

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The little Mourner.

A lovely child, four summers old,
With snowy brow and hair of gold,
Lay in her little bed awake,
And wept as if her heart would break;
While ever and anon she said,
"Mother's dead, Mother's dead."

"Little mourner, cease to weep,
Perhaps thy mother is asleep,
And from her dreams and slumber mild
Will wake to kiss her pretty child."
The tears flowed faster as she said,
"Mother's dead, Mother's dead."

"Pretty darling, do not cry,
The clouds of sorrow soon pass by,
Kind hearts will shelter thee from ill,
And thou shalt have a mother still."
Louder sobbed the child and said,
"Mother's dead, Mother's dead."

"Sweetest darling, weep no more,
Thy mother walks the happy shore,
And like an angel in the sky,
Thou shalt behold her by-and-by."
She raised her eyes and sadly said,
"Mother's dead, Mother's dead."

S. S.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

Pen Sketches—No. 2.

BOASTFUL PERSONS.

They are those who have a very exalted opinion of their personal abilities or work.—They can never do anything for the weal of man but they must blow a loud and long blast through a trumpet so that others may know about it lest it be lost in oblivion. Do they suggest a plan and it works well, you will be reminded that that plan was the offspring of their teeming brain. Do they contribute to any benevolent fund, they will inform persons how much they gave, if considerable—but if small they will let you know they knew the funds did not deserve or did not need so much. Such remind us of a certain feathered bird that seeks the high places to do his crowing. What is man and what has he of which he can boast? Let thine own works praise thee.

JOHN.

Religious Instruction at Home.

This is a matter which we believe demands more attention than it commonly receives.—With all the facilities now afforded, there is a reluctance in many parents to undertake so palpable a duty. The following article from one of our exchanges offers some good suggestions on the subject:

THE FAMILY SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

The Sunday-school, useful institution as it is, may be abused. While in theory no one proposes to make it a substitute for religious training at home, it is to be feared that in practice, many fall into this lamentable error. Children were taught in the truths of religion before the days of Sunday-schools. In the time of Moses, provision was made for their instruction, and every Israelite was required to teach the children of his family. This custom has been kept up, with more or less strictness, by all God-fearing people ever since and should never be neglected by any. We have no statistics at hand, and we suppose none are to be found, to show the relative proportion of home-training before and since the introduction of Sunday-schools. Some contend that there is as much religious instruction now as then, while others insist that many parents allow the Sunday-school to do their work. Both positions may be true, since the parties who make the Sunday-school a proxy for themselves in this work might not instruct their children were there no such schools. This, however, is a question more curious than useful. The practical question

is: Are there not now many families, even among Christian people, where regular religious instruction is a thing unknown?

The Sunday school can never, legitimately take the place of home training; its design is to supplement it, not to supplant it. We are well aware that there are many children gathered from dens of poverty and wretchedness, to whom the Sunday-school becomes father and mother, so far as religious instruction is concerned. All the truths they hear are heard in the Sunday-school; all the good impressions they receive, all the holy aspirations they obtain, they find here. But this is because of parental neglect at home, and affords no example for Christian parents to neglect their duty, under the impression that the Sunday-school will do it if they do not. Home is the place where religious impressions are to be made and deepened, and parents are the natural instructors. Whatever is heard or learned elsewhere is to be considered as only additional and confirmatory.

Many parents seem to suppose that this home-training can be accomplished by family prayer, morning and evening. But this, valuable as it is, is only a partial means toward accomplishing the end desired. We do not undervalue family prayer when we say that, of itself, it cannot do all that is needed in the religious training of children. It has a quiet passive, moulding influence, and as such is invaluable; but in addition to this, something active, positive, and direct is needed. There should be some special time for religious conversation and instruction in the family. We would not, of course, have this hour invested with everything solemn and gloomy as though religion found its best type in the sombreness of a funeral. Such a procedure would repel and chill the impressive, sensitive mind of childhood. We would rather have the exercises as cheerful and pleasant as they can be made, tending to associate in the mind of the children religion with whatever is bright and beautiful.

With many whose time seems to be already fully occupied, from one end of the week to the other, Sundays included, the great difficulty would be to find the time. There is only one direction to be given on this point, and that is to *make* time. This is a duty toward our children which is imperative, and we must find time for it, even if something else is put aside. Probably the most convenient season for most families may be found on Sunday afternoon. If there are Sunday school or church services in the afternoon, the family Sunday-school may be held at the hour of evening prayer. The exercises need not be burdensome; if properly managed, the children will soon learn to delight in them. One important thing to be remembered is to give every child in the family, that is old enough to prattle, something to do, if it is no more than the repetition of a verse of Scripture. Hymns may be sung, and the Scriptures read in turn with pauses for suitable explanations. There are a number of books published with short chapters and simple statements of truth, especially designed for children. These may be used with great profit allowing one of the children to read aloud to the rest, and giving all a free opportunity to ask questions of each other, and to answer them if they can, the parents deciding, when the rest are done.

Gems of Thought.

"The flower that unfolds its petals becomes more beautiful for the expansion; so the heart that leads in love and kindness is unspeakably richer for every such life-throb."

"All toil that contributes to the well-being of others, in itself praiseworthy, and the most common duty of daily life can be dignified or degraded by the spirit with which it is performed."

"Some of the most important circumstances of our life grow out of events apparently of the most trifling character."

"He that tears the most, believes the most."
"There is nothing truly valuable which can be purchased without pains and labor."
"There are many paths to success in life, but that is the true one alone which leads to virtue, happiness and heaven."

For the Christian Messenger.

MISCELLANEA.

No. IV.

"ECCE HOMO: a Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ."

[This work has attracted much attention, and very various opinions respecting it have been uttered. Some, as Lord Shaftesbury and others, have denounced it as a pestilent production, filled with the seeds of skepticism. Others greatly admire it, and Mr. Gladstone has written three papers, published in *Good Words*, vindicating and praising the book.—The truth lies, as is generally the case, between these two extremes. It is certainly to be regretted that the work gives a one-sided view of the Lord Jesus. The writer contemplates him as a religious phenomenon, and endeavors to account for his teachings and actions. He gives his verdict as a philosopher, calmly and coolly surveying the Lord's life, as the life of a great and wonderful man, but confining himself to the human aspect. He seems to have no knowledge or no sympathy with the redeeming work of the Son of God, and ignores, or keeps back, all that was peculiar in the great purpose of his life on earth. He may believe in the Deity of the Saviour, and in his atonement, but there is no sign of it in the book, and some indications of the contrary. While the author professes to admit the miraculous, he dilutes that element in certain of the narratives, and panders to unbelieving doubts. For instance, referring to the account of the baptism of Christ, he says—"There is nothing necessarily miraculous in the appearance of the dove, and a peal of thunder might be shaped into intelligible words by the excited imagination of men accustomed to consider thunder as the voice of God." (p. 10.)

Nevertheless, there are many splendid passages in the volume—genuine gems of thought. The author possesses powers which we should like to see worthily employed in setting forth the divine glory of the Saviour. He promises another volume in which his religious views are to be completely announced.

The following are the "Contents" of "Ecce Homo":—

"FIRST PART.—1. The Baptist. 2. The Temptation. 3. The Kingdom of God. 4. Christ's Royalty. 5. Christ's Credentials. 6. Christ's winnowing fan. 7. Condition of membership in Christ's kingdom. 8. Baptism. 9. Reflections on the nature of Christ's Society.

"SECOND PART.—Christ's legislation. 10. Christ's legislation compared with philosophic systems. 11. The Christian Republic. 12. Universality of the Christian Republic. 13. The Christian a law to himself. 14. The Enthusiasm of Humanity. 15. The Lord's Supper. 16. Positive Morality. 17. The Law of Philanthropy. 18. The Law of Edification. 19. The Law of Mercy. 20. The Law of Mercy, (continued.) 21. The Law of Resentment. 22. The Law of Forgiveness. 23. The Law of Forgiveness, (continued.) 24. Conclusion.

We give some specimens:

Immortality of the soul. It is surprising that the early Jews, in whom the sense of God was so strong, and who were familiar with the conception of an Eternal Being, should yet have been behind rather than before other nations in suspecting the immortality of the soul. The Greek did not even in the earliest times believe death to be annihilation, though he thought it to be fatal to all joy and vigour; but the early Jews, the Legislator himself and most of the Psalmists, limit their hopes and fears to the present life, and compare man to the beasts that perish. How strange a revolution of thought when the area of human hopes and fortunes suddenly extended itself without limit! Then first man must have felt himself great. Then first too human relations gained a solidity and permanence which they had never before seemed to have; then the great and wise of a remote past started into life again; then the remote future moved nearer and became vivid like the present. This revolution had in a great measure taken place before the time of Christ. The suspicion of immortality appears in the later prophets, that suspicion which Christ himself was to develop into a glorious confidence.

Defects of modern piety. We are to remember that nothing has been subjected to such multiform and grotesque perversion as Christianity. Certainly the direct love of Christ, as it was felt by his first followers, is a rare thing among modern Christians. His character has been so much obscured by scholasticism, as to have lost in a great measure its attractive power. The prevalent feeling towards him now among religious men is an awful fear of his supernatural greatness, and a disposition to obey his commands arising partly from dread of future punishment and hope of reward, and partly from a nobler feeling of loyalty, which, however, is inspired rather by his office than his person. Beyond this we may discern in them an uneasy conviction that he requires a more personal devotion, which leads to spasmodic efforts to kindle the feeling by means of violent raptures of panegyric and by repeating over and getting by rote the ardent expressions of those who really had it. That is wanting for the most part which Christ held to be all in all, spontaneous warmth, free and generous devotion. That the fruits of a Christianity so hollow should be poor and sickly is not surprising.

The test of faith. Justice is, often but a form of pedantry, mercy mere easiness of temper, courage a firmness of physical constitution; but if these virtues are genuine, then they indicate not goodness merely but goodness considerably developed. A man may be potentially just or merciful, yet from defect of training he may be actually neither. We want a test which shall admit all who have it in them to be good whether their good qualities be trained or no. Such a test is found in faith. He who, when goodness is impressively put before him, exhibits an instinctive loyalty to it, starts forward to take its side, trusts himself to it such a man has faith, and the root of the matter is in such a man. He may have habits of vice, but the loyal and faithful instinct in him will place him above many that practice virtue. He may be rude in thought and character, but he will unconsciously gravitate towards what is right.—Other virtues can scarcely thrive without a fine natural organization and a happy training. But the most neglected and ungifted of men may make a beginning with faith. Other virtues want civilization, a certain amount of knowledge, a few books; but in half-brutal countenances, faith will light up a glimmer of nobleness.—The savage, who can do little else, can wonder and enthusiastically obey. He who cannot know what is right can know that some one else knows; he who has no law may still have a master; he who incapable of justice may be capable of fidelity; he who understands little may have his sins forgiven because he loves much.

Socrates and Christ. Both Socrates and Christ uttered remarkable thoughts and lived remarkable lives. But Socrates holds his place in history by his thoughts and not by his life; Christ by his life and not by his thoughts.

Philosophy and Christianity. It is a mistake to regard Christianity as a rudimentary or imperfect moral philosophy. Philosophy is one thing, and Christianity quite another, and the difference between them lies here—that philosophy hopes to cure the vices of human nature by working upon the head, and Christianity by educating the heart. * * * On consideration we shall find that each has its function, and that philosophy undertakes quite another sort of moral improvement than Christianity. The difference may be shortly expressed thus:—Both endeavor to lead men to do what is right; but philosophy undertakes to explain what it is right to do, while Christianity undertakes to make men disposed to do it. * * * Philosophy, as such, works by reasoning, by enlightening the mind, by exposing miscalculations, and revealing things as they are. Now by what process of this kind can the bad man be turned into the good? Where is the demonstration that will make the selfish man prefer another's interests to his own? Your dialectic may force him to acknowledge the right action, but where is the dialectic that shall force him to do it? Where is the logical dilemma that can make a knave honest?

The Christian Republic. The city of God of which the Stoics doubtfully and feebly