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Poetry.

Growing Old.

I'm growing old—it is surely so;
And yet how short it seems
Since I was but a sportive child
Enjoying childish dreams.
I cannot see the change that comes
With such an even pace;
I mark not when the wrinkles fall
Upon my fading face.
I know I'm old; and yet my heart
Is just as young and gay
As e'er it was before my locks
Of bright brown turned to grey.
I know these eyes to other eyes
Look not so bright and glad
As once they looked, and yet 't is not
Because my heart's more sad.
I never watched with purer joy
The floating clouds and glowing skies,
While glistening tears of rapture fill
These old and fading eyes.
And when I mark the cheek where once
The bright rose used to glow,
It grieves me not to see instead
The almond crown my brow.
I seem to hear the wondrous song
Redeemed sinners sing,
And my heart leaps to join the throng
To praise the heavenly King.
Oh, I am glad I'm growing old,
For every day I spend
Shall bring me one day nearer that
Bright day that has no end.

Religious.

A Denominational spirit.

The Boston Watchman & Reflector in taking a review of the recent Baptist anniversaries held in that city says they will long be memorable for their frank and manly exposition of Baptist principles. It had been reported in many quarters that the denomination was slowly drifting from its old landmarks, and that the doctrines of the fathers were held very loosely by the children. Christians of other names have been predicting for years that the practice of close communion will soon yield to the liberal sentiments of the age, and be abandoned by our churches. Such opinions and prophecies found little support in the late anniversaries; for it was evident to all present that Baptists have strong convictions by which they are governed, and a feeling of responsibility to Christ they cannot set aside. A new impulse was given to a true denominational spirit, and to earnest and vigorous efforts for the maintenance and spread of Baptist sentiments.

We rejoice in this evident growth of a denominational spirit; for if Baptists are justified in separating from the rest of Christendom, and maintaining a distinct organization, they are bound to labor earnestly that their faith and practice may become universal. Baptist churches are needed as a living protest against corruptions in Christendom; against broad departures from the letter and spirit of the New Testament; Christ instituted a church for believers only; the door has been widened to admit those who give no evidence of faith. He instituted a church for believers only; the door has been widened to admit those who give no evidence of faith. He instituted the ordinance of immersion to symbolize a burial of the old life, and a resurrection to the new life. The ordinance has been changed, and by the change loses both its significance and beauty.

Against such changes, made by the authority of Romanism, and adhered to by those Christian sects which came out from Rome at the Reformation, Baptists are bound solemnly to protest. They deny all right to modify the laws of Christ. His decision is final, and His precepts must be kept at all hazards. He claims an unreserved allegiance, to the least no less than to the greatest of His commandments. If they are sincere in their belief that Christ's authority is supreme and

His laws should be maintained, they cannot keep silence, but must in any wise rebuke their brethren, and not suffer sin upon them. They must declare that sprinkling is not baptism, and that the baptism of infants is not the ordinance which Christ instituted. In all clarity, but with a plainness and firmness not to be mistaken, they must warn their brethren against such perversions of Christ's teachings, and insist on a return to the New Testament standard. If Baptists love Christ, they must grieve to see His authority subverted. If they are indifferent to violations of His ordinances, they are wanting in sincere allegiance. The truth will not be taught, unless they teach it. Errors will not be abandoned, unless they expose them. The ordinance of baptism will continue to be perverted, unless they insist strenuously on the duty of following Christ. It is a historical fact, which no one will question, that in the precise ratio in which Baptist sentiments are openly disowned and tenaciously urged, do they make rapid progress and win converts. Discussion always promotes the truth, while error spreads by silence.

Nor can it be fairly charged against us, that by cultivating a denominational spirit we violate Christian charity, and widen the breaches in the great Christian household. It ought not to be so. It need not be so. It is not so. Our brethren of other names call us bigoted and narrow-minded; but we hold that Baptists who are true to their principles must be eminently charitable. They first proclaimed liberty of conscience, and have always been faithful to this great tenet. They concede to others what they claim for themselves—the right to interpret the Bible and learn duty from its teachings. With that right they never interfere. But they do insist that when duty is plain it ought not to be neglected or modified by the dictates of custom, or tradition, or expediency. As a matter of fact, wherever Baptist sentiments predominate, as in Rhode Island, a larger liberality and a kindlier intercourse prevail among Christians of every name.

We welcome, therefore, most gladly, the revival of a denominational spirit. Let Baptists proclaim everywhere, frankly and boldly, the teachings of the New Testament, and insist on the necessity of strict obedience to the commands of Christ. Let them avow earnestly their belief that sprinkling is not baptism, and that the baptism of infants is a dangerous perversion of Christ's ordinance. By contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and holding the truth in love, they may best honor Christ and reclaim their brethren from error.

The Giant Cities of Bashan.

Bashan is, in many respects, among the most interesting of the provinces of Palestine. It is comparatively unknown. Western Palestine is traversed every year; it forms a necessary part of the Grand Tour, and it has been described in scores of volumes. But the travellers who have hitherto succeeded in exploring Bashan scarcely amount to half-a-dozen, and the state of the country is so unsettled, and many of the people who inhabit it are so hostile to Europeans, and, in fact, to strangers in general, that there seems to be but little prospect of an increase of tourists in that region. This very isolation of Bashan added immensely to the charm and instructiveness of my visit. Both land and people remain thoroughly Oriental. Nowhere else is patriarchal life so fully, or so strikingly exemplified. The social state of the country and the habits of the people are just what they were in the days of Abraham or Job. The raids of the eastern tribes are as frequent and as devastating now as they were then. The flocks of a whole village are often swept away in a single incursion, and the fruits of a whole harvest carried off in a single night. The arms used are, with the exception of a few muskets, similar to those with which Chedorlamer conquered the Rephaim. The implements of husbandry, too, are as rude and as simple as they were when Isaac cultivated the valley of Gerar. And the hospitality is everywhere as profuse and as genuine as that which Abraham exercised in his tents at Mamre. I could scarcely get over the feeling, as I rode across the plains of

Bashan, and climbed the wooded hills, through the oak forests, and saw the primitive ploughs and yokes of oxen and goods, and heard the old Bible salutations given by every passer-by, and received the urgent invitations to rest and eat at every village and hamlet, and witnessed the killing of the kid or the lamb, and almost incredible despatch with which it is cooked and served to the guests, I could scarcely get over the feeling, I say, that I had been somehow spirited away back thousands of years, and sat down in the land of Nod, or by the patriarch's tent in Beersheba. Common life in Bashan I found to be a constant enacting of early Bible stories. Western Palestine has been in a great measure spoiled by travellers. In the towns frequented by tourists, and in their usual line of route, I always found a miserable parody of Western manners and language; but away in this old kingdom one meets nothing in dress, language or manners, save the stately and instructive simplicity of patriarchal times.—*The Giant Cities of Bashan, by Rev. Ker Porter.*

The Cynic.

The cynic is one who never sees a good quality in a man, never fails to see a bad one. He is the human owl, vigilant in darkness and blind to light; mousing for vermin in darkness and never seeing noble game. The cynic puts all human actions into two classes: openly bad, and secretly bad. All virtue, and generosity, and disinterestedness are merely the appearance of good, but selfish at the bottom. He holds that no man does a good thing except for profit. The effect of his conversation upon your feelings is to chill and scar them; to send you away sour and morose. His criticisms and insinuations fall indiscriminately upon every lovely thing like frost upon flowers. If a man is said to be pure and chaste, he answers: "Yes, in the daytime." "Yes, in the daytime." If a woman is pronounced virtuous, he will reply: "Yes, as yet." Mr. A— is a religious man; "Yes, on Sundays." Mr. B— has joined the church; "Certainly; the elections are coming on." The minister of the gospel is called an example of diligence; "It is his trade." Such a man is generous; "Of other men's money." That man is obliging; "To lull suspicion and cheat you." "This man is upright; "Because he is green." Thus his eye strains out every good quality, and takes in only the bad; as the vulture, when in the highest heavens, will sail by living flocks and herds, but comes like an arrow down upon the smallest carcass. To him, religion is hypocrisy; honesty a preparation of fraud; virtue, only want of opportunity; and undeniable purity, asceticism. The live long day he will ooze sit with sneering lip, uttering sharp speeches in the quietest manner, and in polished phrase, transfixing every character which is presented: "His words are soter than oil; yet are they drawn swords."—Psalm 55: 22. All this to the young seems a wonderful knowledge of human nature; they honor a man who appears to have found out mankind. They begin to indulge themselves in flippant sneers; and with supercilious brow and impudent tongue wagging to an empty brain, call to naught the wise, the long tried, and the venerable.—*H. W. Beecher.*

Never dissolved.

The union between the Lord Jesus and his people, that union whose living links Christ's own hands have clasped and riveted, is beyond the power of the destroyer. Though Christians die, they are still related to each other, and related to Christ in the bonds of the everlasting covenant. The separation between Christian friends is only temporary and partial. They are all members of the same living immortal body, parts of that whole person which is inseparably one with Christ. Their death is precious in his sight; their very dust is dear to him. Nothing that forms an essential part of their living redeemed humanity is lost. Dead they are, but they have died in the Lord—they are asleep in Jesus. Their life is hid with Christ in God. They are bound up in the bundle of

life—hermetically sealed from all the destructive elements of the world, from the cares, the sorrows, and the sins of time—in the living branches of the tree of life. All the rights and privileges which belong to them when living are still theirs, undiminished and unimpaired. Their blessed Saviour still represents them as their advocate, still watches over their interests, still preserves his covenant engagement inviolate; and whatever is meant by being "in Christ," is meant of them now, even although they are dead, and shall be hereafter fully realized by them when God shall bring them with him. Neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Colenso's hymn-book.

This theological Don Quixote having retired from his attack on the Pentateuch in a condition similar to that in which the assault on the windmill left the knight of La Mancha, has so far recovered as to begin a war on the Christian hymns. His last publication is a new hymn-book which "does not contain the name of Jesus or Christ from beginning to ending." He thus apologizes for the omission: "A violent attack has just been made upon me with reference to my new hymn-book, which (strange to say) I find does not contain the name of Jesus or Christ from one end to the other. This was quite unintentional on my part, and has merely arisen from the fact of my having rejected hymns after hymns which contained prayers to Christ, which I do object to on scriptural and apostolic grounds, as I hope to set forth in a sermon, and others in which the name of Jesus is used familiarly and irreverently and others in which some objectionable doctrine is taught in the hymn throughout or in some verses of it."

The fact needs no comment. A Christian (7) bishop publishes a collection of hymns in which the name of Christ does not occur, and fails to notice the omission of the title of his Lord until his attention is called to it!—*W. & R.*

The Lord's Prayer.

How much there is in it! It teaches all of us, every one of us, to look to God as our parent—Our Father! It prompts us to raise our thoughts and desires above the earth—"Who art in heaven." It tells us we must reverence our Heavenly Father—"Hallowed be thy name." It breathes a missionary spirit—"Thy kingdom come." And a submissive, obedient spirit—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And a dependent, trusting spirit—"Give us this day our daily bread." And a forgiving spirit—"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." And a cautious spirit—"Deliver us from evil." And, last of all, an adoring spirit—"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

A sleeping Christian.

"The devil," says Luther, "held a great anniversary, at which his emissaries were convened to report the results of their several missions."

"I let loose the wild beasts of the desert," said one, "on a caravan of Christians, and their bones are now bleaching on the sand."

"What of that?" said the devil, "their souls are all saved."

"For ten years I tried to get a single Christian asleep," said another, "and I succeeded and left him so."

"Then the devil shouted," continues Luther, "and the night stars of hell sang for joy."

The terror of being thought poor has been the ruin of thousands.

Wine and passion are racks oft used to extract words from us.