The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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POETRY.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Good and Right.

BY MARION HARVEY.

Shadows falling darkly
O'er the path of life,
Tired eyes vainly seeking
For the good and right.

Oh! for light to guide us
Through life's tangled maze
Oh! for light to bear us
Over thorny ways.

Has the hand that led us
Been so far withdrawn?
Light divine that cheered us
Gone,—forever gone?

Sick and faint and weary,
Waiting, sore oppress,
For the nearing haven,
Calm, eternal rest.

Star divinely beaming,
Star of hope and love,
Draw our earth-worn spirits
To sweet rest above.

Send thy silver radiance
Through the solemn night
Light the way which leads us
To the *good* and *right*.

March 31st, 1876.

RELIGIOUS.

The N. Y. Hippodrome Convention.

The Convention recently called in connection with the meetings under Messrs. Moody and Sankey, and held in the Hippodrome, New York, was attended by a large number of ministers and others. It appears to have been carried on largely in the form of questions, and answers given to them by Mr. Moody and others. We give a few of these as specimens, and as suggestions for our brethren.

WEDNESDAY MORNING.

Mr. Moody said: I have come to the conclusion, that if we are going to have successful gospel meetings, we have got to have a little more life in them. Life is found in singing new hymns, for instance. I know some churches that have been singing about a dozen hymns for the last twenty years, such hymns as "Rock of Ages," "There is a fountain filled with blood," etc. The hymns are always good, but we want a variety. We want new hymns as well as the old ones. I find it wakes up a congregation very much to bring in now and then a new hymn. And if you cannot wake them up with preaching, let us sing it into them. I believe the time is coming when we will make a good deal more of just singing the gospel. Then when a man is converted let us have him in these meetings giving his testimony.

Q. Would you start a meeting when there is no special interest in the churches?

Mr. Moody—Certainly I would. A good many are folding their arms and saying, "Wait until the good time comes to favor Zion." The point is to make the good time come anyway. Go to work. They have got no calendar in heaven. God can work one month as well as another, and he is always ready when we are ready.

Q. Suppose the minister is interested and there is no special feeling among the people, would you call in outside help? Would you commence the effort by calling in at once outside help?

Mr. Moody—That is a very important question. If I were a minister in a community or a church, and could not get more than one or two to sympathize with me, I would just get them around to my study, and we would pray and go forth in the name of the Lord and say, "We are going to have a meeting," and there will be an interest break out. Three men can move any town. If you are going to wait until the whole church gets aroused, you will have to wait a long time. Get as many as you can, and God will stand by you.

Q. Is it best to put a test question in a church, asking those that are anxious for their souls to arise, or rather go to another room?

Mr. Moody—I think so. If any man is going to be saved, he is going to take up his cross, and if it is a cross, I would like to ask him to do it. What you want is to get them to do something they don't want to do, and it is a great cross generally for people to rise for prayer: but in the very act of doing it they are very often blessed. It is letting their friends know that they are interested, and are on the Lord's side. I have found in the last three years that it has been a great help to us. In fact, I don't think I should attempt to have meetings without the inquiry-room. People are sometimes impressed under the sermon, but what you want is to deal with them personally. Here and there one is converted under the sermon, but for every one converted under the sermon hundreds are converted in the inquiry-room.

PRAYER-MEETINGS—HOW TO CONDUCT THEM.

Mr. Moody then introduced the other topic of the morning—How to conduct prayer-meetings and make them successful? I have noticed, said he, in travelling up and down the country, and after mingling with a great many ministers, that it is not the man than can preach the best that is the most successful, but the man that knows how to get his people together to pray. If we could only have our prayer-meetings what they ought to be, and people go, not out of any sense of duty but because they delight to go, it would be a great help to a minister in his Sunday services.

I find it a great help in prayer-meetings to get the people right up close together, and then get myself right down among them. I believe many a meeting is lost by the people being scattered.

Another important thing is to see that the ventilation is all right. Sometimes I have been in rooms where I think the air must have been in there five or six years. You cannot always trust the janitors to take care of it. The people get sleepy, and you think it is your fault. Very often such a thing is the fault of bad ventilation. See that you get fresh air—not too hot, and not too cold, but pure.

Have once in a while a thanksgiving-meeting. It wakes up a church wonderfully once in a while to let the young converts relate their experiences.

What are you going to do with these men that talk so long? I would talk to them privately, and tell them that they must try to be shorter. And it is a good thing sometimes for ministers themselves not to be too long. Sometimes they read a good deal of Scripture, and talk until perhaps only fifteen minutes are left, and they then complain because Deacon Smith or Jones, or some one else, talks too long. Just let the minister strike the keynote of the meeting, and if he can't do that in ten minutes he can't at all. Give out the subject a week ahead, let the minister take five or ten minutes in opening, and then let the different ones take part. That would be greater variety. When a man takes part he gets greatly interested himself. It was pretty true what the old deacon said, that when he took part they were very interesting, and when he didn't they seemed very dull.

Q. Suppose one, two or three brethren come to the prayer-meeting, and there are thirty sisters, how are you going to get along?

Mr. Moody—I should call it a woman's meeting, and go on and have the sisters take part.

Q. What should be the main purpose of a prayer-meeting—the conversion of sinners, devotion, or the edification of saints?

Mr. Moody—I should say that the prayer-meeting ought to be for the edification of saints and devotion.

Q. Do you believe in calling on people to pray and speak in the prayer-meeting?

Mr. Moody—My theory is one thing and my practice another. I have always advocated open prayer-meetings, but when our noon prayer-meetings became so large we often had men whom we did not know coming up and talking and talking and not saying anything, and others who had come a hundred miles just to be present at that meeting, and so we have had to put it into the hands of those on the platform. Still, I stick to my theory that it is better to have an open meeting. You sometimes get things that grate upon your nerves, but at the same time you get things that you would not get if you took it into your own hands.

Q. If you tell a man to be short and he don't obey, what then?

Mr. Moody—I would have a bell.

Q. Suppose you drive him away by that method, what then?

Mr. Moody—Let him go. Five men will come and take his place.

Q. What does the Scripture teach that women should do in prayer-meeting?

Mr. Moody—It teaches that they should pray like all the rest of them.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

Inquiry Meetings.—This subject was well introduced by Dr. H. C. Fish, who said:

I do not know why Mr. Moody has requested me to open this discussion, except possibly that he is familiar with the fact that for a long time I have had something to do with the inquiry-meetings of about 1,200 souls, whom I have had the joy and privilege of introducing into the Christian church of Newark, upon profession of their faith. Almost all of them have come through between the [illegible] and handling and [illegible] and I have never had a year of my ministry where the inquiry-room has not been an important feature. I intend in the future to make much more of it than I have ever done, and never to have a service—unless it be an unusual case—in which the inquiry does not form a part. I believe we are accustomed, all of us, to set our nets and not to draw them. When I was at the Sea of Galilee I forced my oars in as far as I could, and the fishes ran up in plenteous numbers to see what was going on, but I did not catch a single one. The next day a friend of mine caught one fish, and the sea was full of them. Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men." Where there are such multitudes of souls, we ought to catch some of them. I think the place to catch souls is the inquiry-room. One Sunday night I was saying from my pulpit that hand-picked fruit was the best kind of fruit that the orchardman does not pick up the fruit that falls on the ground and put it away to keep late in the season but he gets the fruit that is picked one by one, apple by apple, from the bough carefully, and puts it away to keep. I said hand-picked fruit is what we want. An old woman who had been going to my church a great while when she heard this began to think. The next night she brought her husband to the meeting. He said: "For twenty years I have not darkened the door of a church of God, but my wife has been teasing me so much all day to come here to-night I had to come." "Yes," the old woman said, "I thought I would try and do some of the work you told us about last night. My husband was the nearest to me, and I thought I would begin at home and work him."

Dr. Boot addressed the meeting, after which Mr. Moody said:

If the ushers would encourage their members to be scattered among the audience never mind their pew but sit back the door if need be, or in the gallery where they can watch the faces of the audience, it would be a good thing. In Scotland I met a man who with his wife would go and sit among them they said, to watch for souls. When they saw any one who seemed impressed they would go to him after the meeting and talk with him. Nearly all the conversions in that church during the last fifteen months had been made through that influence.

A man was speaking about Christians recognizing each other in heaven and some one said, "I wish he would preach about recognizing each other on earth," In one place where I preached where there was no special interest, I looked over the great hall of the old circus building where it was held, and saw men talking to other men here and there. I said to the secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association who got up the meeting, "Who are those men?" He said, "They are a band of workers." They were all scattered through the hall, and preaching and watching for souls.

I do not see how men can preach without inquiry-meetings. I like to see the converts.

Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, Jr, said the failure of young converts in the past was, he thought, chiefly attributable to the lack of systematic training for work by the church. There were three distinct departments in this training: First, the training in the Word; second, training in worship; and third, training in the work of the church. Young converts needed to be instructed in the text of the Word, for having been but just redeemed from spiritual ignorance, they could not be expected to be familiar with the Bible. The first step in their new life should therefore be this training in the Bible. In relation to the training in the worship of God, the speaker contended that the convert should have perfect freedom in talking with his Father, and should receive the encouragement of the church in his efforts to address the Almighty. As the church was a body of workers, the weak ones need that the young can places in the church's ranks, and accomplish their share of its work. It was the pastor's duty to study the converts capacities, and to assign him to the duty for which he was best fitted, and not, as was frequently done, where no judgement or discrimination was exercised, try to fit "square blocks in round holes." Addresses followed by Rev. Drs. Deems and Pulmer.

THURSDAY MORNING,

Mr. Sankey opened the question, "How shall the Service of Song be conducted in the Lord's Work?" He said:

I shall not go into any long disquisitions on the subject, but I will speak upon the practical bearings of the question, How can we use the power of song?

Singing is a great power. Why the little book that contained some of our songs published in England, has taken such a hold of the people, that the sale has equalled 5,000,000 copies. They have been the translated into many languages. I think I have seen the book in twenty or thirty languages.

In the church I wouldn't have an artistic quartette choir. They can't praise God for the congregation. I would have, instead, a large Christian choir. We have made it a rule in our meetings to have only Christians in our choir. You know our success.

I would have the choir seated near the minister, so that they can counsel together. The singing should be under the control of the office bearers and the minister. I would also remove all the screens from before the choir. Let them be in full view of the people. The choir ought to be taught to listen to the sermon.

A large organ sometimes drowns the voices of the choir, so I would advise that a small organ be used. It is not the fault of the organ but of the player. If a large organ can be played softly, just loud enough to lead the people, it will do very well. But nothing is equal for music to the human voice.

In a prayer-meeting, if you have a Christian man who is a good singer, I would have him lead the singing. In regard to an instrument at the prayer-meeting, some are opposed to it and some not. If I had a good singer, one whose voice was strong enough, I would have him instead of an instrument, but if not, I would have some one who could play the organ in the proper key, and then the people can follow him. Bring in new hymns now and then. The question of introducing new tunes into the service of the church is a very important one. Now and then a new tune should be introduced. The best plan I have found is that the tune should be sung as a voluntary frequently before it is given out as a hymn.

Educational Items.

Girls' schools in Japan.—A girls' school was recently established in Tokio, Japan, at the opening of which the Empress made the following address:

"Upon hearing last year that this school was about to be established in order to foster the growth of education for girls, I was unable to contain my joy. Its construction has now been completed and the ceremony of its opening has been performed. My earnest desire is that this school may henceforth be prosperous, and that I may eventually see the beautiful fruit of female education appear in profusion throughout the whole of the land."

Each scholar in the Boston Latin school costs the city $240 a year.

France has one school for each five hundred inhabitants, and thirteen scholars in each hundred souls. In 1872, thirty per cent. of the population could neither read nor write, the greatest ignorance prevailing in the western departments.

Of the twelve hundred teachers employed in the schools of New York city, over eight hundred are women. Yet the less than four hundred men receive other words, the women teachers do more than two-thirds of the work for less than half the pay.

Iowa does not seem inclined to encourage compulsory education. A bill lately introduced into the Legislature, requiring children between seven and fourteen years of age to attend school at least twelve weeks each year, was indefinitely postponed.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

A letter from A. V. Timpany.

Mr. Timpany gives the readers of the *Canadian Baptist* some further account of his tour in India. He was proceeding in a northerly direction, and as it is desirable that we should become as well acquainted as possible with India, where our Foreign Missionary work is being done, we copy his letter:—

"At Hourah we met some of the brethren going the same way as ourselves. Some for Allahabad, some for Delhi. We were not rich enough to travel first-class, or get second, but took what is called "intermediate class." The ticket for 450 miles was about $5.50. We were green as to Indian Railroads and learned a little by the time we reached Benares. We had sent our bedding and trunk, etc., to Secunderabad over 2000 miles, to save extra expense. We were shown into a compartment that was separated from the others only by iron bars. The seat was a hard board and of course without springs. We had a leather valise for our pillow and a dressing gown and rubber coat to otherwise comfort ourselves. It was beautiful moonlight and too cold as soon as we were well out of the low flats of the Ganges for us to sleep much, and when we did sleep it was not of grassy mounds or Eden's bowers that we dreamed. When day dawned we were passing through a beautiful country. There were low rocky hills with fine fertile valleys between, and here and there we looked out in the distance upon the boundless valley of the sacred river. We were riding fast and every half hour would bring us to some place or