

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### THE SEED AND THE SOWERS.

Ever so little the seed may be,  
Ever so little the hand,  
But when it is sown it must grow, you see,  
And develop its nature, weed, flower, or tree;  
The sunshine, the air and the dew are free  
At its command.

If the seed be good, we rejoice in hope  
Of the harvest it will yield,  
We wait and watch for its springing up,  
Admire its growth, and count on the crop  
That will come from the little seeds we drop  
In the great, wide field.

But if we heedlessly scatter wide  
Seeds we may happen to find,  
We care not for culture or what may betide,  
We sow here and there on the highway side,  
Whether they've lived or whether they've died,  
We never mind.

Yet every sower must one day reap  
Fruit from the seed he has sown,  
How carefully, then, it becomes us to keep  
A watchful eye on the seed, and seek  
To sow what is good, that we may not weep  
To receive our own.

## Religious.

### DON'T THROW ORANGE PEEL ON THE PAVEMENT.

BY J. A. SPURGEON.

I like oranges when they are sweet, in fact, I like most sweet things. I have no doubt, my dear reader, that your taste and mine are very much alike; I prefer the best of everything and plenty of it. There are two sides, however, to every question, and also to an orange; and it happens that most people throw away the side they don't like. I am not going to endeavour to stop this habit; I am afraid I should have too much to do if I were to try, and most probably only get well pelted for my pains. The practice is likely, however, to lead to falls, which are none the less painful because they might have been avoided. Of course, you and I never set a trap to throw down any fellow creature, but I am afraid we may have dropped orange peel, and some persons have possibly slipped over it and been injured by their fall. Ever since I saw an old man leaning on his staff, for very age, day after day, in the East of London, most carefully occupying his time in removing with much exertion every remnant of orange peel from the pavement, I made up my mind to do the same as often as it was in my power.

There are, however, other falls than bodily ones, and there is orange peel to correspond to every case; so we will have a chat on the whole matter, and speak in the joint name of "We."

What do we think about dancing parties? Orange peel on the carpet we say! and if the children should fall (mind we don't assert that they will), but if they do, who put it there? We believe that there are some "Spurgeon Quadrilles" published, and unless we are misinformed, they have been danced, and notably so, last summer, not far from Leeds, when one gentleman (?) pushed another in the dance, who returned a blow, which was repeated, and the whole led to a fight, and ultimately to the police court.—We certainly can only say, "Serve them right." If a man tries to walk on orange peel and falls, on his own head be the penalty: we can only hope that it may raise the bump of caution for the future. But to expose the little ones to this and all that it may lead to, is more than we should like to answer for before God, whatever may be the opinions of others on the subject.

What do we think about theatre going? Orange peel on ice, we say! sure to make you slip, and almost certain to produce a fall. We have noticed that some who could not find time for the week-day services, could arrange for these times of so-called amusement, and we have never doubted the result. What are the general surroundings and atmosphere of the playhouse, are they not opposed to everything like godliness

and true piety of heart? We don't challenge the Christianity of those who go there; we can only say that a man who tries to run on ice, strewn with orange peel, will never run so as to obtain a prize. A Christian who thus acts is not adorning the doctrine of the Lord Jesus: he is not avoiding the appearance of evil, and is scarcely a meet spectacle for the "cloud of witnesses" who watch our Christian career. To take children there, is, to our mind, nothing short of sending them to play on the railroad and run the hazard of their not getting out of the way of express trains; and the only assignable reason is, not that there are no other places to amuse them in, but if they look at the trains whirling by "they will see life." Yes, perhaps death also, and who is to blame?

What do we think about novel reading? We are once more reminded of our orange peel, and its tendencies to upset the balance of rectitude when it is in the pathway.—You tell me there are many sorts of novels. Certainly, we never said that pieces of orange peel were all of the same size. There are small and large portions, but the principle is the same, and differs only in proportion, according to position and circumstances. We are sure that this is a growing evil, and the whole effect of this absurd rage for works of fiction is to beget an unnatural course of thought, and full of ten of conduct also. We see it clearly in the lads who read the cheap tales of robbery, etc., so largely disseminated amongst some classes; and magistrates on the bench have to call attention to it frequently; even as we have known the hospital authorities speak out when their patients are brought in with broken legs from tripping on the slippery peel. Loudly did the coroner complain the other day, when an old lady met with her death from a fall on the pavement, caused in the way I have already alluded to again and again. Well may doctors, magistrates, and coroners, cry out against the source of evils which come under their notice, and we also are driven to speak out when we see painful facts all around us, proving that none the less surely, because more secretly, is the dangerous influence of novel reading at work in many families, even of church members. We must enter our solemn protest against allowing the young people the run of a lending library without any restrictions. We should as soon permit a school of children to empty a chemist's shop of all the drugs and poisons contained in it. Harm must result and certain injury is before them.—If you are thoughtful about the food for the body, be even more careful about the sustenance for the higher faculties of the mind and soul. If you desire modest daughters and steady sons, guard them from the sensational novel literature of the day, or you will bitterly rue the mistake when it will be too late to repair the injury sustained.

What do we think about the sending of children to Church of England Schools?—Why, as we should about having them taught to walk on orange peel, when you really want them never to set foot on it.—Send a bird into the water to teach it to fly, and put a fish into the frying-pan to learn to swim, and then send your children to be taught what you wish them to be, in the very place where it is next door to impossible that they should learn it, and where they will see the very opposite in full power and action. Better make any present sacrifice than run the risk of a life's bias to the wrong. With equal force this applies to attendance upon the service of the church itself. If you would not have your children believe in the semi-papacy of the Church of England, its priestly pretensions, its dogmas of baptismal regeneration and of apostolic succession; if you would have them rejoice in the freedom of the church, and maintain the kingship of Christ as the sole head of it, then keep them clear of the place where rank heresies on these and other subjects are taught as the truth of God.—The usual effect of going into the water is to get wet: no sane man would plunge into a bath to dry himself, and no one with common sense will train up a child in the way he should not go, in the hope that when he is old he will depart from it.

What do we think about our church members marrying non-professors. Why, that they secure a perpetual shower of orange peel in the front of their feet, and on every side as long as they live. They may not fall, but nothing short of a miracle of grace can prevent it. The union itself is a fall, and a very injurious one. More mischief arises from this than from anything else in connection with many of our churches. Soon after such a marriage, the old place of worship is not fashionable enough, a more tasteful and ornate style of thing is desired to minister to the taste of unpenewed nature, and when that fails, neglect of the means of grace altogether follows, and at last coldness and all but death itself ensues. We would cry out against this as we would against your endeavoring to walk on a tight rope, carrying a corpse with your hands tied to it. Willingly to choose this is a madness, for which there is no other name than SIN. Many of our fathers would have at once cut off the offending member from the church for this, and said of such a one, "Gone over to Babylon;" we must certainly rebuke, and occasionally in some cases, even expel those who thus offend, so as to honour him who said, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers."

We have no more time to enlarge, but before we part let us ask if there are no habits of speech, no actions of our lives, no engagements in business, nor modes of pleasure, whereby our brother may be made to fall? Do we by our thoughtlessness and want of care trip up any, or expose ourselves to peril? It is so easy to cast down for there is a power, mighty as the attraction of the earth, whose tendency is to help all men in this direction. We need much to pray daily, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

May our determination be, with the apostle Paul, "Wherefore, if meat makes my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

### TAKING OFFENCE IN THE CHURCH.

A great mistake is made by many church members. When they receive an injury from a fellow-member or imagine that they are unjustly treated by them, they rashly conclude that the best remedy is to absent themselves from the public and social meetings of the church. An article in a late number of the *National Baptist* treats this subject in the following very sensible style:—

This proceeding is wrong, the most wrong you could take. Come now, and let us reason together. Let me put together, in the fewest words possible, some of the *pros* and *cons*. By staying away—

1. You violate your duty to God, who commands you to "walk orderly" and not to forsake "assembling together" with his people. If you are sure that you cannot be comfortable in that church, ask for a letter and join another at once. But if you act as you do you cannot have a letter granted to you.

2. You break your covenant with the church. Turn to it now, and read it prayerfully, and see if you are not in danger of committing a great wrong.

3. You are showing resentment against the whole church for what a few members, or perhaps, only one, has done.

4. You set at naught the great rule, Matt. 18. Unless you freely and fully forgive those who have offended you, go and do as Christ commands, and begin a holy discipline with them, you bring on yourself His condemnation.

5. If you refuse to do this, and still absent yourself, the church must put you under discipline. A committee will wait on you, and you must then act according to Gospel order, or you will be excluded; and most justly. Now read, on your knees, Matt. 16: 16, and 18: 18.

6. The persons who have offended you may be pillars in the church. You are getting up a party to destroy their usefulness; yea, so far as your influence goes, to destroy the church; and you will be responsible before God for all the good you prevent.

7. You are keeping yourself in a miserable state of mind, and running an awful risk of apostasy.

### THE LAMP WITHOUT OIL.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

Whilst spending a week lately in the society of a great number of ministers from the Canton of Vaud, one of them, at a public meeting, related to us the recent conversion of a lady in his parish. She was one of those who lived only for this world; the thoughts of her sins had never caused her uneasiness; she was careful and troubled about many things, but neglected the one thing needful. One night whilst alone in her room, she saw the lamp which lighted it suddenly go out. Although she was alone, she said aloud (thinking only of the accident which had left her in the dark), "There is no oil in my lamp!" The words thus spoken echoed in the room and sounded in her ears, but with a new sense. She recalled the parable of the five foolish virgins, who had no oil, and whose lamps had no oil, and whose lamps had gone out at the coming of the Bridegroom; and from that moment, day and night, that word of God remained in her soul, as an arrow remains in the side of a stag who flies far away from the hunters. It recurred to her constantly: No, I have no oil in my lamp! My God, what will become of me? I have not thy grace in my heart! She was filled with fear; then she began to pray, and continued in prayer until God answered her favorably, and gave her his peace through the Holy Spirit, and now she is happy and full of zeal. Like Enoch, she walks with God; and we trust that, like him, she will continue to do so till the end.—From the French of L. Gausson.

### THE DANCE.

What a strange thing this dancing is, after all, when you look at it from a philosophical, or if you please, unsophisticated point of view. The other day Insulanus asked a lady how it came to pass that the entrance upon the floor of the ball-room made such a wonderful change in the usual manners and habits. She asked him what he meant, as she did not understand. He asked her, Suppose I introduce you to a friend of mine, a stranger, and he would not only take your hand but put his arm around you, what would you do? You may imagine her look and answer! What would she do? All your lady readers know what they would do, and what the father, husband or brother of such a lady would do. But, said Insulanus, as soon as you enter the room of the "hop" or ball, you permit a perfect stranger, who is introduced to you at the time, not only to take your hand, but to put his arm around your waist, and to sail around the room with you, in the giddy mazes of the dance, and your father, brother and husband think it all right!—The lady admitted that she had not exactly looked upon it from that point of view, but gave Insulanus no other information than that things were allowable in the dance which are not so in ordinary life.—Mora-vian.

### CLEAVING TO CHRIST.

I have seen a heavy piece of iron hanging on another—not welded, not linked, not glued to the spot—and yet it cleaved with such tenacity as to bear not only its own weight, but mine too, if I chose to seize it and hang upon it. A wire charged with an electric current is in contact with its mass, and hence its adhesion. Cut that wire through, or remove it by a hair's-breadth, and the piece of iron drops dead to the ground, like any other unsupported weight.

A stream of life from the Lord brought into contact with a human spirit, keeps the spirit cleaving to the Lord so firmly that no power on earth or hell can wrench the two asunder. From Christ the mysterious life stream flows, through the being of a disciple it spreads, and to the Lord it returns again. In that circle the feeblest Christian is held safely; but if the circle be broken, the dependent spirit instantly drops off.—Arnot.