

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

THE TWO PILGRIMS.

"Brother, the year is gliding fast away,
One Christian pilgrim to another said;
A few more weeks, and it will pass for aye—
How quickly have its days and seasons fled?"
"True," his companion with a sigh replied,
"And it appears to me, on looking back,
That not one year in all my life besides
Has left so much of sorrow on its track."

"This year death stole my firstborn from my hearth,
Then I for weeks at his dark portal lay;
While outward trials thronged around my path,
Dread foes within have vexed me day by day."
"I know," his friend rejoined, "that you have met
Great troubles lately, and your heart is bowed;
But O! my brother, let us not forget
The 'silver lining' to each gloomy cloud."

"Your child is dead, but then your soul has cheer
In the sweet thought that she is with the Lord;
And in your sickness was not Jesus near?
Has he not spared your life—your health restored?
In all your trials God hath some wise end;
Strength and deliverance were by him bestowed.
Let us not fall when looking back, my friend,
To mark the countless mercies on our road."

"Jesus has trod before this thorny path;
'Tis ordered by our Father wise and fond;
And what are all earth's woes to him who hath
The hope of an eternal heaven beyond?"
"My fault," the other said, "with shame I see;
Your words, my brother, are both true and kind;
Pardon my murmurs, Lord, and give to me
A truly thankful and contented mind!"

THEODORA.

Religious.

PRAYER A POWER.

I stand by a photographer and see how, by a simple process, he secures the services of the sunlight as his limner, while he stands apart, measuring the seconds, and lets the unpaid agent do the work, noiselessly and with invisible pencil, sketching posture, form and feature with unimitable exactness. As I look on the finished picture I am filled with admiration of the mysterious achievement. But I am more deeply affected with wonder as I see a human being take the posture of devotion, and, by the intervention of no mechanism, by the aid of no chemicals or contrivances of art, but by looking at God and holding heart-communion with Him, receive upon his own moral nature, first the outlines of the Divine likeness, and, at every repetition of the process, additional lineaments of that likeness—the resemblance becoming daily more obvious. "With open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," the praying man is "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

I watch an operator in the telegraph office and see him, with little effort, send a message hundreds of miles, and then receive the answer, writing it as fast as it comes; and I stand in awe of the power thus made available for human benefit. But my awe is profounder as I observe a man speaking to God, holding converse with Him who presides over the universe, communicating heart-thought, and, as he knows by consciousness, receiving heart-thought in return. I understand that there is a line for the transmission of requests and responses, stretched, before science was born, not between different terrestrial points, but between earth and heaven, connecting man and God, the humblest home of piety and the Giver of all good.

Prayer is a marvellous privilege, for it is a marvellous power. Who knows the full measure of what it can accomplish?—W. & R.

A PRAYER IN THE COURT ROOM.

Prayer is rarely heard in our court rooms. The moral atmosphere that prevails in them is hardly favorable to a spirit of devotion. The following scene, therefore, may well have occasioned surprise, and will be long remembered by all who witnessed it. We find the sketch in one of our exchanges:

A most affecting scene occurred at the close of a late trial for murder. The prisoner came in a little paler than usual, but he was not cast down or disconcerted, and retained the remarkable serenity of coun-

tenance and composure of mind which have characterized him nearly all the time since the commencement of the trial. His father sat down beside him and took his hand, showing in that simple act the deep parental affection he felt for him. The judge upon his seat, the attorneys in their places, and the spectators, sat silently waiting the coming of the jury. The waiting was not long; the jury came in and took their seats with the dignity of men who felt the importance of the decision they had made, and their responsibility to their fellow-men, their country, and their God. The accused looked searchingly at each as they passed, as if he would read his fate in their countenances. The verdict was then read—"We, the jury, find the prisoner not guilty," &c. There was an impulse to applaud the verdict, but all eyes were turned toward the prisoner, and for a moment a silence like that of a grave prevailed.

Then followed a scene not often witnessed in a court room, and one which we have no words to describe as it occurred. The prisoner that was—a prisoner now no longer—fell upon his knees, and lifting his eyes toward heaven, uttered an earnest prayer of thanksgiving and praise to the God whose justice and mercy had been so wonderfully manifested in him. He thanked God that though he had often erred he had not been cast off, or forsaken of Him, or his fellow-men. He prayed for a blessing upon the court and jury who had tried him as by fire, and established his innocence before the world; for strength to do the will of his Father in all time to come, and for wisdom to train his little ones to virtue and truth.

The prayer was irresistibly eloquent, and all heads were bowed; tears fell, and sobs burst from men unused to weep, and when "Amen" was pronounced, "Amen" came back in response from every part of the room, and there were tears in every eye. All rose to their feet; the acquitted man advanced and took each jurymen by the hand with a fervent "God bless you! you have saved an innocent man from shame and disgrace; you have taken a foul stain from my name. God bless you!" And to the prosecutor, whose conduct in the case commands admiration from all for fairness and honesty, he gave a cordial "God bless you!" The old white-haired father, whose firm trust had supported the son in the dark hours of trial, now melted in tears of joy that his boy was acquitted of guilt and his own good name remained untarnished. The judge, wiping his eyes of the tears that had come unbidden, ordered the sheriff to adjourn the court. The congratulations of friends continued some time longer, and then he who came into court on Monday morning with the charge of a felon upon him, walked forth a free man.—*Id.*

A SHORT PATENT SERMON.

Old Lorenzo Dow was a sensible reformer. He is said to have shown his peculiar good sense, at one time, by preaching the following excellent words in behalf of the printing fraternity:—

"Perhaps it may not be amiss to remind you of the printer in my discourse. He is in a very disagreeable situation. He trusts everybody, he knows not whom. His money is scattered everywhere, and he scarcely knows where to look for it. His paper, his ink, his type, his journeymen, his labor, &c., must be punctually paid for. You, Mr.—, and you, Mr.—, and a hundred others I could name have taken his paper; and you, and your children, and your neighbors, have been improved by it. If you miss one paper, you think hard of the printer—you would rather go without your best meal than be deprived of your paper. Have you ever complied with the terms of your subscription? Have you ever taken pains to furnish the printer with his paper? Have you paid him for his type, his press, and his hands' work? If you have not, go and pay him. He needs the money."

Lorenzo must have known more of a newspaper publisher's trials than most people do, or he would never have put forth such truths as those.—*Christian Era.*

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY BURDEN.

Every soul has its own burden and knows its own trials. There are none without some burdens, and some seem to have all burdens. There are burdens on account of sin. Its past guilt presses on us heavily. Its remaining power in the heart is a great grief to the believer. He often mourns over his indwelling corruption. Then there is the burden of sorrow. Our days are full of trouble. We sustain losses that are very grievous to be borne—loss of reputation, of property, of health, of liberty, of friends, and, in times of persecution, of life. The heart is greatly burdened, also, on account of our friends who are unconverted. Paul heaviness and continual sorrow on this account, and every Christian has. Our children are out of the ark of safety. Our companions are without hope. Our parents are strangers to God. Our dearest friends are in the broad way to death. This must trouble the true believer, and it ought to burden us far more than it does. If we realized the worth of the soul, the peril it is in, the dishonor sin brings on God, the infinite price paid for redemption, the brief period in which redemption is possible, the power of prayer and effort to save the soul from death, and responsibility this devolves on us in reference to our unconverted friends, we should feel his burden too heavy for us to bear alone.

These are some of the burdens that oppress our hearts. What shall we do with them? Shall we sink down under them, and faint at the Lord's rebukes? This were unmanly and unchristian. * * * It is a kind of refined selfishness to fly from troubles and get away from our burdens. It once founded monasteries and made men anchorites and hermits. We must stand in our lot, and not basely desert when the battle waxed hottest, and the thunder peals the loudest. No, we must not run away like arrant cowards from our place in the lines. What then shall we do with our burdens? Cast them upon the Lord, come to him with your burdens of sin and sorrow and trouble of whatever kind, and cast them all upon him, and he will sustain you. He will not sustain the burden, but will enable you to sustain it. He may not lift it off, but he will lighten it. He will not let it crush you. When his purposes are accomplished he will remove it, or remove you from it. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he will sustain thee."—*Jour. & Mess.*

RELIGION PROFITABLE FOR THIS LIFE.

Wherever an intelligent piety takes root, social prosperity is sure to follow, and relapses into vice generally carry with them the ruin of personal character and social decline. An English magazine gives a very striking illustration of the influence of religion and ungodliness on two neighboring islands:

In the northern part of Holland the ocean, many centuries ago, forced its way on the land and formed a lake, which the Dutch call Zuyder Zee. In this small sea are two islands, whose history is of the most remarkable character, by the contrast they present. Their names are Marken and Schokland. The former is one of the most flourishing parts of the country; the other now a place where only the bird finds its resting-place in the ruins of houses once cheered by the voice of men and the labor of industry. Striking contrast! And when asked what fearful events have made that once gay and prosperous Schokland a bare and desolate place, our answer must be, it was not the power of the sea, nor winter storms, nor any disasters of any peculiar kind, which ruined this once flourishing population; but it is strong drink that has done its work in a slow, but no less real, process of decay. Drinking and drunkenness, the cause of a most distressing poverty, occasioned, year after year, a regularly returning famine, and fever of the most dangerous character. The ragged inhabitants spread

on the neighboring continent, and far into the country, and brought everywhere their poverty and infection. This continued for many years; and the fear and disgust of that disgraced race became everywhere so great that the case was brought before the Parliament, and a royal decree issued, stating that no more *stat money* should be given for defending the island against the power of the sea, but a sum of £2000 accorded to it and divided among the inhabitants, who were to be separated and transported to distant parts of the country; so that, by incorporation and intermixture, their corruption might cease to be a plague for the whole population.

And now, how shall we account for the prosperity of the other island—for the healthiness, cleanliness, and happy homes of its population? They are a remarkable reproduction of the sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, walking in all the commandments and following the example of their fathers. Their strong and broad-shouldered men, their fine-looking, blue-eyed girls, are yet the purest type of the first inhabitants of Holland; though tempted by a wet ground, by an unhealthy climate, by daily visits paid to great towns, were they sell their fish, this fishing people—though tempted in all manners as those of Schokland were—have never allowed intoxicating drinks to enter their island, and abhor their use with religious fear. True to a man to the Gospel of Christ, since the first appearance of the Reformation they have been friends and readers of the Bible, and unwilling to know anything besides its commandments. They have been, for centuries past, sober, well-instructed, pious people, where a happy home is a rule, and no afflictions known save those which come from the hand of God. When we compare these two small islands, so near to each other in this small sea, perhaps we shall find nowhere on earth a more striking example of the truth of the words of Solomon: "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: but the wicked is driven away in his wickedness."

MY DREAM.—I was in heaven hastening with others to see the Lord Jesus. As I went, one and another where met whom I had known on earth, and rapturous greetings were exchanged. Some told me they were there through my instrumentality. My joy was so great that I awoke.

The memory of that joy is very sweet, and my purpose is to realize it. So I have consecrated myself to the work of saving souls, that I may meet many in glory of whose salvation I was instrumental. If in my dream I was so glad to meet such, I am sure my joy will be unspeakably great, if it be so that the shadow becomes the substance.

Fellow-Christians, let us labor not only to enter into that rest, but to take others with us. It will be a great thing to go to heaven, to be with Christ; but how jubilant will be our hearts if we enter heaven in glad company—go to the Lord Jesus with precious souls whom we have warned and won for him. Go work for this; pray for this; leave no means untried.

Do not go to heaven alone.

PEOPLE seem to think that love toward God must be something totally different in all kind from the love which we feel toward our fellow creatures—nay, as though it might exist without any feeling at all. If we believed that it ought to be the same feeling which is excited by a living friend upon earth, higher and purer, but not less real or warm, and if we tried our hearts, to see whether it is in us, by the same tests, there would be less self-deception on this point; and we should be more easily convinced that we must be wholly destitute of that of which we can show no lively token.

In the face of the sun you may see God's beauty; in the fire you may feel his heart warming; in the water his gentleness to refresh you; it is the dew of heaven that makes your field give you bread.