

**Sunday Reading.**

For the Christian Messenger.

*Dear Brother,*

In looking over some old papers the other day, I came across the following beautiful and touching lines, written on a slip of paper, in shorthand. I do not know who the author was. But I am sure all the lovers of piety and poetry among your readers will be edified by their perusal, and so I have copied them out for the Messenger.

S. T. R.

**Enoch walked with God.**

To walk with God! O fellowship divine!  
Man's highest state on earth! Lord! be it mine!

With Him may I a close communion hold,  
To Him the deep recesses of my heart unfold,  
Yes! tell it all; each weary care and grief,  
Into thy bosom pour, till there I find relief.

Oh! let me walk with thee! Thou Mighty One!  
Lean on thy arm, and trust thy love alone!  
With thee hold converse sweet; where'er I go,

Thy smiles of love my highest bliss below,  
With thee transact life's business doing all,  
With single aim for thee! as thou dost call.

My every comfort at thy hand receive,  
My every talent to thy glory give;  
Thy counsel seek in every trying hour,  
In all my weakness trust thy mighty power  
Oh may this high companionship be mine!  
And all my life by its reflection shine!

My great, my wise, my never-failing Friend,  
Whose love no change can know, no turn, no end,  
My Saviour-God! who gavest thy life for me,

Let nothing come between my heart and thee!  
From thee no thought, no secret would I keep,  
But on thy breast my tears of anguish weep.

My every wound to thee I take to heal,  
For thou art touched with every pain I feel;  
O Friend of friends! the Faithful, True and Tried!

In thee and thee alone I now confide!  
Earth's broken cisterns! ah! they all have proved,  
Unsatisfying, vain, however loved!

The false have failed; the fondest, they must go,  
Oh! thus it is with all we love below!  
From things of earth, then let my heart be free,

And find its happiness, my Lord, in thee,  
Thy Holy Spirit for my Guide and Guest,  
Whatever my lot, I must be safe and blest.

Washed in thy blood; from all my guilt made clean,  
I in thy righteousness alone am seen,  
Thy home my home; Thy God and Father mine,

Dead to the world, my life is hid with thine,  
Earth highest honours fade before my view,  
Its pleasures—I can trample on them too.

With thee by faith I walk in crowds alone,  
Making to thee my wants and wishes known,  
Drawing from thee my daily strength in prayer,

I find thine arm sustaining every where,  
While through the clouds of woe and sin the light  
Of coming glory shines more sweetly bright.  
Be this my daily boast, my aim and end,  
With thee to walk, Redeemer, God, and Friend.

**The Preacher's Portrait.**

BY W. H. PORTER.

Suggested by the recent death of Rev. S. W. deBlois, D. D. for near 29 years pastor of Horton Church, and successor of Rev. T. H. Harding, who was pastor of the same church for 60 years—

From life's upland, looking either way, toward the sunset and the dawn, as an incentive and an inspiration to those coming, I have simply aimed with borrowed colors, to fill up and present that master sketch of a model preacher Ecc. xii. 9-11. "Behold the picture!"

First, and most prominently, "stands the preacher, messenger of truth, the legate of the skies."

And next, his preaching, and the effects of it.

"His theme divine. His office sacred, his credentials clear." No trace is given of the preacher's age, size, manner, appearance, canonicals even; but of himself, the outline is inimitable.

Evidently, the most important feature in the mind of the delineator, was, his wisdom.

"The preacher was wise."

But as the painter puts himself—though unconsciously—as well as the subject, into his picture, this is simply what might be expected of one, who asked for himself neither long life, nor

riches, nor the life of his enemies, but understanding," who said, "Wisdom is the principal thing. She is more precious than rubies and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her."

It is "the principal thing" for any one; but especially for him who is to be "a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes;" God's "messenger of truth" to erring men.

"The preacher" was no "blind leader of the blind," vainly expected and endeavouring to "read a book that was sealed." "Because the preacher was wise he still taught the people knowledge."

He "spoke that which he did know, and testified what he had seen." He "neither received it of men, nor was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." "For the Lord giveth wisdom and understanding." And so, being "taught of God," he was "able to teach others also;" and "the people came to hear the wisdom that God had put into his heart."

But in spite of the preacher's wisdom, nay, in consequence of it, he was A LEARNER.

He kept bearing fruit by continuing to grow. It was not enough that he had "come to great estate, and had gotten more wisdom than all they that were before him;" but he "increased—added thereto." Hirschfelder, "a wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels."

"He applied his heart to know, and to search, and to find out wisdom." "He gave good heed—an attentive ear." Lange,—"and sought out many proverbs,—parables." He "gave attendance to reading." He "separated himself and intermeddled with all wisdom," "giving himself wholly to it that his profiting might appear unto all."

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual," he "meditated therein," till he became "wiser than his enemies, and had more understanding than all his teachers." And so while "skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn," were restlessly ever on the wing, seeking new fields for their scant seed, "He ne'er had changed, nor wished to change his place," but like the "scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, he brought forth out of his treasure things new and old," and "continued to teach the people knowledge." But not without close application and

SEVERE LABOR

did the preacher keep in advance of the times, and still continue to teach the people knowledge."

"He gave good heed, and sought out many proverbs." He quarried in the mines, and dug in the fields of truth; He sought for wisdom, "as for silver; and searched for it, as for hid treasure." He "cried after knowledge, and lifted up his voice for understanding;" and searched the scripture, saying, "open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." He "set his heart to understand, and to chasten himself before God; seeking by prayer and supplication," to know the verities of which he spoke.

He gave himself, like the Apostles "continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word," and so, like Apollos, became "mighty in the scriptures;" "an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit," "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

And such becomes an "ambassador for Christ," God's messenger of truth to men. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." And thus he says, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers; to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood."

"Come as a teacher sent from God, Charged his whole counsel to declare. Lilt o'er our ranks the prophet's rod Upheld by power divine and prayer."

But "not of constraint, or of necessity," but

WILLINGLY,

Yea, "very gladly would he spend

and be spent for the people." He even gloried in the privilege; and "magnified his office." "He thanked Christ Jesus in that he had counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry." Not for his own glory, gain, or delectation, did he apply himself to understand and to "teach the people knowledge." "Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise."

"Woe to the shepherds who feed themselves. Should not the shepherd feed the flocks." And so while others were seeking their own aggrandizement or gratification, he could "endure all things for the elect's sake." "Being affectionately desirous of them, he was willing to impart unto them, not the gospel of God only, but also his own soul because they were dear unto him." He could even "wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren," and to be made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some."

"He loved his charge: no wealth could dare With its most priceless worth to vie. Suns, systems, worlds, how mean they are, Compared with souls that cannot die."

They were his "joy and crown."

They might have instructors, but he was a father. And so with a patience and perseverance, born of love, "he continued to teach the people knowledge." And that too, with

HEROIC COURAGE.

Undaunted by opposition, passion, or prejudice, such as would have made an Elijah wish that he might die; or a Jeremiah say, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name," he could say, "none of these things move me." "Whether men would hear, or whether they would forbear," he "kept back nothing that was profitable to them," and "shunned not to declare unto them all the counsel of God." "The love of Christ constrained" him, like Cicero for the Republic, or like Paul for the Saviour, he could say "I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus."

And so he was

PERSEVERING.

Not easily discouraged by present, partial, or apparent failure. While others were relinquishing "hard fields," and despondently saying: "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught," he was "patient, in meekness instructing those that opposed themselves: if God peradventure would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." "In the morning sowing his seed, and in the evening withholding not his hand; knowing not whether should prosper either this or that, or whether they both should be alike good." Like "the husbandman, waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, having long patience for it, until he received the early and the latter rain" and so "he continued to teach the people knowledge." But not with mere patience and perseverance only, but with confidence and hope. He "so run, not as uncertainly." He believed in God, and in his promises; that, "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." That God's "word shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he has pleased, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he has sent it." And so "he continued to teach the people knowledge," confident that "in due season he should reap if he waited not."

But the preacher exercised

SKILL AND INGENUITY

in "rightly dividing the word of life." "He sought out, and set in order many parables." He so arranged and marshaled his living thoughts, his "gathered sentences," as to make them as clear, and telling as possible. He "wrote the vision, and made it plain, that he might run that readeth it." He uttered truth

—in language plain;  
—and much impressed

Himself, as conscious of his awful charge, And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds May feel it too."

"Commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." But the preacher took equal pains to make his teaching

ATTRACTIVE AND INTERESTING.

"He sought to find out acceptable words:"—to clothe and present his

parables in the most attractive and interesting manner possible. He was "unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument."

"And, as a bird each fond endearment tries To tempt its new fledged offspring to the skies,  
He tried each art, reprieved each dull delay, Allured to brighter worlds and led the way."

Yet, "not with enticing words of man's wisdom, or with philosophy and vain deceit;" avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called; he gave "sound speech that could not be condemned." He was "in doctrine

UNCORRUPT."

"That which he wrote was upright, even words of truth." "Not as many who corrupt the word of God," or "handle it deceitfully," "giving heed to fables that turn from the truth:" the preacher "heard the word from God's mouth and gave the people warning from him." "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Knowing the terror of the Lord, he persuaded men," and besought them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. "Holding fast the form of sound words," he "exhorted, reproved and admonished, with all long suffering and doctrine."

"Unpracticed he to fame or seek for power, By doctrines fashioned to the passing hour." "By him the violated law spoke out its thunders, And by him, in strains as sweet as angels use,  
The gospel whispered peace."

And how easy from the character of the man, to learn

THE CHARACTER OF HIS PREACHING.

How instructive, and profitable. How earnest and persuasive. How clear and forcible. How attractive and interesting. How honest and faithful. And above all how effective.

"Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,  
And fools who came to scoff, remained to pray."

"The words of the wise are as goads;" "like piercing goads their gathered sentences." Lange, "Sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," pricking men in the heart, and causing them to cry out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" His preaching proved the power of God unto salvation. "And so he could say, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power."

"At his control  
Dispair and anguish fled the struggling soul. Comfort came down the sinking heart to raise,  
And his last trembling accents whispered praise."

But not to impel from sin to safety, merely, were the preacher's "sentences" uttered, but to urge the saved to greater spiritual speed and service. To inspire and stimulate the Christian ranks to greater zeal and activity. Thus the preacher gave to the people line upon line;" affirming those things confidently, to the end, that they who had believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." But not saying "go" to the people, and "binding heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, that he would not lift with one of his fingers;" but "come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." "Follow me, as I follow Christ." "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

And so the preaching was strengthening to the people. "Like nails fastened" in the spiritual building, "confirming the souls of the disciples;" drawing and binding them more closely and firmly together, and to the sure foundation, the "one Shepherd."

And thus when Christ "ascended up on high, he gave some—pastors and teachers,—for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And so, as we take a passing glance at "the preacher," "how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace." "Standing and feeding in the strength of the Lord."

"He establishes the strong, restores the weak. Reclaims the wanderer, blinds the broken heart,  
And armed himself with panoply complete. Of heavenly temper, furnished with arms Bright as his own, and trains by every rule Of holy discipline to glorious war The sacramental host of God's elect."

**The Sneer.**

There are some things that exert an immense power in the world without seeming to have anything in themselves to warrant it. The effect seems wholly disproportionate to the cause. We see changes wrought in people's plans and conduct, important enough to have sprung from some weighty reason; and when we trace them back, we find them produced by something so petty and trivial, that we can hardly realize the connection. Such an influence in human life is the sneer. In itself it is insignificant and worthless. It has in it neither argument nor reason; it appeals neither to the authority of long-tryed usage, nor to the conviction of a new-found truth. It contains neither dignity sincerity, nor sympathy. It is founded on no serious regard for right conduct, nor righteous displeasure against mis-doing. It is, indeed, utterly destitute of a single benevolent emotion or kindly desire.

**The Doctrine of the New Birth.**

BY THE REV. J. HUNT COOKE

The first lesson given by the Great Teacher cannot but be highly important. It was at Jerusalem. A certain magistrate came to Him for instruction. He came by night. This might have been because the Rabbi thought night was the best time to study the law. It might have been from fear of men. It can hardly be a figurative expression, revealing the benighted state of Nicodemus (as Hengstenberg suggests). It possibly showed promptitude in embracing the earliest opportunity (as Lyra intimates). It might have been to teach, 'There is no time at which He does not receive' (as Bengel says). It may indicate the full occupation of our Lord during the day. It surely teaches that there was full time for the consideration of the business. Here, then, was the Teacher sent from God. And here was a candid, devout, cultured gentleman seeking His instruction. Our attention ought to be intense. The first lesson was, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' In order that there might be no mistake, the truth is re-asserted in similar words. And yet a third time, with personal application, 'Ye must be born again.'

This truth takes a prominent position in the sublime preface to the fourth Gospel. The sons of God are stated to have been born—not of blood, which is Establishmentarianism; not of the will of the flesh, which is Rationalism; not of the will of man, which is Sacramentalism—but of God. And the truth which lays the axe at the root of these three forms of error is the true doctrine of conversion.

Is this truth kept in the foreground of the modern pulpit? It is not asserted in the Articles of the Church of England. It is expressly abrogated by the Christening Liturgy. The tendency of modern thought is antagonistic. Do our Evangelical ministers assert this as uncompromisingly as our Lord did to Nicodemus? There is a widespread complaint of fewness of conversions. Can this be traced to a feeble faith in the necessity of the new birth, and hence a less ardent proclamation?

Recently in one of our worldly papers there was a criticism on a living preacher whose ministry is singularly blessed with conversions. The writer quoted what he considered a peculiarity. The minister addressed his congregation as though he thought it consisted of two classes, and but two. The one lost, the other saved. This line of demarcation is not in accordance with modern taste. The writer thought it effective. We ask, is it right? Ought devout, cultured people, living clean and respectable lives, to be clasped with drunken sots as lost souls? Is it right to preach the same doctrine to a religious, church-going lady, as to her impertinent, foolish servant? Is it really true that decent people in this nineteenth Christian century ought to be told, 'Ye must be born again?'

There never was a time when the bold declaration of the Scripture teaching was more needed. Men are either in Christ or out of Christ. If out of Christ there is no difference. The more men resemble Nicodemus the clearer reason for preaching to them what Christ preached to Nicodemus. For dealing with respectable and candid en-

quiers there is a clear example. In imitating Jesus Christ as a teacher, it is not to low people, alone, but to the gentry as well, that the necessity of conversion must be brought home. Now, as in every age, there are Spirited men who fully recognize this truth, and act upon it. But there is wavering in some directions. The right weapon to deal with modern doubt is ancient faith. The true preacher is a herald with whom it is of the first importance to clearly and unhesitatingly proclaim a message. The acceptability of its contents is a secondary consideration to the faithfulness of its announcement. The more modern society rebels, the fuller must be the pulpit proclamation to all men, 'Ye must be born again.' The more eager ministers are for converting, the more eager should they be to proclaim to all the absolute necessity of conversion for entrance into, even for the right vision of, the Kingdom of God.

Reader, let no man ever delude you into supposing that you can be happy in this world without repentance. Oh, no! You may laugh and dance, and go upon Sundays in excursion trains, and crack good jokes, and sing good songs, and say, 'Cheer, boys, cheer! and 'There's a good time coming;' but all this is no proof that you are happy. So long as you do not quarrel with sin you will never be truly happy.

**Correspondence.**

For the Christian Messenger.

**The Benefits of Infant Baptism.**

DR. VAN DYKE ON THE TRAINING OF INFANT CHRISTIANS.

If Dr. Van Dyke expounds the Confession of Faith correctly, that document is not scored upon by any Presbyterian Church with which I am acquainted. If his theory were carried out the practical consequences would be of the gravest character. He thus states his views on the proper training of the young:

"The two theories of the Church and of the Sacraments we have endeavored to expound, lie at the base of two entirely different schemes of Christian education; different not only in their positive precepts, but in their pervading spirit, and in the atmosphere they create in the homes where they prevail. The aims of the two schemes are radically distinct. According to the one, parents have a child of Satan, a fallen and unregenerate being, prone to all evil, and incapable of all good, to restrain, to instruct, and to pray over, in the hope that it will one day be converted and made fit to join the church. According to the other scheme, the child is a fellow-member with the parents in the church of Christ, a participant with them in the covenant of grace, a joint heir with them to the same covenant promises, a child of God, whom He has committed to them to be nursed for Him. The reflex influence of the aim pursued will determine the whole educational process. The underlying expectation of the parent will inevitably impress itself upon the character of the child. Any attempt to treat our children inconsistently with our inmost views as to their moral state and their relation to God, will betray and defeat itself in a thousand unconscious ways. And the effect of such self-contradiction will be not only a failure to attain our specific ends, but an impression on the mind of the child that both we and our religion are a pretense and a sham. Dr. Bushnell, in his admirable book on 'Christian Nurture,' does not put the case a whit too strongly when he says: 'it is the very character and mark of all unchristian education, to train up a child for future conversion.' And he is no less correct when he adds, 'The true idea of Christian education is that a child is to grow up a Christian, and never to know himself as being otherwise.' These opposite aims will not only control the hopes of parents, and the instructions through which they seek to be realized, but they will make themselves felt with peculiar power in our treatment of children's faults. It must make a vast difference in our discipline whether we regard their shortcomings and misdoings as the lingering remains of sin in a young Christian, or as the living seeds of all evil in one who is still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity.

The telling of experiences, the fixing of the time, the discovery of the causes, and the description of the process of conversion, have become to a large extent synonymous in the mind of the church with the tests of piety and the evidences of Christian character; while the value or even the possibility of a true Christian experience running back into springs that are hidden and divine, gradually developed like a grain of mustard seed, under the steady influence of Christian culture, not obtaining by its very depth and pervading power all attempts to fix its time and seasons, or describe the successive stages of its growth, is ignored, undervalued, and even condemned as unevangelical. Our children are afraid to claim their birthright privilege, because they have no experiences to tell, and can give no account of their conversion. Instead of being taught that they already belong to the church, and that if they lose the Saviour it is their privilege to come to his table as soon as they understand the meaning of the ordinance, they hear the charge rung about being converted and joining the church, and getting their ideas of conversion from

what the adults of the world, with their hearts full of friends. These sound services in Presb-italicize argume- loves the God, and en- bap- church- Again who has parents ation of the mind a his own Dr. true re- "The without be shou of hour shall not the den- under the out of the pr- the church family of the from a effecti- Who- rev-its orig- ing of would to the Christ of was- broug- as "their 14), b- better- taken- By all which ant a heart christ- women- the w- lives, glorio- "inst- child- princ- the r- those- church- the w- which is " 20), y- as the- of the- The- Acco- Presb- not b- by de- by no- cong- num- enlar- rems- the- stea- entia- tian- "sig- his c- Dr- in- of n- cate- that- Que- 1760- day- of g- it is- dec- lear- ly y- app- nati- own- met- Chr- utt- aut- or- vr- in- out- inf- del- to- the- int- an- aff- bo- of-