

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The Garnered Year.

Another year has gone—
Gone to join the ranks that stand
Motionless in the silent land,
Dim caryatides that bear
On their prone heads the weight of care,
The burden of the vanished time,
The noble purpose and the baffled scheme,
The good man's deeds, the visionary's dream,
The victor's wreath, the martyr's bloody cross,
The stake of all most dear, the gain, the loss;
Loss of our loved ones vanished from our side,
Gain through eternity that thus they died—
O loss unspeakable! O gain sublime!
Years that stand shrouded in the mantle drawn
To hide their faces, till the glorious dawn
Of God's effulgent light to make all clear,
Reveal the mystery of each patient year,
And they shall lift their heads and say,
"Lord, here we stand."

The Reverie of the Bells on New Year's Eve.

FIRST BELL.

Should I mourn that the year is gone,
With its sunshine and its showers—
Its sweet spring leaves, its autumn fruit,
And its fragrant summer flowers?

SECOND BELL.

Brother, oh not for these I care,
For all these next year will be as fair!
But I grieve for those who cannot return,
The churchyard dead of this year I mourn.

THIRD BELL.

Oh, not for them, the next bell said,
Sweet, sweet is the rest of the holy dead;
I grieve for the dear ones left on earth,
As they gather now round the Christmas hearth.

FOURTH BELL.

I, said the Fourth Bell, grieve to know
The varied ills in this vale of woe,
For the sick on the couch of weary pain,
For the poor man's want and prisoner's chain.

LAST BELL.

The Last Bell sigh'd—There's One on high,
Who hears every spirit's broken sigh;
I mourn for those who from him depart,
Who refuse the balm for the broken heart.

Family Herald.

Religious.

The End of the Year.

BY MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

DECEMBER is always a sad month. Death, however we may divest it of its more glaring terrors, is a thing to make us quiet and thoughtful, and to clothe the landscape of our life in sombre hues. And there is so much of dying now. The flowers—all that is left of them—are dying silently, and failing for their rest on the soddened ground.—The leaves are dropping one by one as silently as we drop, when our end comes, unnoticed, mutely, and for ever. And the year is dying. It has well nigh lived its life—its life of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow, of ease and pain, of rest and work. It is departing, as its fellows have all done before it, leaving us only a new weight of responsibility, and its memories, to help us in the future. It is like parting with a dear old friend every time the year leaves us, albeit we appear so glad to exchange it for the one that is fresh and new, and as yet all untried. For we have had happy days in this old year, dear friends, have we not? days in which the cup of blessing has seemed to run over, and a Father's presence and a Saviour's smile have gladdened our hearts and filled the hours with sunshine. Not all sweetness (as becomes a true friend) has the old year brought us. It had its deep sorrows, and its darkened days. There have been times when we have been obliged to cast ourselves down in brokenness of heart, and say, "No sorrow is like unto my sorrow"—days when the fountain of joy has seemed fully spent, and only the bitterness of the "waters of Marah" has met our parched lips. But then, we have not been left to mourn alone with our unutterable grief. The Comforter has stood by with the cup of healing

in his hand. We have sat beneath his shadow with great delight, and his fruit has been sweet to our taste. It is true that we have come up from the wilderness, but it has been leaning on the Beloved.

And the old year has taught us some good lessons. Joy and sorrow, summer and winter, have been our teachers. We may have been over slow to learn, but some things which we have conned over in the hard school of experience must have sunk into our hearts, and will remain with us, howsoever rapidly the waters of future years roll over them. Every year brings its lessons. It is our own fault if we have not this year learnt at least some, if we do not now know more than we did of our own sinfulness and weakness, and of the boundless love and kindness of our all-pitiful Father in heaven.

But the end of the year may well be sorrowful, because of our many shortcomings and great wrong-doings. We have not done what we might have done. Opportunities have come, power has been given; God has plainly said, "Go work to-day in my vineyard," and we have turned back in idleness and irresolution, speaking no word, putting not our hand to the work which has waited for us, seeking not to do the good which the Father would have us. So we must have some sorrow at the close of the year, and not altogether undeserved, seeing that sorrow follows sin and neglect of duty so surely.

We may have left some treasures by the road-side of the past year over whose loss we mourn. Some dear companion whose feet have with ours trodden the steep hill-side and the rugged road, has fallen asleep in Jesus. And now we have to go alone, and uncheered by the voices that used to bid us God speed, and sing the home songs with us.

But the end of the year is a time of gladness, because of the Christmas festivities. The time when families unite, and parted friends meet and enjoy old pleasures once again, may well be anticipated with delight and looked back upon with gratitude. It is such gladness that amid the partings, and absences, and trials of love, to which this life is subjected, there are some bright spots toward which our weary eyes turn wistfully, and in which we may find amends for our grief. And such bright spots are the Christ-masses of our lives, the time of gaiety, and mirth, and music, of love, and kindness, and charity, dear old time of peace on earth and good-will to man; the time when we forgive our fellows all their little sins against us, when we take the hands that have been long estranged, the hearts that have been divided, may be united and beat happily again. Moreover, it is very meet that Christmas should be a happy time, because we keep it as the anniversary of the day on which salvation came unto us. One thing is worth considering; it is not yet quite the end of the year, there yet remain some days on which we may strive to put right, as leave some things that are wrong; if we have any harsh or unkind thoughts toward a brother, we may now go to him and get forgiven, and be received back to his heart.

We are in time for the new year, we may go forth to meet it gladly and trustfully, resolving to do better than we have done before. But not in our own strength, otherwise we shall do just the same as we have already done; we shall fall as we have fallen, and the good that we might do will be left undone still. After all, the years of our lives tell a sad story; we might not hope to get the "Well done" at all, unless we heard it, not because of our deserts, but because of the love of the Saviour. It shall be a glad fading away of the old year, and a glad beginning of the new, if He who is the Bright and Morning Star will smile upon us blessing and forgivingly.

Ecclesiastical Progress.

People who are old enough to look back fifty years, are able to compare things as they then existed and things as they exist now, and doing so, they will, in many respects, see the immense superiority of our own days. The difference extends to everything material, but at present we fix our attention upon church and chapel architecture. In this matter Scotland is pre-eminently an example to

the whole of Christendom. When Dr. Chalmers settled in Glasgow, he startled the city magistrates by declaring that they required ten more churches to meet the necessities of the population. They thought the great philanthropist a dreamer; but had he said thirty instead of ten, he would still have been within the limits of the necessity. This fact is clearly shown by the actual numbers of ecclesiastical buildings in the city of Glasgow.—The Church of Scotland, the Free Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and all the minor bodies, have been for a long period adding edifices to edifices, and still the provision comes short of what would be the necessity were the people once turned to God.

Dr. Chalmers, animated by a noble zeal for the good of his country the salvation of man, and the glory of Christ, exerted his powerful influence and his matchless eloquence to the uttermost to promote the erection of new churches in connection with the Establishment, and the result was the rearing of no fewer than 150 edifices, an achievement unparalleled in the history of the Christian Church. But, having accomplished this great work, he found that he had exhausted his strength and his resources, and we observe in his Correspondence a statement to the effect that he intended to desist from any further effort. Shortly after this came the great conflict with the Government on the subject of patronage, which issued in the memorable and glorious Disruption, and in the foundation of that incomparable community, the Free Church. The consciences of that remarkable people having been fairly roused and imported into the enterprise, church edifices, parsonages, and school-houses rose with a rapidity that filled the world with amazement. Within a brief period, the Free Church actually raised the marvellous sum of £5,000,000. Nothing like this has been heard of since the world began. By means of the Disruption the Established Church may be said to have doubled, if not trebled, itself in moral power and usefulness. Every lover of Zion throughout the world may justly exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

Although Scotland, from unparalleled circumstances, has completely outstripped England in the work of church-building, yet even there great things have been done, and are being done at the present hour. Both Churchmen and Dissenters have begirded themselves for vigorous labour. While societies are performing great and glorious things, numbers of individuals, both Churchmen and Dissenters, are doing themselves and their religion infinite honour by the zeal and the liberality which they are displaying in the cause of Christ. The Dissenters led the way, but Churchmen were not slow to follow. We may point to Liverpool for an illustration of individual action among Churchmen. Among the new Churches, the construction of which has been undertaken at the sole expense of private individuals, are the following:—

Mr. Thomas D. Anderson commenced, about two months since, a church in Liverpool, at his sole expense. The cost will be between £8,000 and £10,000.

Mr. J. P. Malthus has begun a church at Bootle, at the request of a pious daughter, lately deceased, the cost of which will scarcely be less than £8,000. For this church the Earl of Derby has kindly given the land.

Mr. William Peck is about to erect a church at his sole expense, in the district of St. John the Baptist. The cost will be from £5,000 to £6,000, exclusive of the land, which will increase the amount by at least £1,800.

Mr. James Tyrer, a Liverpool merchant, has already nearly finished, at his own expense, a handsome church near the Stratford Railway Station, for the benefit of the railway porters and servants. The cost of the whole, including land, church, endowment, parsonage-house, and schools, will amount to at least £12,000.

Mr. W. H. Preston, late Mayor of Liverpool, and at present High Sheriff of the county, is about to build a handsome church, at his own expense, in one of the crowded districts of Liverpool.

This is as it should be; these gentlemen deserve the utmost credit for their zeal and liberality. The good will not be confined to the localities in which they have severally sought to benefit the people by the establish-

ment of a ministration of the Gospel! their example will prove contagious, leading to further efforts in the same quarter, and to imitations elsewhere.

These things suggest the beautiful example recorded in Scripture of Him concerning whom the Jews said, "He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." This is the only act of the kind of which we read in the Bible, and it is handed down to all coming time to the honour of the excellent Gentle. Have we not in England thousands, and thousands more, Churchmen and Dissenters, professing faith in the Gospel of Christ, and a concern for His glory, each of whom is able, without feeling it a burden, to build a house of prayer? Can those gentlemen whom God has made the stewards of His bounty in any other way expend it more calculated, in life and in death, to administer to them equal consolation? "We speak as unto wise men; let them judge what we say."

How to cripple a Church.

In contests with the enemy, we always rejoice when we have crippled him, for then the prospect of an ultimate triumph in his complete overthrow is brightened.

Satan seeks the ruin of the church, and that, too, by first crippling her. Happily for him, and as a means wisely adapted to the end, he enlists sometimes a part, and sometimes the whole, of the church itself with him in the work of destruction; and the danger of her final overthrow from her doings or her neglects, is none the less real, because, perhaps, she unwittingly does as she ought not to do, or neglects doing what she ought to do. The following considerations may throw some light on the way the church is sometimes crippled and ruined. We address church members:

1. Disregard of the duty of family prayer. This will bring a blight on you and through you on the whole church; and if your conscience should trouble you for your neglect, you can quiet it by referring to the press of business, or the misconduct of others.

2. Let your absence at covenant meeting be the general rule, and your presence the exception; and gradually the church will be shorn of her strength and lie down in pitiable weakness.

3. Discard the obligation to influence your children to attend public worship, and they will not be likely to be converted, nor the church built up by their becoming members of it.

4. In conversation with men whose discourse abounds with profanity, not only never rebuke them, but occasionally give your approbation by smiling.

5. Allow yourself the free use of low vulgar words, and your unconverted, intelligent associates will admit that possibly your religion may have salvation in it, but it certainly has not refinement.

6. Adopt the prevalent notion that religion is important only as it secures happiness here and hereafter, and that you are to pay no regard to the cultivation and enlargement of those faculties which distinguish man from the brute. Then many of the attractions and much of the power so necessary to the rebuilding of the church will be wanting, and she will of course be crippled.

7. Give but little attention to order and system in keeping the house of worship clean and warm. Whatever may be necessary to be done in these respects, leave to whoever may chance to do it, or leave it undone.

8. Let your listlessness indicate that you have but little confidence in wholeheartedness in efforts to convert your fellow men.—Your indifference will be readily seen by the unconverted, and regarded as a true index of your feelings in respect to the nature and necessity of religion, and they will be likely to act accordingly.

9. If your pastor should suggest the importance of more enterprise, tell him your Bible teaches, Job 23: 10, "Remove not the old landmarks."

It is thought that by attention to these ruins, "Ishabod" may be written on the church.—*Morning Star.*

SCANDAL, like the Nile, is fed by innumerable streams, but it is extremely difficult to trace it to its source.