

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.

On the Death of Deacon Joseph Sibley, of the Lower Steeple Church.

Christian Pilgrim, thy wearisome journey is ended,
Thy conflicts are over, thy labors are done;
Thy spirit's fruit dwelling to earth has been given,
But that sanctified spirit to heaven has flown.

Yes the angels have welcomed, with anthems exultant,
The servant of Christ to his blood-bought reward,
From weakness and suffering, on earth he has risen,
To dwell in the bliss-giving smile of his Lord.

How glorious the change from a perishing body,
By Satan assaulted, by trials distressed,
To a home in the mansions of joy everlasting,
And the endless delights of the saved and the blest!

Long years had he journeyed on, way-worn and feeble,
Temptations assailing, but Jesus his stay,
By infinite mercy, and grace ever strengthened,
To combat each foe on the thorn-beset way.

Weep, weep for his loss, ye who knew him, who witnessed,
His patient endurance, his labors of love,
Who saw him grow daily more Christ like and lowly,
Till summoned to share in the triumphs above.

But weep not as those who have nought to console them,
Though deeply we mourn him, we know he is blest,
That he walked while on earth with the God who had saved him,
And that God has now taken him home to his rest.

J. B.
Lower Steeple, Feb. 8th, 1862.

Miscellaneous.

Youthful presumption rebuked.

One day the boat from New York bore a mixed company, but made up in good part by some fifteen or twenty Methodist preachers, who had come to New York from the interior of the State to attend their annual Conference, and were returning to their several fields of labor. Among the passengers also was a young man who professed to be a disciple of Pythagoras, and made himself very obnoxious to the passengers by the constant intrusion of his professed belief in the doctrine of transmigration. At last the nuisance became unbearable, and one of the preachers, whose shrewdness will be fully demonstrated by the sequel, determined to silence him:

"My young friend," said he, "is it really true that you believe in such absurd nonsense as that you will become some other animal when you die?"

"Most assuredly I do," said the young man; "but so far from its being an absurd doctrine, I can sustain it by arguments you will find it difficult to answer."

"We shall see," said the preacher. "If you were to be thrown overboard from this boat, and a big fish should eat you, you would become a fish, would you not?"

"Certainly I would."

"And if some farmer coming to the river for a little recreation in fishing, should catch you, and thinking you were not suited to his table, should feed you to his swine, you would become a hog, would you not?"

"Right again," said the young man with a triumphant air, not dreaming of the sad predicament into which he was being led.

"You answer promptly," said the reverend interlocutor, "and I am pleased with your candor. One or two more questions and I think I shall have clear views of your doctrine. If after you became a hog, the farmer should kill you and boil you up into soap, you would be soap, would you not?"

"Soap," repeated the young man, doubtfully. "Soap is not an animal; but still my career could not end, and so I must be soap."

"Very good," said the preacher. "One question more, and I think I shall understand all about your doctrine. If after you became soap, the farmer's wife should rise early some Monday morning, and having converted you into soap suds and washed her dirty linen with you, should pour you on the ground, what would you then be?"

The young man had reached the end of his transmigratory career sooner than he anticipated, and he was silent for the remainder of the trip, much to the gratification of his fellow passengers.

Akin to the above, and almost as good, though of a more recent date, is the story related of a young man who was riding in a stage coach with several other passengers, among whom was

a clergyman. The young man professed to be an atheist, and took special pains to avow his sentiments, even attempting to sustain them with arguments. The clergyman paid no heed to him for some time; but at length he addressed him thus:

"Sir, you say there is no God."

"Yes sir, I do," was the reply.

"Ah, I have read about you," rejoined the clergyman. "Read about me, sir? Where? Where? I am not aware that anybody has written about me. You must be mistaken, sir."

"No I am not, sir. I have read about you in the fourteenth Psalm, where it says: 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.'"

There is another stage-coach anecdote related, in which a clergyman and silly young man figure, quite to the disadvantage of the latter. The young man entertained his fellow passengers with a general tirade against ministers of the Gospel, and wound up with the remark that if he had a son who was a fool, he would make a preacher of him.

"Your father seems to have been of a different mind!" quietly observed the clergyman. The smile that expanded the countenance of every passenger but that of the young man, showed that they "saw the point," if he did not.—N. Y. Chronicle.

The American War.

The following is from the Sydney, New South Wales, *Christian Pleader*, of Nov. 1, 1861:—

THE AMERICAN WAR, THE UNION, AND SLAVERY.

We have looked into the matter, and cannot help thinking that the American's mode of reasoning fails to be conclusive. We still think that the Southern States have the same right to claim independence of the Federal constitution which the thirteen colonies had to break off from Great Britain. The written compact of the union is no way stronger than the implied compact between Great Britain and the Colonies. On such a question therefore we deem the war, on the part of the Northerners, unreasonable. But in saying this we have no sympathy with the Southerners whatever.

We must maintain, that the first call of equity is, to the utter abolition of slavery by the Northern States. The Union, good or bad, is a very little matter in comparison with this. We verily believe that the Northerners are, consciously or unconsciously, only striving for the former enactment of slavery. Not a trace can we see of a right aim on that subject. It is amazing how blind they seem to the simple truth that is so palpable to most other people.

The Union is made an idol, and all the Northerners seem to be offended if, not only their opponents in the South, but everybody else outside of their nation, will not fall down and worship it as they evidently do themselves. Now "the idols God will utterly abolish." The Americans have enough truth and religion among them to make them terribly responsible to God. They set themselves to rebuild their idol; they do not set themselves to secure the reign of righteousness among them. How then can they be acceptable to God? Let them disown those judgments of their Supreme Court which have sanctioned the monstrous facts of slavery, and enunciated as a law, that no African can be a citizen of their nation. Let them by public deed declare slavery an evil, and abolish the Fugitive Slave Law. Let them treat coloured people without prejudice, and as brethren of one blood with themselves. Let them do away with the mockery of religious services in which that brotherhood is outraged. These are GOD'S laws, incomparably above the Union. He demands regard to his laws, and let the Union then take its chance. This setting up of the Union in preference to His laws assures us, that if it were to be restored under present circumstances, its restorers would re-establish slavery as firmly as ever.

Acquired beauty best.

Beauty is an excellent gift of God, nor has the pen of the Holy Spirit forgotten to speak its praise, but it is virtuous and godly beauty alone which Scripture honours, expressly declaring on the other hand, "that a fair woman, which is without discretion, is as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout." (Prov. xi. 22.) Many a pretty girl is like the flower called the imperial crown, which is admired, no doubt, for its showy appearance, but despised for its unpleasant odor. Were her mind as free from pride, selfishness, luxury, and levity, as her countenance from spots or wrinkles, and could she govern her inward inclinations as she does her external carriage, she would have none to match her. But who loves the caterpillar and such insects, however showy their appearance, and bright and variegated the colors that adorn them, seeing they injure and defile the trees and plants on

which they settle? What the better is an apple for its rosy skin, if the maggots have penetrated and devoured its heart? What care I for the beautiful brown of the nut, if it be worm-eaten, and fill the mouth with corruption? Even so, external beauty of person deserves no praise, unless matched with the inward beauty of virtue and holiness. It is, therefore, far better to acquire beauty than to be born with it. The best kind is that which does not wither at the touch of fever, like a flower, but lasts and endures on a bed of sickness, in old age, and even at death.—Gothald.

Crooked things in our Churches.

BUNYAN, in *Zion's Advocate*, alludes to some causes which had hindered the prosperity of churches in certain localities and says:—Among these causes were some crooked things which were found in connection with those churches. Of these I have something more to say. Now, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I am not opposed to crooked things as such, certainly not to all crooked things. They have their uses as well as straight things, and sometimes wonders are accomplished by them. We read in the good Book that the walls of ancient Jericho were once prostrated by the instrumentality of rams' horns, and scarcely anything is more crooked than these. I am not at all sure but that these instruments were selected at that time simply because they were crooked. What mighty results followed from their use on that occasion! Crooked things are not to be condemned, therefore, indiscriminately. In many instances, and for many purposes, they are altogether better than straight things.—A husbandman always selects as a snathe or handle to his scythe, a crooked, rather than a straight stick. He can work more easily with it, and it is preferred for this and other reasons. Consequently it has become quite a business in manufacturing, to take straight things and make them crooked. So the farmer, when he cannot find a stick with a good, "natural crook," takes one with an artificial crook, for a crooked thing he must have, any how.

But we are not to infer from this, that because crooked things are useful for some purposes, they are useful for all purposes.—There are many purposes which demand straight things. Crooked things, will not answer at all. They are in the way, and worse than nothing. I saw a man piling up wood the other day. He was doing it well, and handsomely. He came to one stick that was crooked. He tried to make it fit in with other sticks. He turned it one way, then another way, and every way, but it would not fit, and finally he threw it out one side. He would not have it in the pile. Crooked things are good in some places, but not in all places. If they are kept by themselves, no matter if they are crooked, even so crooked that they cannot lie still. But if they are put in with other things which are straight, then comes the difficulty.

So much it seems proper for me to say about crooked things in general. They do well in some places, but not in all places; for some purposes, but not for all purposes. They may have a degree of gracefulness and beauty by themselves, and yet they may mar beauty and be very troublesome when brought in connection with other things.

In applying these general principles to matters pertaining to Christians, and the Christian church, it is evident, that in the main, they have a peculiar significance. I have seen some very good Christians who were crooked in various respects. Alone, they did very well. They were earnest, zealous, sincere, and working in their own way, with the largest latitude given them, they seemed to interfere with no one. They are crooked—peculiar as their friends called it, and everybody was disposed to make allowance for their peculiarities, and there was no special difficulty. But when such persons have once been admitted to a church, to become part of a building whose beauty and strength consist in its being fitly framed together, then difficulties have arisen, and the building has been weakened. It is admitted even by these very persons, as well as by others, that the strength and glory of a church are found, not in its numbers or its wealth, but in its oneness of views, of efforts, and piety. It is then, when all is compact, harmonious, straight in doctrine and in practice, that a church has the greatest moral force, and secures its greatest achievements. So Paul understood it, when he exhorted the Philippians to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Now, I say, all admit this to be right in theory.

But here comes the difficulty. A person who gives some evidence that he has been converted, is received into a church. He has some crooks in him to be sure, crooks in his disposition, or in his views of Christian doctrine, or in regard to the ordinances and discipline of the church, or perhaps he is somewhat crooked in his daily walk; but still a charity that hopeth all things, favors the admission of such a one to the church,

and all due allowance is made for his, so called, peculiarities. But ere long, he is found to be like the crooked stick in the pile of wood. It seems to be impossible to adjust him to any place in the church, and he is a source of inconvenience and trouble. He is in favor of union, but that with him means, that the whole church shall do as he says, and conform to his crooks. If this is done, then they are all crooked; if it is not done, then there is contention, perhaps disunion, and every evil work. Many a crooked thing have I seen in my day, in the churches, which could not, or rather would not be adjusted to things that were straight. Many a man have I seen, whose conduct would never have led me to suppose that he belonged to the church, but rather that the church belonged to him. How much our churches have suffered, and still suffer from the crooked things connected with them! Be patient all of you, and I will tell you about these crooked things one by one, by and by.

New use for Jacob's Ladder.

A Welsh clergyman, invited to assist in the ordination of a minister in some part of England, was appointed to deliver the address to the church and congregation, and, having been informed that their previous minister had suffered much from pecuniary embarrassment, although the church was fully able to support him comfortably, he took the following singular method of administering reproof. In his address to the church he remarked:

You have been praying, no doubt, that God would send you a man after His own heart to be your pastor. You have done well. God, we hope, has heard your prayer, and given you such a minister as he approves, who will go in and out before you, and feed your souls with the bread of life. But now you have prayed for a minister, and God has given you one to your mind, you have something more to do; you must take care of him, and, in order to his being happy among you, I have been thinking you have need to pray again. "Pray again? Pray again? What should we pray again for?" Well, I think you have need to pray again. "But for what?" Why, I tell you. Pray that God would put Jacob's ladder down to the earth again. "Jacob's ladder! Jacob's ladder. What has Jacob's ladder to do with our minister?" Why, I think if God would put Jacob's ladder down, that your minister could go up into heaven on the Sabbath evening after preaching, and remain there all the week, then he could come down every Sabbath morning so spiritually minded, and so full of heaven, that he would preach to you almost like an angel. "O, yes, that may be all very well, and, if it were possible, we should like it; but then we need our minister with us during the week to attend prayer-meetings, visit the sick, hear experience, give advice, etc., and, therefore, must have him always with us; we want the whole of his time and attention." That may be, and I will admit the necessity of his daily attention to your concerns; but then you will remember that if he remains here, he must have bread and cheese, and I have been told that your former minister was often wanting the common necessities of life, when many of you can enjoy its luxuries; and, therefore, I thought if God would put Jacob's ladder down, your present minister might preach to you on the Sabbath, and, by going up into heaven after the services of the day, save you the painful trouble of supporting him.—W. & R.

The penny a week.

It is said that in England the Methodist church raises its large amounts of missionary and other moneys by securing a small sum each week from each member. As illustrative of the importance which the English preachers attach to the rule of paying weekly, and of their tenacity in insisting upon its observance, Bishop Ames, at the late session of the Genevee Conference, mentioned the case of a chairman of one of the London districts who was accustomed to close all his meetings with the expression: "Now, brethren remember—Justification, Sanctification and the Penny a Week."

A Spiritualist congregation in Boston, on a recent Sabbath evening, opened their services with a direct and most revolting prayer to the Devil! The prayer, as reported in the *Banner of Light*, began thus:—"O Lucifer! thou son of the morning, who fell from thy high estate, and whom mortals are prone to call the embodiment of evil, we lift up our voices unto thee." It ended thus:—"O Satan! we will subdue thee with our love, and thou wilt yet kneel humbly with us at the throne of God." These are not the worst parts of the prayer, and the sermon is said to have been even more blasphemous still.