

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 1866.

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Poetry.

Finish thy work.

Finish thy work, the time is short ;
The sun is in the west ;
The night is coming down—till then
Think not of rest.

Yes, finish all thy work, then rest ;
Till then rest never ;
The rest prepared for thee by God
Is rest forever.

Finish thy work, then wipe thy brow ;
Ungird thee from thy toil ;
Take breath, and from each weary limb
Shake off the soil.

Finish thy work, then sit thee down
On some celestial hill ;
And of the strength-reviving air
Take thou thy fill.

Finish thy work, then go in peace ;
Life's battle fought and won ;
Hear from the throne the Master's voice,
Well done ! well done !

Finish thy work, then take thy harp,
Give praise to God above ;
Sing a new song of mighty joy
And endless love.

Give thanks to him who held thee up
In all thy path below,
Who made thee faithful unto death,
And crowns thee now !

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Acadia College.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATING
CLASS, June 6, 1866.

[Published at the request of the Class.]

GENTLEMEN,

In the name of the Faculty of the College, and on behalf of the friends of the Institution here assembled, I congratulate you on the position you occupy this day. You have looked forward to it for these four years past, with trembling anxiety, and have toiled hard to attain it. Your wishes are gratified. The goal is reached, and you have won the prize.

You are now about to enter upon the duties of life, and perhaps ere long to grapple with its difficulties and trials. You will soon be introduced to scenes very different from those to which you have been accustomed here. It will not be all sunshine. Neither will it be all storm. There will be a mingling of the rough and the smooth. The bitter and the sweet will be welded together. If sometimes the promise of the morning shall fail to be fulfilled, and an overcast sky shall envelope you in gloom, the occasions will not be few in which the cloudy dawn will be succeeded by a bright day. Your experience in this journey will doubtless greatly resemble that of the travellers who have gone before you.

You came here to be prepared for the journey. Education, you rightly judged, is essential to the efficient discharge of life's duties ; for even genius, untrained, is apt to boggle and blunder. So you came to be educated. Not that you supposed it possible, in four years, to learn all that is to be learned, or lay in a stock of knowledge that would suffice you for a life-time. Expectations so Quixotic did not enter into your minds. Your object was to learn how to learn, and how to use your learning. You looked for an introduction to the prime sources of knowledge, ancient and modern, and for directions as to the manner in which your future researches might be prosecuted, with reasonable prospects of success. You hoped to obtain a general acquaintance with the laws which the Great God has impressed on matter and on mind, by which all beings are uniformly and constantly governed. You sought discipline. You desired to form habits of thinking,—to acquire correct taste,—and to be able to express your thoughts in a style neither diffuse or feeble on the one hand, nor rugged or obscure on the other, but distinguished by clearness, precision, and force.

All this has been in a good degree accom-

plished. You are now to take your flight. Whither, and for what purpose ? What course have you marked out for yourselves ? How are you planning, as far as mortals may plan, to employ your powers and spend your lives ?

It may be well to remind you that wherever you may go you will find society in an advanced and advancing state. Nova Scotia has made great progress within the last generation. Influence over others cannot be gained so easily now as it could thirty years ago. The race of thinkers has largely increased in number. He who would sway the minds of his fellow-men must give proof that his own mind is well furnished, and that he has gained the habit of self-improvement, or he will not be able to maintain his position. This consideration will serve to confirm you in the resolve which it is presumed you have already formed, that education, your own education, shall be still continued, and be your life-work. You will be students as long as you live :—and when I say so, I refer to life in the most extensive acceptance of the word, and mean to affirm that the student-life will never end. Here, we are but learning the alphabet, and forming letters into syllables and words. We shall study things,—and search into causes,—and discern laws,—and solve problems in God's government,—and revel in glorious discoveries, in the next world. "In thy light," said one of the thinking men of the olden time, "we shall see light."

But to return. I take it for granted that you have made your choice. Perhaps some of you will be enrolled in the honourable list of Teachers. Others may wish to penetrate the dark recesses of legal lore,—or be ambitious of skill in the healing art,—or seek wealth and distinction in commerce,—or find a place among those who "allure to brighter worlds and lead the way."

Now, whatever may be the pursuit or profession to which you devote yourselves, *stick to it*. Do not be inveigled into side-issues. If for instance, any of you should decide on the christian ministry, I would say, to such a one,—*"Be a minister"*—and nothing else. Do not buy farms,—nor trade in horses,—nor keep store :—do not even teach school, unless under the pressure of dire necessity, such necessity as the people should never suffer to exist. The ministry requires the whole man. The Apostle Paul says, "Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profit may appear to all." And so of the other professions. No man can expect to succeed in either of them who does not make it the business of his life, from which he is not to be diverted by appeals to his vanity or by visions of aggrandisement.

And here let me interpose a caution. Beware of party-politics. Many a noble vessel has been wrecked on that rock. You have something better to do than to engage in the vain janglings and unseemly strife which unhappily distinguish, even under British government, the conduct of "political affairs." The excitement is perilous, and the advantage more than doubtful. Your time and strength may be far more profitably employed. Get a good name among men by diligent attention to the duties of your respective callings, and let those who will "seek the bubble reputation" by devious courses.

But it is just possible that some of you may desire to "govern men and rule the state," and to make politics your chosen profession. If I might suppose that an embryo statesman is before me I would say to him,—*"Be a statesman"*. Qualify yourself for the work, for it is arduous, and few are fitted for it. Study the science of government. Be well versed in the history of your country. Acquire patriotic learning. Know all about Nova Scotia, all about British North America—the capabilities of the soil—the mineral wealth—the character of the people—and their special wants. Get enlarged views. Be not seduced to fanciful theories, but give

* I was surprised to learn, after the meeting, that these expressions were misunderstood. My meaning was, "Stick to it, or leave it." All the while the ministry is your profession, give yourself to it. The instruction and care of a church furnish work enough for any man. If your talents may be more usefully employed in another direction, act accordingly, yet still retaining the right to preach the gospel as you have opportunity. In that case, the ministry has ceased to be your profession. Your mode of life is changed. But while it is your profession, I say again, *stick to it*, or your church will suffer.

your adhesion to such plans and policy as appear to be best adapted to the actual state of the population ; and be sure that you attach high importance to the encouragement of education in all its branches. Then, if it should be your lot to sit among legislators, take a dignified position. Judge of measures by their merits. Always support the just and the right, by whomsoever proposed. Do not think it necessary to be the drudge of a party. Let it be seen that you are neither to be beguiled nor bought—that you will be no man's slave—that you will serve your country at all risks. So acting, you will secure honour and renown, whether your seat be in our modest province building at Halifax, or in the magnificent halls of Ottawa."

Be your course what it may, Acadia's light will shine upon it. You will look back with grateful satisfaction to the years spent in this place, and it will be your studious endeavour so to demean yourselves that your *Alma Mater* may continue to regard you with affectionate complacency. We entertain no doubts in that respect.

Once more. You are all professors of religion. The claims of God have been acknowledged by you. The consciousness of obligations resulting from these claims is your every-day experience. Life, as you have learned from the highest authority, is then only spent worthily when its aims are godlike, and the motives of action are drawn from divine sources. God in Christ is the object of your devout adoration and love. You have learned the practical theology described in those pregnant words of the Apostle,—*"None of us liveth to himself, and no name dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord ; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."* Let that text be your motto. Go forth to your allotted work determined to exemplify the spirit of the gospel, and cheerfully trusting in promised wisdom and strength. There may be griefs—disappointments, perplexities—"days of darkness," and "wearisome nights"—all this is the portion of fallen humanity, and none of us can look for exemption. But the "voice from the excellent glory" cheers and consoles. Our Heavenly Father says to each of his children, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Aet for God, and he will take care of you, here and hereafter.

For the Christian Messenger.

United States Correspondence.

Boston, June 11, 1866.

DEAR BROTHER,

Nova Scotia, I am sorry to say, was not represented at our National Baptist Anniversaries, held in Boston for an entire week, during the month of May. Most gladly would we have welcomed a large delegation of our provincial brethren ; and I am sure from personal experience that there is great benefit to be derived by an interchange of christian courtesies and mingling in the social enjoyments connected with such interesting religious gatherings. How it would have pleased me to have seen Dr. Cramp upon the platform, and to have listened to his stirring appeals and words of wisdom. And Dr. Pryor—surely he might have come home for one week, where he would have received the most cordial greetings from those with whom he was for so many years associated in christian labor. New Brunswick sent us brethren Cady and Garner, and we hope they have carried home a "good report," which may serve to bind more strongly together in christian love and fellowship the great Baptist family of the United States and the Provinces.

As full reports of all our meetings have been so widely circulated, and extracts from them published in the *Messenger*, it would be superfluous for me to attempt giving any account of them further than to say, that the attendance was very large, the reports from our different denominational organizations most encouraging, the discussions able and conducted in a fraternal spirit,—while the prayer meetings and social intercourse was such that even an infidel might have been led to say, "Behold how these christians love one another."

One great subject which claimed attention

at most of our meetings, and which is of deep interest to every philanthropist and christian, was the condition of our colored fellow-citizens in the Southern States. Perhaps there never was a people before where the anxiety to be educated was so universal as it is now among the millions of those lately redeemed from bondage and invested with many of the rights of freemen. They will do any thing and make any sacrifice for the sake of receiving instruction. Open a school any where, and crowds will flock to it day and evening—from the youngest child to the aged veteran in years and toil. They are most grateful for all kindness shown them and study with an intensity and perseverance, that is truly wonderful. This truth applies equally well to week day and Sabbath instruction. One of the largest schools in Virginia is that is that in the First African Baptist Church. Some incidents connected with this school I will give you—as they were related to me by the Principal. "The week before Christmas I spoke to the school about a vacation and said, you will want to celebrate the holidays. 'I want no better holidays than this' said one, holding up his book. 'So I say,' responded the whole class. A good christian 'Aunt' said, 'when I see ye are teaching our children, and sees them with their books, I feel as if I should bust all out to tears. I drops right down here many times in the day and prays for ye all and I prays for ye many times when I dont drops down.' I called at the home of two little girls who were living in a brick hut with the earth for a floor and not a window, noar way of admitting a ray of light except by the open door. I said to the little girls—*who always had perfect lessons*, and they get them at home—how do you get light to study these cold days ? You cant bear the door open—you must be obliged to burn candles in the day time.' 'Oh no' said one, 'we hasn't candles Miss Mary, but we gather shavings after we gets home from school and burns them for a light until we gets our lessons.' And they only had one book between them.

Such facts and incidents, which are not of rare occurrence, ought deeply to interest us in the welfare of this people who have groped so long in ignorance and darkness. There is a great work to be done in their behalf at the present time, but it may fairly be expected that in a few years they will be able to support a large number of their own preachers and teachers, and contribute besides to the general objects of benevolence. They are placed in a trying position and need support and encouragement from friends in all parts of our land. Let us give them a fair chance to prove their capabilities, both physical and intellectual, and time will settle the question as to the true position they are to occupy in the human family.

Fraternally yours,
N. P. KEMP.

For the Christian Messenger.

Premonitions.

The account of the Railway Conductor, in a late number of the *Messenger*, who was impressed to stop the cars and go ahead to see if any thing was wrong, and who discovered a switch out of place, which had he gone on, would have destroyed the train, brought to my recollection several events of the same kind, authentically related to myself.

A respectable sea captain, residing at Port Medway, N. S., told me that he was once on the coast of Newfoundland in stormy weather. For several days he had been broken of his rest, and so one day he "turned in," as the sailors express it, to obtain a little rest. But he had scarcely fallen asleep before he was awakened by a shake from a hand laid upon his breast, and the startling cry of, "Captain ! you are going right on to the rocks !" He made one bound out of the berth, when to his astonishment there was no one there. He rushed on deck, and was just in time to order the helm "put down" to clear the "breakers" upon which the vessel was driving.

An excellent christian brother residing in St. John N. B., related to me the following fact of the same kind. He was taking a short cut through the forest in winter when the snow was deep, when he came where