

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

DEAR BROTHER,

In reading that beautiful hymn in the *Messenger* lately, said to have been composed by a lunatic, I was reminded of some verses which I had copied from the diary of a young man in this country, who is deemed insane, though his friends are, I believe, generally of opinion that he is truly pious. He was on one occasion kept for a few days in a state of confinement in jail, during which time he kept a diary, and wrote, at several periods, the following. I believe they will find a response in many a bosom. He who cannot sympathise with the sentiments expressed, not the composer, is the really insane person.

A. B. C.

1st.

Oh when shall I drink from that free flowing stream?
For which daily I sigh, of which nightly I dream.
Oh! when shall I bathe in that river of bliss?
No longer confined in a prison like this.

Oh when shall I join the blest spirits above,
To praise the Redeemer and sing of his love?
When shall I be wrapt in the theme of the skies,
There joy never ends and love never dies?

2nd.

Jesus climbed up Calvary,
Jesus hung upon the tree,
Jesus shed his blood for me;
Oh! death, where is thy victory!

Christ the Lord for me was slain,
Christ the Lord revives again,
Christ the Lord descends to reign—
Oh, my soul, shout victory!

3rd.

Oh when shall I quit this dark prison of clay?
To bask in the sunshine of unfading day.
[He says it is the fifteenth day since my body
has been caged.]

But oh! my bold spirit is free;
It walks o'er the land, it mounts o'er the sea,
To where the cross stands upon Calvary;
Blest Jesus, didst thou agonise and die for me?

4th.

Away from every murmuring thought,
Since Jesus is my friend;
I am his servant, dearly bought,
To praise him without end.

Oh when shall I sing with bright angels above,
The praises of Jesus, and talk of his love?
From sin and from sorrow forever set free,
When, my Father and God, shall I come unto thee?

The following beautiful Epitaph composed by the same, is inscribed on his mother's tombstone, in the burial ground in Canard, Cornwallis.

No weeping willow, nor deep cypress gloom,
Mantles, with sombre shade our mother's tomb:
But a rude stone with artless lines cut deep,
Points out the peaceful spot of her last sleep.

Religious.

CONFESSION.

There has been a tremendous outcry recently on the subject of auricular confession, or confession made to priests, as practised in the Church of England. There were rumours of such a thing a considerable time ago, but they have now taken shape in the persons and practices of Messrs. Liddel and Poole, of Knightsbridge, and Messrs. Gresley and West, of Boyn-hill, Stoke Poges, near Slough. And hence the outcry aforesaid. Let us, first, have a few words about

SCRIPTURAL CONFESSION.

If there is one thing which, more than another, marks the Divine Revelation, it is the following. It is its design to bring man into direct spiritual intercourse with his Maker. The great evil is, that there is, in man's sinful state, no such intercourse. The poor, wretched creature has run away from God, and is trying to keep out of his sight by all sorts of devices, just as Adam hid himself among the trees of the garden. The Gospel calls on him to consider that this is nothing but sin, folly, and infatuation—that, whether he will or not, he must certainly one day stand face to face with God; that it will be an awful thing for him to appear before Him impenitent and unforgiven on that day, and that he ought therefore now, in the day of salvation, to draw near to Him, through the Saviour, by repentance and faith, when all

will be well—well in life, well in death, well in judgement, well for ever. Of this repentance and faith, wrought by grace, confession is a part, and that confession is to be made, not to man, but to God alone. When it is sincere, and accompanied with a change of heart and life, God himself grants forgiveness, the man gets peace, and walks before Him as a forgiven man ought to do, and will reach heaven at last through the merits of his Saviour.

POPISSH CONFESSION.

It is a very strange thing for any one to imagine that a fellow-creature can forgive sins, and that one of them is to go to another for that purpose. His fellow-creature is nothing but a fellow-sinner—dark, guilty, powerless, dying, and to be judged—like himself. Unless, indeed, he be forgiven of God, he will himself be condemned and cast out. What monstrous absurdity, therefore, and horrid daring it is for any man to pretend to forgive another. It is only to be equalled by the act of him who goes to him with such a view. There is no way of explaining how such a system could have come about, but by supposing that the one man represents himself as being somehow like to, or as having the power of, God, and that the other is so far deluded as to believe him, and go to him accordingly. This is really the secret of the whole matter. The Church of Rome is the one church. So it says. And the head of it, the Pope, is the sole representative of God upon earth. As such, he possesses Divine authority, which he can delegate to his priests, so that every Popish priest is, as it were, a bit of the Pope himself, and possesses, like his master, Divine authority to do this or that. To forgive sins is a peculiar attribute of the Pope. It, therefore, also belongs to the priests. In Popish countries all this is well known. For the priests to offer, and the people to receive, forgiveness from the priests, and go away from them as if all were right with their souls, is universally understood and practised.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND CONFESSION.

Ah! but how different from the Popish Church is the old, venerable, reformed Church of England, with its glorious liturgy. The Church of England is alleged to be the great witness for Protestantism in the world. Well, we have always said, and we do not hesitate to say so again, that there is a great deal that is admirable in and about that Church. But, for any sake, let us have a simple, honest consideration of the whole case. Let us not act like the idolatrous fools of old, who, for several long hours together, cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Here is the simple fact. There are, at this moment, men in the number of its ministers who do maintain that they have the power to forgive sins, and who call upon their people to come and confess to them, assuring them that their sins will be forgiven, and that they will then have great peace and comfort. How comes this to pass? It must be in some such way as we have seen it in the Popish Church. There must be some claim made for a special Divine power, and some ground in the constitution and declarations of the Church of England, on which these men stand; otherwise it would never be tolerated for a moment. There must be some allegation of a power specially pertaining to the English Church—a power resident in its bishops, imparted to its priests, and through them communicated to the people. The very idea of confession on the one part, and absolution on the other, implies all this. In virtue of this superhuman quality alone, we repeat, it is that the claim to forgive sins can for one moment be set up. Now, we ask, is there anything like this in the Church of England? Let our readers answer for themselves, after they have read the following words uttered by the bishop in the service of ordination:—"RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands. WHOSE SINS THOU DOST FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN; AND WHOSE SINS THOU DOST RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED."

Nothing is more clear or certain than that these words contain the claim of a Divine power for the bishop, which he is capable of communicating to the priests, and of a Divine power for the priest, which he is capable of communicating to the people, and which, accordingly, he is supposed to do, when, in the order for visiting the sick, it is said:—

I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

This system of *absolution* and *confession* is the primary feature in the Popish Church, and that it is undoubtedly to be found—with sincere sorrow do we affirm it, in the Church of England. We shall only add that it is utterly unscriptural, that it is most dishonouring to God; derogates from the glory, the grace, the power of one mediator between God and men—the MAN Christ Jesus; that it saps the foundation of all Gospel truth; keeps man from personal spiritual intercourse with his Master (which it is, as we have said, the great object of revelation to restore), and makes him a greater slave than ever to his sins; sinks him down deeper than before in darkness, superstition, and false confidence—for false he will find such confidence in priestly forgiveness to be, when he stands before God on the great, last day, and finds that such forgiveness is, after all, unavailing.—*Christian Cabinet.*

Everybody's Sermon.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

Every man in his calling has a sermon preached to him. The farmer has a thousand sermons; I have brought them out already; let him open wide his eyes, and he shall see more. He need not go an inch without hearing the songs of angels, and the voice of the spirits wooing him to righteousness, for all nature round him has a tongue given to it, when man hath an ear to hear. There are others, however, engaged in a business which allows them to see but very little of nature, and yet even there God has provided them with a lesson. There is the *baker* who provides us with our bread. He thrusts his fuel into the oven, and he causes it to glow with heat, and puts bread therein. Well may he, if he be an ungodly man, tremble as he stands at the oven's mouth, for there is a text which he may well comprehend as he stands there: "For the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; they shall be consumed. Men gather them in bundles and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Out of the oven's mouth comes a hot and burning warning, and the man's heart might melt like wax within him if he would but regard it. Then see the *butcher*. How doth the beast speak to him? He sees the lamb almost lick his knife, and the bullock goes unconsciously to the slaughter. How might he think every time that he smites the unconscious animal (who knows nothing of death), of his own doom? Are we not, all of us who are without Christ, fattening for the slaughter? Are we not more foolish than the bullock, for doth not the wicked man follow his executioner, and walk after his own destroyer in the very chambers of hell? When we see a drunkard pursuing his drunkenness, or an unchaste man running in the way of licentiousness, is he not as an ox going to the slaughter, until a dart smite him through the liver? Hath not God sharpened his knife and made ready his axe that the fatlings of this earth may be killed, when we shall say to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, "Behold, I have made a feast of vengeance for you, and ye shall feast upon the blood of the slain, and make yourselves drunken with the streams thereof?" Ay, butcher, there is a lecture for you in your trade; and your business may reproach you. And ye whose craft is to sit still all day, making shoes for our feet, the lapstone in your lap may reproach you, for your heart, perhaps, is as hard as that. Have you not been smitten as often as your lapstone, and yet your heart has never been broken or melted? And what shall the

Lord say to you at last, your stony heart being still within you? He shall condemn you and cast you away because you would have none of his rebukes and would not turn at the voice of his exhortation. Let the *brewer* remember that as he brews he must drink. Let the *potter* tremble lest he be like a vessel marred upon the wheel. Let the *printer* take heed, that his life be set in heavenly type, and not in the black letter of sin. *Painter*, beware! for paint will not suffice, we must have unvarnished realities.

Others of you are engaged in business where you are continually using scales and measures. Might you not often put yourselves into the scales? Might you not fancy you saw the great Judge standing by, with his Gospel in one scale and you in the other, and solemnly looking down upon you, saying, "*Mene, mene, tekel*—thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." Some of you use the measure, and when you have measured out, you cut off the portion that your customer requires. Think of your life too, it is to be of a certain length, and every year brings the measure a little farther, and at last there comes the scissors that shall slip off your life, and it is done. How knowest thou when thou art come to the last inch? What is that disease thou hast about thee, but the first snip of the scissors? What that trembling in thy bones, that failing in thy eyesight, that fleeing of thy memory, that departure of thy youthful vigour, but the first rent? How soon shalt thou be rent in twain, the remnant of thy days past away, and thy years all numbered and gone, misspent and wasted for ever! But you say you are engaged as a *servant*, and your occupations are divers. Then divers are the lectures God preaches to you. "A servant waits for his wages and the hireling fulfilth his day." There is a similitude for thee, when thou hast fulfilled thy day on earth, and take thy wages at last. Who, then, is thy master? Art thou serving Satan and the lusts of the flesh, and wilt thou take out thy wages at last in the hot metal of destruction? or art thou serving the fair Prince Emmanuel, and shall thy wages be the golden crowns of heaven? Oh! happy art thou if thou servest a good master, for according to thy master shall be thy reward; as is thy labour such shall thy end be. Or thou art one that *guideth the pen*, and from hour to hour wearily thou writest. Ah! man, know that thy life is a writing. When thy hand is not on the pen, thou art a writer still; thou art always writing upon the pages of eternity; thy sins thou art writing or else thy holy confidence in him that loved thee. Happy shall it be for thee, O writer, if thy name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and if that black writing of thine, in the history of thy pilgrimage below, shall have been blotted out with the red blood of Christ, and thou shalt have written upon thee the fair name of Jehovah, to stand legible for ever. Or perhaps thou art a *physician* or a *chemist*; thou prescribest or preparest medicines for man's body. God stands there by the side of thy pestle and thy mortar, and by the table where thou writest thy prescriptions, and he says to thee, "Man, thou art sick; I can prescribe for thee. The blood and righteousness of Christ, laid hold of by faith, and applied by the Spirit, can cure thy soul. I can compound a medicine for thee that shall rid thee of thy ills and bring thee to the place where the inhabitants shall no more say 'I am sick.' Wilt thou take my medicine or wilt thou reject it? Is it bitter to thee, and dost thou turn away from it? Come, drink my child, drink, for thy life lieth here: and how shalt thou escape if thou neglect so great salvation?" Do you cast iron, or melt lead, or fuse the hard metals of the mines? then pray that the Lord may melt thine heart and cast thee in the mould of the gospel? Do you make garments for men? Oh, be careful that you find a garment for yourself for ever. Are you busy in *building* all day long, laying the stone upon its fellow and the mortar in its crevice? Then, remember thou art building for eternity too! Oh, that thou mayest thyself be built upon a good foundation! Oh, that thou mayest build