

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. VIII. No. 48.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1863.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVII. No. 48.

Poetry.

The death of Archbishop Whately.

(From the Spectator.)

Past falls the October rain, and dull and laden
Stretch the low skies without one line of blue;
And up the desolate streets, with soles that deaden
The rolling wheels, the winds come rolling too.

Paster than fall tear-drops—bells are tolling;
The dark sky suits the melancholy heart;
From the church-organs awfully is rolling
Down the draped lanes the Requiem of Mozart.

O tears, beyond control of halt a nation,
O powerful music, what have ye to say?
Why take men up so deep a lamentation?
What prince and great man hath there fall'n to-day?

Only an old Archbishop, growing whiter
Year after year, his stature proud and tall,
Palsied and bowed as his his heavy mitre;
Only an old Archbishop—that is all!

Only the hands that held with feeble shiver
The maverellous pen—by others outstretch'd o'er
The children's heads—were folded now for ever
In an eternal quiet—nothing more!

No martyr he o'er fire and sword victorious,
No saint in silent rapture kneeling on;
No mighty orator with voice so glorious,
That thousands sigh when that sweet sound is gone.

Yet in Heaven's great Cathedral, peradventure,
There are crowns rich above the rest, with green
Places of joy peculiar where they enter,
Whose fires and swords no eye hath ever seen.

They who have known the truth, have spoken,
With few to understand and few to praise,
Casting their bread on waters, half heart-broken,
For men to find it after many days.

And better far than eloquence—that golden
And spangled juggler, dear to thoughtless youth—
The luminous style through which there is beholden
The honest beauty of the face of Truth.

And better than his loftiness of station,
His power of logic, or his pen of gold,
The half-unwilling hum of a nation
Of fierce extremes to one who seem'd so cold.

The purity by private ends unblotted,
The love that slowly came with time and tears,
The honourable age, the life unspotted,
That are not measured merely by their years.

And better far than flowers that blow and perish
Some sunny week, the roots deep-laid in mould
Of quickening thought, which long blue summers
cherish,
Long after he who planted them is cold.

Yes, there be saints, who are not like the painted
And haloed figures fixed upon the pane,
Not outwardly and visibly enshrined,
But holding deep the light which they contain.

The rugged gentleness, the wit whose glory
Flash'd like a sword, because its edge was keen,
The fine antithesis the flowing story,
Beneath such things the sunniness is not seen;

Till in the hours when the wan hand is lifted
To take the bread and wine, through all the mist
Of mortal weakness our eyes are lifted
To see a quiet radiance caught from Christ;

Till from the pillow of the thinker, lying
In weakness, comes the teaching then best taught,
That the true crown for any soul in dying
Is Christ, not genius, and is faith, not thought.

O wondrous lights of death, great unvelier,
Lights that come out above the shadowy place,
Just as the night that makes our small world paler,
Shows us the star-sown amplitudes of space!

O strange discovery, land that knows no bounding,
Isles far off half'd bright seas without a breath,
What time the white sail of the soul is rounding
The misty cape—the promontory Death!

Rest then, O martyr, pass'd through anguish mortal,
Rest then, O saint, sublimely free from doubt,
Rest then, O patient thinker, o'er the portal,
Where there is peace for brave hearts wearied out.

O long unrecognised, thy love too loving,
Too wise thy wisdom, and thy truth too free!
As on the teachers after truth are moving
They may look backward with deep thanks to thee.

What measure shall there be to Ireland's weeping?
What are her best ones to so dear a head,
Her clouds their faint light after sunset keeping,
But ivy living when the oak is dead?

By his dear Master's holiness made holy,
All lights of hope upon that forehead broad,
Ye mourning thou—quit the minister slowly,
And leave the great Archbishop with his God.

Religious.

Bible Women.

This distinctive title, as applied to one branch of Christian female activity, was first used in London in connection with efforts to reach the degraded poor of that city through the purifying influence of God's word.

A Christian lady, Mrs. Banyard, found her

heart deeply impressed with the benighted condition of the poor in the district of St. Giles, a portion of the city in which at that time, ten years ago, there were whole streets where scarce a family could be found in which the wife and mother was not a drunkard. The misery of these homes and neighborhoods was very great. Cannot something be done? was the question which pressed heavily upon her heart. Ordinary means utterly failed as city-missionaries, tract visitors, and Bible sellers could not and dared not venture into the fearful scenes of this locality.

The idea occurred of employing some Christian woman, if one could be found familiar with such life, who might freely visit the poor women, and seek to induce them to hear the Bible read, and by small payments become possessors of it. Such a woman was found, who by reading God's word had through a train of interesting circumstances been truly born into his kingdom. Her heart yearning to do good, she was employed, Mrs. Banyard herself engaging to superintend and direct the benevolent work. A short experiment proved that a "missing link" in the chain of evangelical action had been discovered. By kind words and deeds, by loving attention, in sickness and trouble, many a hard heart was subdued and many a wretched home transformed, while every advantage gained by the humble visitor was made to serve as a wedge for the speedy entrance of the book of life.

From this small beginning, as from a seed, sprang the goodly tree which now overhangs the whole vast city of London. In every needy district humble women are employed as working agents or "Bible Women," while ladies of refinement and culture act as superintendents and counsellors.

It is considered essential that the Bible woman should reside in the midst of her district, where her neat and cheerful room may easily be found by the poor mother whom she seeks to elevate. Daily she goes out with her bag of Bibles to visit homes darkened by long years of sin. Her womanly ways, and best of all, her womanly sympathy, so new and strange, yet so sweet to the fallen, degraded beings upon whom she calls, win attention to the heavenly message; then follows an invitation to the mothers' meeting in her own room, where new hopes and new wants soon spring up, calling for a change of life and abstinence from intoxicating drink.

Such is but a brief outline of the work of Bible women in London. The work was spread not only in England and Scotland, but also in this country. In our large cities, particularly in New York and Brooklyn, the employment of Bible women has been attended with marked success. Most of these women have themselves been poor and wretched. They can therefore from experience speak feelingly when they declare that religion is profitable, both for the life that now is, and also for that which is to come. Their one great object is to get the Bible read and understood, so that its savor may be felt throughout every home of their appointed district. Of course there will be found much suffering to relieve. Bread and clothes and fuel must be often sought for at the hands of the rich for those whose bodies are perishing from want, but *personal relief is not the Bible woman's chief work.* It comes in only as a means to an end ever to be kept uppermost, namely, the entrance of that word which converteth the soul.

"Bible-classes for poor mothers," "mothers' meetings," and "praying circles," are the almost necessary outgrowth of this work, and these furnish a field for Christian work among the ladies of city churches which for interest and success can hardly be surpassed.

It is refreshing to know that, while so much is done by the servants of sin and Satan to destroy and break down the sanctity and peace of "home," to blacken and deface the fair name of "woman," there is a work begotten in Christian love through which many sad homes and hearts have been lit up with the light of God's word, until they have become bright with hope and love.

The experience of each month adds certainty to the conviction that in the work of Bible women there lies a power long needed in the Christian church, and which is as far superior to the systems of the Romish "sisterhood," as light is superior to darkness, and truth to error.—*Am. Mess.*

What is a Sermon?

There are two ways of regarding a sermon; either as a human composition or a divine message. If we look upon it entirely as the first, and require our clergymen to finish it with their utmost care and learning, for our better delight, whether of ear or intellect, we shall necessarily be led to expect much formality and stateliness in its delivery, and to think that all is not well if the pulpit has not a golden fringe round it, and if the sermon be not fairly written in a black book, to be smoothed upon a cushion in a majestic manner before beginning. All this we shall duly come to expect; but we shall, at the same time, consider the treatise thus prepared as something to which it is our duty to listen without restlessness for half an hour or three quarters, but which, when that duty has been decorously performed, we may dismiss from our minds, in happy confidence of having another whenever it shall be necessary.

But if once we begin to regard the preacher, whatever his faults, as a man sent with a message to us which is a matter of life and death, whether we hear or refuse; if we look upon him as set in charge over many spirits in danger of ruin, and having allowed him but an hour or two in the seven days to speak to them; if we make some endeavor to conceive how precious these hours ought to be to him, a small vantage on the side of God after his flock have been exposed for six days together to the full weight of the world's temptations, and he has been forced to watch the thorn and the thistle springing in their hearts and to see what wheat had been scattered there, snatched from the wayside by this wild bird and the other, and at last, when, breathless and weary with the week's labor, they give him this interval of imperfect and languid hearing, he has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men, to convince them of their weakness, to shame them from all their sins, to warn them of all dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of those doors where the Master himself has stood and knocked, and yet none has opened, and to call at the openings of those dark streets where wisdom herself has stretched forth her hands, and no man regarded; thirty minutes to raise the dead in—let us but once understand and feel all this, and we shall look with changed eyes upon that frippery of gay furniture about the place from which the message of judgment must be delivered, which either breathes upon the bones that they may live, or it ineffectual, remains recorded in condemnation, perhaps, against the utterer and listener alike, but assuredly against one of them. We shall not so easily bear with the silk and gold upon the seat of judgment, nor with ornament of oratory in the mouth of the messenger; we shall wish that his words may be simple, even when they are sweetest, and the place where he speaks like a marble rock in the desert, about which the people have gathered in their thirst.—*John Ruskin.*

A striking incident.

One Sabbath morning a singular lapse of memory befel me, which I had never before and never since experienced. When I rose from sleep I could not recollect any portion of the discourse which I had prepared on the day before; and what was more strange I could not even remember the text of the prepared sermon. I was perplexed, and walked out before breakfast in Kensington gardens. While there a particular text occurred to my mind, and my thoughts seemed to dwell upon it so much that I resolved to preach from that, without further attempting to recall what I had prepared—a thing which I had never ventured to do during all my ministry. From this text I preached, and it was, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I preached with great liberty, and in the course of the sermon I quoted the lines:

Beware of desperate steps! the darkest day—
Live till to-morrow—will have passed away.
I afterwards learned that a man in despair had that very morning gone to the Serpentine to drown himself in it. For this purpose he had filled his pockets with stones, hoping to sink at once. Some passengers, however, disturbed

him while on the brink, and he returned to Kensington, intending to drown himself in the dusk of the evening. On passing my chapel, he saw a number of people crowding in it, and thought he would join them in order to pass away the time. His attention was riveted to the sermon, which seemed to be in part composed for him; and when he heard me quote the lines I alluded to, he resolved to abandon his suicidal intentions.—*Life of Dr. Leischild.*

"No sprinkling Priest."

A young German, in making a few remarks with much simplicity and fervor, at a recent Fulton Street Prayer Meeting, said:

He wished to testify that the Lord had been merciful to him, and he had the witness that his sins had been forgiven and his iniquities blotted out. He had been a Roman Catholic, but he was one no more. "No, no," said he, "I go to no sprinkling priest now to have my sins washed away. I go to the fountain head. I go to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. I go to no Catholic priest now to get absolution. I go to Him who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. I go to no observances and penances to work out my salvation. I go to Him who becomes the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe. I need not now to have the priest say that I am no longer under condemnation. I go to Him who says there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, and who gives the Spirit to witness with my spirit that I am born of God. I go to no priest now to ask what is truth. I go to Him who has promised to lead His believing people into all truth. I have great consolation in having fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before me in the Gospel.

"I need 'no sprinkling priest' now. I go to the Great High Priest of our profession—Jesus Christ the righteous. I go to the Word and the testimony concerning Him, and I have found great joy and peace in believing in Him; and O, how have the Holy Scriptures been opened to me to assure my trembling heart that no power shall pluck me out of my Saviour's hand, and that I shall never perish. I ask God, my Heavenly Father, to enlighten me by His Word and Spirit. I never can tell you how my soul magnifies the Lord and rejoices in the God of my salvation. What thrall-dom I have escaped from and what a Saviour I have found! Glory be to Jesus, for His mercy to me, once a poor Roman Catholic, who knew Him not. But now I am able to say to Him: My Lord and my God."

Silence versus Speech.

An intelligent contributor to the *Sabbath Recorder* doubts if the estimate generally made of the worth of a devotional meeting rests on a sound basis. He evidently has warm sympathies with his Quaker neighbours, and agrees with Emerson, that silence is often golden, while speech is only silver. Many of our readers may think with him, that a solemn and impressive silence is more devotional than a babble of vain words; but we suspect that few will agree that a meeting where large numbers speak eagerly from overflowing hearts is less profitable than one where long pauses intervene between formal prayers and remarks. If the Spirit moves to silence, it may be desirable; but if the Spirit moves to utterance, all are the gainers. The words of the correspondent are, however, worth reading:

I am often pained by the peculiar stress laid upon by the weighty importance attached to, *audible religious exercises* in prayer and conference meetings. The prevalent idea among Christians seem to be this: If every available moment of the meeting is occupied by *audible* speaking and prayer, the spiritual condition of the church is "flourishing." If the time is hurriedly occupied, one speaker rising before another is fairly seated, or two or three springing to their feet at once, the church is remarkably prosperous—is "enjoying a refreshing season of Divine grace." If, on the contrary, some moments slip by in silence, Christians are turning their backs on the cause, and the church is in declining spiritual health. If these times of silence often occur, the church has seated consumption—its faith