

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVI., No. 36.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, September 6th, 1871.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIV., No. 36.

Poetry.

BE ACTIVE.

Look ye, brothers! time is rolling,
Rolling rapidly away;
Vesper bells will soon be tolling,
Tolling for the dying day.

Rouse thee, comrades! nerve for labor!
In life's battles dare and do,
Boldly wield truth's gleaming sabre,
Vanquish wrong and right pursue.

Plant your standard, firm and fearless
On the citadel of right;
Hard may seem the task and cheerless,
But the promised crown is bright.

Poor yourself, you have for others
Wealth you may not—must not keep;
Words of cheer for drooping brothers,
Tears to shed with them that weep;

Smiles to cheer the lone one's labors,
Tolling o'er life's weary way;
Bread to share with poorer neighbors,
Hung ring, starving every day.

Go to hearts which pine and perish!
Wipe the falling tear away!
Every smitten spirit nourish,
Drooping sadly by the way.

Carry gladness to the sighing,
Give your strength to bear the same!
Whisper comfort to the dying;
Whisper softly Jesus' name.

Up some hill or down some valley.
Seek the lost to guide aright!
Hark! the bugle sounds the rally;
Gird you, comrades, for the fight!

Religious.

THE MINISTERS' INSTITUTE AT YARMOUTH.

The lecturers on application made by Rev. I. E. Bill, furnished for publication brief sketches of the papers read by them before the Institute. Many of our readers will like to see these sketches, and will thereby learn something of the valuable thought presented before the brethren assembled on that occasion.

The following brief sketch has been furnished by Rev. Dr. Tupper of his interesting lecture on the

REVISION OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES.

About twenty years ago the lecturer wrote *Proposal for a Revision of the authorized English version of the Scriptures*. This was, in its leading features, strictly original. It was prepared while a broken leg confined him to a bed of suffering, and deprived him of free access even to his own library.

Many regarded the plan proposed by him as impracticable; but it afforded him sincere pleasure to know that measures have been recently adopted approximating to the course which he then suggested. Some condensed extracts from the essay may be given:

While some regard the common English version as absolutely perfect others depreciate it as being in many respects very faulty. The writer, however, agrees with those who maintain that this version is good; but that it is susceptible of material improvement.

The sacred *Originals* cannot be improved; but all translations, being made by fallible men, may be reasonably expected to bear some marks of human frailty, and, in some cases, to require correction.

While the revision of the common English translation of the Bible is, in the writer's opinion, highly desirable, it is evidently a work of such vast moment, that it requires to be undertaken and accomplished with much caution and prudence. It appears evidently undesirable that any one denomination should attempt to supersede the public and general use of the authorized ver-

sion by the introduction of one professing to be improved. Such a measure might be reasonably expected to be detrimental to the interests of that denomination. Any change that might be made, even if it were an improvement, which would seem more favorable to the views of that body, would be naturally regarded as sectarian; and, instead of producing conviction, would naturally tend to strengthen prejudice against the view, or views, thus apparently favored. A thing may be "lawful," and yet "not expedient," and consequently inadvisable. (1 Cor. x. 23.)

As a revision of the common translation is a matter in which all Protestant christendom, so far as the English language is spoken, is concerned, it appears obviously desirable that it should be effected by the united labors of competent men belonging to the different denominations of christians.

The lecturer here introduced a quotation from a recent editorial of the *London Freeman*, a Baptist periodical, in which it is remarked (in accordance with what he had proposed twenty years before); "A revised translation of the Bible for general use ought to be above all suspicion of sectarian bias; and, therefore, it was in the highest degree expedient, not only to welcome the light of the greatest learning from all quarters, but also to let each section of christendom have its representative amongst the revisors."

The plan originally proposed by the lecturer—subject to amendments—was, That a Board of suitable men be selected by all the principal denominations of Protestants; and that they carefully revise the common version; but that no change be made in any text or word without the unanimous agreement of the whole Board. Hence all the denominations represented would naturally possess confidence in the revision so effected.

In reply to the natural inquiry, What improvement might be anticipated from a revision so made? it is suggested: 1. *Grammatical inaccuracies would be corrected.* 2. *The improvements made in English Grammar since 1611 would be introduced.* 3. *For obsolete words, and those of which the meaning is changed, appropriate words would be substituted.* 4. *Indicate words and phrases would be exchanged for such as are not so.* 5. *The principal erroneous translations would be corrected.*

That these improvements would be highly beneficial is unquestionable. They would obviously render the English Scriptures more attractive to ordinary readers, and more easily understood by them. These changes would not imply any censure on the venerable men to whom we are indebted for our excellent version now in common use; since they would be, in general, the result of changes in the language during the lapse of two hundred and sixty years.

The views expressed by the lecturer in 1851 are not essentially altered. As, however, the arrangement recently made in England for the revision of our version of the Bible—fit men being selected from the different denominations—approximates to the plan then proposed by him, he cordially acquiesces in it. Among "general principles to be followed," one is, "To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the authorized version, consistently with faithfulness;" and another is, "To make or retain no change in the text on the second and final revision by each company, except two thirds of those present approve of the same."

By the latest accounts it appears that the revisors are going forward with their work very cautiously and harmoniously. So far as a judgment can now be formed, there is great reason to hope that the work will be judiciously executed; and that it will redound to the declarative glory of God, and be productive of incalculable benefit to multitudes of the human family. It is the lecturer's earnest desire that it may be cordially received by the different denominations, be ex-

tensively circulated, be understandingly and profitably perused, and be rendered an infinite blessing to the present and future generations.

CHURCH HISTORY BY REV. DR. CRAMP.

Dr. Cramp commenced by observing that his object in the lecture was to describe the state of Christianity during the first century after the death of the Apostle John (who died A. D. 100), with a view to ascertain whether Christian truth was preserved in its integrity, and whether Christian churches retained the simplicity and purity of the earliest times.

During all this time Christianity was steadily on the advance. Churches abounded in Northern Africa, and were numerous in Gaul and Britain. In the countries which had been evangelized by the Apostles, the cause continued to prosper. Some rhetorical passages in the writings of Justin Martyr and Tertullian would lead us to believe that in almost all nations the truth was beginning to prevail.

General persecution had not taken place, but hostility to the gospel was manifested everywhere, and blood-thirsty mobs maltreated and murdered Christians at their will. The Emperor connived at their outrages, for even the philosophic Antonines hated Christianity, as many philosophers do now.

The Christians of this century were in the main "a peculiar people." They protested against all that was frivolous and unholy. To be a Christian was to be a decided opponent of the world as it then was. The modest and pure deportment of believers was a living rebuke of the lascivious indulgences by which society was then disgraced.

In judging of this period certain cautions must be observed. We must beware of confounding private opinion with general belief and practice, or ought to be careful in forming our estimates of the so-called heresies of the time, which have been very unnecessarily magnified and multiplied. We must not imagine that the changes or additions in religious services were uniform or universal, and we must remember that it is unfair to bring the churches of that century to our standard.

The creeds of that period were brief and simple. They were rather collections of facts than statements of truths. Substantially, the church of that time held the views which are now deemed evangelical, although there was frequently much vagueness of expression. But they were uniformly clear in regard to the atonement and the final doom of the ungodly.

Their worship was very plain. Pliny's account was quoted. According to Justin Martyr they met on Sundays, when the Scriptures were read and expounded, prayer and praise offered, and the Lord's Supper celebrated. Portions of the elements were sent to the absent members. A collection was made for the poor and the sick, which was placed in the hands of the "President," to be by him distributed.

Baptism, as Tertullian described it, was a threefold immersion in water. Various ceremonies were added to it. The sign of the cross was frequently used. They fasted often. They prayed towards the East. They never kneeled on the Lord's day. For these practices they had no precepts in the Scriptures. Tradition originated them, custom confirmed them, and then faith (so Tertullian said) observed them. Some sprung from Jewish observances, some from Paganism. They were all unauthorized novelties.

Towards the end of the century the true idea of baptism was perverted. It was thought to accomplish that which it represented. False doctrine and abundant superstition followed.

There was a sudden alteration in the government of the church. Episcopacy came in, probably first at Antioch, and in a modified form. Ignatius was one of the earliest bishops. He was a good man, and a martyr, but it is evident that he was of weak mind, and he magnified the office in an apostolical way.

The bishops soon assumed power, and lorded it over the clergy and the people, with various success. The bishop of Rome attempted to govern other bishops, but he failed in the attempt. The time had not yet come.

Synods came into operation in the second century. The discipline of the churches was rigorous. The heresies of the time were numerous, though they were for the most part philosophical rather than religious speculations. Much injury was inflicted by the Catholic School of Alexandria. On these points some information was given.

In conclusion, the lecturer remarked that though the church was comparatively pure, the germs of subsequent evils already showed themselves. They were developed in the following centuries, and then the true church was found only in the wilderness. Why this concealment was permitted, and why Christians are so small a minority of the world's population, will not be known till "the mystery of God shall be finished."

DR. STEARNS' LECTURE.

The subject of the lecture was, "All inspired truth the preacher's authorized text-book." The design of the lecture was to show that the preacher should fearlessly unfold all revelation, exhibit it in its connections, and rest satisfied with the result. In so doing he could best meet the wants of all classes. Some needed milk, some meat, some doctrine, some ethics, some fed on the promises, some were quickest stirred by a warning. And as God designed by his series of revelations to educate a race-man, the preacher who copied His plan would satisfy the wants of all, and build up every man in the faith of the gospel. This was evidently the design of a divine revelation. It is apparent in the first place, by the completeness of idea in an infinite mind, God is one. His unity is the unity of united infinities. Among these infinities is the infinity of his knowledge. On this knowledge there is therefore such completeness that when he speaks he says just what he purposes to say, says in it the very shade of language he wishes to use, and says a clear distinct final thought upon every subject on which he speaks. He puts infinite wisdom into every part of Scripture; so that if we divide the Bible into a series of instructions for people in different ages, each part is in itself a whole. So many Bibles; so many perfect expressions of perfect knowledge. Progress in revelation is simply progress in culture, to take in and take hold of the thought of an infinitely wise God. God may speak to Adam or to John, to Abraham or to Paul, yet he cannot but speak essentially the same thing when announcing the same truth. And he will do this, not because these persons stand on the same plane of knowledge, but because if he speaks at all he speaks from himself, and speaks his unerring self, hence the whole range of Scripture gives us a whole Bible for a text-book, and hence it adapts itself to men of every age and every grade of intellect. The Bible is thus kaleidoscopic, formed from the same materials, but giving perpetually new combinations. In the second place, this design of revelation is evident from its singleness of aim in its portraiture of human character. Character in the Bible is described from the Divine standpoint. Man is vastly below God, but is to come infinitely near him—man is lost, but is to be saved. The description of his lost condition may take on any phase within the range of the divine mind; but it reaches the same point and reveals the same dire fact. The representations of the renewed nature too, bear the same unmistakable type everywhere. They are resemblances of God.

In the third place this design of revelation appears evident from the unity of scope in its plan of Redemption. The preacher need not fear the attacks of science or of reformers. Science, true science, never will conflict with

revelation, and false reformers will in time run themselves out of breath. All divine revelation may be expressed in one word—Rescue. This thought is the one leading, ruling, controlling thought.

The lecturer then drew three conclusions from his theme. First, That the preacher should address himself to his work with every variety of method. Thus alone he copies God's plan of preaching. Secondly, He can thus speak with authority. Like his master, he thus holds all revelation in his mind, and so far as he can, speaks as God. Thirdly, He may rest assured of his success. God will respond to his own method of working good.

DR. HOVEY'S LECTURE.

The Union of Deity and Humanity in the Person of Christ. Two points were treated in this lecture, viz.: 1. The fact that Christ was but one person; and 2. The meaning of the expression "one person" in the case of Christ. In proof of the fact alleged, appeal was made to the circumstance that Jesus Christ almost always spoke of himself in the singular number: "I," "mine," "me," "the Son of Man," "the Son," "the Son of God," meaning himself, as he stood before his disciples. It was also urged that the higher nature of Christ was united with the lower by conception, when the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, and that a union thus effected must be supposed to result in a single personality. In discussing the second point, or the meaning of the words "one person," in the present case, must include the fact of a single consciousness. To secure this, or to make it intelligible to themselves, some writers have taught that the Word took the place of the human soul in Christ; that it was humanized, so to speak; but this teaching was rejected as unscriptural. Christ was not, evidently, a mere man in his experience; his higher nature was not "paralyzed." Nor did the Eternal Word become itself human and associate itself with a human spirit—so that in experience there were two human souls in Jesus. But, starting from the union of soul and body in man, as the only analogy casting a ray of light on the subject, it was maintained that the consciousness of Christ embraced the faculties and susceptibilities of a threefold nature—the Logos, the human soul, and the body. But as this was a mediatorial work and position, representing on the one hand God, and on the other man, it was a law of his action to teach only that which had been apprehended by his human as well as by his Divine faculties. This view of the case was defended as one which allows to all the language of the New Testament, and especially of the Gospels, its full and natural force. The speaker concluded by a brief reference to the action of the Holy Spirit upon the human faculties and susceptibilities of Christ.

ABSTRACT OF DR. CRAWLEY'S LECTURE.

The Resurrection as implied in 2 Cor. v. 1. After claiming that the Bible was in the main a plain, intelligible revelation from God, the speaker acknowledged that it was not "all clear," for which he gave several reasons, and proceeded to comment on 2 Cor. v. 1, as a passage generally thought clear, but in reality containing serious difficulties in the way of a satisfactory interpretation.

The main question was "What exactly is the building of God not made with hands?"

The passage required some fitting antithesis to the "tabernacle—the body"—in which "we groan."

If we say the happy state of the righteous is that antithesis, it wants an object which the senses can grasp to put in exact opposition to the body.

If we say it is the future glorified body, that would be a good antithesis, but it could not be immediate after death, and the whole passage, with its context, shewed the mind of the apostle anticipating immediate relief from present "groanings" in the enjoyment of the Lord's presence.

There was indeed an escape from