

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.

Flowers for the Graves.

Yes, strew the graves with flowers! where sleep
the fair,
The gentle, and the good: and let them bloom,
In richest beauty and luxuriance there;
Shedding sweet fragrance round the tomb.

Yes, strew the graves with flowers! Spring's
earliest flowers;
There scatter Summer's gems of fragrant breath;
Bring fading glories from Autumnal bowers,
To deck the narrow tenements of death.

Ay, wreath them round the white sepulchral
stone!
And spread them o'er the sod; beneath it lies
A precious seed, in faith securely sown;
A latent germ, which will in glory rise.

Bring the pure lily from the lake's calm breast;
Bring full blown roses from the parterre bowers;
With these, let graves of cherished friends be
drest,
To memory fragrant as the breath of flowers.

And let the dark green cypress wreath be laid,
On the tear-moistened mound of sacred earth;
For voices sweet are hushed! and forms which
graced
Glad, happy homes, are absent from the hearth.

But by its side, let fadeless amaranth twine;
And mourning hearts, with hopes immortal fill.
Though dust is heaped o'er the forsaken shrine,
The quenchless, vestal lamp is burning still.

Mother! young mother! deck with lilies pale
Thy sweet babes grave! to thee at even given;
Then gone at morn, as gentle dews exhale—
From the fair flowers, and pass away to heaven.

And thou lone, sad one fragrant tributes bring,
To wreath thy young bride's tomb! lavish them
here;
For what so loved thee, has but taken wing,
To fit its dwelling in a purer sphere.

Scatter fresh roses o'er the slumbers grave,
E'er while they last! ye broken sister band!
O'er nought but dust the whispering leaflets
wave:
Pure spirits wait you in "the better land."

Bring to the lowly couch sweet eglantine,
Where rests in peace the slumbering child of
song;
Who fell asleep, inspired by hope sublime;
While round the spirit hallowed memories throng.

Oh, strew with flowers the Christian's peaceful
tomb,
Emblems of that blest faith, in which he died;
There they may well in richest beauty bloom;
For him who walks where crystal waters glide.

The soul has flown! but there will come a time,
An hour of heavenly joy and gladness; when—
The freed one from yon summer, glorious clime,
To its deserted home will come again.

When shall this be? When the torpedo chain,
From the grave dwellers shall be all unwound;
When the grim monarch, Death, shall cease to
reign;
In his own toils a powerless captive bound.

Garland with asopodel! the signal bright—
And glad of coming life; and let it bloom,
All brightly o'er the dust; until the light—
Of morn, shall pierce the darkness of the tomb.

Thousands who know no hope beyond the
grave,
Strew o'er their loved and lost, green leaves,
bright flowers:

Then let them ever in profusion wave,
When death is brightened by such hope—as ours.

From the warmed bosom of the earth they wake,
In vale, or mountain, in the garden bowers,
Of all things holy to the heart they speak!
Then strew the silent graves with flowers! fresh
flowers!

Ondore Aug. 11th.

DIFFICULTIES.—It is a common saying—
"difficulties show what a man is made of."—
The saying is true and important. Not till
a man has been tried, can we know his
character, his abilities, or his worth. The
man who has had no encounter with diffi-
culties is a mere fairweather voyager, whom
the smallest gale may frighten and compel to seek
the nearest haven of rest and security. The
school of difficulty is in truth the best school of
moral discipline. The encounter with difficulties
must make a man better, or it will show him his
weakness and his deficiencies. It is a test, and
the man must come out from it better or worse.
If beaten, he will learn his weakness and defi-
ciencies; if successful, he will learn the lesson
of "how to do and dare."

Select Sermon.

A Sermon.

BY JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

Of Cavendish Chapel, Manchester.

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus: These
things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His
right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven
golden candlesticks. I know thy works, and thy
labours, and thy patience, &c.—Rev. ii. 1-7.

I. The Head of the Church has a minute
knowledge of all the services of His people.
First: There is a distinguished *labour*. "I
know thy works and thy labour." The church
at Ephesus had been a working church. It had
been operating on the surrounding regions of
depravity, darkness, and death. In its early
life it was eminently an aggressive church.
For my own part, I would have Christ's
Church as ambitious as Alexander. As he
waved his battle-flag over a conquered world,
so would I that the Church might unfurl the
banner of a nobler conquest over every nation,
and kindred, and people, and tongue.

Second: There is distinguished *patience*.
The "patience" is twice referred to. This
patience may be understood as indicating long-
suffering in relation to those by whom the
saints in Ephesus were surrounded—long-suf-
fering, both in waiting for the germination of
the seed which they had sown in many tears,
and in the meek endurance of fiery trials.
God specially marked this excellence. This
meekness of love was known to the Head of
the Church; and this suffering in silence was
as acceptable as a thousand songs. The point
to be noted here is, that Christ is mindful not
only of the outward manifestations of the
spiritual life—such as many labours and many
offerings—but also of the hidden graces which
cluster round the heart. He sees not only
the moral warrior brandishing his sword in
the thickest of the battle, but also the wound-
ed and suffering soldier, and sweetly says to
such, "I know thy patience." We are too
prone to attach high value exclusively to the
conspicuous, the declarative, the many-tongued;
we must indeed, prize these as necessary in
the assertion and maintenance of great prin-
ciples; but let us never forget that what gar-
lands and diadems soever may adorn the heads
of the great leaders in moral actions, there is
a brilliant crown on the brow of holy, much-
enduring, silent patience. It is often easier
to fight than to be patient. This backward-
ness in having patience may be seen not only
in the higher ranges of Christian life, but in
the lower levels of philanthropic service. If
it fall to your lot, for example, to sit through
the cheerless day and the dreary night with a
loved one who is in the grasp of a fell disease,
many friends will offer to join you if, as they say
they can be of any use; but what do they mean
by being of "use"? O ten they mean more
so long as they can be *actively engaged*; keep
them in an excited state of action, and all
will be well; but how few can quietly and
reverently sit still, and watch in loving and
hopeful patience the placid countenance of
silent suffering! How few can tone them-
selves to the high strength of doing everything
by doing nothing! Patience is undervalued
by an excited world; but Jesus notes it in its
long vigils, marks it trimming its dim lamp
in the solemn midnight, and sweetly whispers
His word of commendation, which is always
invigorating as the breath of immortality.

Third: There is distinguished *jealousy for
the right*. "Thou canst not bear them which
are evil, and thou hast tried them which say
they are apostles and are not, and hast found
them liars." It must ever be remembered that
there is a spurious charity. It is morally im-
possible that Christians and anti-Christians
can have any sympathetic fellowship. Can
trumpet-blast be clearer than this? "What
fellowship hath righteousness with unrighte-
ousness? And what communion hath
light with darkness? And what concord
hath Christ with Belial? Or what part
hath he that believeth with an infidel?
Wherefore come out from among them
and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch
not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."
The Head of the Church applauds the saints
in Ephesus because they "could not bear them
which are evil." There is, indeed, large scope
for the exercise of Christian charity, and it

is sometimes difficult to determine where her
loving streams shall pause; but there is a
"hitherto" even to the tides of charity. Woe
unto the Church when moral distinctions are
lightly regarded. To confound light with
darkness, sweetness with bitterness, is to mock
the first principles of holy government, and to
destroy for ever the possibility of holy brother-
hood. While, therefore, we would not pre-
sumptuously ascend the judgment-seat, we
believe it is impossible to burn in too deeply
the line which separates the sympathy of com-
passion from the sympathy of complacency.

Fourth: There was distinguished *persistence
in the right course*. "And hast borne,
and hast patience, and for my name's sake
hast laboured and hast not fainted." In a
church correctly described by such language
there may have been extraordinary fortitude,
and this fortitude has been attended with sin-
gular joyousness and cordiality. The eulogi-
um might be read thus:—"I know thy lab-
our and yet thou dost not labour, i. e., thou
dost not make a labour of thy duties;" in
their case duty was not a hard task-master.
There was such a sunny joyousness and mus-
ical cordiality about these saints that they
came to their work—work so hard—with the
freshness of morning, and under their touch
duty was transformed into privilege. There
is a lesson here for Christian workers
through all time. Some men have the most
unhappy art of turning every service they
render into hard toil. When work is done
with the hand only, it is invariably attended
with much constraint and difficulty; but when
the heart is engaged, the circle of duty is run
with a vigour that never wearies, and a glad-
ness which never saddens. Not only so, the
Ephesian saints eminently succeeded in uniting
patience with perseverance. They were not
only patient in suffering, but patient in labour.
They did not expect the morning to be Spring
and the evening to be Autumn, but, having
due regard to the plan of Divine procedure,
combined in wise proportions the excitement
of war with the patience of hope. Among
ministers in particular I have noticed two
evils in the matter of exercising patience;
some exercising it too little, and others exer-
cising it too much. A young minister, fired
with a heroic enthusiasm, expects to exting-
uish the devil and his angels in the first
twelve months of his ministry; and because
at the end of that period the devil and his
angels are just as lively and prosperous as
ever, he throws up his pastorate and seeks a
new battle-ground. An old minister to whom
the vision has long been closed and the testi-
mony sealed, who has not a new idea to pre-
sent, can keep his hold of the property as
though he could convince the very powers of
sin, and turn the very lamps into saints.
Both err. There is something fundamentally
wrong in the impetuosity as in the obstinacy.
The Ephesians were right: they blended per-
sistence with patience, and were extolled by
Him who knew the hardest toil and exem-
plified the most unassuming endurance. The
fundamental point is, that Christ knew all
this. "I know thy works, and thy labours,
and thy patience." "The eyes of the Lord
run to and fro throughout the whole earth,
to show Himself strong in the behalf of them
whose heart is perfect towards Him." Though
our Head is in heaven, not a service rendered
in His name escapes His benignant notice.
There is not a toiler in the vineyard on whose
bent form the Master looks not with appro-
bation. He sees the sufferer also. All that
He observes influences His mediation, so that
in every age "He tempereth the wind to
the shorn lamb."

Such is the opening of the latter. It opens
as with the noise of many waters. Here is a
very cataract of eulogium. The bounding
waters flash back the light of yonder coun-
tenance, and the very spray dances into rain-
bows. I would fain linger here. There is a
"nevertheless" before me which I would glad-
ly escape; but duty calls for the unwelcome
second point—viz.:—

2. That the Head of the Church marks
every declension of piety—"Nevertheless, I
have somewhat against thee; because thou
hast left thy first love." Let me draw your
special attention to the manner in which this
"nevertheless" is introduced. In the first in-
stances, Jesus acknowledges, with most ample
commendation, all the good deeds which had
been done by the Church. He gathers all the

bright and beautiful flowers of service and
suffering, and having wreathed these into a
garland, he places it upon the head of the
Church, and then gently whispers, so low,
methinks, that no enemy could overhear,
"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee."
This method of reproof is eminently sugges-
tive. It gives a lesson to parents. Would
you be successful in reproving your children?
Let commendation precede rebuke; let your
"nevertheless" be winged with love and hope,
and it will fly to the farthest boundary of
your child's intellectual and moral nature, and
a thousand blessings will be shaken from those
heavenly wings. It gives a lesson to pastors
also. Our words of remonstrance or rebuke
will be more successful as they are preceded
by every acknowledgment which justice and
generosity can suggest. When the Master is
compelled, so to speak, to rebuke His Church,
He proceeds as though He would gladly turn.
The rebuke comes with a hesitation which
did not mark the eulogy. He resorts to a
negative form of statement—"Thou hast left
thy first love." He charges His Church with
a lowering of moral temperature; the ardour
and brightness of early love have waned.
Paul is clear enough in his statement to
Timothy that part of a minister's duty is
to "reprove." A difficult part for any man
to undertake! A rebuke may be given with
so rash and vengeful a tone as to create dis-
gust and resentment in the offender; or it
may be uttered with so grieved and trembling
a love as will melt obduracy into penitence.
Rebuke is to be distinguished from coarse and
brutal scolding; it is not to be uttered with
the frantic blare of trampled dignity, but
with the solemn pathos of wounded affection.
Jesus weeps even while He rebukes, and those
sad tears carry the reproving word to the in-
nermost fibres of the heart.

[Conclusion next week.]

The Mission of Baptists.

The following remarks from the pen of Dr.
Williams deserve to be read by both Baptists
and Pedobaptists. By doing so the former
may learn more fully to appreciate their own
principles, whilst the latter may perceive that
it is not a mere notion which obliges Baptists
to occupy the position they do. Prejudice
and ignorance are the parents of error, and
we are satisfied that many of those who
cherish hostility towards us, do so because they
have not seriously examined for themselves
the position we occupy. Dr. Williams places
the matter in a very clear light:

"What is, to use a favorite phrase of the
age, the Mission of Baptists—their special
duty, to which they are peculiarly called and
specially adapted? It is, then, evidently, in
the first place, and beyond all comparison with
other and minor obligations, their duty to
urge onwards, with all their fellow disciples
of other Christian sects who 'hold the Head,'
the universal proclamation of Christ crucified.
This theme is the world's one hope, and hea-
ven's one gift and one law for the salvation of
the race. The peculiarities that divide us from
our evangelical brethren are not to be made
the whole of our gospel; our shibboleth is
not to constitute our whole creed and decal-
ogue. But, on the other hand, these conscien-
tious differences from other evangelical bodies
are not to be surrendered at the demand of
a spurious liberalism. We value them, not
because they were the doctrines and practices
of our immediate fathers; or because they
are the traditional heritage of our com-
munion from past centuries; but we defend
them, because we find them in Christ's Scrip-
tures, and we believe that his infinite wisdom
put them not causelessly there, and that the
dereliction of them will not be found practically
harmless, or even safe. We hold not, as the
chief and most prominent of these our secta-
rian badges, the mode of the ordinance, though
we see in this, indeed, a beautiful expression
of the spiritual death which the convert pro-
fesses to die to his old idols, and of the ever-
lasting allegiance which he avows through his
new-found life to a risen Redeemer. But our
chief burden of testimony respecting this
initiatory rite, relates to the *subject* rather
than to the *mode* of the ordinance. We deny