

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

MISCELLANEA.

No. II.

REV. RICHARD CECIL, M. A.

(Continued.)

"Children of a real Christian receive more conviction than they generally express. I speak from the experience of my own childhood. There is something forcibly impressive in the course of a godly man; it silently, and at times irresistibly, attacks the heart, when no direct address is made to the ear."

A new religion. A Baronet, who is still living, and who was examining his works, (Baron's the sculptor), perceived among them a bust of the late Rev. Mr. Whitefield. "Mr. B.," said he, "after all that has been said, this was a truly great man—he was the founder of a new religion."—"A new religion, Sir?" replied Mr. B.—"Yes," said the Baronet.—"What do you call it?"—"Nothing," replied Mr. B., "but the old religion revived with new energy, and treated as if the preacher really meant what he said."—*Life of John Bacon.*

Never knew his own face. His timely hints were often given with much point and profitable address, to the numerous acquaintance which surrounded him in this public station. Some time after Mr. N. had published his "Omicron," and described the three stages of growth in religion, from the *blade*, the *ear*, and the *full corn* in the ear, distinguishing them by the letters A. B. and C, a conceited young minister wrote to him, telling him that he read his own character accurately drawn in that of C. Mr. N. wrote in reply, that in drawing the character of C, or full maturity, he had forgotten to add till now, that C never knew his own face.—*Life of Rev. J. Newton.*

I remember to have heard him say, when speaking of his continual interruptions, "I see in this world two heaps of human happiness and misery: now, if I can take but the smallest bit from one heap and add to the other, I carry a point.—If, as I go home, a child has dropped a halfpenny, and it, by giving it another, I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something. I should be glad indeed, to do greater things, but I will not neglect this.—When I hear a knock at my study door, I hear a message from God. It may be a lesson of instruction; perhaps a lesson of patience; but since it is his message it must be interesting."—*Ibid.*

Discerning of spirits. He did not always administer consolation, or give an account of characters, with sufficient discrimination.—His talent did not lie in *discerning of spirits*. I never saw him so much moved as when any friend endeavoured to correct his errors in this respect. His credulity seemed to arise from the consciousness he had of his own integrity, and from that sort of parental fondness which he bore to all his friends, real or pretended. I knew one, since dead, whom he thus described, while living.—"He is certainly an odd man, and has his failings; but he has great integrity, and I hope he is going to heaven": whereas, almost all who knew him, thought the man should go first into the pilory!—*Ibid.*

The following are selected from "Remarks made by Mr. Newton in familiar conversation," and reported in the "Life."

Heresy. "My principal method of defeating heresy, is, by establishing truth. One proposes to fill a bushel with tares: now if I can fill it first with wheat, I shall defy his attempts."

Assurance. "I would not give a straw for that assurance which sin will not damp. If David had come from his adultery, and had talked of his assurance at that time, I should have despised his speech."

Analogy of faith. "There is the analogy of faith: it is a master-key, which not only opens particular doors, but carries you through the whole house. But an attachment to a rigid system is dangerous. Luther once turned out the Epistle of St. James, because it disturbed his system. I shall preach, per-

haps, very usefully upon two opposite texts, while kept apart; but, if I attempt nicely to reconcile them, it is ten to one if I do not begin to bungle."

Times of danger. "There are critical times of danger. After great services, honours and consolations, we should stand upon our guard. Noah—Lot—David—Solomon, fell in these circumstances. Satan is a robber: a robber will not attack a man in going to the Bank, but in returning with his pocket full of money."

Principles. "Worldly men will be true to their principles; and if we were as true to ours, the visits between the two parties would be short and seldom."

The extinguisher. "Dr. Taylor of Norwich said to me, 'Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times; and it is very strange if the doctrine of the atonement, which you hold, should not have been found by me.'—I am not surprised at this: I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher on it: now, prejudices from education, learning, &c., often form an extinguisher. It is not enough that you bring the candle: you must remove the extinguisher."

Square measure. "I measure ministers by square measure. I have no idea of the size of a table, if you only tell me how long it is; but if you also say how wide, I can tell its dimensions. So, when you tell what a man is in the pulpit, you must also tell me what he is out of it, or I shall not know his size."

The company a man keeps. If the old maxim does not always hold good, that "a man is known by the company he keeps," it will infallibly stand good if we add one word to it, namely that a man is known by the company he chooses to keep." The physician may be detained in an infectious chamber, and the lawyer be found conversing with his client in a shower of rain; but nobody will infer from thence, that the one chooses to breathe foul air, or that the other chooses to be wet to his skin. While the true Christian therefore, will avoid idleness, fanaticism, or becoming the dupe of any religious party, he will also join the Psalmist in declaring "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them whom thou keepest precepts."

Mysteries. I feel no disposition to stumble at the mysteries of revelation till I forget myself. He who ventures beyond his depth must be drowned. There are some truths in my own affairs, which, however I state them to my children, must appear to them strange and incredible; could they be presented to the intellect of a fly, they must appear much more so.—There is, however some proportion between the intellect of a man and that of a fly; but no proportion at all between that which is finite and that which is infinite. In viewing, therefore, the scheme of redemption I seem like one viewing a vast and complicated machine of exquisite contrivance: what I comprehend of it is wonderful; what I do not, is perhaps more so still.

Unction. All the minister's efforts will be vanity, or worse than vanity, if he have not unction. Unction must come down from heaven, and spread a savour and relish and feeling over his ministry. And among all the other means of qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, and the last also must be given to the word of God and prayer.

Consideration. There is too little attention in many churches, to man as man. I would consult his convenience points. If he could sit easier on cushions, he should have cushions. I would not tell him to be warm in God's service while I leave him to shiver with cold. No doors should creak; no windows should rattle.

Interpretation of Scripture. The right way of interpreting Scripture is to take it as we find it, without any attempt to force it into any particular system. Whatever may be inferred from Scripture, we need not fear to insist on. Many passages speak the language of what is called Calvinism, and that in almost the strongest terms. I would not have a man clip and curtail these passages, to bring them down to some system: let him go with them in their free and full sense; for otherwise, if he do not absolutely pervert them, he will attenuate their energy. But let him look at as many more, which speak

the language of Armenianism, and let him go all the way with these also. God has been pleased thus to state and leave the thing; and all our attempts to distort it, one way or the other, are puny and contemptible.

Eccentricity. Eccentricity, in religious men, is another occasion of enmity. Ask an eccentric man a question: he will stare in your face, and look very spiritual. I know one of these men who called out to a farmer as he was passing, "Farmer, what do you know of Jesus Christ?" Much spiritual pride lurks under this conduct. There is want of breeding and good sense. The world is led to form wrong associations of such characters: "Religion makes a man a fool, or mad; therefore I will not become religious."

The Rose and the Lily.

BY REV. CHARLES H. SPURGEON.

Delivered on Lord's Day morning, Dec. 8th, 1867.

"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."—*Solomon's Song*, ii. 1.

(Concluded.)

Our Lord adds "I am the lily," thus giving himself a double commendation. Indeed, Jesus Christ deserves not to be praised doubly, but severally, ay, and unto seventy times seven. Heap up all the metaphors that express loveliness, bring together all the adjectives which describe delight, and all human speech and all earth-born things shall fail to tell of him. The rose with all its redness is not complete till the lily adds its purity, and the two together are dim reflections of our glorious Lord. I learn from the text that in Christ Jesus you have a combination of contrasted excellencies.

He is the "lily of the valleys." Does he intend by that to hint to us that he is a lily in his lowliest estate, a lily of the valley?—The carpenter's son, living in poverty, wearing the common garb of the poor, is he the lily of the valleys? Yes; he is a lily to you and to me, poor dwellers in the lowlands. Up yonder he is a lily on the hill-tops, where all celestial eyes admire him; down here, in these valleys of fears and cares, he is a lily still as fair as in heaven. Our eyes can see his beauty, can see his beauty now, a lily to us this very day. Though we have not seen the King in his beauty, yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like Jesus Christ in our eyes, as we see him by faith in a glass darkly.

The words, having been opened up one by one, teach us that *Christ is lovely to all our spiritual senses*. The rose is delightful to the eye, but it is also refreshing to the nostril, and the lily the same. So is Jesus. All the senses of the soul are ravished and satisfied with him, whether it be the taste or feeling, the hearing, the sight, or the spiritual smell, all charms are in Jesus. Often when we have not seen the Anointed, we have perceived his presence. Travelling on the Lake Lugano, one morning, we heard the swell of the song of the nightingale, and the oars were stilled on the blue lake as we listened to the silver sounds. We could not see a single bird, nor do I know that we wished to see—we were so content with the sweetness of the music; even so it is with our Lord; we may enter a house where he is loved, and we may perceive clearly enough that he is there, a holy influence streaming through their actions pervades the household; so that if Jesus be unseen, it is clear that he is not unknown. Go anywhere where Jesus is, and though you do not actually hear his name, yet the sweet influence which flows from his love will be plainly enough discernible.

Our Lord is so lovely, that even the recollection of his love is sweet. Take the rose of Sharon, and pull it leaf from leaf, and lay by the leaves in the jar of memory, and you find each leaf most fragrant long afterwards, filling the house with perfume; and this very day we remember times of refreshing enjoyed at the Lord's table still delightful as we reflect upon them.

Christ is so lovely that he needs no beautifying. When I hear men trying to speak of him with polished sentences, which have been revised, and re-revised upon their manuscripts, I would ask them why they need to paint the Rose of Sharon, and what

they can be at in seeking to enamel the lily of the valleys? Hold up Christ crucified, and he himself is beautiful enough without our paint and tinsel. Let the roughest tongue speak sincerely of him in the most broken but honest accents, and Jesus himself is such a radiant jewel that the setting will be of small consequence, he is so glorious that he is "Most adorned when unadorned the most." May we ever feel thus concerning him, and if we are tempted to display our powers of oratory when we have to speak of him, let us say, "Down busy pride, and let Christ rule, and let Christ be seen." He needs no help from thee.

He is so lovely, again, that he satisfies the highest taste of the most educated spirit to the very full. The greatest amateur in perfumes is satisfied with the rose, and I should that that no man of taste will ever be able to criticise the lily, and cavil at its form. Now, when the soul has arrived at its highest pitch of true taste, she shall still be content with Christ, nay, she shall be the better able to appreciate him. In the world's history, we are supposed to have arrived at an age of taste, when color and form are much regarded. I must confess I think it a gaudy, tasteless age, and the fashion of the day is staring, vulgar, childish and depraved. Bright and glittering colors, antique, grotesque forms are much run after; and men must need introduce their chosen fineries and fopperies into their worship, supposing that it is comely to worship God with silks, and laces, and ribbons, and gilt and tinsel, and I know not what of trumpery besides. Just as the harlot of Babylon arrayed herself in pearls and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, even so do her imitators adorn themselves. Men in Christ Jesus, who by reason of use have had their senses exercised, and have learned to delight in nobler things than those in which the swine of this earth delight themselves. God give you to know that if you want beauty, Jesus is Sharon's rose; if you want spotless charms to delight your true taste, he is the Lily of the valleys.

For the Christian Messenger.

LETTER 4.

To the Baptists of Nova Scotia.

Dear Brethren,—

In my last letter, the Granville Street Church is arraigned on the charge of an offense against honor and good faith, which, if our churches, at large, do not condemn, must have the most baneful influence among us.—It is deeply painful to me to undertake the duty of exposing these errors, and I should most gladly have escaped it, but it seems on many accounts to fall naturally to me to perform it, and therefore I bow myself, however reluctantly, to the task.

I find it difficult to comprise, within the compass of one letter, all the particulars which at each step of their proceedings claim remark, because I know how few persons will read a long article in the newspapers. I shall be excused therefore, if I be found returning to things already mentioned.

Allusion has been made to the eagerness of Dr. Pryor's accusers to seize upon supposed evidence against their Pastor, and then manifest blindness to what made in his favor.

Judge Johnston marks a strong case of this kind in relation to certain accounts which he mentions. He saw it constantly and protested against it, but in vain. The same thing became abundantly obvious to myself.

Character, for example, has weighed with them not a rush, except to talk of it in one of their church votes. This is evident, because as there is confessedly no positive evidence on any point of alleged guilt, but merely suspicions which charity might interpret favorably, why did not Dr. Pryor's unimpeached and admirable character for so many years oblige them to make that charitable interpretation? The only answer is, that character went with them for nothing.—They could have acted no more hostilely against Dr. Pryor if his character were unknown.