

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Deserted House.

Life and thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving doors and windows wide;
Careless tenants they.

All within is dark as night;
In the windows is no light,
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door, the shutters close;
Or through the windows we shall see
The darkness and the vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

Come away; no more of mirth
Is here, or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away; for life and thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—bright—
A great and distant city—have
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

TENNYSON.

Religious.

Thirty years among the Zulus.

Rev. L. Grout presents the following statement of progress and success which he has been allowed to witness at his station among the Zulus, and of his feelings in view of his missionary life:

"Thirty years ago, this month, in company with five other missionaries, I left Boston, under instructions to go to the Zulus, of Southeastern Africa, explore, and if possible, establish a mission among them. Nothing was then known of the port of Natal, nor of the Zulus, except that they were a nation of inveterate heathen warriors. It was supposed that Natal was as unhealthy as other portions of the African coast. Indeed, everything about our mission was so unpromising that somebody called us fools, and on a wild goose chase; and, indeed, as I now look back to that time and our prospects, I confess that, as to myself, the only promising thing in the case was a burning Christian zeal in my heart, every moment fed by a belief which did not admit of doubt, that God had called me, fitted me, and sent me on that mission. At length, in 1845, eleven years after we had embarked in our work, I had the pleasure of baptizing my first convert. My present station is the fourth one I have selected and built upon, having been driven away from the other three.

"Now, at the end of thirty years, I find myself at a mission station which has seventy-three members in the church, who are part of a Sabbath congregation, numbering two hundred and fifty: one hundred and forty-five of whom are Sunday school scholars, and sixty-eight of whom are day school scholars. Our house of worship has been erected by the avails of sugar cane which the people have grown. It is built of burnt bricks, roofed with galvanized sheet iron, floored with boards, and the walls plastered with lime on the outside. It is seventy feet long and thirty-five wide.

"Our people have also erected forty upright houses of their own, some of them as large and as good as civilized people live in. If I went out thirty years ago on a wild goose chase, I have indeed caught my goose."

"How much did you take?"

Hearers of sermons often manifest extraordinary liberality; giving away without reserve all the parts of the sermon that apply specially to themselves. They are keen-sighted to see the adaption to others, but have no perception of their own needs. The *Christian Secretary* has a good illustration: "Haven't we had a fine sermon?" said a lady to another in our hearing, while passing out with the congregation at the close of a recent Sabbath service.

"Yes," replied the other, "I think we have; how much of it did you take?"

The sermon was really a good one, upon the duty and blessedness of self-sacrifice on behalf of others. The argument was well put, the diction was almost unexceptionable, and there were passages in the discourse of genuine eloquence. But the lady who so warmly praised it was fashionably dressed, accustomed to live quite at her ease, and, so far as we could learn, not particularly given to sacrifice her substance or her convenience for the benefit of any one else. Yet she was captivated with the sermon; it was a "fine" one she thought. She had been interested; she had been entertained; perhaps she would have said she had been edified; but, while we remained within hearing, she had not framed a reply to the question, "How much did you take of it?" We do not know that she replied at all.

Yet, after all, this is the test question, as to a true appreciation of a sermon. What avails it that we praise the discourse, while never taking it to the heart and the home for practice? The rhetoric, the illustrations, the elocution, all so "fine," may be as valueless and as vain to such a hearer as the spreading of so many peacocks' feathers. "Jael brought forth butter in a lordly dish;" but if the dish were all the attraction it might as well have been empty. But how often the sermon is eulogized and the preacher complimented, perhaps to his own hurt, and with no manner of profit to the hearer? So it was in Ezekiel's day, and so, very probably it will continue to be: "Lo thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear the words, but they do them not." "How much did you take of it?" is the question that remains after all the pleasant compliments.

A Stage-coach Dialogue.

Some twenty years ago, on one of those pleasant mornings peculiar to the autumn of New England, a stage-coach was making its usual trip through a region in the northern part of Massachusetts. It contained a variety of passengers, all or nearly all intelligent and respectable.

As the stage proceeded with but moderate speed through that hilly region, different persons in the company attempted to relieve the wearisomeness of travel by conversation. The common topics of the weather, the crops, the condition of the roads, and the aspect of the country, being despatched, the conversation turned on religion. But the ladies and gentlemen of the company appeared to be, for the most part, like Dr. Franklin, listeners rather than talkers; or perhaps individuals felt a delicacy in broaching opinions which might prove distasteful and obnoxious to their fellow-travellers.

The conversation seemed about to flag, when a well-dressed portly man of middle age, who proved to be a manufacturer from the state of Vermont, boldly presented himself as an advocate of universal salvation. Having evidently only that education which is almost universal in New England, he showed himself a person of more than average information and shrewdness. It is needless to reiterate the stale arguments and sophisms which he employed—arguments and sophisms which have been a thousand times stated and as often answered—all aiming to show, in the face of the divine testimony on the subject, that God will not finally punish the wicked. He talked with a glibness which evidenced that he was performing an habitual and easy part. Having finished his main declamation, he closed with a glowing descant on the gloominess of orthodoxy, and the benevolence of universalism.

He ceased. He had the field of argument to himself. The whole company, while evincing an interest in his harangue by careful listening, had not shown their interest in any more demonstrative manner. Some, in particular one or two ladies, responded each with one of those well-bred, dubious, non-committal smiles which may be construed either into dissent or approbation. Others intimated a negation to his argument by a doubtful shake and aversion of the head. These signs of feeling betokened a general sympathy with the evangelical

view of future rewards and punishments; yet no one evinced a disposition to take up the gauntlet which had been so confidently thrown down before them; and the speaker was full of self-complacency and conscious triumph.

Among the company was a young man who had shown the greatest interest in the conversation, but who had taken very little part in it. He had completed a course of study with a view to the ministry of an evangelical church; but there was nothing in his dress or in his words betokening the clerical character or any pretensions to it.

It may readily be believed that he felt a deep interest in the subject of the pending conversation, when it is stated that several years before he had been himself beset with grave and harassing doubts upon the question of future punishment; but by the blessing of God upon a careful reading of the New Testament in the Greek, accompanied with humble, earnest prayer, he had been fully recovered from their snare.

He determined on the present occasion to employ the Socratic or interrogative method of convicting his opponent of error. "You maintain, sir, that there is no hell, or no punishment of sin after death?" he inquired. "Yes; as you have heard." "But does not God punish the sinner?" "Undoubtedly he does." "How?" "He punishes him by sending troubles upon him in this life." "Is that all? Has the pious man no troubles? Is it not notorious, that often while the religious man is suffering every anxiety and every extremity of temporal affliction, his irreligious neighbor revels in worldly advantages and pleasures?" "Yes; but then the wicked man is punished, after a while." "How, if he continues in worldly prosperity to the end of his life, as many a wicked man does?" "Why, sir, when he does any thing wrong, he is punished for it; he feels remorse; that is the punishment—that is the hell that you orthodox talk so much about." "This remorse, this hell of course is suffered after the sin which it is sent to punish is committed, when he who commits it comes to a sense of his wrong?" "Certainly."

"Now then, sir, I beg your judgment on a case, not only such a one as might happen, but such as has actually happened a hundred times. A man lives for years in the indulgence of all manner of vices. He is a bad man, a bad neighbor, a bad citizen. He is dishonest in his dealings, a swearer, a profligate, keeps drunk the most of his time, and is a very demon in cruel treatment of his family. At last, having ruined himself and family, he closes his course by one grand debauch. Having made himself so drunk as to destroy all power of conscience without taking away the power of action, while in this condition he kills his wife and children, then sets fire to his house, himself, and is consumed with his family in the flames. Now, as the remorse for sin must necessarily be felt only after the act which occasions it has been committed and the subject of it is awakened to a sense of his wrong-doing, where is the punishment in this case; where is the remorse; where is the hell?"

The Universalist passed a moment thoughtfully, as if he would conceive some effectual reply; then impressed with the idea, from the silence and the aspect of the company, that they considered his theory demolished even by his own admissions, and becoming conscious of the fact that he could make no reasonable answer, he did what men commonly do, when suddenly and unexpectedly shown to be in the wrong: he flew into a passion. Suspecting, from some unknown cause, that his opponent was either a minister of the gospel or a theological student, he exclaimed, "I have no opinion of those men that go to Andover and study just to prepare themselves to puzzle honest people, and then go around preaching up the old orthodox doctrines that have been proved to be false long ago." Here the conversation ended.

Have you ever embraced, or been tempted to embrace the ensnaring doctrine of universal salvation? If so, fly from this refuge of liars. God, by his grace in Christ Jesus, will indeed save every one who repents, believes, and "breaks off his sins by righteousness." Dan. 4: 27. But know assuredly, that unless you renounce your sins, in short, unless you are a new creature in Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. 5: 17, your destiny is the blackness of

darkness for ever, Judge 13, and the pains of the second death, Rev. 20: 6.—*Am. Mess.*

The differences of the Evangelists.

BY REV. S. F. SMITH, D. D.

The accounts of the life of our Lord by the four evangelists differ in a very striking manner, one from another. They differ in length. Luke is much fuller than Mark; Matthew is more extended than John. They differ in arrangement. Occurrences are related by one evangelist in a different order from that in which they appear in another. They differ in style. Each has peculiarities distinguishing him from the rest. Mark uses a Greek word not used by the others; John doubles the "verily," the others do not. They differ in the facts of the narrative which each presents. Matthew exhibits one genealogical table of our Lord's human ancestry; Luke, another. John describes the circumstance of the woman taken in adultery, the healing of the man who was born blind, and the restoring of the dead Lazarus to life,—which the others omit. Matthew and Luke commend with the infancy of Jesus; Mark with His baptism and entrance on His public ministry; John touched neither. The first three evangelists narrate matters in the history of the last hours of Jesus which John disregards. Luke relates the history of the penitence of the thief on the cross. The rest make no mention of it. Matthew, Mark and Luke give but an indistinct account of the Holy Spirit, in only two or three passages; John fully determines His personality, and unfolds His wonderful and benignant character as the Holy Comforter, and reveals the fact, the time, the object, and the source of His mission. John describes Jesus Christ under the title of the "Word," who "was in the beginning with God and was God,"—enshrining in His person the Divine Essence,—as at once He that was "sent" and He that sent Him, as it is written, "He that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me"; or, as including in His mysterious nature the Divinity of the Father, the incomprehensible Deity—as it is said; "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The other evangelists reveal the Divine nature of Christ in less direct methods,—more in His works than in His words.

John narrates few events; he lays out his strength on the conversations of Christ. He debates with the Jews, His addresses to His disciples and His intercession with the Father. The miracle at Cana, the healing at Bethesda, the cure of the blind man, the raising of Lazarus, are the principal events which he records. But he gives more of the words of Jesus than all the other evangelists combined.

We admire this variety, because it gives us so much the more of the history of our adorable Saviour. The care of one makes up for the deficiencies of another. And, forming the four accounts into one harmony—each event and conversation being disposed in its order, according to the best light we have, a complete history is obtained. We bless God for the variety of mental constitution which has ensured to us this beautiful and satisfactory whole.

But the question still recurs.—To what cause are we to trace this remarkable variation in the four narrations? Does the various mental constitution of the narrators account for the difference? Did Matthew, as a result of his peculiar idiosyncrasy, enter so fully into details, and Mark, for a similar reason, rest only upon a few occurrences, like a bird glancing from perch to distant perch; and John, when an old man, draw up from the stores of a tortile memory—where he had cherished lovingly the words of Him on whose breast he leaned—the rich and comforting conversations of His Master, which had been his solace in persecution and his joy during a long life of labor and trial? And had John perused the manuscripts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and did he purpose mainly to fill up what was wanting in their accounts? An aged man, of keen discernment, he must have been, and possessed of wonderful powers of memory,—unless the Divine Spirit quickened in his soul by a special affluence the ability to recall long-past conversations.