

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XIX., No. 5.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 4, 1874.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVIII., No. 5.

Poetry.

HIGHER.

Higher in the Christian life,
Hasten up the steep before thee;
Far above the din of strife,
See thy Saviour smiling o'er thee:
He has said, and he is sure,
Faithful servants must "endure."

Higher, Christian! Tarry not,
Though the vale is fair with flowers,
Perils hide in sunny spots!
Shun the soft, enchanted bowers,
Linger not by pleasure's stream,
List not to ambition's dream.

Higher, Christian! Climb the mount—
Mount of prayer. Thy Master climbed it
Many a night for thee, thou frail one;
His example hath sublimed it.
Plead as Jacob did of old,
Till the blessing these enfold.

Higher! Higher! Weary one,
Faint not, though thy comforts perish;
Weep when night comes darkly on,
Hiding hopes thy heart did cherish.
Still, though weeping, look above;
He who rules is full of love.

Higher, Christian! Angels wait,
Watching all thy toilsome way.

Higher! till the golden gate
Opens to the land of day.
Blest-forever thou shalt be,
Home for all eternity.

Religious.

THE LIVING CHRIST:

OR, CHRIST'S PRESENT WORK AN ANSWER TO MODERN DOUBT. BY JOHN CLIFFORD, M. A., LL. B., B. SO. PREACHED AT THE AUTUMNAL SESSION OF THE BAPTIST UNION, AT NOTTINGHAM, OCTOBER 13TH, 1873.

(Continued.)

"The man answered and said unto them, Why per- it is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes."—John. ix. 30.

Beginning with some of the most vivid and abundant materials contained in this latest gospel, let us cite the obvious and well-attested fact that the Lord Jesus is now giving meaning, and purpose, and purity to lives that were utterly without them. The reality of religious conversion is as indisputable now as ever, and as evident as the ebb and flow of the tides. Men are, radically and really changed, swept out of all their passions and pursuits, and set with the entire force of a living consecration to a new and purer destiny. The transformation goes on before our eyes in every living Church, in every city and town, and it verifies itself in the choice of a new career, the adoption of a new purpose, and the living a new life. The godless profligate is self-restrained and chaste. The blasphemer of yesterday prays to-day. Dissolute and selfish a short while since, now he is pure and full of solicitude for others. Ready to do any villainy that gave fair promise of secrecy then, now he was against evil in thought and counts himself worthy of heaviest censure if he does not succeed. Before, he was grasping hard as a stone, reeking with foulness, now he is generous, tender-hearted, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Search we far or near yet we do not find language more squarely fitting into the facts than those used for the conversions of the first century. "He is in Christ," "He is a new creature," "Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

In these recent conversions, we admit, there is not the suddenness of Pentecost, nor the blinding glare that shot on the astonished pilgrim to Damascus, but there is the same repentance towards God, the same faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, the same abhorrence of and separation from the past, the same clear witness to the divine character of the agent of the change, and the same characteristic moral results. Occasionally, and owing to the darkness of the previous life this spiritual chemistry flashes

across our view like the brilliant glare of a magnesium light in the gloomy caverns of a deep mine; but ordinarily its operations are viewless as the air, noiseless as the swiftly marching light, yet evidencing themselves in the new meaning given to existence, the new attachments for the heart and the newly-woven garment of purity which graces and adorns the life. Not more certainly is the chemist, led on by Faraday and Perkin, extracting the most fascinating and fashionable colours now in use from aniline, a product from the mere refuse in the coal-tar retort, than Christ Jesus is now, as of old, making living saints out of those who were thieves and covetous, drunkards and revellers, and the like; robing in beautiful deed and chivalrous service, men and women who were listlessly and aimlessly drifting through a monotonous and wearisome existence; suffusing with a sweet restfulness and hallowing calm disappointed and fevered hunters after pleasure, and filling meaningless lives with thoughts of God and truth, of the soul and duty, and with useful service and holy deed. From Him new light has flashed into the understanding and given a fresh and helpful interpretation to life, its cares, its mysteries, its duties, and its joy; by Him a new rule has been imposed on the conscience, He has pacified by His sacrifice; through Him a new enthusiasm kindles the passions into flame, and in Him is offered to the heart a new object of worship and adoring love. Behold He has made all things new, and the evidences of His creative power are as actual, positive, ascertainable, and verifiable, as was the sight of the once blind man.

Another fact almost, if not quite, as obvious and as widespread is that Christ is gladdening the hearts and gilding the prospects of the poor. It is one of the misfortunes of our growing wealth, that it does not of itself and as a matter of course diminish the evils of pauperism and remove the poor and destitute out of the land. Squalid tenements, alleys swarming with sordid, care-worn, and brutalized men, women, and children, still disfigure our manufacturing capitals, and dim the brightness of our civilization. "When goods are increased, they are increased that eat them;" and the millions toil and die, uncheered by the light of knowledge, and unsatisfied with the material rewards of their labour: whilst in a thousand cases moral dignity and elevation of character are sacrificed to the insatiable Moloch of industrial progress. But the fact is, whatever we may make of it, that even poverty is, in the esteem of hundreds, a different thing because of their faith in One who, Himself, the purest and noblest of beings, endured its keen pressure with such unflinching patience and uncomplaining mildness. There are thousands at this very hour, treading the flinty path with bleeding feet, but with a smiling face, a song on their lips, and real joy in their hearts, as they journey up its jagged slopes, because they see the blood-stained footprints of Jesus along that very road. They have not lost their poverty, but it has lost its sting. Their means are not less straitened, but the evil is stripped of its terrors and rendered incapable of casting out beautiful feeling, fervent trust in God, and sympathy with all that is true and good. The path of the poor is welcome as the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, since they have known that He who loves them so tenderly, and was Himself so loved of the Eternal Father, trod every inch of it, and trod it, too, for them and their salvation.

"Incredible," says one, "why should the mere circumstance that Jesus was a poor man 1800 years since make poverty as though it were wealth, and a scant cupboard as though it were loaded with satisfying provisions?" Why it is so, I stay not now to answer, but I must reiterate the fact. The poor man finds that his lot is not so hard, that the flint does not cut so deeply, or that the wound

is sooner healed, because his living and loving Lord, whose presence is now his joy, went along that very path. Two men live in the same court, work at the same factory, get the same wages, have the one sort of room, yet one is fretting and chafing against the limits of his condition, and always seeking his own things, whilst the other is calm and tranquil, earnest in doing a little good, and cheered with a good hope, through grace, of eternal life. Two wives live in the same street, have the same means, and the same needs; one neglects her house and her children, perpetually rebels against her lot, and flies for excitement to ardent spirits; the other rises out of her poverty, and, not forgetting the claims of home, goes forth to minister to those who need the riches of the faith of Christ, and the consolations of His Gospel. This is not theory, but experience; it is not speculation, but fact. It is what Christ Jesus is doing now amongst the poor. I have seen it in the same way and with the same palpableness that I have seen a chemical experiment in the lecture-room.

Are those unique consolations restricted to those who have to war with material and physical difficulties. By no means: for if our Lord had left the sorrowful and disconsolate, the weak and suffering, the afflicted and dying, without His gracious benediction, myriads who feel most acutely their need of Him, would have remained altogether unblest, and the Gospel of our day would certainly have lacked one of the prime elements of that of the days of His flesh. No religion is complete without the well-founded message, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God;" and no inspiration surmounts every difficulty till it bursts forth in the glowing trust and hope of the twenty-third psalm. Spiritual instruction is not enough. Man has deeper necessities than those of the intellect, and even the addition of those cardinal blessings for the conscience, pardon and purity, will not supply all our need, since there are left wide realms of sympathy and feeling with cravings that must be satisfied. Many yearn for the God of "strong consolations," who can chase away care with His word, and sustain the weary with His arm, dry the tear of sorrow, and heal the wound of sin, fortify the heart against temptation, and breathe solace into the spirit of the sad, soothe the pillow of the dying and animate with everlasting hopes the bereaved. The science of human progress proclaims "the survival of the fittest," and sends the weakest to the wall; the weak man wants to know what God does with him; with the weak and diseased, the heirs of great and abiding troubles, the shattered in strength, and the faltering in purpose. Ah! Christ Jesus, we know who conquers here. Ever dost Thou prove Thy sole sovereignty as the Prince of joy and blessedness in the populous kingdom of tribulation, and Thine unmatched efficacy as a Son of Consolation in the myriad homes of sorrow. Here all men confess Thou hast no peer! for even those who have refused to bow before Thee as the Son of the Highest, have been kindled into faith and love as they beheld Thy far-reaching sympathies, and received Thy bountiful and compassionate help. Borne into the thick of human sorrows, with face marred and heart broken more than any man's, Thou seemest nearer to us than our very grief itself, so thorough, so personal, so perfect was Thine acquaintance with the seas of trial! Like refreshing flowers to an invalid, or life-giving sea-breezes to the faint, or thrilling strains of music to him with a heavy heart, so are the words and presence of Christ to thousands who walk in the hot flames of persecution. The cup of sorrow becomes a chalice of joy when drank from His hand. Suffering wears a crown of charms since He was made perfect in obedience by its sharp discipline. The Valley of the Shadow of Death loses its gloom when He is

seen in it, and the future becomes luminous with enchanting prospects, when brought to His light. For the weakest brother Christ lives; and back of the weakest brother there stands the Strong Son of God: and that weak man learns to "glory in his infirmities," knowing that in Christ's training-school a defeat is often a veiled success, a disaster a disguised triumph, the shattering of his own house the building of a more enduring tabernacle, and the approach of death the dawn of a more perfect life. Yes, though Bethany may not know Christ, and Capernaum no longer hears the Healer's voice, I have seen, you have seen, in blighted and lonely lives, in centres of temptation and conflict, in the abodes of prolonged trial, on sick beds, and at the grave, that Christ Jesus still achieves as great victories over sorrow and sin as those that made Him popular at Capernaum, and loved and worshipped at Bethany.

Foreign Missions.

NEW GUINEA.

This island, so long neglected, is now occupied by the London Missionary Society. That Society has 8 stations established successfully from the headquarters of the mission at Cape York, the northernmost point of Australia, which is separated from New Guinea by Torres Straits. Of these stations 6 are on islands in the Straits and 2 on the mainland of New Guinea. The native teachers who have volunteered for this work have been warmly welcomed. Infanticide is discontinued and the islanders are giving up their long-cherished feuds. In no case were more than two teachers left at a station, except at Redscar Bay, on the mainland, where the missionaries found a village called Manumanu, about twelve miles from Redscar Head, near the middle of the Bay and at the mouth of a large river. The natives seemed friendly, and it was thought best to depart from the original plan of establishing the teachers by twos, and to place all the remaining teachers, six in number, at Manumanu, where in a short time they would be able to put up a good house, aid each other in acquiring the language and lay the foundation for a flourishing mission. Apparently there will be more danger to these missionary pioneers, particularly upon the island, from the climate than from the disposition of the natives. Redscar Bay is twenty-three miles in breadth and seven in depth. The view inland, which is described as very fine, is terminated by the Stanley range of mountains, forty miles distant, which in this vicinity are over 13,000 feet high. The people are mild and inoffensive looking. They practise tattooing universally, the women, contrary to the usual Polynesian custom, being almost entirely covered, while the men are but slightly marked. The natives are ignorant of the use of either iron or tobacco, a conclusive proof that they have had little or no intercourse with foreigners. There are eighteen native teachers with their wives now labouring in New Guinea or Torres Straits.

Varieties of Missionary attainments and character. Dean Stanley discourses on this subject in the following strain:—

Cast a glance over the long list of famous Missionaries from the fourth century downwards to the present time—and may we not ask concerning them, as the Apocalyptic seer asked concerning the noble army of martyrs, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?" Whence came they? and whence came their astonishing energy? Was it from one only Church or sect or creed? No—it was from all. The very forms of Christian belief or misbelief which look the darkest in the pages of polemics, become absolutely transfigured in the persons of those who "hazarded their lives to the death for

the name of the Lord Jesus." There was the Apostle of the Goths, the Moses, as he was called, of the Gothic race, the first translator of the Scriptures in any modern language,—Ulphilas, the Arian heretic. There are those nameless but mighty propagators of the Christian faith in Central Asia, who gave it the widest extension which it has ever received in those secluded regions; they were the disciples of the out-cast and persecuted Nestorius. There were the Monophysite teachers from the Coptic Church of Athanasius, who founded or sustained the one Christian kingdom of Africa. There were the spiritual fathers of our own European Christianity, who came tinged with the darkest and grossest errors of the darkest and most superstitious age which Europe has ever witnessed; Columba in Scotland, Augustine in England, Boniface in Germany. There was Eliot the Puritan, the Apostle of the Indians of North America. There was Xavier the Jesuit, the Apostle of the Indians of the East. There was the first Protestant missionary of India, the Danish Lutheran Swartz. There was the philosophic Platonist, Berkeley, planting his colony in the "storm-vexed" Bermudas. There were the enthusiastic Moravians amongst the snows of Greenland. There was the zealous Evangelical Student from Cambridge, Henry Martyn. There was the cultivated, large-minded, poetic scholar from Oxford, Reginald Heber. There have been the pioneers of Christian civilization in our own time, alike from the conforming and nonconforming Churches both of Great Britain and America; Carey and Marshman, Duff and Caldwell, in India; Ellis and Williams and Judson, and our own Bishop Selwyn, in the islands of the far south. And what was the common motive which inspired all these heroes of the Cross?

What was it but the larger view of Christian truth that animated the soul, not less generous than zealous, of the martyred Bishop Patteson? What was it but this which called one who was consecrated to this high office within these walls, and whose name must be ever dear to Westminster—George Cotton—to become the chief pastor not only of our own communion, but of all the churches, we might almost say of all the religious communities, of India? What was it that fired the great heart of Norman Macleod with that passion for Missions, which may be said to have cost him his life, but the determination to be as broad in his dealings with the varieties of churches as the charity of God, at the same time as in the moral law of duty to be as narrow as the righteousness of God?

Mission Jubilee at Rarotonga.—The Rev. Wm. Gill communicates an account just received of interesting jubilee services held by the natives on the 14th and 24th of May, to commemorate the landing of Papehia, as the first teacher to the islands. On the 14th, nearly the whole of the adult population assembled at Avaxua, where a sermon was preached by the aged native pastor, Maretie, one of the earliest converts. At the juvenile service held at Ngatanjua, nearly all the few remaining old church members, who remembered the former state of heathenism, delivered addresses. Mar-ama, one of the oldest men, had for some time been in failing health, but had prayed to be spared to keep the jubilee. His desire was realised, but he died on the following Sunday. Some kindly references were made which showed the gratitude which the natives entertain for those English missionaries who laboured among them. Isala, the son of Papehia, the youth who accompanied Mr. Gill in his visit to the English churches some years ago, is now the pastor of Mr. Gill's former church in Rarotonga, where he is labouring with much acceptance. Mr. Gill appeals for funds for the purchase of a communion service, as a testimonial of the interest felt among English Christians in this memorable jubilee.