

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

Singing for Jesus.

"With my song will I praise Him." Ps. xxviii. 7.
Singing for Jesus, our Saviour and King,
Singing for Jesus, the Lord whom we love;
All adoration we joyously bring,
Longing to praise as we praise Him above.
Singing for Jesus, our Master and Friend,
Telling His love, and His marvellous grace;
Love from eternity, love without end,
Love for the loveless, the sinful and base.
Singing for Jesus and trying to win
Many to love Him, and join in the song,
Calling the weary and wandering in,
Rolling the chorus of gladness along.
Singing for Jesus our Life and our Light,
Singing for Him as we press to the mark,
Singing for Him when the morning is bright,
Singing, still singing, for Him in the dark.
Singing for Jesus, our Shepherd and Guide,
Singing for gladness of heart that He gives;
Singing for wonder and praise that He died,
Singing for blessing and joy that He lives.
Singing for Jesus, oh, singing with joy!
Thus will we praise Him and tell of His love,
Till He shall call us to brighter employ,
Singing for Jesus for ever above.
F. R. HAVERGAL.

Religious.

Foreign Missionary Items.

EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN ITALY.
—A directory of the Protestant churches in Italy shows that there is hardly a town of even secondary importance which does not now possess at least one evangelical church, although it has been but twenty years since the preaching of the gospel was allowed in that country. The churches are generally of two kinds: there are churches formed of Protestants by birth, and celebrating their worship in foreign tongues, — such as English, Scotch, and American churches, French churches, and Vaudois in the valleys of Piedmont, the German churches. Then come the Italian churches, properly so-called; since they both conduct their worship in Italian, and are composed of Italians converted from Catholicism during the last twenty years. The foreign churches are fifty in number. Of the purely Italian churches there are one hundred and thirty-eight. They are distributed as follows: Methodists, 44; Vaudois, 39; "Free Church," 21; Baptist, 19; Plymouth Brethren, 15.

PROGRESS.—There are not less than 225 separate Protestant congregations scattered through the country from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, and from Turkey to Persia. There are boarding-schools for girls, under the supervision of the American missionaries, in Marsovan, Brussa, Bitlis, Mardin, Kharpoat, and Aintab, with theological seminaries and colleges at other places.

China.

A letter from Miss Norwood, dated Swatow, Dec. 19, 1879, says:

"Concerning this second visit from which I have just returned, you may be pleased to learn something. I had expected to make this trip alone; but just before starting, Miss Thompson learned that she must have her passport renewed before she could make her visit to Jio Peng, where she was soon hoping to go. Thus she was at liberty to go with me who do not need a passport.

We left Thursday, Nov. 27, in one of our small mission-boats, spent the night at Tie Le, and reached Lui Su the next evening.

For six week-days we met in the chapel a class of Christian women, sixteen in all, — whom we taught to read the leaflets. Miss Thompson spent an hour or more each day teaching the Christians to sing the new colloquial hymns just out. The words as well as the tunes delighted them much. "Jesus loves me," seemed an especial favorite,

and they never seemed to tire of it. On Sunday we helped the brethren organize a Sunday School which should embrace every member of the congregation. We divided the school into three classes; the brethren to be taught by the preacher, the sisters by the Bible woman, and the children by a promising young man who assists in the Sunday worship. They are to study the leaflets, hymn book, and such of the Bible as we have in colloquial, and report to me at communion. I think nothing cheered us more than the gratitude the women expressed to us for going to teach them, and the pleasure they manifested at finding that it was possible for them to learn to read the precious truths which are becoming so dear to them.

One day at Toa Po a man came to us to ask us if we could tell him anything about a person in the "western kingdom," whose name was affixed to a paper which he had purchased for twenty dollars, and which paper stated, that, for the amount paid, his sins up to the time of his death were forgiven him. He seemed to have some doubts, and came to ask us if we could assure him that this paper was all right. We tried to tell him of Jesus as the only one who could forgive sins; and he promised to go to the chapel at Kui Su, and learn more.

Another day after our return to Kui Su, a very intelligent-looking woman from a village sixteen miles distant came to the chapel. She said she had heard some time ago about the "people," but she had been unable to learn what their religion was, though she had "sought high and low, here and there and everywhere."

Thus everywhere we see evidences of a desire for more light, and a willingness to hear and receive the truth.

We learned too, that others beside inquirers were interested in the missionaries. After Dr. Ashmore's visit, soldiers were sent three times to the chapel to enquire what his business might be; and, while Miss Thompson and I were at Toa Po, soldiers were again sent to make minute inquiries concerning us and our movements.

The last sabbath afternoon we spent at the Kui Su chapel, just before leaving for home, three servants from the Yaman were sent to act as spies.

We reached home Monday evening, having been absent nineteen days, and travelled one hundred and three miles by boat and twenty-one on foot.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AUSTRIA.

"There is great rejoicing in Austria over the recent removal of restrictions upon religious liberty." Mr. Clarke of Prague writes, under Feb. 2, to "The Missionary Herald": "The favorable decision of the Austrian cabinet, in answer to Brother Adams's appeal, was received yesterday. The right is fully conceded, that one may hold in his dwelling religious services with invited guests, excepting children between six and fourteen years of age who belong to one of the state churches, — Roman Catholic, Reformed, or Lutheran. At the same time the government concedes the right to hold public meetings, as was formerly done in the hall, by giving previous announcement to the authorities, with stamp of fifty kreutzers (22 cents), and then paying one florin seventy-five kreutzers (77 cents) for the attendance of a policeman, to see that nothing is said contrary to law. In the latter concession, as in the former, it is demanded that school children belonging to the established churches be excluded from the meetings. Our lay preacher, Mr. Novatny, has also received a favorable decision to his appeal; and doubtless our friends in Stupitz will very soon receive a similar document from the government.

"It is a matter for great rejoicing, that it now seems to be fully conceded, as a matter of law and right, that any one may invite friends to his own family religious service. 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow.'

One has only to die to be praised.

Final Permanence of Moral Character.

Gentlemen, this universe up to the edge of the tomb is not a joke. There are in this life serious differences between the right hand and the left. Nevertheless, in our present career, a man has but one chance. Even if you come weighted into the world, as Sinbad was with the Old Man of the Sea, you have but one chance. Time does not fly in a circle, but forth, and right on. The wandering, squandering, dissipated moral leper is gifted with no second set of early years. There is no fountain in Florida that gives perpetual youth; and the universe might be searched, probably in vain for such a spring. Waste your youth; in it you shall have but one chance. Waste your middle life; in it you shall have but one chance. Waste your old age; in it you shall have but one chance. It is an irreversible natural law that character attains final permanence, and in the nature things final permanence can come but once. This world is fearfully and wonderfully made, and so are we, and we shall escape neither ourselves nor these stupendous laws.

It is not to me a pleasant thing to exhibit these truths from the side of terror; but on the other side, these are the truths of bliss; for by this very law through which all character tends to become unchanging, a soul that attains a final permanence of good character runs but one risk and is delivered once for all from its torture and unrest. It has passed the bourn from behind which no man is caught out of the fold. He who is the force behind all natural law is the keeper of his sheep, and no one is able to pluck them out of his hand. Himself without variableness or shadow of turning, he maintains the irreversibility of all natural forces, one of which is the insufferably majestic law by which character tends to assume final permanence, good, as well as bad. — Joseph Cook.

Do not give the Reapers all the Praise.

To me it is a great treat to be invited to dine at a farmhouse. I like the company of a good, intelligent farmer, partly, perhaps, because, I do not understand agriculture, and forgetting what I am told concerning it, there is always a novelty in hearing about the fields. I was spending the day in such society just when the harvest was all in its glory. My friend had taken possession of his farm in the midst of the previous winter; his predecessor had died suddenly, leaving it in a splendid condition. A young, earnest minister, recently settled, was also a guest, and somewhat pardonably, was talking with a tinge of boastfulness of his success, and, with outspoken inference, was revealing a sense of superiority over the fine old-fashioned pastor whose work he had entered into. My friend, the host, I saw, hardly liked the self-elation apparent in his minister, whom he respected. As soon as opportunity served, he pointed out to us the far-stretching golden corn-fields, and the orchards wealthy with fruit, and said, "Now, when I entered this farm only eight months ago, there was not a single apple on one of those trees, nor one ear of wheat in all those fields; the whole was left by my predecessor covered with snow, look at the change I have wrought." In estimating the success of a minister we need something of the principle of tenant-right, as it is termed in agriculture. Not simply forming an opinion on what is seen, but on the condition of the soil. If the change be made in winter time, we ought to make allowance for a difference of seasons and the amount of good seed buried for a future harvest.

The best fidelity to Christ is shown in a daily vigilant service to Him in trifles, in efforts to honor Him in humble inconspicuous services, such as in good temper in families, sympathy with man and beast, honesty in business, liberality to servants, fidelity to employers.

Mr. Spurgeon's Annual Address to his Students.

At the recent annual meetings in connection with the Pastor's College. Mr. Spurgeon gave his customary address. The following extracts therefrom indicate that he still maintains all his vivacity and solid good sense:—

"Mr. Spurgeon said the subject of his address would be 'a new departure; a revival; a starting afresh.' The subject was, said Mr. S., exceedingly beautiful, and especially so to some, because the process of running down was such a very easy one. It was one which needed no care, it could be accomplished without a wish, in a measure in opposition to our wish we can still run down without our knowing it, and all the more so because we fancy we are getting rich and increased in goods. Only a little matter of neglect and we run to the lowest possible condition. Do not wind the clock up and it will stop; it will remain motionless, useless, quiet. To keep a farm in good order is a thing that wants a wise man, a good deal of money, and much labour and watchfulness. Let it alone, or take crop after crop from it without putting anything on it, and it will get into the condition that it will starve a lark and grow nothing but weeds. Just so with us. If you do not wind your soul up with daily prayer you will soon run down; you need not sow handfuls of tares; you need not cultivate the nettles and thistles—they will come of themselves—and you will deteriorate more and more. I do not know that we can expect to see continuous energy in any of us. I know the churches certainly have their palmy days, and then again their times of drought. The church of God has been in these circumstances; it has had its Pentecost, its reformation, its great revivals, and between these a sorrowful pause, in which there has been much more cause for lamentation than for rejoicing. Do not, therefore, let any brother condemn himself. If any walk in darkness for a while and see no light, let him trust and look for brighter days to come. I should like to have remained young if I could; if I might have felt the spring, the elasticity, the leaping and running in the ways of God. One is coming to walk now, and it is somewhat suggestive that that should be after all, in God's view, a better thing. First, they shall mount up with wings as eagles. You have seen them; away they go. Your first sermon—how you mounted up. (Laughter.) Then they improve their pace. 'They run and are not wearied,' they walk and do not faint. One reason conducing to our running down may be a cessation of our early successes. Generally when a man first goes into a field there are many unreaped portions of it, and he gets in many sheaves. If you fish in a small pond you must come to the end of the supply. In London we have no limit in this matter, but in small villages it will come to happen that a minister has already got all that God intends to give him, and there are none left.

DISCOURAGEMENTS OF THE PASTORATE.

A lighthouse-keeper far out at sea supplies his wants in this way. He puts a line round the lighthouse, attaches a number of hooks to it, and has, perhaps, one hundred dropping into the water; the tide comes up, the fish bite, and when the tide goes down again the lighthouse is festooned with fish of all kinds; he has nothing to do but to take them off. That is how it was with us. But perhaps, later on, the lighthouse-keeper looks out and cannot see, owing to the denseness of the fog. He is obliged, in view of the gathering of the storm cloud, to keep every door and window shut, or he could not live. He thinks it is hard to be a lighthouse-keeper then, and he is half-inclined to think he chose a bad trade. So we inquire, "Watchman, what of the night?" and the answer is, "No morning cometh, but the night thickens, and it gets denser and denser." I do not, then wonder that a man's spirits run down.

HOBBIES V. GOSPEL PREACHING.

Whenever we get into this condition, too, we generally adopt some kind of scheme to hide it. Some do it by the taking up of hobbies instead of preaching the gospel. I have known them begin to expound prophecy. Now a man full of the life of God may expound prophecy as much as he likes. What I complain of is this: there are some who have lost their love of the Gospel who try to win back what little popularity they once had by taking up prophecy. I have been amused by some brethren who have got out of the old ship to get on to Prophecy, how regularly taken in they have been. The beast of the Revelation was once Napoleon III., but he is dead. Then the deadly wound was his son. His son is dead; and I do not know now what is going to happen. In *Sindbad the Sailor*, it is said that as they sailed along they saw an island, they got out and enjoyed themselves, and were going to take possession of it. Suddenly the island began to move, and it went down, for it was a whale's back they were on. I have known brethren eat, drink and enjoy themselves on some speculation, but suddenly the facts of the history have gone down, and the whole thing has disappeared very like a whale. Others have taken hobbies that are worse, because I see no great or serious mischief in this one, only that it may indicate that a man is spun out on the Gospel, and now wants to spin on something else; he cannot prophesy after the measure of faith, so he will according to the immeasurable extent of his imagination. His experience does not serve him with topics, so he must take flights into things of which he knows nothing.

A QUICKENED MINISTRY.

His third point was that that should be a time of renewal to each one of them. It was a fit time if they took an outlook at the nation. Politically he believed they were come back to a condition in which there would be respect for righteousness and truth—he cared for nothing else; a condition when they would no longer be steered by their "interests" and the policy which comes of it, but by "Is this right or is this wrong?" They had got to this, and now, instead of no progress no injustice amended, and no home legislation, only the admiring of the glitter of some foreign adventures, something would be done. Besides that, the school were educating the people, and he thanked God for that. It was a blessed thing that the people would now be able to read their Bibles, and would not be left to receive religion secondhand from those who had not got any to give which was worth the giving. Now they would read books and get the gospel, if God quickened them as ministers, and now they had not politics to preach, but Jesus Christ, who was at the bottom of all good politics, for the strength of any nation must and would be found in the strength of the Christian Church. If anything were honest, true, and of good report, they were on that side; they were on the side of the limitation of the abominable trade which was ruining our country; on the side of anything which subverted the cause of morality, righteousness, truth and peace. He wished that Christian men would insist more and more on the unrighteousness of war altogether, and that, if driven to it by self-defence, it ever came, Christianity would stand by and deplore it; not laughing her huzzas over the grandest victory which ever came by force of arms. Urging the importance of consecrations to meet the demands of the time, Mr. Spurgeon thought some of them were like the thirsty raven who found water, but too deep in a ewer to get at and it cast in stones into the ewer until the water rose to within its reach. So some of them were so shallow that they must have infirmities to bring their "grace to the top. They had, however, many of them weathered the most of the storm already; let them not now strike their flags and cease the conflict—God forbid. Let energy and patience go together, and the eternal life would put