

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XII. No. 11.

HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 1867.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXI. No. 11.

Poetry.

There's Rest by-and-by.

BY REV. SIDNEY DYER.

"Let us labor therefore to enter that rest."—HEB. 4:2.

When, faint and weary, toiling,
The sweat drops on my brow,
I long to cease from labor,
To drop the burden now,
There comes a gentle chiding
To quell each murmuring sigh;
"Work while the day is shining,
There's resting by-and-by."

'Tis not to hear thy groaning
Thy task is heavy made,
Nor adding to thy sorrow
That succor is delayed;
When bending 'neath the burden,
You toil, and sweat, and cry,
"Be patient," is the answer,
"There's resting by-and-by."

The way is rough and thorny,
The day is dark and drear,
My step is growing weary,
The night is drawing near;
Behold this verdant wayside,
How cool the shadows lie!
"Nay pause not in thy journey,
There's resting by-and-by."

Ah! when the crown is waiting,
And room enough in heaven,
Why wage a further warfare
Where dreadful wounds are given?
O, give me now the trophy!
Why not, my Saviour, why?
"Still bear the cross a season,
There's resting by-and-by."

This life to toil is given,
And he improves it best
Who seeks by cheerful labor
To enter into rest.
Then, pilgrim, worn and weary,
Press on, the goal is nigh:
The prize is straight before thee,
There's resting by-and-by."

Nor ask, when overburdened,
You long for friendly aid,
"Why idle stands my brother,
No yoke upon him laid?"
The Master bids him tarry,
And dare you ask him why?
"Go labor in my vineyard,
There's resting by-and-by."

Wan reaper in the harvest,
Let this thy strength sustain,
Each sheaf that fills the garner
Brings you eternal gain!
Then bear the cross with patience
To fields of labor hie;
'Tis sweet to work for Jesus,
There's resting by-and-by."

Religious.

Dean Alford on the New Testament.

Some weak-kneed people, pretending to great reverence for the Word of God, are greatly afraid to hear of attempts at Revision of the authorized version, lest it should destroy the confidence of the illiterate in the divine character of the Scriptures. It has been sometimes charged upon Baptists that they have been sinners in this matter above all, and the Revision made by the American Bible Union has been nicknamed the Baptist Bible. Shame on the libellers!

Dr. Henry Alford, Dean of Canterbury, has no sympathy with such ignorance and superstition. A work recently published in London; by this learned Church of England divine, entitled "How to study the New Testament," speaks out very distinctly on Bible Revision. We extract the following from a review of this work in the London Freeman:—

After a brief introduction he takes up each Gospel in succession, points out with great clearness and beauty its peculiarities of style and thoughts. He then indicates the more remarkable places where the present Greek

text is not that of the most eminent authorities; and afterwards the more remarkable instances where our translators have failed to give the force of the original. Appended to the chapters on the Gospels are two on the four narratives of the Passion and of the Resurrection. The Book of Acts he regards not as the history of what was done by the apostles, but as the history of what our Lord did through them. The Gospel of Luke is the record of the continuance of what He taught and thought. The whole he divides into three portions—Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and gives in each the corrections of text and translation as before. This plan he is carrying through the whole of the New Testament, and we hope to see a second series of papers by the end of the year.

Those who are acquainted with Dr. Alford's larger works will not be surprised to find considerable attention given here to the apparent discrepancies of the Gospels. We concur most cordially in his disclaimer that Christianity has nothing to fear from honest study, and nothing "to gain by the suppression or concealment of any existing difficulty, or by the offering of any specious but insufficient solution." He has accordingly given special prominence to these difficulties, and holds with respect to many of them that they can not at present be solved. "Could we know exactly how any given event related in the Gospels happened, we should at once be able to account for the variations in the narratives and the separate truth of each would be shown. But not knowing the exact details of any event thus narrated, we often cannot undertake to reconcile apparent discrepancies. Our plain duty is firmly and fearlessly to recognize these, and to leave them as fearlessly unsolved if no honest solution can be found." And yet we think Dr. Alford has hardly done justice to the men whom he condemns. Believing, as they do with Dr. Alford, that every part of the narrative as inspired men left it will be found true, they object to any solution of difficulties which affirms that the writers were mistaken; and then they offer hypotheses on any of which the discrepancies are reconcilable. Most of the best harmonies of the Gospel say no more than any honourable advocate would say of differing, though not necessarily discrepant, human testimony. Their explanations may be inadequate, and like all suppositions, may turn out unfounded; but they are put forth as suppositions, and it is not fair to hint that they are hardly honest.

On the inaccuracies of the English translation and of the present Greek text, Dr. Alford writes with a frankness and an earnestness that do him great honour. "The English version for faithfulness, for simplicity, will bear comparison with any that has been made; yet, it is not a word more than the truth to say that it abounds with errors and inadequate renderings. In this matter let me speak plainly, and say that the Church of Christ in this land has not acted faithfully by her members. A formidable list of passages might be given, in which our version either has confessedly mis-rendered the original, or has followed a form of the text now well known not to have been the original form.—These might be corrected at any time; and it is a grievous thing that this has not been done or is not now a-doing. Let a commission of men learned in the Scriptures, be appointed chosen from among our different Christian denominations, and, in a few years, at most, this stumbling-block will have been removed. The time may not have been ripe for it a short while ago, but I believe it is ripe for it now, at least as far as regards the New Testament and mind I speak not as a youthful enthusiast but as one whose life, now not a short one, has been mainly spent in the study of the Sacred Word; not as a lover of change in this matter, but as an ardent admirer and lover of the dear old English words of our national Bible."

Mr. Spurgeon's Appeal to Members of Baptist Churches.

The following address is from the January No. of the *Sword & Trowel*. Although intended for the Baptist Churches of Great Britain, yet it might be no less appropriately

addressed to brethren on this side the Atlantic, even to those dwelling in N. S., N. B., and P. E. I. We respectfully commend it to general and earnest attention:—

BELoved BRETHREN.—An exceedingly great and bitter cry has gone up unto heaven concerning many of us. It is not a cry from the world which hates us, nor from our fellow-members whom we may have offended, but, (alas that it should be so!) it is wrung from hundreds of poor, but faithful ministers of Christ Jesus who labour in our midst in word and doctrine, and are daily oppressed by the niggardliness of churls among us. Many of our churches honourably discharge towards their pastors the duty of ministering to them in temporal things, but by far the larger number dole out to them a pittance upon which they do not live, but barely exist. Brethren of abundant liberality are among us, but those of an opposite disposition abound. I should be very sorry to be compelled to adduce the many cases in which the hire of the spiritual labourer who has reaped down our fields is wickedly kept back; but this I know full well—that the cries of them which have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth, and it is high time that a voice should be lifted up to warn the churches of their sin, and of the consequences which will surely follow unless there be a speedy amendment. Having no end to serve but the glory of God, and having no pecuniary gain to seek, and having personally seen and lamented the affliction and poverty of my fellow-servants in the ministry, I feel bound with all affection, but much earnestness, to press the matter upon the hearts of the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Hundreds of our ministers would improve their circumstances if they were to follow the commonest handicrafts. The earnings of artisans of but ordinary skill are far above the stipends of those among us who are considered to be comfortably maintained. Is this the way in which we show our appreciation of their spiritual gifts, their fervent prayers, their earnest labours, their watchings for souls? In thousands of cases church members do not give so much as one penny a week towards the maintenance of the man whom they call their "beloved pastor," and if they pay the mean and paltry pittance of a shilling for a quarter of a year they reckon themselves to have done liberally, and as becometh saints. Is this the manner in which we show our gratitude to the great Head of the church for sending us pastors after his own heart to feed us with knowledge and understanding?—Worthy, devoted men are obliged to sue for alms at the hand of our charitable fund in London, in order to eke out the scanty portions which their people allot to them; while in many cases there are those connected with their churches who dwell in sumptuous houses, own farm of many acres, and ride in their carriages. Is the Lord well pleased with those professors who thus constrain others to maintain a ministry of which they enjoy the fruit, and which they are therefore bound in common honesty to support by their own gifts? Do not many of the wealthy and of those who are thriving in business need to blush when they see themselves giving towards their pastor's maintenance no more than is given by domestic servants and day labourers? Is it not a thing to be wept over that men's consciences should allow them to speak of being consecrated to Christ, while the servant of Christ pines in poverty, and they of their abundance do not minister to him? "If," says the apostle, "we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 11.) But is it not in these days thought to be a very great thing if the preacher be properly sustained and if he be left to be humiliated by debt or to be pinched by want, is it not thought to be a trifling grievance? The last great day alone will reveal the secret sorrows, the bitter anguish through which many a servant of the Lord has had to pass because of the niggardliness of the people who professed to be his loving and faithful flock. "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.) Is not this ordinance of

God greatly trifled with? Might it not even be conceived that the churches feel it to be a yoke of bondage, or think it to be better that men should starve of the Gospel than *live* of it? If it be our conscientious belief that the pastors of the churches should give their whole time gratuitously, let us say so, and be consistent. If the labourer be not in our esteem worthy of his hire, let us tell him so, and bid him go about his business. Those who deny the right of the ministers to temporal support fly in the teeth of Scripture, but they are at least consistent in withholding their money; but to hold with a paid ministry to make even more than commendable stir about electing a pastor, to expect him to be instant in season and out of season, in the pulpit, and from house, and then to deny him even enough bread to eat is shameful. One would imagine from the excitement frequently attending the choice of a minister that the office was held in the most eminent esteem, but alas! the wretched contributions prove the reverse. For this there is no excuse. If you will have the man be honest enough to pay him. What right-minded man would wish another even to do the work of his scullery for nought? Who would consent to be pauperized by receiving another man's labour without returning him a recompense?—How is it with your consciences, ye non-subscribing church-members, or have ye no conscience at all?

Some hearers appear to imagine that all their duty towards their ministers lies in criticising them, and they judge themselves to have done the preacher a great service if they speak a good word of his discourses. They use the preacher as the old carriers did their pack-horses, when they heaped heavy burdens upon their backs, and afterwards hung bells at their ears to make them music. As an old writer says, "ministers empty their books, empty their veins, and empty their brains, but they must feed upon turnips and leave their posterity beggars." The world maintains its players and fiddlers far better than the Christian church remunerates its ministers; and a dancer or an actor will receive more than the most learned and edifying divine. Many farmers spend more on their dogs than upon their minister, and one dinner will cost some traders as much as a year's gospel; and yet these persons would be in a fine fever if their piety were doubted. The lives of many professors so far as their gifts to the Lord's cause are concerned, would, if fairly written out read like a libel upon human nature, and would be a mere burlesque of Christianity. Many, it is to be hoped, have never thought upon this matter carefully.—Would to God it were in my power to let those who withhold from thoughtlessness see the sorrow which they inflict upon those whom they respect. The ambassadors of peace do indeed weep bitterly with a weeping which is neither profitable to themselves nor convenient for us. At the present moment the great advance in the price of all the necessities of life is very keenly felt in the pastor's house; but has the fact been taken into consideration by the churches? The wages of workmen have advanced, but not the incomes of the workers for God. Bricklayers, carpenters, printers, all draw their extra pay at the week's end, but there is no increase to the scanty quarterage of the poor preacher. Even kind friends forget this, and unkind ones only remembered it to make cruel remarks thereon. Meanwhile the evil recoils; the poverty of the minister is visible in the flock. He is meanly fed temporally, and they are scantily fed spiritually. They give unto the Lord scant measure, and even so is it measured unto them again. Want of books must impoverish the hearer quite as much as the preacher; debt must distract the thoughts, and so impair the discourse; children poorly clad, and rent unpaid must injure the mind and so the sermon. I do not ask luxuries for my brethren, although many of them might claim even these; but I would with all my heart and soul say, "Deacons of churches, stir up the members, and set the example yourselves of giving our preachers at least a generous supply of necessities." You, the deacons of our churches, know from your own experience, that £100 per annum, for a man with a wife and children, is not wealth, but far from it, and yet how many ministers would be happy if their incomes came near this moderate sum. We