

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Flowers for the Graves.

Yes, strew the graves with flowers! where sleep
The gentle, and the good: and let them bloom,
In richest beauty and luxuriance there;
Shedding sweet fragrance round the tomb.

Yes, strew the graves with flowers! Spring's
earliest flowers;
There scatter Summer's gems of fragrant breath;
Bring fading glories from Autumnal bowers,
To deck the narrow tenements of death.

Ay, wreath them round the white sepulchral
stone!
And spread them o'er the sod; beneath it lies
A precious seed, in faith securely sown;
A latent germ, which will in glory rise.

Bring the pure lily from the lake's calm breast;
Bring full blown roses from the parterre bowers;
With these, let graves of cherished friends be
drest,
To memory fragrant as the breath of flowers.

And let the dark green cypress wreath be laid,
On the tear-moistened mound of sacred earth;
For voices sweet are hushed! and forms which
graced
Glad, happy homes, are absent from the hearth.

But by its side, let fadeless amaranth twine;
And mourning hearts, with hopes immortal fill.
Though dust is heaped o'er the forsaken shrine,
The quenchless, vestal lamp is burning still.

Mother! young mother! deck with lilies pale
Thy sweet babes grave! to thee at even given;
Then gone at morn, as gentle dews exhale—
From the fair flowers, and pass away to heaven.

And thou lone, sad one fragrant tributes bring,
To wreath thy young bride's tomb! lavish them
here;
For what so loved thee, has but taken wing,
To fit its dwelling in a purer sphere.

Scatter fresh roses o'er the slumbers grave,
E'er while they last! ye broken sister band!
O'er nought but dust the whispering leaflets
wave:
Pure spirits wait you in "the better land."

Bring to the lowly couch sweet eglantine,
Where rests in peace the slumbering child of
song;
Who full asleep, inspired by hope sublime;
While round the spirit hallowed memories throng.

Oh, strew with flowers the Christian's peaceful
tomb,
Emblems of that blest faith, in which he died;
There they may well in richest beauty bloom;
For him who walks where crystal waters glide.

The soul has flown! but there will come a time,
An hour of heavenly joy and gladness; when—
The freed one from yon summer, glorious clime,
To his deserted home will come again.

When shall this be? When the torpedo chain,
From the grave dwellers shall be all unwound;
When the grim monarch, Death, shall cease to
reign;
In his own toils a powerless captive bound.

Garland with asopdel! the signal bright—
And glad of coming life; and let it bloom,
All brightly o'er the dust; until the light—
Of morn, shall pierce the darkness of the tomb.

Thousands who know no hope beyond the
grave,
Strew o'er their loved and lost, green leaves,
bright flowers:
Then let them ever in profusion wave,
When death is brightened by such hope—as ours.

From the warmed bosom of the earth they wake,
In vale, or mountain, in the garden bowers,
Of all things holy to the heart they speak!
Then strew the silent graves with flowers! fresh
flowers!

Ondow Aug. 11th.

DIFFICULTIES.—It is a common saying—
"difficulties show what a man is made of."
The saying is true and important. Not till
a man has been tried, can we know his
character, his abilities, or his worth. The
man who has had no encounter with diffi-
culties is a mere fair-weather voyager, whom
the smallest gale may frighten and compel to seek
the nearest haven of rest and security. The
school of difficulty is in truth the best school of
moral discipline. This encounter with difficulties
must make a man better, or it will show him his
weakness and his deficiencies. It is a test, and
the man must come out from it better or worse.
If beaten, he will learn his weakness and defi-
ciencies; if successful, he will learn the lesson
of "how to do and dare."

Select Sermon.

A Sermon.

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"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works, and thy labours, and thy patience, &c.—Rev. ii. 1-7.

I. The Head of the Church has a minute knowledge of all the services of His people. First: There is a distinguished labour. "I know thy works and thy labour." The church at Ephesus had been a working church. It had been operating on the surrounding regions of depravity, darkness, and death. In its early life it was eminently an aggressive church. For my own part, I would have Christ's Church as ambitious as Alexander. As he waved his battle-flag over a conquered world, so would I that the Church might unfurl the banner of a nobler conquest over every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue.

Second: There is distinguished patience. The "patience" is twice referred to. This patience may be understood as indicating long-suffering in relation to those by whom the saints in Ephesus were surrounded—long-suffering, both in waiting for the germination of the seed which they had sown in many tears, and in the meek endurance of fiery trials. God specially marked this excellence. This meekness of love was known to the Head of the Church; and this suffering in silence was as acceptable as a thousand songs. The point to be noted here is, that Christ is mindful not only of the outward manifestations of the spiritual life—such as many labours and many offerings—but also of the hidden graces which cluster round the heart. He sees not only the moral warrior brandishing his sword in the thickest of the battle, but also the wounded and suffering soldier, and sweetly says to such, "I know thy patience." We are too prone to attach high value exclusively to the conspicuous, the declarative, the many-tongued: we must indeed, prize these as necessary in the assertion and maintenance of great principles; but let us never forget that what garlands and diadems soever may adorn the heads of the great leaders in moral actions, there is a brilliant crown on the brow of holy, much-enduring, silent patience. It is often easier to fight than to be patient. This backwardness in having patience may be seen not only in the higher ranges of Christian life, but in the lower levels of philanthropic service. If it fall to your lot, for example, to sit through the cheerless day and the dreary night with a loved one who is in the grasp of a fell disease, many friends will offer to join you if, as they say they can be of any use: but what do they mean by being of "use"? O ten they mean more so long as they can be actively engaged; keep them in an excited state of action, and all will be well; but how few can quietly and reverently sit still, and watch in loving and hopeful patience the placid countenance of silent suffering! How few can tone themselves to the high strength of doing everything by doing nothing! Patience is undervalued by an excited world; but Jesus notes it in its long vigils, marks it trimming its dim lamp in the solemn midnight, and sweetly whispers His word of commendation, which is always invigorating as the breath of immortality.

Third: There is distinguished jealousy for the right. "Thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." It must ever be remembered that there is a spurious charity. It is morally impossible that Christians and anti-Christians can have any sympathetic fellowship. Can trumpet-blast be clearer than this? "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." The Head of the Church applauds the saints in Ephesus because they "could not bear them which are evil." There is, indeed, large scope for the exercise of Christian charity, and it

is sometimes difficult to determine where her loving streams shall pause; but there is a "hitherto" even to the tides of charity. Woe unto the Church when moral distinctions are lightly regarded. To confound light with darkness, sweetness with bitterness, is to mock the first principles of holy government, and to destroy for ever the possibility of holy brotherhood. While, therefore, we would not presumptuously ascend the judgment-seat, we believe it is impossible to burn in too deeply the line which separates the sympathy of compassion from the sympathy of complacency.

Fourth: There was distinguished persistence in the right course. "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted." In a church correctly described by such language there may have been extraordinary fortitude, and this fortitude has been attended with singular joyousness and cordiality. The eulogium might be read thus:—"I know thy labour and yet thou dost not labour; i. e., thou dost not make a labour of thy duties;" in their case duty was not a hard task-master. There was such a sunny joyousness and musical cordiality about these saints that they came to their work—work so hard—with the freshness of morning, and under their touch duty was transformed into privilege. There is a lesson here for Christian workers through all time. Some men have the most unhappy art of turning every service they render into hard toil. When work is done with the hand only, it is invariably attended with much constraint and difficulty; but when the heart is engaged, the circle of duty is run with a vigour that never wears and a gladness which never saddens. Not only so, the Ephesian saints eminently succeeded in uniting patience with perseverance. They were not only patient in suffering, but patient in labour. They did not expect the morning to be Spring and the evening to be Autumn, but, having due regard to the plan of Divine procedure, combined in wise proportions the excitement of war with the patience of hope. Among ministers in particular I have noticed two evils in the matter of exercising patience; some exercising it too little, and others exercising it too much. A young minister, fired with a heroic enthusiasm, expects to extinguish the devil and his angels in the first twelve months of his ministry; and because at the end of that period the devil and his angels are just as lively and prosperous as ever, he throws up his pastorate and seeks a new battle-ground. An old minister to whom the vision has long been closed and the testimony sealed, who has not a new idea to present, can keep his hold of the property as though he could convince the very powers of sin, and turn the very lamps into saints. Both err. There is something fundamentally wrong in the impetuosity as in the obstinacy. The Ephesians were right: they blended persistence with patience, and were extolled by Him who knew the hardest toil and exemplified the most unassuming endurance. The fundamental point is, that Christ knew all this. "I know thy works, and thy labours, and thy patience." "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him." Though our Head is in heaven, not a service rendered in His name escapes His benignant notice. There is not a toiler in the vineyard on whose bent form the Master looks not with approbation. He sees the sufferer also. All that He observes influences His mediation, so that in every age "He tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

Such is the opening of the latter. It opens as with the noise of many waters. Here is a very cataract of eulogium. The bounding waters flash back the light of yonder countenance, and the very spray dances into rainbows. I would fain linger here. There is a "nevertheless" before me which I would gladly escape; but duty calls for the unwelcome second point—viz. :—

2. That the Head of the Church marks every declension of piety—"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee; because thou hast left thy first love." Let me draw your special attention to the manner in which this "nevertheless" is introduced. In the first instance, Jesus acknowledges, with most ample commendation, all the good deeds which had been done by the Church. He gathers all the

bright and beautiful flowers of service and suffering, and having wreathed these into a garland, he places it upon the head of the Church, and then gently whispers, so low, methinks, that no enemy could overhear, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee." This method of reproof is eminently suggestive. It gives a lesson to parents. Would you be successful in reproofing your children? Let commendation precede rebuke; let your "nevertheless" be winged with love and hope, and it will fly to the farthest boundary of your child's intellectual and moral nature, and a thousand blessings will be shaken from those heavenly wings. It gives a lesson to pastors also. Our words of remonstrance or rebuke will be more successful as they are preceded by every acknowledgment which justice and generosity can suggest. When the Master is compelled, so to speak, to rebuke His Church, He proceeds as though He would gladly turn. The rebuke comes with a hesitation which did not mark the eulogy. He resorts to a negative form of statement—"Thou hast left thy first love." He charges His Church with a lowering of moral temperature; the ardour and brightness of early love have waned. Paul is clear enough in his statement to Timothy that part of a minister's duty is to "reprove." A difficult part for any man to undertake! A rebuke may be given with so rash and vengeful a tone as to create disgust and resentment in the offender; or it may be uttered with so grieved and trembling a love as will melt obduracy into penitence. Rebuke is to be distinguished from coarse and brutal scolding; it is not to be uttered with the frantic blare of trampled dignity, but with the solemn pathos of wounded affection. Jesus weeps even while He rebukes, and those sad tears carry the reproof word to the innermost fibres of the heart.

[Conclusion next week.]

The Mission of Baptists.

The following remarks from the pen of Dr. Williams deserve to be read by both Baptists and Pedobaptists. By doing so the former may learn more fully to appreciate their own principles, whilst the latter may perceive that it is not a mere notion which obliges Baptists to occupy the position they do. Prejudice and ignorance are the parents of error, and we are satisfied that many of those who cherish hostility towards us, do so because they have not seriously examined for themselves the position we occupy. Dr. Williams places the matter in a very clear light:

"What is, to use a favorite phrase of the age, the Mission of Baptists—their special duty, to which they are peculiarly called and specially adapted? It is, then, evidently, in the first place, and beyond all comparison with other and minor obligations, their duty to urge onwards, with all their fellow disciples of other Christian sects who 'hold the Head,' the universal proclamation of Christ crucified. This theme is the world's one hope, and heaven's one gift and one law for the salvation of the race. The peculiarities that divide us from our evangelical brethren are not to be made the whole of our gospel; our shibboleth is not to constitute our whole creed and decalogue. But, on the other hand, these conscientious differences from other evangelical bodies are not to be surrendered at the demand of a spurious liberalism. We value them, not because they were the doctrines and practices of our immediate fathers; or because they are the traditional heritage of our communion from past centuries; but we defend them, because we find them in Christ's Scriptures, and we believe that his infinite wisdom put them there, and that the deterioration of them will not be found practically harmless, or even safe. We hold not, as the chief and most prominent of these our sectarian badges, the mode of the ordinance, though we see in this, indeed, a beautiful expression of the spiritual death which the convert professes to die to his old idols, and of the everlasting allegiance which he avows through his new-found life to a risen Redeemer. But our chief burden of testimony respecting this initiatory rite, relates to the subject rather than to the mode of the ordinance. We deny