

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XXVI., No. 46

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, November 16, 1881.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XLV., No. 46.

## Poetry.

### Over against the Treasury.

Over against the treasury this day,  
The Master silent sits; whilst, unaware  
Of that Celestial Presence still and fair,  
The people pass or pause upon their way.

And some go laden with his treasures sweet,  
And dressed in costly robes of his device  
To cover hearts of stone and souls of ice,  
Which bear no token to the Master's feet.

And some pass, gaily singing, to and fro,  
And cast a careless gift before his face,  
Amongst the treasures of the holy place,  
But kneel to crave no blessing ere they go.

And some are travel-worn, their eyes are dim,  
They touch his shining vesture as they pass,  
But see not—even darkly through a glass—  
How sweet might be their trembling gifts to him.

And still the hours roll on; serene and fair  
The Master keeps his watch; but who can tell  
The thoughts that in his tender spirit swell,  
As one by one we pass him unaware?

For this is he who, on one awful day,  
Cast down for us a price so vast and dread,  
That he was left for our sakes bare and dead,  
Having given himself our mighty debt to pay?

O, shall unworthy gifts once more be thrown  
Into his treasury—by whose death we live?  
Or shall we now embrace his cross, and give  
Ourselves, and all we have, to him alone?

## Religious.

### The English Baptist Union.

The Baptist Anniversaries differ from those of other denominations in the proportion of ministers and members who attend them. The delegations from our Churches usually consist largely of private members, or laymen, as they are often termed. The story of the purpose of clergymen coming together being that they may "swap sermons," does not very well apply to Baptists. One of our London exchanges in referring to the late meetings of the English Baptist Union at Portsmouth and Southampton, however, remarks:—

Sermons our reverend friends of the Baptist denomination do not come to "swap," but they change other things. Warm wishes, ready sympathy, and kindly counsels are the order of the day. If these annual meetings did no more than bring people together, causing them to know each other better, and enter more completely into each other's joys and troubles, they would accomplish no mean work.

Temperance meetings were held on Monday evening, both at Southampton and Portsmouth, at which able speeches were made, shewing that the Baptists take a front rank on the matter of Total Abstinence, there as well as here.

A writer in the London *Freeman* gives a gratifying picture of the excellent arrangements they had made for such gatherings. He says:—

The good people of Portsmouth seem to be full of energy. It is assuredly a lively place, and the friends at Lake-road Chapel are a lively people. I took an early opportunity of paying a visit to this noble chapel, which may be considered head-quarters. By the side is a large school-room. On entering,

there was a class-room on the right, fitted up with desks and all that is necessary for writing. On the left was another class-room, in which the plumber had been at work, and it was fitted up with all that is necessary for a wash. This appeared to me to be very considerable. When away from home, often a wash is a real luxury—one difficult to acquire. Passing into the large school-room, which was cleared, so as to afford room for conversation, on the right was a bar, fitted up as an enquiry office, where a friend was posted ready to afford information of the neighbourhood, times of trains, &c., and of varied other kinds. On the left was a regular post-office, with telegraphic communication and arrangement for despatch and delivery of letters.

The meeting on Monday evening, October 24th, was at Carlton Chapel. This is a spacious and bright building. It was crowded to excess, and many were unable to enter. The chapel seats about 800 persons. The service began with the beautiful hymn, "Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed." Scarcely any hymn could have been more appropriate as the opening expression of the spirit and work of the Union. Dr. Stanford preached a sermon to young Christians, from Mark xiii. 24, 35, 36. It was listened to by the crowded congregation with eager attention.

On Tuesday morning the weather was beautiful, and a large congregation again assembled in East Street Chapel for public worship. The sermon was preached by Rev. R. H. Roberts, on "The Soul's search and the satisfying discovery" from Acts viii. 34-36. The chapter and text were read from the Revised Version.

The sea trip from Southampton to Portsmouth by steamer is very pleasant. Passing down Southampton Water, we saw Netley, with its large hospital, and just a glimpse of the beautiful ruin of the old abbey. On the other side of this water is the New Forest. This is the prospect which, seen from Southampton, suggested one of Dr. Watt's beautiful hymns, "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood." Then, steaming along by the Hampshire coast, with the Isle of Wight on the other side of the Channel, we pass a point with a curious name—Gillkicker—and Southsea was in sight. It looks well from the sea with its level common and fine terraces of houses. The passage occupied more than an hour and a half. The morning was bright, but there was a cold, clear East wind. Some brethren were successful in defying the cold breeze by engaging in an animated discussion on the Open and Close Communion question. This is sure to make some of our brethren warm.

THE FIRST SESSION OF THE UNION, was held on Wednesday morning. Devotional services preceded. There had been a prayer-meeting at 7.30, and another for 30 minutes, commencing at 10.15, at the Lake Road Chapel, Landport. At 10.45 the President, Rev. Henry Dowson, took the chair. There was a crowded attendance. The President's Opening Address was on the theme:—

"SPIRITUAL LIFE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ASSEMBLIES AND OPERATIONS OF THE UNION."

In the introduction he said, "Divine truth, when received by faith, produces a new state of mind, which we call spiritual life. This distinguishes the Gospel of Jesus Christ from all self-righteous pretensions and superstitious observances. When we assert our belief in the religion of our Divine Lord, we profess to receive facts and truths, altogether supernatural." He noticed that our Lord commenced His ministry with the doctrine of the New Birth. He then went on to speak upon the Source, the Principles, and the Fruits of Spiritual Life.

He then dwelt on the truth that this life, in its enlarged exercises, is

necessary to the prosperity of our Union. His first remark was

*Spiritual life will give importance to our assemblies, and will make them to be seasons of blessing.*

The Gospel of Christ gives no encouragement to isolation and exclusion. The constitution of a Christian Church shows us that the design of our Lord is not only to unite us to Himself, but to each other in obedience and fidelity. It was a dark age in the history of Christendom when men, in the name of religion, retired from the society of others under the guise of a godly life; but it was the outburst of superstition; pride and corruption became the ruling principle of a life voluntarily separated from the genial influences of fellowship. It is a sad mistake of those who now come under the power of Divine truth, but who wish to be the disciples of Christ secretly, and to serve the Lord apart from others. This is doing violence to principles which the grace of God elevates and hallows. It not only involves a neglect of Divine ordinances much to be deplored, but also the absence of those motives to Consistency, and Christian service which the Union creates. If, the fellowship springs from Christian life—if it is associated with the noblest friendship, "the fellowship of kindred minds"—the revival of it will bring together larger assemblies. Difficulties which almost preclude the attendance of our brethren will be, at least in some measure, removed; the richer brethren, will help the poorer by furnishing the necessary supplies. Brethren of influence and position who are not in the ministry will seek to sacrifice public and important engagements, which are only secular, that they may encourage and help by their presence. The affairs of this life—mercantile and political—will only have a secondary place before the claims of the Kingdom of God. Nor shall we estimate our brethren chiefly by their worldly position, but by moral worth, their likeness to Christ, and the fruits of a holy and useful life. Thus the rich and the poor meet together in the presence of God, who is the maker of them all. Let us remember that we have in our churches diversity of gifts, various operations, but the same Spirit. We feel thankful where unction and emotion are combined with intellectual power. But high religious feeling consecrates humble talents, and it will enable us with effect to enlist the public service of brethren less known amongst us whose voices may mingle with the ministrations of those to whom we always listen with gratification and profit. For we may gather from the apostle's word in his Epistle to the Corinthians that it is the will of our Divine Lord that all the gifts which he imparts, whether great or small, may be called into exercise, and made subservient to His glory.

This spiritual life, said he, will secure on the part of our brethren diligent attendance upon the various meetings which may be convened. He touched on the attractions of the sea and the scenery around, but "we leave our homes at such a time as this, not for recreation, but for Christian service, not to regale ourselves, but to benefit others." It is a "consummation devoutly to be wished" that they who needed the hint accepted it in the spirit in which it was given. Then came an important consideration:

*Spiritual life will commend and illustrate the distinctive principles we profess to maintain.*

The difference of opinion between ourselves and the rest of Christendom is important, but very simple. Other Christian bodies place baptism before faith, we place faith before baptism. But simple and Scriptural as this is, it is misunderstood or misapplied. In these assemblies we have an opportunity afforded for the vindication of our principles; not so much by the clear and conclusive arguments which sustain our practice, as by the results of our deliberations and the spirit with which they are embued. Spiritual

power will show the professed followers of Christ who dissent from our views that we are the unchanged advocates of liberty and the rights of conscience; that we would not deprive the least in the Kingdom of heaven of any Christian privilege; that we impose no human ordinance of burdensome yoke upon those who seek to enter into the Redeemer's visible Kingdom; and that we exercise a charity which consists, not in the surrender of the truth, but in its maintenance and defence. A dignified temper must rule our conferences; with freedom of speech and opinion there must be combined forbearance and urbanity; this will give force to our utterances and felicity to our proceedings. Unfounded prejudices against our opinions will be mitigated, if not removed; the truths which we hold will be vindicated by our spirit; Christians of every name will be constrained to honor us; and God will look down on us and say, "This people have I formed for Myself, and they shall show forth My praise."

The next point noticed was—Spiritual Life will give prosperity and success to our efforts to spread the Gospel and to our works of Christian love. He spoke of our Foreign Mission, British and Irish Mission, Augmentation Fund, Annuity Fund, and Educational Society.

One of the greatest excitements was that of

### GOING TO HEAR MR. SPURGEON.

The South of England Grand Palace, as the immense music-hall in Portsmouth is termed, is said to seat 3,000, and to afford standing room for 3,000 more. At three o'clock the doors were closed, every inch of room for sitting or standing being occupied. The Gun Wharf-road and other thoroughfares by this time were blocked. It was calculated that at least as many as were inside were outside in disappointment. At a quarter-past three o'clock Mr. Spurgeon appeared on the scene, but his friends and the police had the greatest difficulty imaginable in getting him in. It reminded one how some years ago, when a young man, he was unable for a time to force his way into a place where he was to conduct service. At length in a clear, strong voice he called out, "If you do not let me in, I won't preach." In due time the service commenced.

### MR. SPURGEON PREACHED

from John xv. 5, "Without Me ye can do nothing." "These words" he said "were Divine." Therefore they were perfectly congruous with humility. His division was, first: there is ground for hope that in Christ, the living Vine, I can do or produce something; secondly, it is possible to be without Christ; thirdly, when once disassociated from Christ we can do nothing; fourthly, let us hear the voice of wisdom and confess this.

Let us, then, in a spirit of adoration bow before His Majesty. Not touching the moral and spiritual inability of fallen man, though he believed in that doctrine, he remarked that Christ was here speaking to the very leaders of the Church. It was to the branches of the vine: he did not speak of action in general. The text might be rendered, "Without Me ye can produce nothing as fruit." He did not say they could not commence anything, but the words swept all the ground—not even Apostles could do anything without Him. With Christ there was a chance of doing something. To Christians the word "do" was delightful, especially in an age of so much altering and revising. He had a vision something great would be done by personal holiness, that fruit may be not only in character, but in usefulness to others. There should yet be ten thousand branches, beautiful clusters on that grand vine. The world was sick at heart, but should yet be healed; wars and oppression stopped, with 10,000 converted, and those bringing one each to Christ, every living person would soon be brought to the Saviour. Awful times were prophesied, but he believed in God the Father, by whom ultimate victory must

and would be achieved. To be without Christ as a bare possibility chilled the very marrow of the people of God. Was their religion a factor in their daily lives? Some of the branches would not remain. When laid aside he had suffered severe doubts whether he would be one of the branches cut off and burnt. Think of the devil burning a bundle of ministers, Sunday-school teachers, deacons, or elders, and these although having grown on a good vine! It was a shuddering thought. The third point of the sermon was that of a vision of failure. The Church without Christ would do nothing. Building edifices, gorgeous ritual, fine conferences, but doing nothing, some churches got away from Christ in matters of doctrine—getting loose in their belief. At some places sermons that might as easily be preached in Mahomedan mosques were delivered—very fine, but no Christ in them. Advanced thought it was called, but advancing backwards certainly. A Gospel without Christ failed even to attract the people, and he was glad of it. Christ must be also supreme. Esau was very complimentary to Jacob. At present the nineteenth century was talking well of Christ, but Judas's kiss was a thousand times more hateful than his curse. If human philosophy approve religion, that religion must be false. Christ must not be altered or made up, but accepted as He is. Preachers of Christ were not creeping cravens asking permission to be, but Divine ambassadors with a message, with an absolute claim. Christ must be Master. Christ may go away from us in regard to his inward presence, and how sad it made a true believer! Life and character gave a charm to the simplest word of a preacher; the Gospel according to your own soul was much better. The smell of Divine spices in the preacher's garments was a great secret of power. In the heathen world nothing would be done without Christ. Inevitable the decree that without Christ they could do nothing. The text was in conclusion practically enforced as a voice of wisdom. They should compel Christ, even the Churches of prestige and wealth, and those of noble organizations. Let salvation advance and all come and acknowledge their good-for-nothingness and fruitlessness without Christ. They should then be able to do all things through Christ, who would strengthen them. Next let them pray; not have, for instance, mongrel meetings by absorbing the devotional service with some other gathering. If a church did not believe in prayer he would not be minister of it five minutes, for what was the use of being captain of an army who did not believe in gunpowder? Let there be personal and not mere affected trust and work. Christian churches sometimes failed for want of push. He believed in jumping at a wall in duty if the Master ordered it. Let them jump, it was the Master's duty to carry them through. There was a song of sweet contentment in the text. What could they want to do without Christ? Out of the text came an argument for their going to Christ. If Christ's friends could do nothing without Him, certainly His enemies could not. Let them, then, howl on. Evangelical doctrine was going, according to some people. The idea made him laugh. If they threatened this, he could only say, let them try, for they would never succeed. At the close of the discourse, which throughout was breathlessly listened to, a collection was made for the funds of the Stockwell Orphanage.

Out side, an open-air service was held. The speakers were Messrs. Cox, Murphy, the venerable Charles Stovel, and Mr. Cory. Large numbers of persons listened to the addresses, and it is hoped some permanent good was effected.

At the evening session the Report of the Home and Irish Missions was presented by the Rev. W. Sampson; it set forth that the receipts had been, by the United Mission, £2,445; the Irish Mission, £1,383; Home Mission, £1,418; sale of stock, £2,461; total