

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XIV. No. 5.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 8, 1869.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXIII. No. 5.

Religious.

A LETTER FROM MADAGASCAR.

FROM THE CORRESPONDENT OF THE
CHRISTIAN WORLD.

The Church in Madagascar, which for so long a period was subject to fiery persecution, and which the malignant hatred of a wicked queen failed utterly to exterminate, though she destroyed some of its brightest members, scattered the rest, and effectually prevented their assembling, except in secret, to worship the God whom they loved, is no longer darkened and impeded by the frown of adverse rulers. For the late Queen Rasoharina and her advisers, though they tolerated the Christian religion, yet looked with disfavor and jealousy upon its, for them, too rapid and wide diffusion. The present Sovereign and her government wisely inaugurated the new reign by the total abolition of idolatry and the nominal adoption of the religion of the King of Kings. This has naturally given a great impulse to Christianity, filled all our chapels—some to overflowing—and proportionately intensified the energy and joy of our churches. Some of the distant tribes, who still remembered the days of darkness and cruelty, were too incredulous to believe in the veracity of the general topic of conversation that the new Queen had renounced the god of wood and scarlet cloth of her ancestors, and began to worship the God of the martyred Christians; and looked forward with restless anxiety to the Coronation Day, when they would hear for certainty the truth or falsity of the popular report. They have now learned that idolatry, so far as the Queen and Malagasy government are concerned, as far as Antananarive is concerned, with the district surrounding it for a distance of some miles is a thing of the past.

The coronation of Ranavalomanjaka, took place on the 3rd of September, at Andohalo, a large open space in the centre of the city, where the people usually assemble to receive public messages from the Sovereign. Intimation of the approaching coronation was previously conveyed to many of the distant towns and large villages, and they in return sent representatives to congratulate the Queen upon her accession, and to express their loyalty to her throne. There was a vast concourse of people present, numbering at a rough guess upwards of 150,000, and many of these decked their persons with the best finery they could possess themselves of for the auspicious occasion. Several lines of soldiers in uniform were placed in different parts of the ground, and great order was maintained throughout the day—an order, indeed, which would put to shame many an English crowd one tenth the size. A large platform was erected to the extreme east of the plain, on which, through the kindness of the Prime Minister, all the Europeans who attended were accommodated with a seat; and on the middle of this platform was a handsome canopy over the temporary throne of her Majesty, which was covered with fine cloth, and on its four sides bore, in gilt letters, the words of the angels who appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men."

At eight o'clock p. m. the firing of guns and the sound of music announced that the Queen had left the Palace. She was preceded by a long procession of women, wives and daughters of officers and nobles, in European dresses of nearly all sorts of material, shape, and colour, and displaying crinolines of very respectable dimensions. Her Majesty was borne by sixteen men in royal palanquin procured from France, and was attended by the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary of State, several officers, all elegantly attired, and her Life Guards. When she arrived opposite to a large flat stone in the centre of Andohalo, which was once considered sacred—but I trust so no longer—she left her palanquin and stepped on to it for a few seconds, in accordance with an ancient Malagasy custom, by which all the Sovereigns within recollection have

stood on that identical stone at their coronation. She then walked to her throne on the platform, with her crown on her head, and the long train of her beautiful white satin dress borne by three officers. The shout of joy with which she was received by the people was scarcely less inferior to our English hurrah! A handsomely bound copy of the Holy Scriptures was placed on a small table by her side, thus silently notifying to her subjects that God's Word had taken the place of the sappy or idol, and signifying, too, I hope, that the living truths of that precious volume are in future to guide both her public and private life.

The proceedings of the day were commenced with an interesting speech from the Queen herself, which she delivered in a good voice, and with considerable energy. At the close of each important paragraph in her speech she struck the boards of the platform with her sceptre, and exclaimed, in a phrase equivalent to—"Is it not so, O ye below the skies?" to which the people replied as with one mighty voice, "That!" The Royal Speech has since been printed and circulated. In it she refers to her ancestors; reminds her subjects that they are her father and mother, and that she is their father and mother; exhorts them to obey the laws, and apprizes them (perhaps in reference to the scheming of the French) that she will not allow foreigners to possess one inch of soil in her dominions. The following is a translation of the only sentence in her speech with regard to "praying," as the profession of Christianity is designated:—"This is what I say unto you below the skies, concerning praying; there is no compulsion and there is no prevention, for God made you."

After this the laws of the kingdom were read, amounting to about a hundred in number, and these were characterized by a good deal of intelligence, and indicated a considerable sense of the right and just. Then followed addresses from the different tribes to her Majesty, expressive of their loyalty and affection, in token whereof they presented a dollar, or the "hasina," as it is called. Among those who addressed the Queen was a woman who attracted much attention. She belongs to a district in the South, near to which there is a whole tribe in rebellion, and she has become renowned by placing herself, though a woman, at the head of a troop of soldiers and leading them forth to battle. This she has done several times, and invariably succeeds in keeping the enemy in check. In reward for her bravery she has been appointed governor of an extensive province, and the same honour, titles, and position, have been conferred upon her as are possessed by many of the higher officers. Nearly all the representatives, who were very numerous, flattered the Queen, and gave utterance to their attachment in most extravagant terms. The last speaker was the Prime Minister, and his harangue, the general subject of which was the recognition of God in all things, and at all times, lasted about twenty minutes. Wielding a sword in his right hand, he paraded backwards and forwards in front of her Majesty as he spoke and at every pause was most enthusiastically cheered. With this closed the interesting events of the day.

The recent changes in Madagascar will give great joy to our friends in England. The Gospel is not now simply tolerated, but the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary of State, and many of the nobles and officers co-operate in plans for its further dissemination, and freely contribute of their means towards aiding in the erection of places of worship. The prayers, however, of British Christians are still needed, that the invincible arm of God which has brought His Church in this land safely through the storm of persecution, may shield her from the intrigues of Roman priests and popish trumpery, preserve her from the pernicious influence of State interference and control, and cause her to abound in purity, faith and good works.

Conversion without conviction is no better than conviction without conversion.

TRUE INDEED.—He who would make a name in life must have an aim in life.

WORDS OF WISDOM FOR THE WISE.

GET THE CORK OUT.

You can't fill a bottle with the cork in.—No matter how good the water, or how long you pour, you can't fill it. Yet this ludicrous attempt is exceedingly common. How much breath is spent in trying to teach, when the pupils don't want to learn. The cork is in tight, yet the teacher pours on, and it all runs off. In fact, if it does anything, it just swells the cork and makes it tighter. *The grand work of a teacher is to awaken desire.* Do this, and if you do nothing else you succeed. Fail in this, and whatever else you attempt is a failure. That philosophy which seeks to reach the heart through the head, puts things wrong end first. The head is reached through the heart: get the desires right, and the head will come right.

I speak now more particularly of religious culture. What I have said is true of all teaching, but is more lamentably disregarded in religious teaching than elsewhere.—The next time you go to your class, go prepared with some thrilling incident which will stir the emotions, and fill the eyes with tears. Then tenderly commend the truths of religion, and see if you do not get a different hearing. If you can get the current of feeling to flowing, you may, or rather the Holy Spirit through you, may turn it into the channel of life. But you can do nothing with an inactive nature. You must arouse activity. Hostility is better than stupid indifference. "I would that you were either cold or hot." If the machine can get motion, of any sort, he can do what he will. If he can only get a bar of iron to move back and forward, he will print books, make watches, drive railroad trains around the world, and vessels through every sea.

Let us learn the lesson. We need to address our teaching more to the emotional nature. Through this the will is reached. You can't lecture or scold a soul to Heaven.

President Hopkins says, ministers (and it is true of teachers) are like fishermen.—One goes out with a neat and graceful rod, with the most delicate morsel arranged for his bait, and quietly dropping his hook into the water, so as scarcely to make a ripple, throws out the fish as rapidly as he can handle his rod. Another takes a huge cudgel for a pole, with a bed-cord for a line, and hooks and bait of frightful dimensions, and then slashing in his line, lashing the water into a foam, cries, "Bite, you dogs, you."

The first time I heard that excellent children's preacher, Mr. Hammond, he greatly shocked me. He had talked some time to a large audience of children, but in no unusual or very impressive way, when he commenced and told an affecting story of the whipping of a slave girl to death, by an unfeeling monster, because she would be true to the Savior. When most were moved to tears, Mr. Hammond jumped down from the platform, and called upon those of us who sat with him to talk and pray with those children who were crying about their sins. I did not know what it meant. They were not thinking of their sins. They were thinking of that poor slave girl. I could not go. One after another, as I thought reluctantly, went down to talk with the children. Soon they seemed to be deeply engaged. Soon on their knees in prayer.—What did it mean? Was I all at fault? Had I no sympathy with Christ's work? Could I not discern the manifestation of the Spirit? I went down. The first boy I came to was in tears. I began to talk with him about Jesus, his own soul, his sins. He listened. He seemed anxious. We were soon on our knees. God blessed that meeting. I think I have seen something of the philosophy of the incident. The current of feeling was stirred.—Personal effort turned it towards Christ. The heart was melted; then personal effort impressed truth upon it.—*Baptist Tidings.*

If thou bearest slight provocations with patience, it shall be imputed unto thee for wisdom; and if thou wipest them from thy remembrance, thy heart shall feel rest, thy mind shall not reproach thee.

(From the Watchman & Reflector.)

FROM ONE SUBSCRIBER TO ANOTHER.

JUST A TIMELY HINT.

I have paid my subscription for a year in advance. Fifty-two times (I see we have fifty-three papers this year) the paper will come to me, and each time when I sit down and dry off its dampness and begin to read its columns, there will be an added enjoyment from the consciousness that it is already paid for. It may seem a little matter but the sum total of life's enjoyment is made up of little matters. Fifty-two times with greater zest and richer satisfaction I shall greet my weekly visitor: and this in the aggregate will be no small item in the year's enjoyment. I have tried both methods. I have let month after month pass, till half, or three-quarters, or the whole of the year was gone, and the paper was not paid for. I speak from experience, therefore. I know there is no comparison in the enjoyment of reading a paper that is paid for and reading one for which you have not paid.

And it is pleasant to think that whatever hints or direct calls the paper may contain, aimed at delinquents, not one of them can touch you for the year to come.

But not only is your pleasure involved, but your moral benefit as well. I contend that you are in a better state to receive good moral and spiritual impressions when reading a paper for which you have already paid than when reading one for which you owe. You are brought, as it were, into generous sympathy with the publisher and contributors to such paper. There is no conscious delinquency to disturb you.

But, besides, you are actually, by prepayment, contributing to make the paper better. Suppose a paper to have twenty thousand subscribers, at three dollars subscription. If, on the first of January, all paid in advance for the year, it would bring into the hands of the publisher sixty thousand dollars ready cash to purchase materials, and pay contributors, and meet all the current expenses. Is it to be doubted that with that sum in hand he could lay his plans more liberally and confidently, so as to furnish a much better paper than he could if the payments came in tardily, little by little, through the year?

I am not writing at the suggestion of editor or publisher, nor, it will be perceived, in their interest. I am writing in our own interest, fellow-subscribers. The fact is, we are a great fraternity, each one of which can contribute to make that source more affluent. How? By prompt and invariable prepayments. The practice has our own enjoyment, our own moral good, and the good of all our fellow-subscribers to recommend it. Of the editor and publisher I have nothing to say. They belong to a class who can speak, or, at least, write for themselves.

A SUBSCRIBER.

THE NAILS OF THE CROSS.

The following, translated from the Italian, is a specimen of what has been so long supplied to the people of Italy in the place of the genuine, apostolic religion of the Cross.

"According to Sig. F. Govean, 'Il Romanziere del Ropolo,' of Turin, the nails of the Cross on which Christ was crucified by the Jews, have increased with the flight of time from three to twenty-seven 'although,' says this pleasant writer, 'there was, in fact, not one, as persons condemned to the death of the cross were not nailed, but tied to it.'"

"Here is the history of these twenty-seven nails:

"Theodore, the historian, who lived in Constantinople in the sixth century, mentioned three of them in the second volume of his history.

"One of them was cast into the sea by the Empress Helen to calm a tempest.

"The second she had set in the rich crown of her son.

"The third, Constantine the Great, had made into a bridle bit.