

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The two Worlds.

From *The Bird's Nest*.

God's world is bathed in beauty,
God's world is steeped in light,
It is the self-same glory
That makes the day so bright,
Which thrilled the heart with music
Or hangs the stars in light.

In God's world strength is beauty,
And so is beauty strong,
And light—God's glorious shadow—
To both great gifts belong.
And they all melt in sweetness
And fill the earth with song.

God's world has one great echo,
Whether calm blue mists are curled,
Or lingering dew drops quiver,
Or dark storms are unfurled,
The same deep love is throbbing
Through the great heart of God's world.

Man's world is bleak and blighted,
Steeped through with self and sin
And should his feeble purpose
Some noble plan begin,
The work is marred and tainted,
With leprosy within.

Man's world is bleak and bitter
Wherever he has trod,
He spoils the tender beauty
That blossoms on the sod,
And blasts the loving Heaven
Of the great good world of God.

Man's world is pain and terror
He found it pure and fair
And wove in nets of sorrow
The golden Summer air
Black, hideous, cold and dreary
Man's curse, not God's, is there.

And yet God's world is speaking
Man will not hear its call;
But listens where the echoes,
Of his own discords fall;
Then clamors back to Heaven
That God has done it all.

IDA.

Religious.

Elocution in the Pulpit.

Too little attention is paid by many ministers of the gospel to manner and delivery in their pulpit exercises. Success often depends far more on this than on the intrinsic merits of a discourse. Where an effort is required on the part of the people to listen to a speaker, the most elaborate discourses fail to interest and attract. Hearers, on the other hand often lose much of the benefit they might receive by allowing some defect in the preacher's utterance, or his style to deprive them of the thoughts he labours to convey to them.

The following anecdote and reflections from the *Central Presbyterian* are a good illustration of

MANNER IN THE PULPIT.

It is related of the Rev. Samuel Williard, once the minister of the old South Church in Boston, who was a man of eloquence, that he had a son-in-law settled in the ministry in a country parish, not far distant, who was esteemed as a very good man, and a sensible preacher, but whose manner of preaching was somewhat defective. He had frequently preached for Mr. Williard, much to the annoyance of many of the people, and on one such occasion a leading man in the congregation came to Mr. Williard on Monday morning with a request from himself and others that he would not invite Mr. — to preach in his pulpit again, saying that he was a very poor preacher, and they were not edified by his discourses. Mr. Williard apologized politely, and they parted, but before his son-in-law left town, Mr. Williard borrowed his manuscript, saying that he wished to read it, and on the next Sabbath he preached that sermon to his people, without any alteration. The people were delighted, and began to say, "There, see what a man

of talents can do. Mr. — gave us a most miserable, rapid discourse from that text, but now we see how finely Mr. Williard can handle it, &c." and they came to him at once to solicit a copy for the press, and then to their great mortification he told them the whole story. Now whence was all this? It was the manner of delivery, and nothing else.

Facts like these are instructive. They show us the importance of cultivating an acceptable manner in the pulpit, and not only to seek out acceptable words to say, but to say those words in an acceptable manner. The manner of preaching often destroys its effect. Is there not a defect here in the theological training of our young ministers? And should they not be as carefully instructed respecting their manner in the pulpit, as they are in regard to the truths they exhibit? If a psalm or hymn is read to be sung as part of worship, should it not be read with emphasis, and with some regard to its sentiment? Should not the Scriptures be read very distinctly and forcibly as the words which God speaketh? And should not the prayers be offered with emotion, and as the utterances of a heart in audience with the Deity, and so distinct withal, that those who join may do it understandingly? Much of the comfort as well as the profit of worship, depends on these things. Let ministers ponder them, and more especially young ministers, those who are just girding on the harness, let them consider it that good habits may be well fixed upon them as they enter the field.

SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

A correspondent of the *Watchman & Reflector* refers to the preaching of this gentleman. The effect of his reading, as described in the following extract, may further illustrate the value of Elocution in the pulpit.

The *London Times* before me, announces that Sheridan Knowles, Esq., will preach in Vernon chapel, Sunday night next. You are aware he was formerly a play-actor and a play-writer—also that a few years since he was converted, united with the Baptist denomination, and became a preacher. Reading a similar announcement in the *Times*, when recently at London, I went to hear him. He was an older person than I anticipated seeing, I should think him well-nigh threescore and ten, and was very infirm in his tread; but his eye was as bright, and his voice as clear, and loud, and musical as ever. His sermon was good, but lost much of its power because he read every word of it; and English people do not like written sermons. The reading of the hymns, the Scriptures, and his prayers, I shall not soon forget. His Scripture—the chapter commencing with "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," was read as I never heard it read before. The congregation well-nigh arose from their seats. His utterance thrilled every heart—he seemed to make it a living word. It was, undoubtedly, a favorite chapter of his, since he hardly referred to the Bible during its rehearsal. After sermon he closed with prayer—the Lord's Prayer—and never before did I hear it so effectively offered; such an enunciation, such an accentuation, such pathos are indescribable; and as his own heart soared heavenward, the hearts of his congregation accompanied it. The clergy of the church of England use the prayer referred to in their public worship more than all the rest of the clergy combined, and many of them are apt to hurry over it with all the speed possible, seemingly forgetting it is the prayer of our Saviour, and uttered as the model of all prayers, and prefaced with the command, "After this manner pray ye." No one, I am sure, can be in doubt as to what that manner was; and I would that the clergy of the church of England who are at fault in this point, could at this time have listened to Mr. Knowles, as, with unaffected reference, he prayed in our Saviour's own words.

Mr. Knowles has for some time past been Professor of Elocution in the Regents Park Baptist College, London, and preaches only occasionally we believe.

A great Grief deposited in the Right Place.

BY THE REV. JOHN COX.

"And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.—Mat. xiv. 12.

The corpse of John and the conduct of his disciples demand our attention. There lies a martyr to truth. What a high honour! It is pleasing to contemplate the wondrous birth, the pious youth, the eloquent and successful ministry of this man of God; but his death, and the testimony of Jesus to him afterwards, will also yield much instruction. Behold the headless corpse of him who was the greatest of prophets, a man filled from his birth with the Holy Ghost. His life was sacrificed to the caprice and cruelty of wanton and wicked persons.

"Peace, be still!" Wait awhile! There is a God who judgeth righteously. John is a real gainer after all. His enemies have not harmed him nor killed that truth which was dearer to him than life. Herod, haunted by his guilty conscience, and Herodias crushed under the power of sensual passions, these are to be pitied, not John. He hath "finished his course," and God hath approved it. A man who thus lives, what matters it how or when he dies?

Turn from the Master to the disciples. There was a sorrowful employment. No doubt they shed many bitter tears, and realized many sorrowful thoughts; but they sought the right solace in their sorrow. They went straight from the grave to him, who had said ages before, "O grave, I will be thy destruction!" This was one end which God had in view in their trial, and he has the same object in all our trials. It was true wisdom in them thus to act. This was the only way to get light in the dark dispensation, and to obtain comfort under it. In Jesus they found another Master, who could employ, instruct, and bless them. In what they did they are a pattern to us. They were not stumbled at religion by the triumph of its foes. Most probably adversity brought their Master's words to mind. There is one "greater than I." To him they went. Let us imitate them. Convinced sinner, tell him your dangers and diseases. Tempted soul, tell him all your fears and feelings. Discouraged servant, tell him all your weakness and failures. Mourning saint, tell him all the sorrows of the Church, and the woes that pain your heart. Nor let us fail to tell him our desires to serve him, and our hopes of being with him. His character for power and sympathy, his free, loving invitations, and the success of others, all encourage us. Tell him everything; this will bring repose, with repentance as regards the past, patience under present trials, and hope respecting the future. By so doing we shall be also saved from two very unprofitable things,—complaining to others, and complaining about them.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers.
But error wounded writhes with pain,
And dies among her worshippers."

Oratorio in the Crystal Palace.

The fact, noticed in one of our Selections in last number, that the songs of birds are the result of the imitative faculty, and of a desire to excel, received a striking and beautiful illustration at the recent musical festival in the Crystal Palace. An American, writing to the *Watchman*, says:—

"I must now tell you of the great musical treat recently enjoyed by the English people, and all who, at the time of its occurrence, were sojourning within their gates. It is just one hundred years since the death of the great Handel, and the musical world have been three years rehearsing, so as to give an entertainment to commemorate the event. It occurred some two weeks since at the Crystal Palace, and Handel's own oratorio of the Messiah was performed, with a chorus of four thousand voices. Probably not less than thirty thousand persons were there. What a sea of humanity! and O,

what waves of music were in that great and beautiful palace. You almost see the billowy melody, as it floated by. When the chorus burst forth in the words, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," it produced an effect truly astonishing. A religious feeling appeared to pervade the entire assembly, and all seemed to realize, in the words of the oratorio, that "He was indeed Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The Crystal Palace is filled with bloomed and blooming flowers, and living streams of water, in the last of which actually germinate and grow all manner of aqueous plants; and during this concert season were there seen blossoming the white water lilies, in all their immaculate loveliness. Evergreens adorn the internal part of this edifice, and in them are nests for birds, and in these nests are hatched and reared feathered songsters, whose notes are never heard outside these palace walls. During the concert in question, just as the soprano voice commenced the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"—just as the artist was taking the entire audience in thought upon the wings of her song up to the right hand of the Father—just as every Christian heart was echoing forth the same strain, these birds, of Crystal Palace nativity, warbled forth the sweetest song I ever heard "Twas episodic, it is true; yet 'twas an episode most agreeable. The entire audience turned and smiled—not was it a mere superficial face smile, with no more depth than that of the moonbeam upon the lake. All human efforts to sing were put to the blush, after these little songsters opened wide their throats, and taking up the strain of the soprano, warbled forth with her (seemingly) the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." In the second part of the oratorio came in the world-renowned "Hallelujah chorus." As soon as the signal to commence was made manifest by the conductor's baton, the entire house arose and stood until it was completed. No one can describe the effect produced by these four thousand trained voices singing "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." I am sure I shall never hear it so perfectly and so efficiently rendered again until I get within the "pearly gates."

Preach Christ.

A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done, he went to the old minister, and said, "What do you think of my sermon?" "A very poor sermon indeed," said he. "A poor sermon?" said the young man: "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." "Why, did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one?" "O yes," said the old preacher, "very good indeed." "Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate, and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good, as far as that goes; but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text: we are not to be preaching Christ always; we must preach what it is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know, young man, that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, 'there is a road to London?' " "Yes," said the young man. "Ah?" said the old divine, "and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is, Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ." "And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that has not got a road to Christ in it; and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch, but I would get at my Master; for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it."