

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Sitting on the shore.

The tide has ebb'd away:
No more wild dashings 'gainst the adamant rocks,
Nor swayings amidst sea-weed false that mocks
The hues of garden gay;
No laugh of little wavelets at their play;
No lucid pools reflecting heaven's clear brow:
Both storm and calm alike are ended now.

The rocks sit gray and lone;
The shifting sand is spread so smooth and dry,
That not a tide might ever have swept by,
Stirring it with rude moan;
Only some weedy fragments idly thrown
To rot beneath the sky, tell what has been;
But Desolation's self has grown serene.

After the mountains rise,
And the broad estuary widens out,
All sunshine; wheeling round and round about
Seaward, a white bird flies;
A bird? Nay, seems it rather in these eyes
A spirit, o'er Eternity's dim sea [be.]
Calling:—"Come thou where all we glad souls

O life! O silent shore!
Where we sit patient; O great sea beyond!
To which we turn with solemn hope and fond,
But sorrowful no more;
But little while, and then we too shall soar
Like white-winged sea-birds in the Infinite Deep;
Till then, thou, Father, wilt our spirits keep.
—Miss Mulock.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

"It is Christ that died."

ROMANS VII. 34.

A SERMON BY REV. WM. HALL,

(Continued.)

And when you come to die, my fellow sinners, when you are about to pass out of time into eternity, when busy meddling memory, alas, too faithful to its trust, brings the past to view, and when the thickening shadows of eternity are settling down on your souls, if you have not a hope in Jesus at that awful hour, you will feel then, my fellow sinners, and it will plant thorns in your dying pillow; and when you look on that moral waste along which you have passed, and which no flower of hope has ever bloomed, your souls will be filled with unutterable anguish, whilst you will feel the fires of hell kindling within you. *We knew our duty, and did it not, God called and we did not hear.* He stretched out his hands, and we did not regard, therefore he will laugh at our calamity, and mock when our fear cometh, "When your fear cometh—as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, and I will not answer, they shall seek me early, and they shall not find me, for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." And when you lie down amidst the torments of the damned, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched, and when you look across that gulf which will separate the righteous from the wicked, and hear through the open gates of heaven, the melody of Angels, and redeemed spirits, and behold afar off the white-robed priesthood of the eternal palace, you will feel then, and it will give to your misery a greater intensity: "We might have been among yonder shining throng, we might have united in the song of the redeemed, we might have been casting our crowns at the feet of Jesus, and with the palm branches of victory, have sat down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. *We knew our duty and did it not, we neglected the great salvation.*" And when you weep and wail in that lost world without weeping and wailing yourselves to rest, when you toss yourselves on the fiery billows which crest the wrathful lake of perdition—the spirits sorest anguish will receive a greater torment, from the remembrance that they despised the

overtures of mercy, and trampling under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant, *forced your passage to the flames.*

And my fellow Christians, as you look forward to the commemoration, of the death of Christ, on that occasion let me direct your minds to the great truth, "*It is Christ that died.*" Let your holiest thoughts cluster around the cross. Let Christ be your light in darkness, as he will be your life in death, your boast in time, your bliss in eternity. Eternity too short to speak his praise, or fathom his profound love to man, to man of men the meaneast, e'en to me, *my sacrifice, my God, what things are these, and when the storms of life are raging around you, pillowed on the bosom of Omnipotence, and reposing beneath the shield of his might, derive consolation from the thought, that because he not only died but lives, ye shall live also.*

And as the bird of Heaven, when the storm rages round some Alpine summit, plumes his wings for a loftier flight, and floating on the azure sky, looks with undazzled eye upon the noonday brightness of the sun, and beholds the storm careering beneath his feet; so the tempest-tossed Christian, when the trials of life are assailing him, plumes the wings of faith, to take a loftier flight heavenward, and reposing beneath the everlasting arms of Jehovah, gazes by the eye of faith, undimmed by the corruptions of this world, on the glories of the Sun of righteousness, and sees the storm raging far beneath.

Jesus knows thy silent weeping,
When before his throne ye bow
Never, never, is he sleeping,
Where he reigns in glory now.
If the world be dark before thee,
If its billows rolling o'er thee,
All thy soul with terror fill,
Hear him saying, *Peace, be still.*

Christian Symmetry. Religious Portraits.

Christianity, as it shines upon the pages of the Bible, is a perfect system. This is illustrated in the life and character of the Saviour! In Him no one excellence is seen standing out in undue prominence, or to the exclusion of some other. In Him was a perfect whole. All beauty, all worth, all excellencies are blended together in his character; and the more we are impressed with its unity. But, in many of his professed disciples, there is a sad deficiency of this feature. In the great majority, you will see some one or more of the Christian's traits, and be at the same time struck with the palpable absence of others. In some respects they seem to be very religious; but in other respects they are very irreligious. Grace seems to have been to work on some parts of their nature; but on other parts of it there is seen no signs of its operation. They are better persons as it regards some things; but with regard to others, there is no improvement. The following portraits of some characters will illustrate the foregoing remarks:

1. Here is a disciple who seems to be devotional, converses well on the subject of religion, and prays well; but to all around him he is evidently avaricious. He is so eager to get rich, that he will grind the face of the poor. Of him the world scornfully say—He may be a Christian, but he is a very grasping one.
2. Here is another who is liberal; he willingly and cheerfully honours the Lord with his substance; but he does his business loosely, and often fails to fulfil his word. Of him the keen-eyed world sarcastically say—He may have piety, but he is not honest. He may render unto God the things that are God's, but he does not render unto man the things that are man's.
3. Here is a third, who is a model of integrity, diligence, and uprightness; but there is one serious blot on his escutcheon—he is proud, obstinate, and self-willed. Of him, his neighbours say—He may be a Christian, but he is a very ill-natured, crabbed, churlish one.
4. Another is meek, humble, and unassuming; but in his Christian character there is one glaring inconsistency, on which, like the falling star, the green-eyed world fix their attention, and make the occasion of stumbling; both in worldly and religious matters, he is exceedingly indolent.
5. Another, in all his relations, is active and persevering; but there is one hurtful drawback—he has an unamiable temper and an ungovernable tongue. He a Christian? say some; why, he is a tyrant in his household, and over these under him!
6. In striking contrast with the one just described, is another, who is amiable and gentle; but there is some dereliction that greatly lessens his influence—he is inclined to be light and

trifling in his conversation. His deficiency in gravity renders him powerless in religion.

7. One more portrait will finish our gallery. One who professes a strong attachment to the cause of God, and to his brethren. Who can be fluent on the blessings and advantages of religion; but his whole love to it is only "in word and in tongue," he will not bear burdens, nor make sacrifices to help the Church, nor ease a brother. The world say of such—He says, but does not. They do not believe him sincere; and however highly and truthfully he may recommend religion, it does no good, because his actions belie his words. Reader, which portrait is yours?—*Intelligencer.*

Rail and Telegraph to Ephesus.

Says an exchange: "How opposite to all our ideas of Ephesus, is the fact that a railroad and a telegraph are in employ in that place. At the completion of the railway connection with Smyrna, recently, there were speeches and feasting, mid-day prayers and solemn ceremonies. In the land of the Seven Churches, where the great Apostle preached the gospel, the prophecy of Isaiah is having literal fulfilment; the valleys are exalted, and the mountains and hills brought low, for a return to those desolate lands, of the Christianity which civilizes, reforms and restores. At the time of mid-day prayer, a telegram was sent from Ephesus to Constantinople, announcing to the Sultan that the line was opened."

While the boastful artificers of old lie silent around Damascus, the silversmith of Ephesus, and the Christians of Sardis and their brethren, wait in peace the summons to "walk with me in white robes," the steadfast advance of art and civilization, fostered by the religion of the despised Nazarene, is filling valleys, and levelling mountains, annihilating space and hastening the day when the men of America will speak with the men of Jerusalem, in one moment of time, in one common language, the language of a universal civilization, and universal Christianity.

Could the dead dust of Ephesus awake to life and behold the wonders of that day, what astonishment would fill the souls of the long sleepers! The dust is not alone of the great men in profane history, but it is eminently sacred in the eyes of the Christian. Mary, the Virgin mother, doubtless was buried here, and her dust went here to the common earth, to await the resurrection of which her Son was the first fruit. St. John the beloved disciple, having seen from the rocky hill of Patmos the glory of his Master's House, from which he, the well-beloved and most impatient, was longest of all the disciples kept away, received at length in Ephesus the joyful answer to his prayer, "Come quickly, Lord," and shook off here the dust of his long pilgrimage. Timothy, the friend of St. Paul, and first bishop of the Church in Ephesus, died here, as seems to be probable, and was buried in this soil. Here Onesiphorus, and Priscilla and Aquilla, and others who have come down to long memory and affection as those who ministered to the weariness and sufferings of the great Apostle, lived and doubtless died, and over their dust the modern steam car thunders by the ruins of the theatre in which St. Paul was accused by the people, and the silent wire of the telegraph, the work of the American Morse—modern Christian of a land then lying unknown beyond the pillars of Hercules—that wire bears to far Byzantium the lightning intelligence that the followers of Mohammed are at prayer in their mosque on the plains of Ayaslook, "City of the Moon." Diana of the Ephesians has regained the possession of her desolated city, but the railway and the telegraph wire will be the advance couriers of the returning faith of Mary and John, and Paul and Timothy.

Prayer-Meetings.

HOW TO MAKE THEM INTERESTING.

It is fatal to make a prayer-meeting stereotyped, and there is no danger that is greater. Can't you sometimes have something new sung? Can't you get this or that diffident young man to come in and say a few words? Can't you get that other man, who never speaks, to open his mouth? You must go to them alone before the meeting, and speak encouragingly to them. Don't scare them by making them think they must make a great speech. Go to your meeting hopeful—I mean, really believing Christ, when he promises to be in the midst of the two or three who gather in his name. You may feel, perhaps, that you are cold, and others are cold. But there certainly will be one there—Christ—who is not cold. Don't always be harping on one string, either in your prayers, or in your exhortations. Keep the wheel out of the old, deep rut. Some are always dwelling upon a revival—a revival—as if there was nothing done, or to be prayed for but this; whereas there is the spirituality of the church; there is

the word, the seed sown; there is the Sabbath school; there is the liberality of the people of God; there is the soil preparing, and to be prepared, for the seed of the word, and all these belong to the prayer-meeting.

Don't scold. It will do no good. Those present know they don't deserve it, and the absent don't hear it. The prayer-meeting is not the place to let off spiritual dyspepsia. Don't whip your pastor with your prayers. His heart is heavy enough; but he knows it is his duty to keep his heart-aches to himself, and to be outwardly cheerful, at least. He wants, and needs your earnest prayers, but don't take him up as you would a frosty iron, and drop him as if you feel the frost.

Don't teach false theology. You sometimes hear men say, "If now this church would only come down on her knees in the dust before God, a revival would follow!" Don't you know that if she should thus come down, the revival is already there!—*John Todd, D. D., in Congregationalist.*

The four Gospels.

ADDRESS OF REV. THOMAS ARMITAGE, D.D.,
President of the American Bible Union, at its Anniversary, October 29, 1862, on the Presentation of the First Copy of the Four Gospels from the Final Committee.

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE UNION.—God is the one infinite fact. Next to Jehovah himself, the grandest fact in the universe is the little book which I hold in my right hand: the four Gospels written concerning his Son. Envy not the patriarch Noah as he stood on the new-found mountain, looking back upon the last page in the history of the old world and gazing upon the opening volume of the new. It is your privilege to stand upon this holy mount of New Testament truth, and at one sweep of the vision to contemplate "the law and the prophets," "preparing the way of the Lord," and the more glorious oracles which should follow in its train. The Old and New Testaments are like the cherubim, face to face, overshadowing and gazing down intently upon the ark, which ark is Christ. From the dateless reachings of the eternal past, and the unbosomed fullness of the viewless future, God pours forth the thoughts and feelings of his heart to this grand centre, until the God-spel—the good history—is traced from the manger in the stable to the throne in the skies, and the good news is sounded to all the dwellers in heaven above and on the earth beneath.

"The law and the prophets" were committed to the Hebrews, and were their peculiar property. The Epistles and the Apocalypse were addressed to the first Christian churches, and were their especial directory. But the four Gospels were emphatically the books of the people. Dr. Campbell says, "I look upon the language of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as better adapted to the readers for whose use the Gospels were at first composed, than the language of Plato or Demosthenes would have been." They were the earliest books that were publicly read in the Christian assemblies every Lord's day. Often the disciples met "in dens and caves of the earth," to read the wonderful contents of these sacred books, despite the malignity of their foes, who prohibited the publication of this series of sublime facts, recorded for every kindred, and people, and tongue. These tidings were first uttered in the warm breath of "him who spoke as never man spake," in the audience of the masses, "and the common people heard him gladly." The marvelous works which are recorded in these books were wrought upon, and for the people. Most of all, the mysterious sacrifice which he offered, and to which these Evangelists bear testimony, was for "the sins of the people." You see, then, that in one sense the very guilt of the common people creates a thirst in the popular heart for the writings of the four Evangelists, because they unseal to them the fountain of human redemption. In consequence of this and other vital facts, these books have exerted an influence unparalleled upon the principles, manners, and relations of our race. This is the electric spark which sends its thrill of vitality through the whole of the Bible from the beginning to the end. There is no book in existence like the Bible in this respect. Its magic charm enchants you on every page, because its magic name is graven there. Search every historian, from Herodotus down to Bancroft and Macaulay, and no one of them ever wrote such a sentence as this: "These things are written that ye might believe; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Yet this is the fervent *animus* which runs through the entire books of the Old and New Testaments. But the soul of that *animus* is found in the central fact about which all Scripture revolves in the writings of the Evangelists. Hence in the providence of God, it is a remarkable thing that the first translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular of any people has almost uniformly been the four Gospels. There is scarcely a variation from this rule in modern