

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

{ NEW SERIES. }
{ Vol. XXIII., No. 19. }

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, May 8, 1878.

{ WHOLE SERIES. }
{ Vol. XLII., No. 19. }

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

"It is I." Matt. xiv. 27.

Who, Christian, came from heaven above
To suffer agonize and die;
Who brought you tokens of his love?
It is I.

Who bore thy sins upon a tree,
Beneath an angry, frowning sky,
And gave his life to make you free?
It is I.

Who took the sting from death for thee,
So that thou would'st not fear to die,
And spoiled the grave of victory?
It is I.

Who watches o'er thy daily life,
And gives thee grace, a rich supply
For all thine earthly toil and strife?
It is I.

Who comes to thee at eventide,
And comforts thee as thou dost lie
At rest, as evening hours glide?
It is I.

Who comes thy weary heart to cheer,
When sickness clouds thy noonday sky,
And thou art filled with doubt and fear?
It is I.

Who speaks in words of tenderness,
And in thy sorrow does draw nigh,
With peace thy waiting soul to bless?
It is I.

Who points to heaven's Morning Star,
And bids thee turn and gaze on high,
And list to music from afar?
It is I.

Who promises a heaven of light,
To fascinate thy wandering eye,
And dissipate the clouds of night?
It is I.

Who comes with honour to bestow,
And all the saints to glorify,
Who labor in this world below?
It is I.

Who will divided friends unite,
And crown them in yon world on high,
And fill their souls with pure delight?
It is I.

Fear not Christian be very bold,
Nor I thy Saviour e'er deny?
And when thou need'st a friend behold,
It is I.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Future Punishment.

Dear Editor,—

May I be permitted to call the attention of your readers to Mr. Joseph Cook's lectures on the subject of the "Punishment of the Wicked?" It is a remarkable providence, that when one of the most honored evangelists proclaims the saving truths of the gospel at Boston, then steps upon the public platform, a champion whose learning, logic, and bold testimony, both attract and confound the scepticism of that city. Regarding the dreadful subject, so thoroughly agitating people's minds today, we need not be surprised that it so often comes up for discussion; for who among us has not, with a torch lighted at the fire of his own feelings, sought to shed a ray of hope across the gloom of the pit of perdition? For this reason, I am disposed to deal kindly with any who may differ from me on the subject, while I remind them that endless punishment is the testimony of both heaven and earth. It is difficult to conceive how this truth could be more clearly revealed. The strongest language is used in holy writ to place it before our minds. God has acted in wisdom and kindness in locating the eternal prison beyond the reach of our eyes and ears; and such is the infidelity of the heart that men would not be persuaded though one arose from the dead. Mr. Cook is reported to have spoken on the subject as follows:—"When I rode to Tivoli I saw cripples walking on all fours through the dust of Italy. Men with unreportable hereditary diseases were publicly clamoring for alms.

The beggars go free in Italy. They ask for food at the doors of convents. You see the lazaret-house on crutches. Skeletons in closets walk abroad under that southern sun. Society here shuts up its offensive diseases in hospitals and asylums. Closed doors lessen the publicity but not the real terrible of the exhibitions of human wrecks under the stern action of irreversible natural laws. Bring all these wrecks before your thoughts. Shutting your eyes to their existence will not cause them to cease to exist. Infidelity, with gnashing teeth, may proclaim that it hates the fact that human wrecks exist, but they exist, nevertheless. Rolling up the long slopes of Tivoli, I happened to be conversing with several gentlemen on the inexplicableness of the laws of hereditary descent. These cripples, all their lives, suffer for no crime of their own. Were I to follow my sentiment, I should affirm that God is doing at least a small evil to such miserable beings. You say they may be rewarded hereafter; but that will not change the record of the loss in this life. Without any fault of their own, they have suffered pain.

If God does that, and if our mere sentiment, looking on it, would call it a small evil, which must we distrust, God or this sentiment? I suppose that the universe is larger than our outlook upon it. I dare not undertake to affirm that God does not do right every time, or that he ever does a little evil. It is as impossible for Infinite Holiness to do a small evil as a large one. But I find what is called liberal sentiment taken as a guide, misleading me as to the idiot and the cripple, and the man who is born with a disease. I find mere sentiment saying that no universe would ever be created by a Being of Infinite Holiness and Power, and evil of that sort allowed to exist in it. But that state of things does exist. We must face the facts of experience. There are moral cripples and moral diseases incalculably more fearful than the physical. In short, sin has begun and continued for ages under the government of Infinite Holiness and Power. The supreme difficulty is to explain the commencement of evil rather than its continuance. We are all agreed however, that in spite of any appearances which sentiment would take as evidence to the contrary, God can no more do a little wrong than a great one. We must give up mere sentiment therefore, as a guide; for otherwise, we must assert that God is unjust on a small scale. I do not believe that he is; and hence I distrust profoundly following a light as to the next world which I see misleads me here into a denial of the Divine goodness."

These instances of the inconsistency of mere sentiment with the facts of human existence may be enlarged to any extent. Gibbon, the historian, referring to the doctrines of the Reformation, in the fifty-fourth chapter of the history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, says: "A sober Christian would rather admit that a wafer is God than that God is a cruel and capricious tyrant." This is an elegant way of saying that there will be no future punishment of sin, inasmuch as it would be incompatible with the benevolence of God. But how do the writings of this sceptical and polished historian agree with this sentiment? Why every one who reads, must acknowledge, that on loud long groan was wrung from the heart of humanity, as piece after piece, of the vast fabric of the Roman Empire came crashing to the ground. Thirteen hundred years of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, were endured by a considerable portion of the inhabitants of the world. Nor was less suffering endured in the building up of this great empire. We may venture to affirm that what was true of the Roman, has been very much the same in the rise and fall of every empire the world has ever seen; and the only amelioration has been the exercise of that righteousness which purifies and exalts.

Unbelievers accuse us of want of feeling, in the doctrines we hold on this subject; but if the world be eternal, as

some of their philosophers teach, and it continue in the same condition as it has existed during the past six thousand years, there must be eternal suffering of the human race, if not of individuals. Hence it appears that scepticism, to be consistent with itself holds a doctrine of everlasting suffering as incompatible with benevolence as the scripture truth of eternal punishment. But the word of God reveals a means of escape and proclaims truths designed to promote peace and happiness throughout the earth, as well as to people heaven with countless multitudes whose glory and happiness shall be perfect.

H. BOOL.

River Hebert.

Some Objections to Foreign Missions considered.

BY REV. D. P. LAMSON, WORCESTER, MASS.

Europe stood in much the same relation to the Christian churches of Palestine and Asia Minor in the times of the apostles, as India and China and Japan do now to us. The Macedonian cry is still wafted to us on every breeze from the unevangelized parts of the earth. A world lying in wickedness, a world shrouded in the gloom of spiritual night, a world "without God," appeals to us just as it appealed to the first Christians on the shores of Asia,— "Come over and help us."

And it is too late, in the history of the world to urge that the time has not come when the heathen are to be converted; now that God is so wonderfully opening the world in every direction to the missionary and the gospel, and so many movements of a political, intellectual, and social nature are going on favorable to the progress of Christianity. Europe presented one unbroken front of hostility to the gospel when Paul and his fellow-voyagers "loosed from Troas." There seemed hardly ground to hope that amidst its proud philosophies and seductive idolatries, its seats of revelry and its camps of war, Christianity would obtain "leave to be." Yet the apostles and primitive disciples, after their first misapprehensions, seem never for a moment to have questioned the expediency of undertaking to preach the gospel to the Gentiles until the way should be more evidently open. On the occasion already referred to, the writer says: "After he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." They heard this call and obeyed, without stopping to raise difficulties or to ask questions. If a similar spirit of unhesitating obedience and sublime faith had continued to characterize the Christian Church, the Gospel would long ago have made the circuit and conquest of the earth.

Nor can it be said that the heathen do not need the gospel; that they are well enough off as they are. The proofs are overwhelming that the world is sunk in iniquity. The description which Paul has given of the vices common among the Gentiles of his day is true to the letter of the state of society and morals in present heathen communities. It is recognized and acknowledged to be true by the heathen themselves. A missionary was once reading the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to some listeners in China. "Do not tell us," said one of them, "that your Bible was written many hundred years ago: some of your missionaries wrote that about us." Some people are pleased to talk of the innocence of the heathen! why, language fails to express the enormity of the crimes and vices that are not only practised, but sanctioned by religion, where the gospel is unknown. Though not guilty, of course, of rejecting a Saviour of whom they have not heard, the heathen are guilty of sinning against the principles of natural religion, the law of God which is "written in their hearts." Says one of our veteran missionaries, "The heathen are perishing and they know it; but they

Rev. E. A. Stevens, D. D.

know not how they may escape the penalty due to their sins." The fact that they have a sense of right and wrong, and that they know that they are living in sin, and expect to suffer for their sins, proves the guilt of the whole pagan world before God, and therefore of its need of the Gospel of Christ.

But perhaps the most specious objection to missions to the heathen is based upon what is called the *paramount claims of our own country*. To send the gospel abroad, while large masses of our own population are unsaved, is said to be taking the children's bread, and casting it to the dogs. But we find that though our Lord commanded his disciples to begin the work of evangelization at Jerusalem, they were to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name "among all nations;" they were to be witnesses for him not only in Judea and Samaria, but to "the uttermost parts of the earth." And as a matter of fact, we find the apostles laboring zealously and successfully to spread the glad tidings through the provinces of Asia Minor, in Macedonia and Greece, and Italy, while multitudes of their own countrymen in the cities and villages of Palestine were living and dying without hope. And they acted wisely in so doing. Had they waited until every soul in Jerusalem and Judea had received the gospel where had been the glorious triumphs of the first Christian age over the combined forces of philosophy, priestcraft, and military despotism? Where had been the Christian Europe and America of to-day?

Besides, religion is one of those things of which, the more we give away, the more we have. The foreign missionary work has a most blessed reflex influence upon those churches and Christians that support it. A vast deal more has been done for the destitute parts of our own land, the great West and the South for the poor in our cities, for the cause of temperance, since the hearts of God's people have been opened to the claims of foreign missions. The field is so essentially one, that, the more we feel and pray and give for the work abroad, the more we shall feel and pray and give for the work at home. The cultivation of the missionary spirit enlarges the heart, and makes it quick to heed and respond to every call upon its sympathy and benevolence. If we were to cease to send money abroad to convert the heathen, we should soon give less for the conversion of our own countrymen. The churches that have opposed missions have dwindled and become extinct. The churches that are most thoroughly interested in missions are our strongest churches spiritually and often financially. It is an inviolable law in church as well as individual life, "He that watereth shall be watered himself."

And this, too, should be taken into account: in our own country, except in some of its newer and more destitute localities where there will be need for years to come of some effective system of colportage people may hear the Word of God if they will. Bibles are plenty and cheap; religious papers and tracts are scattered almost as "thick as leaves in Vallambrosa." There is one minister to every thousand of the population, while in some of the most populous countries of heathendom there is no knowledge of Christ and salvation but such as the missionary brings. In India, there is but one missionary to 30,000 souls, and yet India is far better supplied with missionary labor than most parts of the field. Well may we exclaim, "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

We would make no invidious comparisons between the home and foreign work. Neither should be neglected. Both ought to be pushed more vigorously, and supported more generously. The success of the one is the success of the other. If we save our country, it will help largely to save the world; and if we save the world, we shall save our own country. But it does seem that if any distinction is to be

made, it should be in that part of the field which is as yet wholly unevangelized. If part of a crew of a sinking vessel had life-preservers within reach, and part were already struggling in the breakers, ought we not to give our chief energies to save the last? At all events, are we not to consider ourselves as did the large-minded and loving apostle, debtors to all men, to give them so far as in us lies, the glorious gospel of Christ? Can we claim that we are acting in the spirit of the great commission, unless we are doing all in our power not only to induce men to believe the gospel who already have it, but to give it to those who are destitute of it and who, because they are destitute of it are going every day by hundreds into a dark eternity?

Mrs. Webb's Waifs.

HOW BEWILDERED—LITTLE WANDERERS ARE RESCUED AND TENDERLY CARED FOR IN NEW YORK.

"This ain't my home, sir. We don't live in no such a place as this."

Officer—"Oh, yes, you do. You have moved here recently. Isn't this a nice big house?" And up the stairway of the Police Central Office marched the stalwart policeman, kindly keeping step with the little tow-haired urchin by his side. Fifteen minutes elapsed, and then—

Excited woman—"Please, is 'Bub' here? We have looked everywhere and can't find him."

Doorman—"Go up stairs, Madam, and see Mrs. Webb; he may be among the lost children." Another short interval, and "Bub" and his mother emerged from Police Headquarters, smiling through their tears, and talking as if they had been separated for years.

"How could you be so bad, 'Bub'?" cried the mother. But "Bub" only blubbered and hung closer to her neck.

"A very ordinary occurrence that," said the doorman, in reply to a question from the reporter who witnessed this scene. "Just wait a while, and you will see more such cases." The reporter did wait. From sundown until an hour after dark policemen came in, leading children by the hand or carrying them in their arms, while fathers and mothers followed soon after to reclaim the wanderers. Barefooted, hatless, barelegged and often half-naked boys and girls, of all ages and sizes of childhood were brought in and placed under the matron's care. On the particular evening referred to, eleven lost children were led in captives. It was a quiet night in the crowded streets around Police Headquarters, and as each policeman brought in his prisoner, he felt apparently pleased to have found something to relieve the monotony of the patrol.

Where had the little fellow been found? The policeman answer: "Fast asleep in a hall-way, on a strange doorstep, or in the street; roaming in the streets far from home, and bewildered as to their names and residences; sometimes they are found in vacant buildings, where they have been deserted by unnatural parents."

And how did they get lost? "Some of them accidentally strayed away from their nurses and homes, others stole away and lost themselves, while still others were purposely turned out in the morning by their parents to shift for themselves."

Early in the morning these little children, some of them just able to toddle along, are playing at the doorstep. A strolling musician or any unusual sight or sound attracts their attention, and when nurse or mother turns aside for a moment the children have disappeared. Some of the mischievous little scamps watch for an opportunity to escape, and their friends might as well look for a needle in a haystack as for them. Nothing is to be done till night, when the missing ones are found among the lost children in the Police Central Office, or among the dead and mangled at the Morgue. Another class of castaways are the children of the careless poor and