

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### His Father is a King.

Take heed you treat him well; forget him not;  
Look not upon him with disdainful eyes;  
For though just now he seems of lowly lot,  
He is a Prince, believe me, in disguise.

His title is secure—it cannot fail;  
His realm is wide, and as a garden fair;  
The sweetest odors float on every gale,  
The brightest rivers flow and murmur there.

He does not seem of rank or wealth possessed—  
A poor, unlettered man, he meets you now;  
But soon a star will glitter on his breast,  
A golden crown will rest upon his brow.

He often walks among you; treat him well,  
This "beir apparent" in a beggar's guise,  
Lest, looking up, you meet displeasure fell  
Flashing upon you from his Father's eyes.

What though his garb is often poor and mean,  
He wears upon his hand a signet ring,  
And goes attended by a guard unseen—  
Fit guard for one whose Father is a King.

Oh! never let a look or thought of scorn  
Rise as you pass him on his toilsome way,  
But still bethink you of that glorious morn,  
When with the angels, and as fair as they.

By the great King of kings with honor named,  
Hearing the joyful "welcome" and "well done,"  
He shall look forth, through the wide heaven  
proclaimed,  
In royal robes, "bright shining as the sun."

## Religious.

### Dramatic Preaching.

No thoughtful man can doubt that a dramatic style prevails too extensively in the pulpit. Preaching ought, first of all, to win attention and interest hearers, and the best sermons, if they fail in this respect, are of little value. There ought to be more of dramatic preaching, such as is described in the following sketch of a collier's sermon:

Brethren, I am now going to show you how a poor sinner is saved by *grace*; and I am sure many of you have been so saved. Let me take the case of a miserable man in the pains of conviction. He is, we will suppose, down at the bottom of the pit of despair. Now let us ask him how he got there, and how he means to get up. Then leaning over the pulpit to the right hand, the preacher curved and hollowed his hand, and applying his mouth to it, spoke aloud this imaginary colloquy, as if from the surface down through the pit-shaft, after the manner of the "banksman" at the colliery:

"Hollo! hollo! who's down there?"  
"O, minister, a poor sinner; a miserable sinner."  
"How came you there, my poor brother? how came you there?"  
"My load of sin weighed me down, and I fell deeper and deeper."  
"O wretched man that you are; how do you mean to get up?"  
"I never shall get up. I am lost! lost forever! I've been trying ever so long to climb up by the side of the shaft, but I cannot; I fall down again."  
"You cannot succeed of yourself. I'll send you down the *rope of faith*. Lay hold of that, and you will be got out. Cling to it; cling to it; here it is!" (imitating the paying out of a rope.) "Now, then, it must be down to you. Lay hold of the only hope set before you. Have you got hold now?"  
"I'm so feeble I can hardly grasp it! but I think I have got a good grip now."  
"Then pull-a-boy, lads! Let us help this poor sinner up. O, how heavy he is. Why what have you got besides yourself hanging on to the rope?"  
"Only a few good works of my own."  
"Good works! good works! Throw them down. Down with them, or they'll break the rope."  
"Well, if I must I must, but sure they would do me some good."  
The preacher continued to represent the lifting, but suddenly stopped, as if his arms had received a check, exclaiming to the imaginary ascendant,—

"Why, what is the matter now? What are you struggling with?"  
"Doubts and fears, sir. I am afraid I cannot hold on."

"Lay firmer hold of the rope. Doubts and fears are nothing to strong faith. But what now? Trembling again? What is it now?"  
"A great fight of afflictions, master; and I cannot hold on."

"Hold on, sinner, hold on; you'll come out of the afflictions. But what is this? Shaking again? What can be the matter now?"  
"Strong temptation, master. O, I shall fall! I'm falling! O, help me! O, help me!"

"So we will. But what dreadful thing has happened now? The weight is *three times* as great. What a horrible noise. What have you got there?"  
"It's the devil himself has gripped me.— He is gripping me hard. O, minister! I'm lost! I'm lost!"

Hereupon the excitement in the congregation became intense. Women wept, men rose up, and the minister seizing his opportunity continued,—  
"Now, lads, let us all *pray* and pull together. This poor sinner is in great danger. But Satan cannot long buffet him. The great Captain is with us, and He is too strong for demon or devil!"

Straining at and lifting the imaginary load the preacher greatly excited himself as well as his hearers. Finally he appeared to bring the imperilled and hard-gripped penitent to the surface. Then with great effect, he uttered the words, "Lads, he's safe! he is saved! There he is! The *rope of faith* never broke yet, and I knew it would not break now."

"Be not forgetful to entertain Strangers."

One pleasant Sunday morning a few months since, a young man left his boarding house with the intention of taking a stroll in the upper part of the city.

He was a stranger in Philadelphia. Only a few weeks before, he had left his quiet New England home, left the dear mother who had watched over him and prayed for him from infancy, to seek his fortune in the great city. All its dangers, its temptations beset his pathway, but as yet the love of that mother had proved his shield and safeguard.

Before leaving home he had promised her that he would attend church, but three Sabbaths had passed over his head, and his promise was still unfulfilled. More than once he had lingered near the entrance of some stately temple of God, but as he noticed the throng of fashionably dressed people pouring up the broad stone steps, he said within himself, "I shall not be welcome in that grand church.— Very probably I would be regarded as an intruder, so I had better stay outside."

On the morning in question he was strolling aimlessly along when his eye was attracted by the fanciful Gothic architecture of a church in — street. As he approached, he heard the full rich tones of the organ, and being passionately fond of music, concluded to step inside of the vestibule and listen for a few moments.

While standing thus, a young member of the church entered, and noticing the stranger greeted him warmly, and invited him to come in.

"No, thank you," was the reply. "I only stopped for a few minutes to listen to the music. I did not intend to go in, as I am a stranger here."

"But we are always glad to see strangers in this church," said the young member, "we try to make them feel at home. Is it not so, Mr. J.—?" he continued turning to his Bible class teacher, who had just entered.

"Yes indeed," said the gentleman addressed as he warmly grasped the hand of the youth, "strangers are always welcome here. Come into my pew, and I think I can prove it to you."

Such an invitation was not to be rejected; and the New England youth with some little hesitation, followed his new friend up the broad aisle into one of the best pews.

At the close of the service the gentleman asked "Well how did you like it?"  
"Very much," was the answer, "the hymns were familiar, the tunes also, they reminded me of home," and his voice slightly faltered.

"I knew you would be pleased," said the gentleman, with a smile, "but now come with me. I want to introduce you to two or three of my Bible class. You must make friends of them; they are good lads, every one. By the way," he continued, "I should like to have you come to my Bible class this afternoon.— You do not attend any Sunday-school, I suppose?"

"No sir," answered the young man, looking somewhat surprised.

"I see how it is. You think you are too old to go to Sunday-school; but we have an adult Sunday-school here numbering about four hundred, so you will have plenty of company. Will you come?"

"I do not know," said the young man hesitating. "I will think about it."

His new friend however was not to be put off so easily, and at length yielding, he promised to come in the afternoon.

That day proved to be the turning point in his life. He was soon persuaded to enter the prayer meeting, and in a few weeks his faithful teacher had the joy of knowing that he was safe in the fold of Christ.

When relating his experiences before the church, he told the story of his Sunday morning walk, his casual stepping into the church door, and the invitation he had received.

"Stop just there," said the pastor who had been listening attentively. "Do you think you would have entered the church if this young brother had not invited you to come in?"

"No sir," was the reply. "I should have waited till the music ceased, and then have continued my walk."

"You see, friends," said the pastor turning to the deeply interested listeners, "the value of a simple invitation. Those few kind words to a stranger youth have been made the means, in God's hands, of saving a soul from death. I need only add 'Go ye and do likewise.'"

### The Glass Railroad.

"There was a moral in that dream."

The "Milford Bard," during one of his fits of *mania a potu*, said:

It seemed to me as though I had been suddenly aroused from my slumbers. I looked around and found myself in the centre of a gay crowd. The first sensation I experienced was that of being borne along with a peculiar gentle motion. I looked around, and found I was in a long train of cars, which were gliding over a railway many miles in length. It was composed of many cars. Every car opened at the top, was filled with men and women all gaily dressed, all happy, all laughing, talking and singing. The peculiar, gentle motion of the cars interested me. There was no grating, such as we hear on a railroad. This, I say, interested me. I looked over the side and to my astonishment found the railroad and cars made of glass. The glass wheels moved over the glass rails without the least noise or oscillation. The soft, gliding motion produced a feeling of exquisite happiness. I was happy! It seemed as if every thing was at rest within.—I was full of peace.

While I was wondering over this circumstance, a new sight attracted my gaze. All along the road, on either side, within a foot of the track, were laid long lines of coffins, and each one contained a corpse, dressed for burial, with its cold white face turned upward to the light. The sight filled me with horror; I yelled with agony, but could make no sound. The gay throng who were around me only redoubled their songs and laughter at the sight of my agony; and we swept on gliding with glass wheels over the glass railroad, every moment nearer to the bend of the road, far, far in the distance.

"Who are those?" I cried at last pointing to the dead in their coffins.

"These are the persons who made the trip before us," was the reply of the gayest persons near me.

"What trip?" I asked.

"Why the trip we are now taking,—the trip on this glass railway," was the answer.

"Why do they lie along the road, each one in his coffin?" I was answered with a whisper and a half laugh, which froze my blood.

"the railroad," said the person whom I addressed.

"You know the railroad terminates at an abyss, which is without bottom or measure. It is lined with pointed rocks. As each car arrives at the end it precipitates its passengers into the abyss. They are dashed to pieces against the rocks, and their bodies are then brought here and placed in the coffins as a warning to other passengers, but no one minds it, we are so happy on the glass railroad."

I can never describe the horror with which these words inspired me.

"What is the name of the glass railroad?" I asked.

The person whom I addressed replied in the same strain:

"It is very easy to get into the cars, but very hard to get out; for once in these cars every one is delighted with the soft gliding motion. The cars move so gently! Yes, this is a railroad of *HABIT*, and with glass wheels we are whirled over a glass railroad to a fathomless abyss. In a few moments we'll be there, and they'll bring our bodies and put them in coffins as a warning to others, but nobody will mind it will they?"

I was shocked with horror. I struggled to breathe, and made frantic efforts to leap from the cars and in the struggle awoke. I knew it was only a dream, and yet, whenever I think of it, I can see that long train of cars move gently over the glass railroad. I can see cars far ahead as they are turned the bend of the road. I can see the dead in their coffins, clear and distinct,—on either side of the road.

While the laughing and singing of the gay and happy passengers resounded in my ears, I only see those cold faces of the dead, with their glassy eyes uplifted, and their frozen hands upon their white shrouds.

"It was a horrible dream."

And the Bard's changing features and brightening eye attested the emotion which had been aroused by the very memory of that dream.

It was indeed a horrible dream. A long train of glass cars, gliding over a glass railroad, freighted with youth, beauty and music, while on either hand stretched the victims of yesterday;—gliding over the fathomless abyss.

"There was a moral in that dream."

Reader, are you addicted to any sinful habit? Break it off ere you dash against the rocks.

### The Infidel Silenced.

An old English journal—the *Evangelical Magazine*, for June 1781, gives the following report of a public debate between a noted infidel and a Mr. Barrett, City Missionary of London. The former first interrogated his opponent:

Quos. Where can you find in the Bible any passage relating to the existence of the soul of man; for Moses has said nothing about it?

Ans. Yes, sir, he has; for in Gen. ii. 7, it is said, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Q. But after the devil had visited Eve with his lies, and had caused Adam and his wife to become sinners, did not God say to Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?"

A. Truly sir; but it is also said in Eccles. xii. 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it."

Q. Can you tell me how that book (the Bible) which lies open before you, can become quick and powerful, or can you explain how it has life in it?

A. Yes, sir, I can: "It is Spirit that quickeneth; the words that I speak unto you" said the Saviour, "they are spirit and they are life; this book will therefore become either a savor of death unto death, or a savor of life to your immortal soul."

Well, sir, and how do you know that you are a child of God.

A. I know it by his having graciously given me his Spirit, witnessing with my spirit that I am born of God.