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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLIII, No. 10.

Poetry.

Life.

A POETICAL AND LITERARY CURIOSITY.

A lady occupied a whole year in searching for and fitting the following thirty-eight lines from English and American poets. The whole read almost as if written at one time and by one author:

Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?

Life's a short summer—man is but a flower;

By turns we catch the fatal breath and die—

The cradle and the tomb, alas! so nigh.

To be is better far than not to be,

Though all men's life may seem a tragedy;

But light cares speak when mighty griefs are dumb—

The bottom is but shallow whence they come.

Your fate is but the common fate of all;

Unmingled joys here no man befall;

Nature to each allots his proper sphere.

Fortune makes folly her peculiar care;

Custom does often reason overrule

And throw a cruel sunshine on a fool.

Live well—how long or short permit to heaven,

They who forgive most, shall be most forgiven.

Sin may be clasped, so close we cannot see its face,

Vile intercourse where virtue has not place.

Then keep each passion down, however dear,

Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear;

Her sensual snares let faithless pleasures lay,

With craft and skill to ruin and betray.

Soar not too high to fall; but stoop to rise;

We masters grow of all that we despise.

Oh, then, renounce that impious self-esteem—

Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream;

Think not ambition wise because 'tis brave—

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

What is ambition? 'Tis a glorious cheat.

Only destructive to the brave and great.

What's all the gaudy glitter of a crown?

The way to bliss lies not on beds of down.

How long we live, not years, but actions tell;

That man lives twice who lives the first life well.

Make, then, while yet ye may, your God your friend,

Whom Christians worship, yet not comprehend.

The trust that's given guard, and to yourself be just,

For live howe'er we may, yet die we must.

Religious.

"Our New Testament, whence it came, and what is its authority."

Our English papers of last month bring brief reports of a very interesting lecture delivered in Glasgow by Dr. Angus, the learned President of Regent's Park College. Dr. Angus is not only a member of the Committee for the Revision of the Scriptures, but also one of the best Biblical scholars of the present day. The special subject of his lecture was, "Our New Testament; whence it came, and what is its authority." We are sure that a short synopsis of some of the chief points touched upon by the lecturer will be perused with interest by our readers.

The first question which Dr. Angus proposed to himself to answer had reference to the genuineness of the sacred Scriptures. Is our modern Greek Testament the very same work which the early Christian churches possessed? What evidence do we have that it is the same New Testament? The answer given to these questions was eminently

satisfactory. It was shown that there were in existence 1600 manuscripts of the New Testament, which extended back to the fourth century, and within the last twenty-five years there was a manuscript found in Mount Sinai which was written in that century. The three oldest manuscripts were, curiously enough, in the three greatest churches—viz., the Protestant Church of England, the Romish Church of Italy, and the Greek Church of St. Petersburg.

Besides these we had in the first nine centuries as many as nine translations of the Bible which practically agreed with our modern text, and we also had the writings of the Fathers of the first six centuries, all of which were evidences of the substantial sameness of our Bible. There need therefore be no doubt in the mind of any one as to the genuineness of the sacred text. Of course there will be improved readings, but these do not affect a single fact, or doctrine, or duty of any importance. The more careful comparison which can be made of manuscripts, versions, and various readings the better; still the ordinary Bible-student may rest assured that our Bible is, on the whole, just as the inspired writers left it. A revision therefore of our present translation, while it may secure an improved and corrected text, should not lead us to cast any doubt on the accuracy of the blessed Book itself. The next question which the lecturer proposed to answer was this: Is our present authorized English version of the New Testament a correct translation? In other words, does it truly represent the meaning of the Greek original? In discussing this division of his subject, Dr. Angus incidentally remarked that the work of revision had been going on for seven years, and would probably occupy three more. It was rendered needless partly by the fact that we had between twenty and thirty different translations, and because, since our authorized version had been made, our language had so much changed that the meaning of the New Testament was not so clear as it ought to be. Indeed, in a great number of passages the meaning was concealed, and there were about 200 words of which the old sense had been completely lost. Another serious point in the English version was the different translations of the Greek words, the effect of which was most disastrous. This was partly owing to inability to translate properly, and principally to the fact that the books of the Bible were divided amongst the translators, each company carried out their own ideas. Now, however, the whole of the books were being revised by the whole of the revisers together. When the work was done Christians would find the same testimony that they had been using from childhood; and although there had been many changes, chapter after chapter would be read without our observing the changes, unless by comparison. They would have substantially the same text and the same translation; and he held that in these speculative times it was worth while for fifty men to spend ten years of their lives simply to obtain this negative result.

From this testimony of Dr. Angus we are warranted in expecting the results from the learning, piety and prudence which the revisers have brought to their great work. We believe that the new version will not only gradually supersede the old, but that the change will be made without any great shock produced by violent and unnecessary alterations. The work will be well and wisely done, will be a permanent gain to the cause of truth, and for long generations to come will contribute to the intelligence and spiritual power of the English-speaking churches.—*Canadian Baptist.*

An Illinois sensationalist preached on "the funeral of Judas Iscariot." Handbills were placed round town on Saturday. A jovial brother appended to one of the handbills: "Relatives and friends of the deceased are cordially invited to be present." The house was full.

A Great Risk.

In business matters, men demand certainty. A doubt is ruinous. A shade is almost as fatal to credit as a confessed bankruptcy. If a bank or insurance company be under suspicion of unsoundness nobody will entrust his property to its keeping. Men will not put their money into a "perhaps," unless indeed there is a prospect of great gains to effect by the risk. And even then, the man who does it is looked upon rather as a speculator, and loses the confidence of business men. His notes are regarded with suspicion, and his name as an endorser adds nothing to the value of a promise, but rather damages it. Men do not wait to have it proved that a concern is hopelessly bankrupt. They say: why should we run any risk, gratuitously and needlessly?

Is there not in all this a lesson bearing on the question of future punishment, which at present occupies the public mind? Can any one prove that there is no hell? Has any one dared to assert that there is no future punishment? On the contrary those who have been quoted and claimed for the gospel of doubt, do but affirm: "We do not find the eternity of punishment positively affirmed in the Bible." And the leading Universalist clergyman of Chicago, in a letter which we quoted last week, begs his brethren not to lose sight of the fact "there is a hell." And the hopes that are held out of a future probation passed under more favorable circumstances than that of this life are merely for the benefit of those who "have not had a chance," of the men who lived in primeval darkness, of the heathen of to-day.

What is the most favorable prospect that is offered to the men who living under the light of Christianity, in the full effulgence of the Gospel, lead a life of sinfulness, worldliness, godlessness? That sin will be attended by punishment, and that the punishment will last as long as the sinfulness; that this sin and punishment will have a duration the limit of which no one defines; that their will perhaps be a probation, though no one can affirm that the conditions of it will be any more favorable to a wise and godly choice than the probation of the present life, but rather all the indications point to the reverse. At the best, it is a tremendous risk. And does a life of worldliness, a youth of recklessness, an old age of regrets, offer such inducements as may justify a man in running this risk?

On the other hand all is certainty. There is a heaven; by a life of piety, purity, benevolence, by a life of trust in the divine man Christ Jesus, imitation of his example, obedience to his commands, we may infallibly secure it; we may possess already the foretaste of it in our own souls, and may enter upon the full enjoyment of it from the moment of our release from the body. Is it wise to neglect this certainty for the *perhaps* of a heaven to be reached after nobody knows how many "æons" of separation from God, of sin, of remorse?—*N. Bap.*

Love, it has been said, descends more abundantly than it ascends. The love of parents for children has always been far more powerful than that of children for their parents; and who among the sons of men ever loved God with a thousandth part of the love which God has manifested to us?—*Augustus Hare.*

If a man be visited with a providential reverse of circumstances; if he be under oppression; if he be arrested by disease; if the delight of his eyes be taken away; methinks I hear God saying, "Take the medicine; it is exactly suited to your case; weighed out by my own hands; take this medicine from me."—*Cecil.*

Mind not much who is with thee, or who is against thee; but take care that God may be with thee, in everything thou doest.—*Thomas a Kempis.*

Get, that you may give; and fail not to give, when you have got!

Notes on the Lord's Commission. No. 3.

BY AN OLD SOLDIER.

We have shown that the Lord Jesus, when he met his disciples on the mountain in Galilee, gave them a Commission, charging them to convey the glad tidings of the redemption to all nations, and to "preach the gospel to every creature."

We have maintained that those who were there assembled, and to whom the Commission was given, were the existing Church, so that it is proper to say, the Commission was given to the Church, not to the eleven apostles only.

That this is the right interpretation may be further argued from the conduct of the Church during the first persecution. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere, preaching the word." (Acts viii. 4). They believed that they had the Commission, and they took it with them. They went forth and preached everywhere" (Mark xvi. 20).

The Commission was given to the people—the people. Apostles died—prophets died—Evangelists died—Pastors and Teachers passed away. But the family did not become extinct. Divine grace has kept up the succession, and the Lord has continually provided instruments for his work.

Every Christian Church should regard itself as entrusted with the Commission, and bound to carry it into effect. Every member of the church is also bound to be a witness and "fellow-helper to the truth," and a worker for the Lord. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter iv. 10).

Is the Church established in a town or city? No better plan can be adopted than that which was adopted at Hamburg, where Dr. Oncken has labored so long and so successfully. That Church was formed in 1834, of seven persons, baptized in the Elbe by Dr. Sears. It was a working church from the beginning. "There is not" it was said, "a member of the church who is not engaged, one way or another, in promoting the extension of Christ's kingdom." The members met regularly for worship on Lord's day mornings. In the afternoons they assembled again, and they were drafted off in pairs to the various sections of the city, where they visited the people, house by house, conversing with them on the salvation! exhorting them to forsake their sins and receive Christ, and distributing copies of the Scriptures and of religious tracts. Thus they all preached the gospel, and sought to make disciples. And what a blessing followed! That church has become a mother of churches. The statistics of January, 1876, were: 110 churches, holding 1,246 stations, with 22,504 members, and 5,954 Sunday Scholars. "If these 22,504 members are distributed over the different countries in which they live, the following picture is presented: North-western Germany, 2,487; Prussia, 8,485; Middle and South Germany, 2,176; Holland, 136; Switzerland, 418; Denmark, 2,006; Poland, 1657; Russia, 4,560; Turkey, 121; Africa, (British Caffraria), 458" (*Baptist Missionary Magazine*, July, 1877).

The church in London, over which the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon presides, numbers more than five thousand. One hundred and twenty-five of them are preachers, who are regularly engaged on Lord's days (many of them at other times also) in preaching the gospel in the back streets and suburbs of the metropolis.

If all the churches of the various denominations in London were to adopt the same course, what a noble army of preachers would be constantly engaged in the holy war, and how much less should we hear of the difficulty of gaining the attention of the masses!

Is the church settled in a village, or country station? Measures of the same kind may be employed, but with some variations in the arrangements.

The church workers may possibly be able, in many places, to meet on Saturday afternoons, and allot the districts to the visitors, who will discharge their duties on the afternoons of the Lord's days. Every church has a certain amount of population to be brought under its influence, and within that range to "preach the gospel to every creature." Till that is accomplished, the purpose of the Commission is not fulfilled.

Then, as God said of his gracious promises to Israel, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37), it is incumbent on God's people to "pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Near thirty years ago I heard one of our ministers (he still lives) preach an eloquent sermon at an Association. In his concluding remarks he dwelt with great earnestness on the duty of prayer. "Give me a praying church," he said, at the commencement of several paragraphs, and thus proceeded to show what glorious results would follow. "We propose a slight addition—'Give me a praying and working church.' Let all the churches become praying and working churches, and we shall soon hear Zion exclaiming, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?' (Isa. lx. 8).

There are 24,606 Baptist churches on this Continent of North America, containing 2,086,417 members. Making due allowance for sickness, family cares, and unavoidable hindrances, let it be supposed that one million of these members can spend two hours each every Lord's day in home missionary work. This provides fifty-two millions of district visits in a year, as the result of Baptist labour in North America. If all other Evangelical denominations should be engaged in the same manner, what a glorious amount of holy aggression on ignorance and irreligion shall we have! Add to this the evangelical Christians in all other parts of the world, and millions on millions will be found occupied in the heavenly enterprise, and entreating their fellow-men to be reconciled to God.

It must not be overlooked, that a large portion of the gospel labour which should be performed by the churches, committed to societies or commuted for money. Many a Christian professor is excused from personal labour by a very moderate payment, and agents do the work which should be done by the churches. That this, in the present state of society, is to a great extent a necessary evil, is admitted: but it is questionable whether our "Master and Lord" looks with complacency on all the cases of excuse-making which continually occur, inflicting serious loss on the cause of God. It surely behoves the churches, and all members of the churches, to institute rigid inquiry into the manner in which they are treating the Saviour's Commission. Many, it is to be feared, ignore it altogether, or adjust their responsibilities by some other rule, self-imposed, or at least of human invention but always below the divine standard of obligation—a make-shift, which will not be accepted in the court of heaven. The answer to the question, "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?"—recognizable by enlightened conscience, will differ greatly, in large numbers of witnesses, from the estimates which are assumed to represent the indebtedness of God's servants. A general revision appears to be called for, which shall deliver the operations of benevolence and zeal from the hap-hazardness so to speak, to which the giving and doing of some of God's people are too frequently consigned.

The Lord's declaration, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," is perhaps too little regarded by us. Dr. Watts says:—

"His mercy visits every house That pay their night and morning vows; But makes a more delightful stay Where churches meet to praise and pray."