

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XXVI., No. 23.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, June 8, 1881.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLV., No. 23.

Poetry.

Cheering Voices from many Lands.

TRANSLATED BY LYDIA M. MILLARD.
A soul, blue-skied, that always sees
Some sunshine in the dark,
Can ever find some heavenly breeze
To help its trembling bark.
—From the Swedish.

Bear, with all thy bravest power,
All that heaven hath sent to thee;
Now a grave and now a bower,
Ever mortal lot must be.
—From the Spanish.

Though sorrow hover round thee now,
Joy may be coming soon;
Not always bends Apollo's bow—
His silent lyre may tune.
—From the Latin.

Lift thy head, throw off thy sadness,
Never let the joy-buds chill;
If thou nurse each germ of gladness,
Gladness all thy life may fill.
—From the Danish.

O, who can stretch himself in ease
Before the world's most glorious deeds?
In indolence can bow
When martyrs, saints, and heroes all
Do after him unceasing call?
O idler, what art thou!
—From the German.

God is the Author great, and men but
players all;
To each some part is given;
The grandest acts performed on earth
Were all composed in Heaven.
—From the French.

If we reach not the height we seek,
We need not blame our fortune drear;
For to our own small selves belongs
The blame of our small sphere.
—From the Greek.

The rock, that's whitened by the wave,
Its battered head must quiet keep;
Now smoothly on it seems to glide,
Now buried 'neath the towering tide;
But when the sea grows calm and sweet,
It comes at last to kiss its feet.
—From the Italian.

Thou, silent, unheard One,
All voices dost tone,
All worlds giving music
From border to throne—
Look down on our weakness,
And pity our sin,
And help us thy greatness
Forever to hymn.
—From the Greek.

Sound, sound, some heavenly bell!
And call us all to pray;
To love some real good so well,
We'll chase no phantom gay.
—From the German.
—Christian Intelligencer.

Religious.

The Good Shepherd.

BY REV. A. MCLAREN, D. D.

"I am the Good Shepherd and know
My sheep, and am known by mine. As
the Father knoweth Me, even so know
I the Father; and I lay down My life
for the sheep."—John x. 14-15.

"I am the Good Shepherd." Perhaps
even Christ never spoke more
truthful words than these. Just think
how many solitary, wearied hearts they
have cheered, and what a wealth of
encouragement and comfort there has
been in them for all generations. The
little child as it lays itself down to
sleep, cries

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me,
Bless thy little lamb to-night,
and the old man lays himself down to
die muttering to himself, "Though I
walk through the valley of the shadow
of death, I will fear no evil, for thou
art with me." "I am the Good Shep-
herd." No preaching can do anything
but weaken and dilute the force of
such words, and yet, though in all their
sweet, homely simplicity they appear
to every heart, there are great depths
in them that are worth pondering, and
profound thoughts that need some elu-
cidation.

There are three points to be noticed
—First, the general force of the meta-

phor, and then the two specific appli-
cations of it which our Lord himself
makes.

First of all then let me say a few
words as to the general application of
the metaphor. The usual notion of
these words confines itself to the natural
meaning, and runs out into very true,
but, perhaps, a little sentimental, con-
sideration, laying hold of what is so
plain on the very surface that I need
not spend any time in talking about it.
Christ's pattern is my law; Christ's
providence is my guidance; my de-
fence—which in the present case means
Christ's companionship—is my safety,
my sustenance—which in the present
case means Christ himself is the
bread of my soul. The Good Shep-
herd exercises care, which absolves
the sheep from care, and in the
present case means that my only
duty is meek following and quiet trust.
"I am the Good Shepherd"—here is
guidance, guardianship, companionship,
sustenance—all responsibilities laid up-
on his broad shoulders, and all tenderness
in his deep heart, and so for us
just obedience and quiet trust. An-
other way by which we get the whole
significance of this symbol is by notic-
ing how the idea is strengthened by the
word that accompanies it. Christ does
not say, "I am a Shepherd," but he
says, "I am the Good Shepherd." At
first sight that word "good" is in-
terpreted, as I was saying in a kind of
sentimental, poetic way, as expressing
our Lord's tenderness and love and
care; but I don't think that is the full
meaning here. You find up and down
this Gospel of St. John phrases such as
"I am the true bread," "I am the true
vine," and the meaning of the word
that is translated "good" is very
nearly parallel with that idea. The
true bread, the true vine, the true
shepherd—each comes to this, to use
modern phraseology, that Jesus Christ,
in his relation to you and me, fulfils
all that in figure and shadow is repre-
sented to the meditative eye by that low-
er relationship between the material
shepherd and his sheep. That is the
picture, this the reality. There is
another point to be made clear, and that
is, that whilst the word "good" is per-
haps a fair enough representation of that
which is employed by our Lord, there
is that a special force and significance
attached to the original which is lost in
our Bible. I do not know that it
could have been preserved; but still it
is necessary to state it. The expression
here is one that is generally rendered
"fair," "or lovely," or "beautiful,"
and it belongs to the genius of that
wonderful tongue in which the New
Testament is written that it has a
name for moral purity, considered as
being lovely, the highest goodness, and
the serene beauty, which was what the
old Greeks taught, howsoever little they
may have practised it in their lives.
And so here the thought is that the shep-
herd stands before us, the realization
of all that that name means, set forth in
such a fashion as to be infinitely lovely
and perfectly fair, and to draw the ad-
miration of any man that can appreciate
that which is beautiful, and can admire
that which is of good report. There is
another point still in reference to this
first view of the text. Our Lord not
only declares that he is the reality of
which the earthly shepherd is the
shadow, and that he is the flawless,
perfect, but that he alone is the reality.
I am the Good Shepherd; in me and
in me alone is that which men need.
And that leads me to another point
that must just be mentioned, that you
won't get the profound meaning of this
metaphor by simply looking at its
natural signification. You have to take
into account that the emblem has an-
other side, and that when our Lord
used these words he was using old
words with a new significance, that it
is a second edition of the figure, and
that here we are to remember all that
went before. "The Lord is my shep-
herd, I shall not want;" "Thou lead-
est thy people like a flock, by the hand
of Moses and Aaron." these are but
specimens of a continuous series of ut-
terances in the old revelations in which

Jehovah himself is the shepherd of man-
kind; and then there is another class
of passages of which I quote one or two.
"He shall feed his flock like a shep-
herd, and carry them in his arms."
"Awake, oh sword, against the man
who is thy fellow; smite the shepherd
and the sheep shall be scattered." There
were, we should remember, two
streams of representation, according
to the one of which God himself was
the Shepherd of Israel, and according
to the other of which the Messiah was
the Shepherd; and here, as I believe
Jesus lays his hand on both the one and
the other, and says, "They are mine
and they testify of me." So sweet, so
gracious are the words that we lose
the sense of the grandeur of them, and
need to think before we are able to
understand how great and immense the
claim that is here made upon our
faith, and that this man stands before
us and arrogates to himself the Divine
prerogative witnessed for of old by
palmist and prophet, and says that for
him were meant the prophecies of
ancient times that spake of a human
shepherd, and asserts that all the sus-
tenance, care, authority, command,
which the emblem suggests meets in
him in perfect order.

Now let us turn to the two special
points which our Lord emphasises here,
as being those in which his relation as
the Good Shepherd is not conspicuously
given. The language of my text runs
—"I am the Good Shepherd, and know
my sheep, and am known of mine. As
the Father knoweth me, even so know
I the Father." Our western ways fail
to bring out the full meaning of the
emblem; but all Eastern travellers
tell us what a strange bond of sympathy
and loving regard, and docile recogni-
tion, springs up between the shepherd
and his sheep away there in the East-
ern pastures and deserts; and how the
man knows every one, though they are
so like each other to a stranger; and how
even the dumb instincts and the narrow
intelligence of the silly sheep recognise
the shepherd, and won't be deceived by
garments that are feigned, and will not
follow the voice of a stranger. And
look how wonderfully beautiful that is
Christ lays hold of the dumb instincts of
the animal, as illustrating, at the one
end of the scale, the relation between
him and his followers, and lays hold of
the communion between the Father and
the Son at the other end of the scale,
as illustrating the same thing. "I know
my sheep." That is a knowledge like
the knowledge of the shepherd, a bond
of close intimacy. But he does not
know them by reason of looking at them
and thinking about them. It is some-
thing far more blessed than that. He
knows me because he loves me; he knows
me because he has sympathy with me,
and I know him, if I know him at all,
by my love, and I know him by my
sympathy, and I know him by my com-
munion. A loveless heart, does not
know the Shepherd, and unless the
Shepherd's heart was all love he would
not know his sheep. The shepherd's
love is an individualised love. He does
not know his flock; but he knows the
units of it, and we can rest ourselves
upon the personal knowledge, which is
personal love, and sympathy of Jesus
Christ. "And my sheep know me"—
not by force of intellect, not by un-
derstanding certain truths, all important
as that may be, but by having our
hearts harmonized in him, and our
spirits put into sympathy and commu-
nion with Him. "They know me,"
and they have rest with the knowledge;
"they know me," and that's the best
answer to all doubt and fear. They
are exposed to danger, but in the fold
they can go quietly to rest, for they
know that I am at the door watching
through it all.

Turn for a moment to the last point,
"I lay down my life for the sheep." I
have said that our western ways fail
to bring out fully the element of the
metaphor which refers to the kind of sym-
pathy between the shepherd and the
sheep; and our western life also fails
to bring out this other element also.
Shepherds in England never have need
to lay down their life for the sheep.

Shepherds in Palestine often did, and
sometimes do. You remember David
with the lion and the bear, which is but
an illustration of the reality which un-
derlies this metaphor. So, then, in
some profound way, the Shepherd's
death is the sheep's safety. First of
all, look at that most unmistakable,
emphatic—I was going to say vehem-
ent, at any rate intense—expression of
the absolute voluntariness of Christ's
death, "I lay down my life"; as a man
might strip off a vesture. And this
application of the metaphor is made all
the stronger by the words which fol-
low:—"Therefore doth my Father love
me, because I lay down my life that I
might take it again. No man taketh it
from me but I lay it down of myself.
I have power to lay it down, and I
have power to take it again." We
read, "Smite the Shepherd and the
sheep shall be scattered"; but here,
somehow or other, the smiting of the
sheep is not the scattering but the gather-
ing of the flock. Here, somehow or
other, the dead Shepherd has power to
guard, to guide, to defend them. Here,
somehow or other, the death of the
Shepherd is the security of the sheep;
and I say to you, the flock, that for
every soul the entrance into the flock
of God is through the door of the dying
Christ, who laid down his life for the
sheep, and makes them his sheep who
trust in him.

Beginnings in Public Prayer.

There comes a time in the life of
every young man, who becomes a
member of the church, when he must
decide whether he will or will not lead
the devotions of others in prayer.
Sometimes the test is made in the fam-
ily, sometimes in the prayer-meeting;
but it comes, and often unexpectedly,
and so greatly embarrasses the young
man.

We believe that the proper thing to
do is always to respond, and do just as
well as one can. It will be pleasanter
afterward to reflect on that course, than
to remember that one refused; and the
fact of having consented and done
something in that way—be it ever so
little—will give moral courage to the
desire of the heart, and the second ef-
fort will be stronger, and one's consent
will come easier. When a trial of this
sort is passed successfully, then the
embarrassment and fear for the most
part are over, and one can rely on
himself to always try to do his duty in
this regard.

Now, in many of our churches are to
be found young men and boys who are
soon to become important factors in
these churches. Let them resolve to do
just what the pastor and deacons call on
them to do; do it in the spirit of grace
and humility: the sympathies and pray-
ers of all the brethren and sisters will
go with them; and, in a little while,
these young brethren will wear off the
embarrassment, and God will help them
and they will grow useful and helpful
to pastor and church. The point is
this: don't think you can't speak to
God for the brethren in prayer, and so
refuse. If you refuse once, you have
opened up the way to refuse again or
not be called on, and three or four re-
fusals will more than likely decide the
matter, and then all your life you will
be a dumb Christian! You will be
hiding your light under a bushel. A
great deal depends on starting right!
and it is certainly right for a person to
pray in the family or prayer-meeting.

When taking the care of—church,
we were inquiring of one of the deacons
as to whom we might ask to lead in
prayer in the prayer-meeting. Said he:
"Brother G. will always re-
spond." Now, there were two brethren
G. in the church. We understood the
deacon to mean Bro. John G. whereas
he meant Bro. William G. At prayer-
meeting the following week, we called
on Bro. John G. to pray; he bowed,
tried, uttered a few requests evincing
great embarrassment, and then repeated
the Lord's Prayer, and said "Amen."
After prayer-meeting closed, he and his
wife came to us—he to express surprise

at being called on, his wife to say:
"Bro. S. I'm glad you did it; I've
tried to induce him to have family
prayer with me and the children, but
he refuses; and now he has had to
'pray in public,' and I want you to
urge him to take up family prayer." Of
course we did. That night at home
the wife brought forward the Bible,
saying: "John, you can pray; you
must now go on; to refuse now will
greatly retard your usefulness; the
children and I will keep quiet till you
read and pray." He consented, and
after a little time he thanked me for call-
ing on him at prayer-meeting, even by
mistake; and now a grandfather, he
has always since observed family reli-
gion in his home, and God has given
his children in regeneration as they have
grown old enough. We think he de-
cided wisely in the unexpected trial,
and we think his wife was a great help
to him too.—Baptist Courier.

The Blessed Gate.

There is a gateway at the entrance
of a narrow passage in London, over
which is written, "No burdens allowed
to pass through." And there is another
gate through which no burdens will
ever pass: it is the gate of pearl. And
there is another city into which this
gate leads; it is the city of New Jeru-
salem. London is the city of man,
Jerusalem the city of God. London is
the city of time; Jerusalem the city of
eternity. There is sorrow and sin in
London; there is neither in the holy
city. There is death in London; there
is no death in Jerusalem the golden.
London is two thousand years old;
Jerusalem is the city of unnumbered
years. London has four millions of
people dwelling within her precincts;
Jerusalem will have a multitude that
no man can number. London will go
down in the crash of earth's fiery doom;
Jerusalem will stand for ever and ever.
Which of these cities do you prefer?

And, after all, mortals do carry their
burdens through that London gate.
These burdens may not be visible to
the eye, but, nevertheless, the sore, the
sad, stricken heart bears them, and
they are many. Beneath the weight
of these burdens men stoop and their
steps falter. Into that mighty city, day
and night, men and women bear heavy
burdens so crushing that they would
lain fling them at their feet, but they
cannot. But no burdens will pass the
gate of the better, the enduring city:
the burden of evil, the burden of grief,
the burden of hearts so broken as never
in time to be healed, the countless bur-
dens of the world's long, dreary night,
—none of these can enter there. All
will be laid down forever at the beau-
tiful gate. In the light of a long sweet
home, in the breast of a glad, glorious
welcome, into the air of the eternally
blessed, they will pass who cross that
threshold and are enfolded within. O
blessed gate! Towards thy ever open
portals we onward press. Holy Bride-
groom, we beseech thee, let us in.

A Child's definition of Prayer.

The other day a poor woman came
into my shop to speak to me on business
matters concerning a daughter of hers,
who is doomed to be a cripple for life.
I soon found that she was a sorrowful
Christian; one of those who give many
a furtive glance at Goliath without see-
ing David close by—looking at her
troubles away—not looking to the
Lord at all. When I spoke of Jesus
as the all-sufficient One, she began to
tell me of a little boy, seven years of
age, she had lost recently, and of what
he delighted in speaking of. The love
of God in Jesus was his theme. When
life was drawing to a close he spoke of
mercy and of grace; of faith in God as
his only foundation for the hope of
going when he died, to be with Jesus
who died for him. Being visited a day
or two before he died, by an unconvert-
ed relative of mature years, the rela-
tive asked him how he was. When he
answered that he was very happy
though sick in body, that his faith kept