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.

Your Mission.

If you cannot on the ocean
Sail among the swiftest fleet,
Rocking on the highest billows,
Laughing at the storms you meet;
You can stand among the sailors,
Anchor'd yet within the bay,
You can lend a hand to help them,
As they launch their boats away.

If you are too weak to journey
Up the mountain steep and high;
You can stand within the valley,
While the multitudes go by;
You can chant in happy measure,
As they slowly pass along,
Though they may forget the singer,
They will not forget the song.

If you have not gold and silver
Ever ready at command;
If you cannot t'wards the needy,
Reach an ever open hand;
You can visit the afflicted,
O'er the erring you can weep,
You can be a true disciple,
Sitting at the Saviour's feet.

If you cannot in the conflict
Prove yourself a soldier true;
If where fire and smoke are thickest,
There's no work for you to do;
When the battle field is silent,
You can go with careful tread,
You can bear away the wounded,
You can cover up the dead.

Do not then stand idly waiting
For some greater work to do;
Duty calls to present effort,
And a crown's laid up for you.
Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare,
If you want a field of labor,
You can find it anywhere.

Religious.

Erastianism.

Those of us who are old enough to remember the controversies which preceded the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland, a quarter of a century ago, have a lively recollection also of the frequent recurrence of the above word in the paper wars, and stirring speeches of the period. Charges of "Erastianism" came from North of Tweed against Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham, "Thick as leaves in Vallombrosa;" but not thick enough to frighten English statesmen into allowing good Dr. Chalmers and his brave clan to have full control of the emoluments of the Kirk, and its spiritual Government too. "The Disruption" consequently took place, Church Establishments received a "heavy blow, and great discouragement," and the Free Church, loosened from the shackles of State control, has done far more for the spiritual welfare of Scotland and the world in the short space of twenty-five years, than had been accomplished previously by Presbyterians in twelve times that period. With the settlement of the great question, the use of the term Erastianism has become much less frequent; but as it is still in use, and stands for important ideas in the region of Ecclesiastical things, we shall probably do some of our readers a good turn by briefly referring to its origin, and endeavouring to fix the bounds of its signification.

With the revival of the study of the classical languages, in the sixteenth century, there came in the practice of turning German and French proper names into their Greek or Latin equivalents. In the year 1523, there was born at Baden, in Switzerland, one Lieber, which means in German the same as David and Philemon, that is, the beloved; and when the youth, who was born Lieber and christened Thomas, came to man's estate he, following the pedantic custom of the times, turned Lieber into its Greek equivalent Erastus. He afterwards became Professor of Ethics at Basle; and then published a work called "Excommunication," in which he propounded the opinions that have given the word Erastianism to our Ecclesiastical dictionary. "He taught that the Church had no right to refuse participation of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, or other ordinances of the Gospel, to any one; that it had no right to inflict excommunication or any kind of censure, and that the punishment of all offences, religious as well as secular, should be left in the hands of the civil magistrate." We can easily see how displeasing these opinions would be both to the Roman Catholics and Reformers of the sixteenth century, and that their author, like the bat in the fable, would be disowned and denounced by both parties alike. To the clearer vision of our own calmer times Erastianism has its mixture of good and evil. So far as he protested against the church possessing any temporal power to reward and to punish, every believer in the entirely voluntary nature of religion will, of course, endorse his views; but so far as he taught that the magistrate is to regulate the doctrines and discipline of the Church of Christ, we utter our hearty *Non-content*," and probably Erastianism "pure and simple," is as much an anachronism among all classes of modern earnest thinkers as the cross-bows of Charles V. would be to General Peel.

As might be expected, there is a large leaven of what is called Erastianism in all established churches; but the name is misapplied to them inasmuch as the preponderance of the civil authority in the midst of them is a transference of the power of the Pope to the temporal prince, and not the result of the adoption of the views of the Swiss freethinker. The Queen of England, as "supreme head of the Church of England," is such by virtue of the maxim of Henry VIII.—"Every prince his own pope." So also such men as Dr. Arnold were wrongly termed Erastians for uttering the certainly untenable proposition that the English Church and the English realm are conterminous and identical; for they held that the members of both Houses of Parliament were as much members of the Church as the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, and therefore had as much right to legislate upon Ecclesiastical affairs as the members of a Baptist Church have to choose their deacons, or settle their pastor's salary. Dr. Arnold might have been better or worse, but he was not an Erastian;—neither do we know of any other leader of modern thought to whom the name will properly apply. What we voluntaries might term the evil side of Erastianism is now nearly obsolete—an extinct volcano. The good side of it, namely, that the church should be allowed no coercive power over consciences is happily becoming a "great fact," an axiom in modern philosophy and politics. Let it thoroughly prevail, and then the last cloud of the dark ages will have disappeared; then the grand conception of Cavour will be realized—"A Free Church in a Free State;" and then we shall be able to "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's."—*London Freeman.*

Mr. Spurgeon and his Church.

(*From London Correspondence of the Watchman & Reflector.*)

My first Sunday in London was passed in the church of Mr. Spurgeon. I found it easy to reach the Metropolitan Tabernacle as it is called. The London cabmen know where it is. Ask one to take you to the Elephant and Castle and he will reply, "Do you want to go to Spurgeon's?" I was quite fortunate in my "bus" on Sunday morning. I found in it a member of Mr. Spurgeon's church, who detected me as an American, passed me through the gates, and made me at home in the early prayer meeting.

The chapel is really an imposing affair. It is built of granite, with a massive portico, supported by six stone columns. The columns and the iron fence which guards the chapel were the gifts of friends. I know of no church in America, as to size and magnificence, which can compare with it. It cost with the land, £155,000. This great sum Mr. Spurgeon collected. He refused to preach in the chapel till it was free from debt. When its doors were thrown open for regular service not one dollar of debt remained on the property.

This church was founded in 1650; it has had a distinguished ministry. Rev. Dr. Gill the commentator, and Rev. Dr. Rippon, of poetic fame, with other eminent men have been its pastors. When Mr. Spurgeon became its pastor it was in a very low condition. He was pastor of a small country church. He had such a low estimate of his abilities that he refused to respond to the letter inviting him to preach in London. He returned the letter supposing it was not intended for him.

The chapel inside is fitted up on the cathedral pattern. The seats are dark, there are no carpets in the aisles, and few cushions in the pews. Besides the body of the church two immense galleries run the circuit clear round the church. Not less than five thousand persons can be comfortably seated. As the aisles and vacant places are always filled not less than a thousand more are always in attendance. Opposite the main entrance and in front of the galleries stands a platform, surrounded by a simple railing. There the marble baptistery is placed. The platform is about three times as large as the pulpit platform in Plymouth church. Gentlemen and ladies sit here to aid in the singing. Above this platform is a second one just above the first gallery, which is the preaching stand of the pastor. On it are a sofa and a plain table. The table is on the side. A rail runs round the edge of the upper platform, but no desk, table, cushion or curtain hides the great preacher from his audience. The rail keeps him from falling over. From all the seats of the chapel a view of the preacher can be had though all cannot see his face. Behind the sofa are seats elegantly fitted in the style of cathedral stalls. In those opening on the platform the elders and deacons sit surrounding the preacher. Behind these Mrs. Spurgeon and family have their seats.

In the rear of these seats are three elegantly fitted up rooms. The centre one is occupied by Mr. Spurgeon, those on the right and left by the elders and deacons. Through a passage way from this room Mr. S. comes on to the platform for service. So great is the crowd that tickets are issued to all who have seats in the chapel. These tickets represent the exact number of seats the person hires. If he hires six seats he has six tickets. These are good for six months, and he gives them to whom he will. Then the gates are opened, and all have access to every unoccupied seat. Long before this time, however, crowds throng the yard, and surge, and wait for a chance for a seat. The stampede is terrible when the gates are thrown open. A rush is made for every unoccupied spot, and when no more can be admitted the gates are closed on crowds often as large without as within.

At the exact time appointed Mr. Spurgeon walks in, attended by his elders and deacons. He would easily be known any where by his portraits. Short and stubby in person, with glossy black hair parted in the middle, with black frock coat, and the inevitable white cravat peculiar to the English clergyman. His general appearance would disappoint no one. He surveys for a moment the vast audience before him, steps to the front of the railing, and says, "Let us have a moment's prayer." His voice is full, sonorous and ringing. There is a cheery, merry sound in it, like a pealing bell, that arrests the attention and puts all in sympathy with the preacher. The first words he utters are full and manly, and run along through the arches and corridors touching the most distant ear. This in contrast with the indistinct mumbling mode of speaking here, is an element of Spurgeon's power over the masses. The prayer is short, joyous, and full of thankfulness. The hymn he reads through and then reads it verse by verse, as it is sung. The tunes to an American ear, are weird-like and unfamiliar. He reads a chapter on which he comments from twenty to thirty minutes. Three hymns are sung and prayers offered before the sermon. One side of a sheet of note paper contains the memorandum from which he preaches. His manner is inimitable, easy, colloquial and impressive; his matter evangelical in the highest degree; his voice, gestures and utterance superb. Men stand by hours in the aisles unwearied, and women hold children in their arms till the long service is ended. At the close no one stirs till the pastor has left the chapel, then the audience arise, with a deliberation strange to an American, and go out with a reluctance, as if they wanted something more.

The working power of this church is tremendous. It has a membership of 3,800.—A regular account is kept with each in a book. Six tickets are delivered to each member semi-annually, which they have to give up at each monthly communion. If they are not present at a communion their absence is marked. Three absences cause a visit from one of the elders. The regular communion is on the first Sabbath in each month, and then the chapel is full. Mr. Spurgeon believes weekly communions. About a thousand meet every Sunday night to commune, but no one is compelled to attend. The Sunday school is very large. It would be larger if there was room to contain it. It is a Baptist neighborhood where the chapel is. Out of 40,000 people it is estimated there are 30,000 Baptists. A Bible class of 200 young men is conducted by one of the elders. A lady's Bible class, one of the most astounding I ever saw, is conducted by a lady. With 900 on the rolls the attendance is 700. Mrs. Bartlett, the teacher commenced the class with three, and has run it up to its present gigantic size. Every imaginable form of mission work, in every imaginable place, is done by members of this church. Over six hundred young men are out every Sunday preaching out of doors, in halls, stations, and every place where they can get a hearing. Bible, tract and missionary work is carried on by regular system. Sixty churches are now supplied with pastors that have gone out from this church. The ninety-three students of the college are sent out as soon as they can talk. A small library is sent out with each man, for which he gives a receipt, and when he is called back he sends the books to another station and the man who receives them sends a receipt to Mr. Spurgeon. The college has 93 students and 243 night pupils. Five thousand pounds are required to carry on the college for a year Boxes are placed in the church for voluntary contributions to the college and the weekly offerings are seldom less than $250 in gold.—Every thing about this concern is immense. All the social and devotional meetings through the week are crowded. This, evening, while I write, fifty-three prayer meetings are to be held in different places, and they will all be crowded.

The secret of Mr. Spurgeon's power lies on the surface. He is a man of rare pulpit gifts; he has a rare memory; he is a hard student; he has unflinching faith in the Gospel; he knows nothing, as a preacher, but the cross; he is as simple-hearted as a child; he has a cheerful, merry, buoyant, manly spirit; he is a man of prayer and believes in it; his wit, fancy and buoyancy crop out every where; he never tires in his work; he unites the eloquence of Whitefield with the executive ability of Wesley.—*W. & R.*

A Picture of Somebody.

Mr. Coaxley is a peculiar man. It may, perhaps, be said that all men are peculiar. But Mr. Coaxley is *very* peculiar. He is a good man; every body that knows him says he is a good man—in his way. But then, if any one is good at all, it must be in his own way. Goodness is personal. A man cannot put on his neighbor's virtues as he would his cloak; for then his goodness would not be his own, but his neighbor's, Mr. Coaxley is kind, gentle, generous. He is devout and liberal. He pays his pew-rent, and gives to the poor; has family prayers; listens attentively to preaching, and speaks ill of no one; loves his pastor; reverences the deacons, and works in the Sunday School. But he has one fault—fortunate man, that he has no more—one fault or failing. He needs to be nursed like a sick child to keep him in tune.

He always thinks he is not appreciated. As long as the eyes of the people are on him, and he hears their words of approval, he will work like a hero. He will do, endure and sacrifice, if he is not overlooked. But if he believes himself forgotten, his energies whither even in the midst of his best endeavours, and the hands of his faith hang down, as if smitten with paralysis. He is one of those machines well made and well working, but which require more power to run than the running is worth.

His pastor must call often at *his* house; must confer confidentially with *him* on important matters; must tell him how much he thinks of *his* opinion, and of his aid; must be sure to shake hands, in a very hearty man-