good and profitable market will be found for the apples and all other produce.

I don't think I told you of a visit I have made to a cottage some time since, where I found three aged persons, two sisters and a brother, aged respectively, 77, 83, 87; Nos. 77 and 83 were discussing the Revised New Testament, the one having an authorised and the other a Revised Edition. On asking which they thought best, they agreed unanimously that the old is better than the new; an opinion shared in by a good many, but which I have no doubt will gradually change, until the Revised be the universal favorite; but a generation or two will possibly have to die out first.

With affectionate and unfading remembrances,
J. BROWN.

Milksham, Wilts, Sept. 28, 1881.

For the Christian Messenger.

Reply to Dr. Armstrong.

Mr. Editor,—

Allow me space in your columns to reply to Dr. Armstrong, and I shall say no more. This may be premised, that sarcasms, misrepresentation and exclamation points do not constitute argument.

The Dr. says I have failed to show how changing the time of holding the Associations and Convention would tend to promote harmony and vigor in our denominational enterprises. I have stated that I did in my first article. The public must judge concerning a question of facts. For the sake of those who may not have my first article to which to refer, I insert the following quotations therefrom: "It seems to me that the work of the Convention is to discuss and prepare plans for the successful carrying on of the three great depart-

ments of Home and Foreign Missions, and Higher Education. It is an important part of the work of the Associations to bring before the churches the plans of the Convention. This cannot well or satisfactorily be done when the Associations meet before the Convention. . . . If the latter be held first, its work can be taken up by the former and brought home more effectually to the hearts of the people, the Associations will receive new life from something to do and say, and unnecessary and injurious criticism avoided. . . . Let there be one settled policy and only one; let that policy be indicated by the Convention as the most nearly complete expression of the Denomination; let that policy be strictly adhered to by the various Boards appointed to carry it; let united and faithful work be done at our Associations, and in our churches; then success is certain." In my second appeared this: "In virtue of the present arrangement, the Associations have no complete information of the past, no plans for the coming year to give the churches, and are not likely to have." Still the Dr. complains that I have not proved my propositions. He however seeks to ward off the force of my argument by saying that "if such results would follow from fixed plans and knowledge of them, there should have been no friction and indifference in the working of any department of Denominational work; for we have had since Aug. 1879, the Convention Scheme." Does Dr. A. mean to say that the Convention Scheme is the only plan—the only work of the Convention; and that knowledge concerning the carrying out of that Scheme is the only knowledge worth knowing? Well that is just what he implies. Were there no modifications or extensions of that plan this year, and will all the information before the Convention be given fully to the churches? I trow not. For the further enlightenment of all parties concerned, let us suppose a case. Suppose that this year the Convention came first; then some of those who attended the Associations, would have had no cause of complaint against the Foreign Mission Board, on account of lack of information. Then the disturbing question of Foreign Missions would have been removed and the Associations would quietly have gone on with their work. Then the Associations would have been in possession of full reports from all the Boards and the plans of the Convention for the coming year. Then they would have the power of attracting more delegates, and creating a livelier interest in all matters because of recent and living information. Many ministers and delegates attend the Associations who do not attend the Convention. Hence the importance of full information for the Associations.

2. The Dr. wants "each Board to supply full information as to its operations, conditions and wants to each Association," and he would have each report on a leaf of note paper! Perhaps the Dr. was thinking of short hand at the time.

3. As to being in my reference to cart and horse, "by no means complimentary to the common sense and moral perceptions (?) of the Baptists of these provinces, I have this to state, that the Convention in its present composition has been in existence only a very few years; that gradually one interest after another has become a part of the Convention; that only recently have P. E. Island and New Brunswick joined Nova Scotia in all the varied interests; that the friction in the Denominational machinery has been becoming more apparent from year to year; that recent and unusual circumstances have shown more fully the need of a change and readjustment of the machinery; that in this direction, the necessity for the use of "common sense and moral perceptions" was not urgently demanded hitherto, and that therefore "Baptists have" not, "for nearly forty years worked according to the present system, and that the experience of that period," does not "contradict Mr. D's implied allegation of cart before horse."

4. The Dr.'s recital of facts concern-