

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### PEN SKETCHES.

No. 17.

#### QUIET PERSONS.

*They are very unobtrusive.*

What they do, is done without noise and not for display. It is pleasant to meet with such in the world and especially in the church. Quiet deeds are performed by them for the sake of doing good. Their words are generally few and to the purpose. Many a cup of cold water has been given by them unknown to the public. At the last day there will be a glorious manifestation of such secret gifts.

Quiet persons in the public means of grace. We have great sympathy for some of them. Their natures are contemplative. They delight to hear and see, but not to be bustling. They have great modesty, and often they think themselves very far below others. We have met with such and when we have found the key to unlock their hearts, they have quietly poured forth rich treasures of thought and feeling. I know some of these quiet persons have been misunderstood and misjudged, their reticence has been attributed to pride or some such wrong motive. I am aware there are quiet persons who may be regarded as being shy and under cover seek to do mischief.

Give us quiet friends for impulsive ones, we can rely upon them and know where to find them in after years. Quiet forces are the most powerful.

JOHN.

#### THE FALSE PROFESSOR.

We grant that there are false professors of religion in every Christian community; that there may be found members in any Christian church that are living blemishes on its fair fame. "Spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear." But when the opposer would hold forth these as fair representatives of the cause with which they for the time stand connected, we do not hesitate to say that the implication is not merely erroneous, it is positively and wickedly false. Nothing could give them such undue prominence but the glaring contrast that evidently subsists between the profession of such individuals and their practices. They are externally identified with the church, but not truly of it. They belong to the church, as barnacles belong to the ship; as excrescences, that mar its beauty and impede its progress. When the casuist is himself a disciple of a different faith, and points to the inconsistencies of professors for the purpose of bringing our evangelical faith into disrepute, we feel inclined to retort, "We thank God that every true church of Christ has enough to make such connections appear inconsistent. It can bear the transient disgrace without material harm."

A class of conscientious scruples may also be met with the same consideration. It has been asked, Does not an individual, in becoming a member of a church, thereby endorse the character of all its members? And here, while we would offer no apology for a neglect of discipline, that often may become an occasion for unfavorable criticism, we unhesitatingly reply that he does not. He has thereby endorsed the character of no individual on earth, not even his own. What he has endorsed is the great principle for the sake of which the church exists, and the divine purpose she was designed to subserve. He has endorsed that which gives to the organization vitality and significance,—the One Lord, One Faith, and One Baptism.

And in so doing he has offered the strongest possible protest against ungodliness and immorality, wherever they may exist. He has professed his faith in a holiness so transcendent, that it is required, in every single case, he should be "washed with the

washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Is Isaiah, let us ask responsible for the character of Saul? Is John responsible for that of Judas? So neither is the honest and consistent member of a Christian church responsible for the character of the false professor who may, temporarily, be associated with him. But let us not fail to notice, in this connection, how strongly every one who has named the name of Christ is admonished to depart from all iniquity; to shun the very appearance of evil; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present evil world that we give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Still more strongly is an application of our subject suggested to another, but coordinate, topic; I mean ministerial apostasy. There have been men who have, for a time, been eminently successful in the work of the Christian ministry; whose labors have resulted in bringing multitudes to the knowledge of the truth; who not only preached, but administered the ordinances of the gospel with great acceptance,—who have subsequently fallen from this eminence of usefulness, and have proved themselves unworthy of the Christian name; and, in some instances, they have passed directly over to an equal eminence in infamy. The questions which very naturally occur in such cases are, Are conversions under such a ministry genuine? And are the ordinances administered by them valid?

Only distinguished between the truth and its advocates, and the answer is clear. The truth is the instrument to which belongs converting grace. The Holy Spirit is the agent by whom it is wielded. The change that we call conversion is therefore, divinely wrought. It is the divine not the human, age that gives character to it. The human is but the vehicle by which the truth is brought in contact with the understanding. Further than this, it sinks into absolutely nothingness. "Who," asks the apostle, "who is Paul, or who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believe? Paul planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 'The excellency of the power,' he continues, 'is of God and not of us.' If, then, the work is divinely wrought, the subsequent apostasy, of even the present insincerity of the human agent cannot affect its genuineness. "Some, indeed," says Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, "preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of goodwill. The one preach Christ of contention not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds, but the other of love knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." "Crowned and Discrowned" by Rev. S. W. Culver.

For the Christian Messenger.

#### REVIEW.

*Memoir of the Rev. William C. Burns, M. A., Missionary to China from the English Presbyterian Church. By Rev. Islay Burns, D. D., Professor of Theology, Free Church College, Glasgow, 12 mo. pp. 595. Nisbet & Co., London.*

(Continued.)

On Mr. Burns's second visit to Aberdeen "We find him again," says his biographer, "in the field, prosecuting with equal devotedness and zeal, and with even still more remarkable results, the work which he had before begun. For two months together, on week-days and sabbath-days, the attendance at the meetings continued unabated, and the numbers of inquirers increased. I find on one of the last pages of his Aberdeen diary specific mention of the two-hundredth case of spiritual anxiety with which he had to deal since the commencement of his visit; and those who sought him out on this errand, and with whom he was able to converse, were of course only a fraction of those who were more or less affected by the general and wide-spread impression. So great at one time was the

number of the anxious, that appointments made for their special behoof would be responded to by such crowds that individual instruction became impossible, and the inquirer's meeting grew into a congregation. Meanwhile the intensity of feeling manifested by those who were the more especial subjects of the movement was often very great, found vent to itself in the case of those who were of a more impressible nature, and were least habituated to self-control, now in silent weeping, and now in loud sobs and cries." p. 165.

Let it be remembered that at this time Mr. Burns was only in the twenty-sixth year of his age! Such successful ministry, for one so young, was a religious phenomenon.

During the next three years his labours were abundant. He preached with great power and blessing "among the mountains," including Breadalbane and other places. Newcastle enjoyed his ministry for some weeks. In the winter of 1841-2 he was stationed at Edinburgh, where he took the charge of St. Luke's Church, the minister being absent for a time through ill health. One who knew him well and watched his proceedings with affectionate interest, furnished the author of the Memoir with a sketch from which we take an extract:—

"The work of this writer forms a unique chapter in his life. A special interest attaches to it. He had to become both pastor and evangelist. True to the motto of his family, 'Ever ready,' he soon showed that he could be both. He at once began a course of lectures on the Sabbath forenoon upon the Epistle to the Romans, and another course at the Thursday prayer-meeting upon the Epistle of James. On Monday evening he taught two classes; a female class for expounding the miracles, and a young men's class at a later hour, where he took up the parables of Christ. Every Saturday afternoon he conducted a class for children. Two courses of lectures—three classes—sermons upon the Sabbath afternoon suggested by the special circumstances of the times or of the congregation;—here was sufficient work for an ordinary man. But he was no ordinary man. He was always longing to be on full work again. The college session had begun. He taught a private Greek class in his lodgings. The College Missionary Association met every Saturday morning for prayer and the reading of essays upon topics connected with foreign missions. He attended these meetings, and by the blessing of God infused his own fire into the hearts of many of the students. At the concluding general meeting of the Association, when about two hundred students were present, he moved one of the resolutions, and it was the universal impression that there never had been such a meeting in the college before.

"A large number of students attended his ministry—not only divinity students, but gownsmen of all stages with their pale eager faces. \* \* \* He invited them to his lodgings; he sympathized with their difficulties; he guided those who were groping in the dark and seeking the way to Zion. Those who had the rare privilege of meeting him in private, and seeing his close walk with God were at no loss to understand the power which attended his public ministrations.

"With him the winning of souls was a passion. As Foster said to John Howard, 'It was the calmness of an intensity kept uniform, by the nature of the human mind forbidding it to be more, and by the character of the man forbidding it to be less.' He cast his net into all waters. He wished to get across to soldiers in the castle. He visited the barracks, distributed tracts, and invited them to his open-air services in the High Street. He frequently visited the Shelter, the jail; the bridewell, the Magdalen Asylum, the Orphan Hospital, the Dean Bank Institution, &c., and preached to the inmates. Wherever the lost or neglected were to be found, he was there, like Him who yearned over a world plunged in sin, telling them of rest for the weary and hope for the guilty. From the very refuse of society he gathered jewels for Emmanuel's crown. Very touching to see him, as I have done, giving tracts and

and speaking tender words to the fallen. To him they were lost pieces of silver; and the thought that they might even yet have Christ for their brother, and heaven for their home, filled him with a tenderness which he had no name for." pp. 229-231.

Dublin next engaged his attention. His visit to that city was not distinguished by such visible results as followed his effort in other places; but it presented him before the excitable Irish Roman Catholics in an unaccustomed light. He did not enter into controversy with them. He did not even mention "Popery." All he aimed at was to bring them to repentance and faith by preaching Christ to them whenever and wherever he could find opportunity—generally in the open air. They interrupted him;—they pelted him with stones; and on one occasion his life was in danger from their violence; yet he calmly and persistently pursued his course. "He is a good man," they said; "we cannot make him angry."

The Presbyterians in Canada had heard of him, and in response to their invitation he crossed the Atlantic and performed the work of an Evangelist among them for two years. He reached Montreal in September 1844, and returned to Glasgow in September, 1846. In Montreal he fully obeyed the apostolic injunction—"Preach the word; be instant, in season, out of season." The Highland regiment then stationed in that city profited greatly by his ministry. The Free Church congregations derived much encouragement and advantage from his faithful services. But he was not satisfied with preaching to his own countrymen. He longed for the salvation of French Canadians and others whom he could not expect to see in the Protestant churches, and so he took his stand in the *Place d'Armes* and other public places. He was very roughly dealt with. "On one occasion his coat was torn, his hat was knocked off, and his pocket bible, his constant companion, torn from his hand. On another, a stone thrown with violence inflicted a severe wound on his cheek. A few of the 93rd rushed through the crowd, and one in anxiety said, 'What's this? what's this?' smiling, he replied, 'never mind, it's only a few scars in the Master's service.' He was carried into the medical chamber of Dr. Macnider, near at hand, when that beloved Christian physician skilfully sewed up the wound. He came forth speedily as if nothing had taken place; and looking round calmly from his reassumed position, he exclaimed, in the words of the great apostle of the Gentiles,—'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.'

"Another hot day of battle is thus vividly described by the Rev. William Arnot, of the Free High Church, Edinburgh, who happened to be in Montreal at the same time, and who himself bravely joined him on the forlorn hope. 'Once,' he writes, 'I went with him to the Haymarket square, where he meant to preach in English. I went somewhat anxious for his safety, with intent to help him if need should arise. A circle soon gathered. He began to preach. More assembled outside;—thicker and thicker the girdle grew, but the roughest outside. William and I stood alone in the middle of the ring, hedged very closely in but the gentlest nearest us. Where they stood at first, they remained. No possibility of movement. Noise and throwing of dirt increased. When he became somewhat wearied I now and then took up the address, and the change of voice operated a little in our favor for getting a hearing. One Irish voice from the outside interrupted William at one time, shouting clear over all the din, 'The devil's dead.' A great laugh followed. When it hushed, William struck in with a plaintive voice, tinged almost with the sarcastic 'Ah! then, you are a poor fatherless child!' This raised a laugh in his favour, and under cover of it he was enabled to proceed for a while. We were besmeared with mud, thrown from the outer circles, but not hurt." p. 267.

He traversed a large part of Lower Canada, as it was then called (now, the Province of Quebec), preaching sometimes in