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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
Am I my Brother's Keeper?

Vain impious words! shall mortal dare
Before high Heaven's Sovereign Lord,
To question what is written here
Within the pages of His Word?

When God declares the sinner's blood
He will require at others' hands,
Shall we withhold the help that we
Could give, to break sin's iron bands?

Content, can we, when thoughtless ones
Are hastening on the downward road—
Sit idly by, care ONLY that
Ourselves have made our peace with
God?

And shall we find in Holy Writ
Sweet promises to cheer our heart,
Nor tell a burdened anxious one
That here, he too, may have a part?

Nay, Christian, lead a CHRISTIAN life,
Let darling sins be laid aside;
Remember, not for us alone,
But ALL MANKIND, the Saviour died.

Be not partakers of their sins;
But give the kindly warning word,
Reach gladly forth the helping hand,
To lead some wanderer to the Lord.

For if our hearts but loved the work
Of pointing sinners to the Lamb,
Quickly the question's form would change
To, "I my brother's keeper am." N.

March 24th, 1880.

Religious.

Saw-Mill Theology.

AT IT AGAIN ON "FORE-ORDINATION."

Jim Manly had a bit of unfinished controversy to settle with Deacon Thresher. So last evening when there was a lull in the conversation, he began again.

It will be remembered they started out to discuss Election, but had gone rather into a discussion of Fore-ordination. The reason for this was, that a twist had been given in that direction, "and besides," the deacon added, "the real difficulties lay in Fore-ordination in as much as Fore-ordination involved the putting forth of actual efficiency to accomplish the result; whereas, Election did not involve the application of any force towards the parties concerned, but meant simply the process which took place in the Divine mind as to what it would not do." For the deacon made and emphasized this special point: "that so far as the lost sinner is concerned, what God has really Fore-ordained is this: He has Fore-ordained that the sinner shall be punished with death, either in person, or in a responsible representative; but he has not fore-ordained that any man shall be a sinner whether or no, God has nothing whatever to do with making a man to be a sinner."

Manly objected to the last statement on the ground that it evaded the real difficulty as he thought. He would admit that God had nothing to do with making any man directly a sinner. But his point was that sinners were made so in a measure by circumstances and antecedents, and that God had control of these circumstances. He controlled the remote beginnings, if not the immediate causes.

Deacon Thresher joined issue at once. "Stop a moment, neighbor! You have a fallacy concealed there of the worst kind. The question is not whether an Almighty God could not have interfered to prevent the will-actions of free agents whom he had made; the question is, did God move men's wills to sinful desires and sinful thoughts? I say, No. Neither did he produce that particular combination of circumstances which you say results in sin, or makes it easy to sin. Perhaps that is the point you want me to meet."

"Yes," said Manly, "that is the point. And now if you say there are combinations of circumstances in this world which God did not produce, and which God does not control, then you say virtually that there is another creative agency, and another superintending agency, besides his."

"Stop again. I do not say that there

are combinations of conditions which God does not control. He does control them as he wishes, in this way or that, as he may elect. But I do not hesitate to affirm that there are combinations of conditions in this world which God did not cause. God has made free agents and intelligent agents, and the very fact of them being intelligent and free, implies a power on their part to produce certain independent results. Any other view would make God the author of all the plots, and the machinations, and all the mischief that is conceived and hatched in all the world. As an illustration of what I mean, take whiskey for example. Now God did indeed make the corn and the rye, and he did make the water that is used for the mash; and the copper that is converted into a still. But he did not make the still-worm, and he did not make the whiskey. The continuation of agencies, and the process by which corn is converted into something hitherto not in existence, is *man's own work*, for which he is himself exclusively responsible. God did not make whiskey, nor did he make gun-powder, nor did he make a thousand things by which men entice and destroy each other.

"Your idea, neighbor Manly, is that I must avoid the theological stumbling block of admitting that God is not the exclusive Creator. I shall not hesitate there a moment. There are some things in the universe that God did not create. He did not create sin; he did not create the Devil.

"Aha!" said Manly, "now I have you. Then the Devil created himself—he is underived, he is self-existent."

"Gently, Manly, gently. Don't be sure you have me. You have something. Well so be it. But when a man fishing gets something on his hook, before he shouts, he had better wait till he pulls it out of the water to see whether he has got a fish or a frog. I repeat my remark, God did not create the Devil. What he did create was an angel of Light possessed of enormous power and capacity—a prince among the angels. This prince among the angels turned himself into a Devil. His original substance is derived from God; but his devilism was the product of his own intellect, his own imagination, his own aspirations, and his own self-acting will. So I say that God made the angel, but the Devil made himself. The same thing is being initiated every day. There is that fellow that was sentenced to state-prison the other day. He had a pious mother who gave him his being; but his pious mother did not make him the horse-thief that he is.

"And that reminds me of Bob Ingersoll, who is going up and down the land airing his blasphemy to everybody who will pay the price of a ticket to hear it. Bob is much exercised to know where the Devil came from. He thinks he puts Christian people in a dilemma. If they reply that God made him, then Bob thinks he has logically fastened the origin of the evil on the just Judge of all the earth. But if Christians say the devil made himself, then he cries out 'Aha! aha!' just as neighbour Jim has done, then the Devil is self-existent. Now, Bob is able to provide himself an answer to this question from his own history. I have heard from good authority that Bob's father was a worthy Presbyterian preacher in Northern Ohio. Now let me put the question, Who was the author of that blasphemous platform speaker? If you say Bob's father was, then you make that good man sleeping quietly in his grave the author of all that ribaldry and blasphemy that Bob is belching out wherever he goes. The old Presbyterian is the blasphemer. But if you say, No! Bob's father is not the author; then, aha! aha! Bob has no progenitor, but he begat himself. What nonsense. The simple truth is that Bob as a child derived his life from his father, but as a blasphemer, Bob has created himself. So he can answer the question as to where the Devil came from without bothering other people whose minds are made up on the subject.

"Don't say that in attributing to Satan and to bad men a kind of creatorship in this way, I am running counter to the Bible, for I am not. God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. There is the very doctrine plainly stated. 'Inventions' that means new things, new contrivances, new ideas, not known before. And mark you, these inventions were not suggested to them from outside. Man 'sought them out.' He pondered matters over in his mind, thought of this possible combination and that possible variation, and that other possible modification or alteration, until some new conception of folly or wickedness came into his mind as the result of the free use of his faculties dealing with such material as he had at hand.

"In this way did Satan invent a lie and invent sin. He is the first one that ever conceived the possibility. Nobody before him had ever told a lie. Nobody had ever thought of a lie. And so the Saviour attributes this kind of creatorship to him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. God has made a thousand constituent elements of things. When properly combined they result in goodness and blessing. But man dissociates them, recombinates them, and then the outcome is sin and death. Every sinner on the face of the earth is not only an heir of transmitted sinfulness, but he is a creator of sin—he is a sin-maker." And so the Deacon went on picking Manly's argument to pieces. Jim muttered something about man's "environment" inclining him to evil, to which the Deacon replied, that whatever was evil in man's environment did not come from God, but from the Devil, and from previous generations of sinners.

It will be seen that Election was not touched after all. And your reporter was glad for one that it was not. I am afraid that the shingle-piles have not heard the last of the tussle between them. But Nelson Wheelers' turning down the lights stopped the controversy and all hands were soon on the way to their homes.—*Stub Pen. in N. Bap.*

The last Healing Miracle of the Christ.

BY REV. JOHN STOCK, LL.D.

"And He touched his ear and healed him." Luke xxii. 51.

1. It is noteworthy that Luke is the only evangelist who narrates the fact that this miracle of healing was wrought. Matthew, Mark, and John all, like Luke, record that the blow was struck and the ear severed; but Luke is the only one of the four who tells us, not only that the hurt was healed, but how the healing was effected. "And He touched his ear and healed him." Now this is a beautiful illustration of the distinct character of each gospel. Luke was "the beloved physician," Col. iv. 14. It was not at all likely that an accomplished disciple of Hippocrates, and a follower of the healing art, would fail to record this miraculous cure and the method of its accomplishment. No, a physician would surely record this "case," whoever else might omit it, thus affording a striking example of the human element in the Holy Scriptures, notwithstanding their plenary inspiration by the Holy Spirit. Each scribe wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit, but each wrote as his own education and tastes led him. The mental and moral idiosyncrasy of every one was not annihilated, but taken under Divine control, and made subsidiary to the production of a perfect, because many-sided record. Luke is "the doctor" consistently and everywhere.

2. The probabilities are that the ear was not struck completely off, but that it hung down by a small thread of flesh. The Lord replaced the ear in its natural position, and by His simple touch at once perfected the healing process, so that not even a scar remained to indicate that the member had ever been severed. The blow was evidently aimed at the skull, the object

being to cleave the head in two. But in the darkness, broken only by the fitful gleams of the torches and lamps, it was easy for Peter's unpracticed hand to miss its mark. The blow, instead of falling full upon the skull, glanced down the side of the head, and severed the ear.

3. Jesus "healed him!" Here was a wondrous exhibition of Divine power given at the moment when our Lord was about to surrender Himself into the hands of his enemies, and to endure stripes, and wounds, and the bitterest pangs of death. His visage was soon to be marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men. The ploughers were to make broad their furrows upon his back. His temples were to be torn with a crown of thorns; His hands and feet were to be pierced with the cruel nails, and His heart divided with the spear. In His unutterable agony He would soon be heard uttering the piteous wail, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" All the waves and billows of sorrow were to go over Him. He was to sink in deep waters, where there was no standing. His outward appearance would be one of the deepest wretchedness and utter helplessness.

And yet, with one touch of that hand so soon to be nailed to the cross. He healed this maimed man. Thus He proved that in His power were the issues of life and of death; that no man could take His life from Him without His consent; that He had power to lay it down, and power to take it again. The bright beams of saving power shone all the more brightly when they fell across the dark background of the utter humiliation of that terrible period; just as a little after, when impaled upon the cross, amid His agony and blood, He first made the blaspheming thief a humble penitent, and then bade him welcome to the splendours of Paradise. Never were humiliation and majesty so combined as they were in the closing scene of the earthly career of the Messiah. When nearest death and the tomb He proved His own power to heal both body and soul.

4. In this incident we see another illustration of the Saviour's gentle and forgiving spirit. The murderous band had come to seize Him, and were thirsting for His sacred blood. No thought of mercy towards Jesus of Nazareth entered into their hard hearts. They were set on His death by the most frightful process of crucifixion. The man whose ear was severed was a servant of the high priest—the willing tool of an implacable hater of Jesus of Nazareth. Both master and man were of one spirit; their resolve was that this time at least their victim should not escape them, but should be made to drain the bitter dregs of the cup of shame and agony. Jesus must die, and His death be made as painful and shameful as possible. And yet the Saviour's meek and gentle spirit prompted Him to return them good for evil. They came to slay Him, but He was among them to heal and to save them. He could have smitten them to the earth by the slumbering thunderbolts of His wrath, but He gave them healing and blessing instead. To the last He illustrated His own words:—"The son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."

5. By this act of healing our Lord proved that, in laying the foundations of His kingdom among men, He would have no blood to shed but His own. Peter had drawn the sword without his Master's permission to do so. But the act was utterly repugnant to the will of our Lord. He had come to lay the foundations of His kingdom over human souls by the sacrifice of His life as our ransom and substitute. His own cross was to be the basis of His throne. "Ought not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?"

Earthly empires have been created by the slaughter of millions of lives upon the battle-field. The mighty warrior has led forth his hosts to the destruction of his enemies, and often to the sacrifice of their own lives. The empires of Sesostris, of Assyria, of

Medo-Persia, of Macedon, of Rome, of Mahomet, of Charlemagne, of Napoleon 1., and our own empire in India, have all been won at the sword's point, and by the slaughter of hecatombs of victims. But when Jesus would win a universal kingdom over human hearts and consciences, no one must die but Himself. Peter is told to put up his sword in its sheath, that Jesus alone may suffer, and the mischief which that sword had wrought when drawn, Jesus repairs. The King Himself must die that He may conquer human souls, and become Lord of consciences. He must have an absolute monopoly of the sufferings which are to bring Him into a seat on the right hand of His Father's throne.

There is no other example of the kind in the history of our planet. No other king has ever died to reign, or passed from crucifixion to sovereignty. But there are at this moment millions of men and women in all parts of our world, speaking different languages, who would shed the last drop of their blood rather than renounce their allegiance to the Crucified One. Jesus reigns, and He reigns because He died. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.)

6. The events which followed this act of healing show the blindness and infatuation of unbelief and hate.

One would have thought that such a display of Divine power, and of pity for men who were thirsting for His blood, would have disarmed the hostility of His foes. Surely they will pause in their impious career in the presence of such majesty and unmerited compassion. But no, they rushed onward in their pursuit of the Saviour's life, their hearts unsoftened, their souls untouched. This miraculous display of pity for His enemies no more deterred them from their purpose than a straw would stem the rush of a mountain torrent.

Hatred and unbelief have no feeling. They are blind. They have no eye to perceive the pleasantest evidences. The very men who saw our Lord raise Lazarus from the dead went away and plotted his death. They said, "This man doeth many miracles." What then? Shall we believe in His Divine mission? No! kill Him out of the way.

The root of unbelief is in a depraved heart. The evidence of our Saviour's Divine mission was clear enough. It was not more abundant proof that these men wanted, but a renewed heart. "How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John v. 44. "The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not seek after God." Psalm x. 4. Miracles are evidence of a special Divine interposition, but they have no power to change the heart, or to destroy prejudice. Scarcely had the voice of God ceased to announce "I am the Lord thy God who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;" "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," (Exodus xx. 2, 3, when the Israelites made a golden calf to worship, and dared to mingle the wild shouts of their idolatrous mirth with the rolling thunders of the Divine presence. The probabilities are that this very servant of the high priest joined as loudly as the rest in the awful cry, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

The union of matter and form makes a body; the union of body and soul together makes a man; and the union of man and Christ makes a Christian and sap from this root makes him a growing one.—*Ralph Erskine.*

The best fidelity to Christ is shown in a daily vigilant service to Him in trifles, in efforts to honor Him in humble, inconspicuous service, such as in good temper in families, sympathy with man and beast, honesty in business, liberality to servants, fidelity to employ-