

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Autumn.

The Autumn,—period lovely yet so sad,
Of the swift rolling years,—again comes round,
Bearing its precious burdens which make glad
The winter's home, and cause with joy to bound
The expecting souls of husbandmen, who, browed
With Summer suns, heave on the creaking carts,
The rich, ripe fruits profusely flung around,
While mellow songs come gushing from their grate-
ful hearts.

Thou art the golden link between the gloom
Of Winter and the bright of Summer days.
The rich green foliage, that hath caught its bloom
Neath vernal skies, which now so fair displays
A thousand glittering hues, how soon it lays,
On Winter's snowy shrine the leafy splendor,
With which the brumal wind so wroth plays,
So heedless scattering 'round the sacrifice so tender.

Into thy lap, fair Summer sadly lays
Her radiant tresses, which, with magic wand
Far waving, or with alchemic displays,
Thou changest to a thousand hues so grand,
That fair are clad the forest-manifed land,—
Each hoary mountain-brow in waving gold;
While over all, with wide unsparring hand,
The crimson tide of Autumn's setting suns is rolled.

But, when Autumnal frosts come creeping o'er
Earth's radiant garniture, shrinks back that gush
Of life, which bright embossed her vernal floor;
Then sad to see, as breaks morn's early hush,
The frosted leaf, once bright in life's deep flush,
Low drooping now in Sol's long slanting ray;
While through the faded bloom in sudden rush,
Or in low moaning tones, the fierce winds seem
to say,—

"We come, but, while we sweep amidst the gloom
Of thy fast falling leaves, whose quick decay,
Is like bright hopes that often find a tomb;
We sigh,—that all this splendor and display,
Which first in sunny Spring had burst to day,
Clothing in verdant sheen each hill and plain,
Must die and fall beneath our chilling way,
Heirs to that dust, where many a mortal long has
lain."

But Autumn, with thy gloom, I love thee still;
The gentle fading of thy rosy light,
At sunset's hour, the dying rays that thrill
The gazer's heart, with visions sad yet bright,
How like the righteous soul, whose glimmering
sight,

Each dear familiar scene forever flies;
As with the darkness of eternal night,
Is slowly sealed the vision of those mortal eyes.

While from that death-bed scene, how bright a ray,
Is flung across our erring lives, awhile
Gilding life's gloomy steps in living day,
Startling the heart with visions of its guilt.
But thrilling is the view, as pile on pile
Of fleecy clouds go floating on sublime
Within the effluence of that golden smile
That bursts forth from the western gates at Sol's
decline.

What rapture of repose marks Autumn's death,
Into the snowy arms how calm she sinks.
With all her charms yields to the icing breath:
But while man pauses o'er the dying scene and
thinks;

He sees the certain doom from which he shrinks,
Yet dwells upon; each falling leaf—the hues
Fast fading o'er the misty hills—are chinks
Through which he sees Death's shadowy realm in
startling views.

But then the thought quick flashes through the soul
(Kindling with hopes of its high destiny),
That yon dark shore will never be its goal;
But that, as breaks each Spring's vitality
From ashes of Autumn's mortality,
So even the soul, when Death shall free its wings,
Dimly foreshadowed by the bloom of coming Spring.

H. C. M.

Falmouth, Oct. 25, 1868.

Religious.

The Intermediate State.

Many persons talk as if they knew a great deal about the condition of men between death and the resurrection. But we believe very little is known respecting that state, and as all that we do know is taught us in the Bible it is important that we ascertain what that teaches on this subject. There are two classes

of men in that state as in this life, and in some respects their conditions correspond, while in others they differ.

We think that to the godly the "Intermediate State" is a state of consciousness, of rest and felicity; a state in which the presence of Jesus Christ is enjoyed, and in which there is a waiting for a larger capacity for enjoyment through the re-union of the body with the spirit, and for an entrance on the final condition of blessedness. The intermediate state is evidently superior to the present life; but the condition of the godly after the resurrection will be more glorious than their condition before that event.

We think also that the Bible teaches that to the ungodly that state is one of consciousness, of pain and anguish, and a state in which there is a waiting for a final decision and an eternal separation from God and happiness. We are aware that some persons dispose of the statements respecting the future condition of the ungodly by saying that they are parabolic and figurative; but we suppose that the parables and figures used in the Bible are in accordance with the truth, and are used to illustrate it, and thus make it plainer to us.

While we think that the Bible does teach all that we have stated respecting the intermediate state, we do not think that it touches how the spirits of the dead exist in that state separate from their bodies; what is their location, whether near to us, or far distant; whether they are conversant with what passes on earth, or are ignorant thereof; or whether their vocation is precisely the same as it will be after the resurrection. We are aware that some persons think that they have fuller information than that which the Bible gives, and they refer to the testimony of persons who have been in a trance, and have afterward told us what they saw and heard. But we think such statements are very unreliable, especially when we place them in contrast with what the apostle Paul says respecting the time when he was "caught up into the third heaven," and "was caught up into paradise," and there "heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." And we can afford to wait for further knowledge on these and other points on which we wish for information; and we believe that those who speculate and assert, without being able to prove, act unwisely in doing so.

We know that a man's condition in this life will determine his state after death, and that his condition after the resurrection will certainly be a fuller development of his intermediate state.

We know also that a state of happiness can only be secured by the reception of salvation by faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Hence, it is of the utmost importance that we be sure that we are now in possession of this salvation, if we would enter into a state of happiness after death, and retain that happiness forever.

The Peace-breaking Brother.

The following incident was told to me by the Rev. J. C. Stiles. It occurred some years since, in one of the New England States:

In a church in a village there was a brother who made it his special duty to labor for the ruin of every pastor whose services the church secured. The fact became so generally known that it was a very difficult matter to induce any minister to accept the charge of the church. For a long time no pastor's voice had been heard within the walls of the church, for each one feared immediate decapitation at the hands of this brother, if he should dare to venture into his vicinity.

The church was rapidly declining, and one member became so anxious on the subject, that he wrote to a minister that he must come and preach for them, or the church would perish. The minister fully expressed his objections. But this member urged upon him the necessities of the church, and promised that he would do all in his power to save him from the fate of his predecessors. The minister at last consented to become the pastor of the church. For a time, all moved on smoothly. But after a while the pastor heard a buzz about his ears; and soon another passed; and then another. He knew that the brother was at work, and that there was danger. He became very sad in consequence of what he

knew must come upon him. One day he met the brother on the street, when he said, "My dear pastor, you seem to be sad, do tell me what is the matter. I will comfort you in your distress; I have often encouraged and strengthened my pastor when he was sad and discouraged." His pastor excused himself then, but promised that he would tell the cause of his gloom in a short time. The brother invited him to take tea with him that night, when he could do so. He consented. He was at the house of the brother at the appointed hour. At once he called for the reason of the sadness of the pastor. He consented to give it provided the brother would not become angry. This was promised.

"Well, brother," began the preacher, "I had a dream that has greatly disturbed me. I dreamt that I died and went to hell, and was carried through many of its departments. At last I came into the palace of his satanic majesty. He was in his chair, listening to the reports of his servants. And brother you were there. One servant arose, and said: 'May it please your honor, I have been among the kings and rulers of the earth, and have stirred up their wrath against Christians, and caused to persecute and slay many of the followers of Jesus, and thereby I have done much for your kingdom.' 'Well done,' said his majesty, 'take your seat; you shall be rewarded.' Another arose, and said, 'Please your honor, I have labored to stir up malice and jealousy among men, and thus have I set neighbor against neighbor, and caused disputes, fights and murder.' 'Take your seat; you, too, shall be rewarded.' Another said, 'Sir, I have sown the seeds of error, and turned men from truth, and made them thy subjects, and thus added many to thy kingdom.' 'Be seated, sir, you also shall have a reward.' Then, brother, you arose and said, 'May it please your honor, I have not labored among kings and rulers, nor have I caused murders, nor sown the seeds of error and falsehood; but I entered the church of Christ as a disciple, and my business through life was to kill preachers,—destroy their character, influence, and usefulness. Sir, I have wrung off the heads of many who preached the gospel.' Then his majesty arose, and by a wave of his hand, and in an approving tone, said, 'Brother, take the chair.'"—Baptist Visitor.

The Japanese Persecution.

Late intelligence from Japan confirms the previous reports of the persecution of native Christians, but not to the extreme—death by drowning—then stated. Early in the spring the Southern Mikado issued the following decree:

"As the abominable religion of the Christians is strictly prohibited, every one shall be bound to denounce to the proper authorities such persons as appear suspicious to him; and a reward shall be given to him for so doing."

As the result of this, about four thousand who professed the Christian faith were seized, and delivered in small companies to the Daimios. On the 8th of June a second decree was published, reciting that "although the sect of the Christians has been already centuries ago persecuted most vigorously by the Banku government, its entire extermination had not been arrived at. As, however, the number of followers of the Christian doctrine had lately considerably augmented in the village of Urakami, near Nagasaki, whose peasants secretly adhere to it," it was ordered that "those to whose custody Christians shall be confided shall instruct them in what is right, with leniency and humanity, and shall do their best to again make good men of them. But," it is added, "if some should not repent and acknowledge their errors, they shall be most severely punished, without any mercy."

The punishment decreed for the refractory was in accordance with this harsh policy.—The persecuted Christians must be put at hard labor in clearing land, or in working lime-pits, or in the gold and coal mines; they must be compelled to live in the mountains and forests, cut off from all intercourse with the surrounding inhabitants; and their diet must be restricted to a small portion of rice daily.—In other words, these unfortunate beings are consigned to a bitter and unrelenting slavery, under whose galling burdens there can be no doubt large numbers of them will perish.

The protest of the foreign consuls against the action of the Japanese authorities, when it was supposed the Christians were to be put to death, was treated with supreme contempt, and such will doubtless be the fate of any attempt at outside interference, as long as the government and character of the Japanese continue what they are.

How to be miserable.

Sit by the window and look over the way at your neighbor's excellent mansion, which he has recently built and paid for, and fitted out.

"Oh! that I were a rich man!"
Get angry with your neighbor, and think you have not a friend in the world. Shed a tear or two, and take a walk in the burial-ground, continually saying to yourself:

"When shall I be buried here?"
Sign a note for a friend, and never forget your kindness, and every hour in the day whisper to yourself: "I wonder if he will ever pay that note?"

Think everybody means to cheat you— Closely examine every bill you take, and doubt its being genuine until you have put your neighbor to a great deal of trouble.— Put confidence in nobody, and believe every man you trade with to be a rogue.

Never accommodate it you can possibly help it.

Never visit the sick and afflicted, and never give a farthing to assist the poor.

Buy as cheap as you can and screw down to the lowest mill. Grind the faces and hearts of the unfortunate.

Brood over your misfortunes, your lack of talents, and believe that at no distant day you will come to want. Let the work-house be ever in your mind, with all the horrors of distress and poverty.

Follow these recipes strictly, and you will be miserable to your hearts content—if we may so speak—sick at heart and at variance with the world. Nothing will cheer or encourage you, nothing will throw a gleam of sunshine or a ray of warmth into your heart.

The old English Font.

The assertion has sometimes been controverted that infants were invariably baptized by dipping, down to a late period in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but we have always been in the habit of determining the antiquity of a church by the size of the font. This opinion was confirmed on a recent visit to Cumberland where in one of the most ancient churches we perceived a font of the most capacious dimensions. On questioning the sexton, he replied: "This, sir, is a very old church, and the font was constructed for immersion; it is none of your modern saucers." The ancient mode of baptism is placed beyond all controversy in Froude's admirable History of England, in which, after noticing the birth of James Stewart, afterwards King James the First of England, he says, "The Duke of Bedford, who was sent as ambassador from Queen Elizabeth to Queen Mary, took with him a magnificent font of gold, weighing 880 ounces as a splendid present to the heir of the English throne. The prince, who was to have been dipped in it at his baptism, had grown too large by the delay of the ceremony; but Elizabeth suggested that it might be used for the next child." James never had a brother and the font was melted down soon after to pay the Scotch troops.

A good Law.

They have a law in Kansas that a wife can prosecute any landlord or saloon-keeper for selling liquor to her husband. A spirited woman has recently taken advantage of this beneficent enactment after the following emphatic fashion:

"To whom it may concern:

"I hereby give notice that the sale of spirituous liquors to Homer Hays is contrary to my wishes, and that I shall prosecute according to law any person who disregards this notice.

"CATHERINE HAYS."

There was a time in New York State when wives could be compelled to pay, out of their own earnings, their deceased husbands' liquor bills. That time has happily passed: but the