

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. X. No. 13.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 1865.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIX. No. 13.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Lines on March.

Old Winter, stern tyrant, his reign has resigned,
And nature no longer feigns death;
Soft touches of Spring her cold fetters unbind,
And she yields to a life-giving breath.

In garments of russet the rough hills appear,
And streamlets grow mad in their glee;
The roar of the cataract swells on the ear,
Like an anthem of wild jubilee.

Like phantoms the swift-sailing clouds hurry by,
O'er lakelets that frown as they pass,
And hastily flitting across the blue sky,
Are joined in a dark rolling mass.

The fickle winds whisper 'mid spice-breathing pines,
Then down the damp hollows they roar;
They pipe on the hill-tops where pale sun-light
shines,
And where the wild cataracts pour.

The stately old hemlocks have lost their staid grace,
And writhe in a fantastic way;
And sturdy old oaks nod assent to the chase,
Of dry leaflets in boisterous play.

Ah! Winter, stern winter, thy sceptre, is gone,
And Nature exults to be free;
Ethereal Spring, queen of mildness, comes on,
And none sigh, regretful for thee.
Margaretville, Wilmot. H. F.

Religious.

Love to Christ.

We believe it would be very beneficial to many persons if the writings of some of the old divines were more frequently read by them than they are. There is often much beauty in their quaint language as well as in the thoughts they convey.

The following from "The Glorious Mystery of the Person of Christ, by John Owen, D. D.," cannot fail to afford profitable meditation to the Christian heart:

"There is and ought to be in all believers, a religious gracious love unto the person of Christ, distinct from, and the reason of, their obedience unto his commands; that is, it is distinct from all other commands; but is also itself commanded and required of us in a way of duty.

That there is in the church such a love unto the person of Christ, the scripture testifies both in the precepts it gives for it, and the examples of it. And all those who truly believe cannot apprehend that they understand any thing of faith, or love of Christ, or themselves, by whom it is called in question. If, therefore, I should enlarge on this subject, a great part of the doctrine of the scripture from first to last must be represented, and a transcript of the hearts of believers, wherein this love is seated and prevalent, be made according to our ability. And there is no subject that I could more willingly enlarge upon. Two things only I shall demonstrate: (1.) That the person of Christ is the object of divine love. (2.) What is the nature of that love in us; what are the grounds of it, and the motives unto it, in them that do believe.

1. In reference unto the first of those, the ensuing position shall be the subject of the remainder of this chapter.

The person of Christ is the principal object of the love of God, and of the whole creation participant of his image. The reason why I thus extend the assertion will appear in the declaration of it.

(1.) No small part of the eternal blessedness of the holy God, consisteth in the mutual love of the Father and the Son, by the Spirit. As he is the only begotten of the Father, he is the first necessary, adequate, complete object of the whole love of the Father. Hence he says of himself, that 'from eternity he was by him, as brought up with him, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him,' Prov. viii. 30. In him was the ineffable, eternal, unchangeable delight and complacency of the Father, as the full object of his love. The same is expressed in that description of him, John i. 18. 'The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.' His being the only begotten Son, declares his eternal relation unto the person of the Father, of whom he was begotten in the entire communication of the whole divine nature. Hereon he is in the bosom of the Father. In the eternal embraces of his love, as his only begotten Son. The Father loves, and cannot but love his own nature and essential image in him.

Herein originally is God love. 'For God is love,' 1 John iv. 8. This is the fountain and prototype of all love, as being eternal and necessary. All other acts of love are in God but emanations from hence, and effects of it. As he doth good, because he is good, so he loveth, because he is love. He is love eternally and necessarily in this love of the Son; and all other workings of love are but acts of his will, whereby somewhat of it is outwardly expressed. And all love in the creation was introduced from this fountain, to give a shadow and resemblance of it.

Love is that which contemplative men have always almost adored. Many things have they spoken to evince it to be the light, life, lustre, and glory of the whole creation. But the original and pattern of it, was always hid from the wisest philosophers of old. Something they reached after about God's love unto himself, with rest and complacency in his own infinite excellencies. But of this ineffable mutual love of the Father and Son, both in and by that Spirit, which proceeds from them both, they had neither apprehension nor conjecture. Yet as herein doth the principal part (if we may so speak) of the blessedness of the holy God consist, so is it the only fountain and prototype of all that is truly called love. A blessing and glory which the creation had never been made partaker of, but only to express, according to the capacity of their several natures, this infinite and eternal love of God. For God's love of himself, which is natural and necessary unto the divine being, consists in the mutual complacency of the Father and the Son by the Spirit. And it was to express himself, that God made any thing without himself. He made the heavens and the earth to express his being, goodness, and power. He created man in his own image, to express his holiness, to express this eternal mutual love of the holy persons of the Trinity. But we must leave it under the veil of infinite incomprehensibility; though admiration and adoration of it be not without the highest spiritual satisfaction.

Again, he is the peculiar object of the love of the Father, of the love of God, as he is incarnate, as he hath taken on him, and hath now discharged the work of mediation, or continues in the discharge of it; that is, the person of Christ as God-man is the peculiar object of the love of the Father. The person of Christ in his divine nature is the adequate object of that love of the Father which is *ad intra* a natural necessary act of the divine essence in its distinct personal existence; and the person of Christ as incarnate, as clothed with human nature, is the first and full object of the love of the Father in those acts of which are *ad extra*, or are towards any thing without himself. So he declares himself in the prospect of his future incarnation and work, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth,' Isa. xlii. 1. The delight of the soul of God, his rest and complacency, which are the great effects of love, are in the Lord Christ as his elect and servant in the work of mediation. And the testimony hereof he renewed twice from heaven, afterwards. Matt. iii. 17. 'Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,' as it is again repeated, Mat. xvii. 5. All things are disposed to give a due sense unto us, of this love of God unto him. The testimony concerning it is twice repeated in the same words from heaven. And the words of it are emphatical unto the utmost of our comprehension. 'My Son, my servant, mine elect, my beloved Son in whom I rest, in whom I delight, and am well pleased.' It is the will of God to leave upon our hearts a sense of this his love unto Christ; for this voice came from heaven, not for his sake, who was always filled with a sense of this divine love, but for ours, that we might believe it.

This he pleaded as the foundation of all

the trust reposed in him, and all the power committed unto him: 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,' John iii. 35. 'The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth,' John v. 20. And the sense or due apprehension of it, is the foundation of the Christian religion. Hence he prays, that we may 'know that God hath loved him,' John xvii. 23, 26.

In this sense the person of Christ is the first recipient subject of all that divine love which extends itself unto the church. It is all, the whole of it, in the first place fixed upon him, and by and through him is communicated unto the church. Whatever it receives in grace and glory, it is but the streams of this fountain, love unto himself. So he prays for all his disciples, 'that the love,' saith he, 'wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them,' John xvii. 26. They can be partakers of no other love neither in itself nor in its fruits, but that alone wherewith the Father first loved him. He loveth him for us all, and us no otherwise but as in him. 'He makes us accepted in the beloved,' Eph. i. 6. He is the beloved of the Father, as in all things he was to have the pre-eminence, Col. i. 18. The love of the body is derived unto it from the love unto the head. And in the love of him doth God love the whole church, and no otherwise. He loves none but as united unto him, and participant of his nature.

'Wherefore the love of the Father unto the Son, as the only-begotten, and the essential image of his person, wherein the ineffable delight of the divine nature doth consist, was the fountain and cause of all love in the creation, by an act of the will of God for its representation. And the love of God the Father unto the person of Christ as incarnate, being the first adequate object of divine love wherein there is any thing *ad extra*, is the fountain and especial cause of all gracious love towards us and in us. And our love unto Christ being the only outward expression and representative of this love of the Father unto him, therein consists the principal part of our renovation into his image. Nothing renders us so like unto God as our love unto Jesus Christ, for he is the principal object of his love; in him doth his soul rest, in him is he always well pleased. Wherever this is wanting, whatever there may be besides, there is nothing of the image of God. He that loves not Jesus Christ let him be *Anathema, maran atha* for he is unlike unto God, his carnal mind is enmity against God.'

'Hereunto doth he annex those blessed promises which comprize the whole of our peace, safety, and consolation in this world. 'He (saith he) that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him,' John xiv. 21. and ver. 23. 'My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' What heart can conceive, what tongue can express the glory of these promises, or the least part of the grace that is contained in them? Who can conceive aright of the divine condescension, love, and grace that are expressed in them? How little a portion is it that we know of God in these things? But if we value them not, if we labour not for an experience of them according unto our measure, we have neither lot nor portion in the gospel: the presence and abode of God with us as a Father manifesting himself to be such unto us, in the infallible pledges and assurances of our adoption; the presence of Christ with us, revealing himself unto us, with all those ineffable mercies wherewith these things are accompanied, are all contained in them. And these promises are peculiarly given unto them that love the person of Christ, and in the exercise of love towards him.'

'It may be known to most of our readers that John Owen was one of the excellent men ejected from the Church of England for Non-conformity in 1662. It is said that—'Such was his proficiency in learning, that he was admitted to the university at about 12 years of age. He then pursued his studies with such diligence, that for several years he allowed himself but four hours sleep in a night. His whole aim and ambition was, as he himself afterwards confessed with shame and sorrow, to rise to some eminence in church or state, to each of which he was in-

different. When Laud imposed several superstitious rites on the university of Oxford, Mr. Owen had received so much light, that his conscience could not submit to them; and God had now made such gracious impressions on his heart as inspired him with a zeal for the purity of his worship, and reformation in the church.'

He occupied several very prominent positions during his life, in those troublous times, and died in 1683.

The late Mrs. Conant.

The following notice of the late Mrs. Conant, from the pen of H. W. Beecher, in the *Watchman & Reflector*, will be read with deep interest by many. The rare qualities and powers of such a woman render her an ornament to her sex, and one of whom not only the Baptist denomination but the world may be proud. We speak of great men when they have undertaken and succeeded in great enterprises, but the same things done by woman, with all the demands of a family resting upon her, add far more of greatness to Woman.

'The readers of the *Watchman* will feel a deep sympathy in our joy and sorrow at the departure of Mrs. Conant, the wife of Rev. Dr. Conant, late of Rochester University, but for some years living in Brooklyn. For a full year her health has waned. But only within a few months have her friends felt that she could hardly see another summer. It was my inestimable privilege to count Mrs. Conant one of my dearest friends. Two such, one can hardly expect to meet in a life-time. She was born to be a great-souled woman. Her intellectual powers were strong and thoroughly educated. She was a scholar in the best sense of the word, working almost as regularly as her husband, and at the same tasks. She was enough versed in Hebrew, Greek and Latin to assist in his laborious investigations, and in French and German she was almost as much at home as in her native tongue. For more than thirty years, at the same table, almost day by day, this pair have worked at joint tasks, like one mind in two bodies. Persistent and scholastic industry had not dulled her taste or imagination. Her love for art was strong, her taste and judgment excellent, and her relish for pictures, statues or engravings, was refreshing to all who loved the beautiful. It was not her nature to admire superficially. Nothing worthy of admiration was to her unworthy of study.

As it should always be, these tastes for art were based upon a deep love of nature, and a profound sentiment of the moral meanings of the beautiful in the natural world. A flower, a tuft of moss, a beautiful day, a landscape, a walk in the fields or forests, excited in her the most genuine and child-like pleasure, at times amounting to joy. Seldom was any one more admirably fitted to be the companion of another's joys.

With all her unquestionable learning, and her incessant application to books or manuscripts, there was not a trace of pedantry, not the slightest obtrusion of unfeminine strength. Over all her gifts was true womanhood. She was modest, sensitive, shrinking from publicity, living in her own little circle of friends, with enthusiastic fidelity to every office of friendship. No one would dream who was not intimately acquainted with her, that she was so thoroughly versed in sacred and secular learning. This unusual combination was pervaded by a deep and pure religious sentiment. Every other grace, at length, had its root in a profound Christian experience. Reared in the strictest New England theology, she retained to the close of life a severe judgment of her own character, and rejoiced with habitual fear. Her dying was peaceful rather than joyful. Her sense of her own deficiency was, until near the last, a cloud that overhung her heart. At length that dispersed. In a clear heaven she beheld her Saviour, and seeing Him, departed to be with Him. A family of ten children and her husband remain. They are rich in the memories of such a wife, mother, woman and friend as is seldom vouchsafed to us in