

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. VI.....No. 8.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1861.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXV.....No. 8.

Poetry.

The Golden Year.

We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move,
The sun flies forward to his brother sun:
The dark earth follows, wheeled in her eclipse;
And human things, returning on themselves,
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

Ah, though the times when some new thought can bud
Are but as poet's seasons when they flower,
Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

When wealth no more shall rest in moulded heaps,
But, smit with freer light, shall slowly melt
In many streams, to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man,
Through all the seasons of the golden year.

Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days,
Roll onward leading up the golden year!

Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the press,
Fly, happy with the mission of the Cross:
Knit land to land, and, blowing heavenward,
With silks and fruits, and spices clear of toil,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

But we grow old. Ah, when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Through all the circle of the golden year?

ALFRED TENNYSON.

Miscellaneous.

(From Zion's Advocate.)

A Singular Death.—No. 1.

Once, as I was returning from an evening meeting, which had not been very interesting, my mind was occupied with reflections upon a lamentation of one of the prophets. Just before I arrived at my place of residence, I overtook two females, who were conversing earnestly upon some topic. As I came near to them, I heard the remark, and it seemed to be the close of the sentence,—"killed the prayer meeting." I recognized the voice as being that of aunt B., and though I heard nothing more, I concluded that they were speaking of the meeting, which we had attended. It was a singular remark, or, at least, it had a very singular effect upon my mind, at that time, and awakened a train of reflection which almost terrified me.

Killed the prayer meeting! I repeated by myself. Then there has been a murder committed! And if a murder, then there has been a murderer, or murderers. Then I thought of the great guilt of such a murder. It was not a man or woman which had been killed, but some thing more important and useful than any single human being. A prayer meeting had been killed. The very life of it destroyed, so that nothing remained but its cold, inactive, and unlovely form. When alive it was very inviting and useful. The church was benefited by it, and the community; yea, an influence went out from it to bless the world. But it was killed. A dead prayer meeting! O! what a death, and what guilt pertained to the person or persons who committed the murder!

And here arose another question. *Who killed the prayer meeting?* That it was dead I had no heart to dispute. It was too obvious to be disputed. But *who killed it?* O! how I wanted to know that. And then, I wondered if any one suspected me; for certainly I must have been seen there by the lifeless form, and it would be very natural to ascribe the death to me. And in spite of all my efforts to be calm, I began to tremble. I knew it was a terrible thing to kill a prayer meeting, and I was frightened at the very thought that suspicion of such a deed might be fastened upon me.

And then I began to enquire, *How was the prayer meeting killed?* It seemed to me, if we could ascertain this, we might determine who was guilty. So I considered carefully all that was said and done that evening, in order to see if there was any word or act which betrayed the guilty. I remembered there were three men and two women who came in late, and possibly they had a hand in it. And there were two men that offered prayers—who prayed a long time

and in a kind of stereotyped form, and perhaps they were concerned in it, for Jesus spoke of some who, for pretence, make long prayers. And there was one man who spoke, and the tendency of his remarks, I imagined, was such as to indicate that he had something to do in killing that prayer meeting. And once or twice during the evening there was a long pause, and all the company sat in silence, as if meditating upon some awful deed which they had committed, or some deed which they intended to commit, and possibly they were all guilty to some extent. But I could not fasten the deed upon any one very definitely at that time. The meeting was dead, but who killed it, or how, I had not discrimination or wisdom enough to determine.

Since that time, I have been several meetings killed, and knew at the very time who performed the deed, and saw just how it was done. And though I have hitherto kept these things secret, and do not now implicate any person or persons in such transactions, yet if the time should ever come when it will be necessary for me to testify what I know, I will tell the world just *how* these prayer meetings were killed, and *who* killed them.

BUNYAN.

The Eccentric Preacher.

In 1839 I was stationed in Ithaca, N. Y. One Wednesday morning in June, a young man in coarse shoes, threadbare coat and superannuated straw hat, called at my study, and said: "My name is Dayton F. Reed; I am a local preacher; here is my license; will you let me preach to-night?" His very youthful appearance, together with the abruptness of the introduction, made me hesitate. Desiring him to be seated, I questioned him as to his whence, his whither and his wherefore. The child-like simplicity of his conversation and the great humility of his spirit soon won my heart; and if he had asked me for my eyes, I could scarcely have denied him. But how to publish an appointment, how to get the congregation—that was the question. "Leave that to me," said he: "I'll certainly have the church full, if you'll allow me to take my own course: don't be displeased, if it's a little uncommon." "Very well," said I. And away he sprang, as if impressed with the conviction that his Master's business required haste. Half an hour elapsed, when the sound of a horn drew me to the window. There, to my great mortification, was my new acquaintance on horse-back, riding slowly along the crowded street, alternately blowing a tin trumpet, and pausing to harangue the wondering multitude. Arriving at the corner, he delivered an exhortation of about ten minutes, which he finished with the announcement that he would preach at seven o'clock in the Methodist church; then he galloped to another street, where he repeated the performance; and so went throughout the town, tooting, exhorting, and publishing his appointment for the evening.

Dinner over, he spent about half an hour upon his knees in my study, and then went again into the street. Walking out soon after, I found him upon a box at the corner preaching to about two hundred people. The discourse abounded with brilliant wit, pungent satire, quaint remarks, beautiful sentences and pathetic appeals. It was over in less than twenty minutes. Then he exhibited his old saddle to his hearers, and told them he wanted to buy a new one; it would cost ten dollars, three of which he had in his pocket. "Take your hat and go around," cried a voice in the crowd. He picked up his straw hat, upon the torn rim of which he had been standing to keep it from being blown away by the wind, and passed to and fro among the people. "Now throw in, boys," cried one. "Yes, throw in, all of you," shouted another, "and buy the man a saddle; you don't hear such preaching as that three Sundays in a year." Very freely went the change into the old straw hat. Not half had contributed, when the preacher, shaking it up, perceived that he had more than seven dollars, and returned to his box, refusing to take another cent, though several urged him. He knelt down, offered a short but fervent prayer, repeated his appointment for the evening, and rode rapidly away. In a

few minutes he was preaching to another company in another part of the town. And so he went on till sunset, delivering not less than seven or eight short discourses during the afternoon; and true, indeed, it was, that the people did "not hear such preaching as that three Sundays in a year."

Seven o'clock came, and the church was thronged, and many failed to effect an entrance. All classes were there, young and old, rich and poor, flaunting belles and rustic laborers. My young friend knelt full fifteen minutes in silent prayer, during which his soul seemed to be in agony. He arose, and read his hymn in a tone of unaffected modesty, and with such a tremor in his boyish voice, that I could not help feeling a deep concern for his success. The singing over, he knelt, buried his face in his hands upon the pulpit cushion, and almost sobbed out one of the most touching prayers I had ever heard. He began by asking for Divine aid to preach to "such a crowd of gay and fashionable people." He was like a timid child, earnestly imploring his father to stand by him in an hour of danger. Before he finished, I believe he had the sympathy of every heart in the audience, and many were dissolved in tears. He announced his text: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment." Every eye was fixed, and every ear was open. Scarcely had they listened to so solemn and earnest a warning. And never, perhaps, save three times in my life, have I witnessed a more profound impression under the preaching of the Word.

The next day he preached ten or twelve short sermons in the streets, and at night, again occupied the pulpit. The crowd was greater than before, and the discourse was of a very different character. It was addressed especially to the young, and the manner in which he described the follies of fashionable life, and exposed the common sophistries of sinners, the delusions of the devil and the perils of procrastination was equally inimitable and irresistible. His rapid sketches of character, and brilliant sallies of wit, mingled with histrionic passages of uncommon power, and occasional touches of the pathetic, made every body laugh and weep by turns. The morning following he went on his way, I know not whither, but the impression left upon my own mind, and I believe upon all, was, that "a holy man of God" had been among us.—*Cor. of New York Methodist.*

The best kind of Argument.

It is often useless to reason with skeptics or rejecters of vital truth. They may count our arguments weak, and flatter themselves that they have gained an advantage over us. But the Word of God is irresistible, and its pungent truths go directly to the heart and do an effectual work there. The following incident in the life of Rev. Herman Horton is in point:

Rev. Mr. M., in his missionary travel through the western part of New York, came to a village where there was a society of Universalists, whose preacher was a man of great zeal and controversy. He tried various experiments to draw Mr. N. into a debate; but the latter avoided him. One day, however, they met by accident, and were introduced to each other. The Universalist would not let the opportunity slip.

"Well, Mr. N.," said he, "I am one of those who hold that all will be saved."

"I am aware of it," said Mr. N.

"And I think I can convince you that the doctrine is true," said the Universalist.

"I will hear you, sir," said Mr. N.

The other then entered upon the usual arguments in support of such views, receiving an attentive hearing on the part of Mr. N., until he had said all that he wished to say.

"I have but one answer to make to all that," said Mr. N., looking him steadily in the face.

"Well, sir, what is it?" said the Universalist.

"Except you repent you will perish."

The reply sorely nonplussed the other. He complained that Mr. N. had not met the case, but, being assured by the latter that he had nothing else to say, he rallied and put forth some other argument; being determined, if possible,

to draw him out. Mr. N. heard him quietly until he was through, and again said, "I have but one reply to make to all that."

The other paused to hear what it would be, when Mr. N. solemnly repeated the awful words, "Except you repent, you will perish."

"Why," said the wounded man—for the word of the Spirit had pierced him deeply, "you will not argue at all."

"I have nothing more to say," quietly observed Mr. N.

After a short pause the Universalist turned to leave the room.

"Stop, my friend," said Mr. N., "I wish to say to you that there is one thing that you will not be able to forget."

"What is it, sir?" he asked.

"Except you repent you will lose your soul."

A bitter smile of incredulity was the only reply to this remark. Mr. N. saw nothing more of him that day.

On the following day the Universalist called Mr. N., and expressed a desire to have more conversation. "No," said the latter; "I do not wish any more conversation with you."

"O, sir," said the other, "I have not come to argue with you. You were right yesterday when you told me that there was one thing I would not be able to forget. I feel that it is true, that except I repent I must perish, and I have come to ask you what I must do to be saved?"

"My dear friend," said Mr. N., "if that be the way, I shall be happy to talk with you as long as you please." And they did talk together, and prayed together, and result was that the Universalist became a happy believer and a preacher of the truth which he had previously labored to divert and destroy.—*W. & R.*

Degrees in Backsliding.

Reader; he who now addresses you, remembering the adage, that "prevention is better than cure," has prepared the following scale of religious declension; not affirming that backsliding proceeds precisely in this order, but all these being marks of departure from God, any one of them should awaken alarm, and ere you arrive at the climax, induce the cry of the Psalmist, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments."

1. Neglect of secret prayer.—Job xv. 4: Isaiah xliii. 10.
2. Disregard of the Bible.—Jer. vi. 19; Hosea iv. 6.
3. Forsaking the means of grace.—Neh. x. 39; Heb. x. 25.
4. Worldly-mindedness.—2 Tim. iv. 10; 1 John ii. 15.
5. Levity in conversation.—Eph. v. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 11.
6. A quarrelsome spirit.—Isaiah xxix. 21; 1 Cor. iii. 3.
7. Dwelling on the faith of others.—Matt. vii. 3-5.
8. Readiness to take offence.—Prov. xiv. 17; xviii. 19.
9. A murmuring, repining spirit.—1 Cor. x. 10; Philip. ii. 14.
10. A critical hearing of the word.—1 Cor. iii. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 3.
11. Covetousness.—Luke xii. 15; Coloss. iii. 5.
12. Light thoughts of sin.—1 Kings xvi. 31; Matt. xxii. 5.
13. Intemperance.—Prov. xxii. 29-32.
14. Love of preeminence.—Prov. xvi. 18; 3 John 9, 10.
15. Indulgence in secret sin.—Numb. xxxii. 23; Eccles. xii. 14.
16. Falling into outward sin.—Prov. xiv. 4; Hosea iv. 17.

Thus far a true believer many fall, and several correction will be the consequence. See Ps. lxxxix. 30-32; Micah vii. 9; Matt. xxvi. 75. But the false professor may descend lower still.

17. Into scoffing and infidelity.—2 Pet. iii. 3.
18. Persecuting the righteous.—Acts vii. 52.
19. An awful death.—Prov. xiv. 32.
20. FINAL PERDITION.—Matt. xxv. 41.

Now he entreated carefully to study this graduated scale; turn to the Scriptures attached to every step in the ladder, ponder them, and pray over them. And "now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever." Amen.