

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business : fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The other World.

It lies around us like a cloud,
A world we do not see;
Yet the sweet closing of an eye
May bring as there to be.

Its gentle breezes fan our cheek;
Amid our worldly cares,
Its gentle voices whisper love,
And mingle with our prayers.

Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred
And palpitates the veil between,
With breathings almost heard.

The silence,—awful, sweet, and calm,—
They have no power to break;
For mortal words are not for them
To utter or partake.

So thin, so soft, so sweet, they glide,
So near to press they seem,—
They seem to lull us to our rest,
And melt into our dream.

And in the hush of rest they bring,
'Tis easy now to see
How lovely and how sweet a pass
The hour of death may be.

To close the eye and close the ear,
Wrapped in a trance of bliss,
And gently drawn in loving arms,
To swoon to that—from this.

Scarce knowing if we wake or sleep,
Scarce asking where we are,
To feel all evil sink away,
All sorrow and all care.

Sweet souls around us! watch us still,
Press nearer to our side,
Into our thoughts, into our prayers,
With gentle helpings glide.

Let death between us be as naught,
A dried and vanished stream:
Your joy be the reality,
Our suffering life the dream!

Religious.

Brother Wormwood;

OR, PROVERBS 26 : 5.

It was in a business meeting of the church that I last heard this brother speak, and but for his presence there, we should undoubtedly have had no trouble, though there were some difficult points to settle on that day. As it was, he came near being too late to spoil all; but saved the day to grief by getting in just a half hour before the meeting should have closed. The pastor had made a warm exhortation, which must have ended any latent ill-feeling, if there was any, when in walked brother Wormwood, with all the pomp of scowl and cloud for which he was so well known.

There was a hush over the meeting at once, as if it had said, "Come, we must have the gall sooner or later; let it come, and be done." He did not wait. Rising, with his loud and thrilling ahem—sure presage of woe—in a voice which was less than a howl, but more than a whine, in his own peculiar style, he began:

"I don't know just what's been the order of the meeting; the hour of 'pointment is 'most too early for any but village folks to get in punctually." (Decided reproof in the tone, shown by a familiar emphasis.) "But I do know what the questions afore us ought to have been, and I hope they've been faithfully looked into and spoke upon;" and thereupon, as usual, he introduced one only, of which anybody had ever heard before. It was now his first topic. "It's high time, in my 'pinion, that something was done to stop the worldiness and extravagance which is coming into the church like a flood. I'm a-going to hold up the standard against it as long as I have breath, and I hope you'll all come up to the work with me." Here the champion gave another prolonged and threatening ahem; but I thought, from a glance at the faces of the audience, that his military spirit was not as contagious as he desired it to be.

"There's one thing about it," he went on: "that is, that I never shall consent to have

two or three thousand dollars of expense put on the meeting house. It was good enough for our fathers, has been good enough for us, and it is good enough for the young folks now. The sooner we discourage this new pride, the the better."

This was edifying, as brother Wormwood had just displaced his old-fashioned family carriage for a modern and much more comfortable one.

"Then there's another point on which I want to say a word," he continued: "I hear that one of the members in the village had a party 't'other night, and that he went so far as to let the young folks play cards. What kind I did not hear, but in my 'pinion one's as bad as another; and I don't believe in parties, anyhow. It's jest the way the world's people do, and it only pleases the flesh—and besides, it makes bad feelings among the young folks in the church. Now, I want the case looked into, and something resolved on for such cases."

"There's another thing, too, that's been a grief to my mind. Some of those among us in high spiritual places has set such an example afore us, and the world, as ought to make us protest;" and he added, with a solemn nod at the minister, or at the mental image of that good man's new sofa, rather—for that was the real offender "in high spiritual places"—"I mean to rebuke such a spirit, in all plainness and faithfulness, wherever I see it. The Christian shouldn't be afraid to tackle sin anywhere, in my 'pinion," he added, as the minister's head went down. And so he went on to state his grievances, as far as to sixtily, at least. But why report farther that with which, alas, almost every church is only too familiar? The speech made was such a mixture of narrowness, prejudice, stubbornness, and pride of opinion, jealousy on the alert for offence, as rouses impatient discussion, and ends in hostile feeling. This case happily was an exception.

When the minister raised his head, it appeared that he at least was serene; for there was an expression about his eyes more like a twinkle than brother Wormwood would have approved, had he seen it; but at the moment, that valiant man was busy pulling down his sleeves, and otherwise settling himself to rest, with great satisfaction, as if after a successful fight with divers dragons.

"I think," began the pastor pleasantly, "that I can relieve brother Wormwood's fears, and grievances somewhat. About the church, firstly, I suppose a majority of the members feel much as our good brother did about his old carriage; which though good enough for his father, and not actually unsafe to sit in, was yet so shabby as to look neither 'decently' nor 'in order.' Then as to the sociable, of which he heard grievous things. A few of the young people went with a birthday gift as a surprise to one of their number, and while at the house, played with cards, it is true, but their only devices were the simple letters of the alphabet, and the game was only to arrange these into words."

"As to the imitation of this vain world practiced in spiritual places," the speaker said with a visible smile, "I know of no uncommon instance, unless the presence of a before unknown luxury in the pastor's house may be called one; and the pastor would here explain that an aunt of the family, having once caught a fall from their falling old lounge, has sent them, he is grateful to say, a comfortable and tasteful new sofa."

The other "grievs" being as easily disposed of, the pastor concluded his remarks in these words. "It is well that brother Wormwood dared to be plain with what he thought undue conformity to the world, wherever found. The pastor should be as plain with his people; and if sometimes he sees brethren so busy with notes in other eyes as to forget to feel for beams in their own, he must remind them of that duty, gently but solemnly referring to that phrase with which our Lord began a like reproof. And if sometimes, in their zeal to pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, he sees them forget the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith, he must also for that administer rebuke. Judgment or justice, fair and honorable dealing; mercy, which is to be shown to all who are in any way dependent upon us; and faith or belief in God's Word—for example when He says, 'Bring ye all the tithes into

the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, if I will not pour you out a blessing;"—these are the things about which our consciences should be so tender, that to watch each one himself, would leave little time for carping at minor offences in others."

The rebuke was given in a tone as kind as it was earnest, but its edge was like that of a Damascus blade; for not long before, brother Wormwood had clearly forgotten to be either "fair" or "honorable" in a certain bargain with a neighbor; and he was well known to be a very hard master, as well as to pay scantily; and the third specification he doubtless felt as a reproof to the niggardliness which kept him from giving a proper portion towards repairing the Lord's house.

The investigations and disciplines which he had that day proposed were not then or afterward referred to, and certainly his spirit is to this day much sweeter than before. Answering him with the plainness and directness which, as he boasted, were his favorite weapons, proved again how "wise" it is sometimes to apply, even in a church-meeting, one of King Solomon's rules.

"This do in remembrance of me."

PRAYER.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."—Ephes. 6: 18.

Young christians should be much in prayer. Not only at stated times, and set periods, but always should we pray. Cultivate the habit of ejaculatory prayer. This kind of prayer rises in the heart, and darts upward to God, without preface or conclusion. You have so many dangers to face, so many duties to perform, so many privileges to enjoy, and so many blessings to crave, that you never can want matter for prayer. Every trial should be taken to the Lord, that he may sanctify it. Every mercy, that he may sweeten it. Every burden, that he may carry it. And every want, that he may supply it. We should pray for ourselves and for others, for the body and the soul, for the present and the future. Not only should we pray but watch for answers, look for blessings, expect divine interferences. Specially should we pray for the saints. For the sick and poor of the Lord's flock. For the diligent and devoted. For all classes and all cases. The Lord loves to hear us pray for each other. When we intercede for the saints, we are engaged in the same blessed work as the Lord Jesus himself. We must persevere in prayer. Many will be our discouragements. Many and various our temptations, but nothing must be allowed to wrest this weapon out of our hands. "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto the Lord." Be much with God in private prayer, and he will be much with you in labor, in conflict, in trials, and in troubles. Prayer brings God and the soul together, and keeps them together. Make everything matter for prayer, and you will never want matter for praise.

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."—1 Tim. 2: 8.

EPISTLES.

"Known and read of all men."

This is, at the same time, a very sad and a very pleasing thought.

The cause that lies near to our hearts is promoted by the good which is in us,—anything we do, or say, or feel in the right direction is "known and read." But so are our misdeeds and failings, so are our cowardice and unfaithfulness.

Those who have taken the name of Christ, and have been enrolled in the band of believers, cannot, if they would, live an unwatched life. All eyes are upon them,—not carelessly scanning, but attentively perusing,—not bestowing a casual glance, but bending an earnest scrutiny upon looks, and words, and actions.

"Known and read" They scarcely realize that. They think sometimes that it is easy to deceive these watching eyes "of all men."

A man slams the door in the beggar's face,

calling him hard names, and bidding him depart; but he loudly prays for the poor and asks that the needy may be fed. He rebukes the sinner, and falls short himself. He cries out against passion and selfishness, and fraud, and thinks that these curious eyes see not his secret doings.

He deceives himself. Both sides of the epistle are "known and read of all men." And his self-complacency would be somewhat disturbed could he realise (what is a fact), that the darker side is even more clearly revealed than the brighter. Somehow the page which contains the frailties and failings is the more interesting, and eager eyes distinguish them and eager lips cry, "This, then is the character of a professor of Christ."

Oh! could we live as Christians should; what eloquent sermons would be preached by our lives! How well and widely would our Master's name be circulated. How many more would be anxious to join our band, and be blessed with our blessings and love our Lord.

God help us ever to remember that we are living epistles, "known and read of all men."

Wayside sowing.

A pious gentleman was called on one day by a young physician, who, after introducing himself, said, "I am under much obligation to you, sir." The gentleman could not recollect how, and the physician replied, "It was at the old turnpike gate in B—, which my father used to keep. You often passed it, and one day gave me a tract, the first words were, 'Stop, poor sinner, stop, and think.' It affected my mind deeply, years ago, while at the university, there was considerable religious interest among the students. I went to a prayer-meeting one evening, when they commenced singing that hymn. My early impressions came back like a flood. I saw myself a great sinner, and found no peace until, as I humbly trust, I gave myself away to the Saviour."

The young man became widely known as an excellent Christian physician, administering healing both to the souls and bodies of men.

Give tracts to the little children. No tear but they will be well received; and they are so plain, a child can understand them.

I sent the little book, "It is I, or Christ in the Storm," to a dear young sufferer, who for three years had been fearfully afflicted. "What a blessing it has been to me," she writes. "For weeks it lay under my pillow; so I could draw it out when I chose, and get a word or two of comfort." I loaned it to another friend, whose pathway is a very dark one. "It seems as though every word of it was written for me," she said.

If you have an afflicted friend, will you not place this precious tract in his hand? If an impenitent one, do not fail to give him the little word, "Come to Jesus," by the same author. Kindly request him to read it, telling him you will be praying for him.

"Beside all waters sow" these precious seeds, and angel reapers will bring home the harvest.—Am. Mess.

The Theatre and its influence.

The circumstance of President Lincoln's assassination having taken place in a theatre, is deeply deplored by the great body of his friends, who have any regard for religion. His presence there however is capable of explanation and open to apology, more perhaps than that of many men in less public positions, but it is made the occasion of searching enquiry as to the consistency of theatre going with a profession of christianity.

The following remarks from the *Zion's Advocate*, the organ of the Baptist body of Maine, on the subject, are highly appropriate:

The great body of evangelical Christians in this country are opposed to theatres, and the churches have made it a matter of discipline when it was known that their members attended them. And this they have done not through prejudice, or bigotry, but from a conviction that the tendency of theatrical performances is pernicious, and destructive to vital godliness. Observation shows that