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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XLIV., No. 34.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger
Life.

What is our life? Is it the little space
Between our cradle and the hour to die,
In which we think, act, work, and fill the
place,
Designed by Heaven that we should
occupy?

The canvas on which we unconscious trace
The scenes that we enact day after day,
Which time makes the first to us seem faint,
Or wholly faded past recall away?

Ah! life is more; when first we draw our
breath
Our life's begun. The end shall never be;
The soul's companion, here, must suffer death,
Only to put on immortality.

This life's the vestibule where we may
choose
The door that leads to gloom or opens to
day;
The battle-field where we may win or lose
A glorious crown that fadeeth not away.

Death is the last scene painted on time's
page.
And then the veil is taken from our eyes;
Probation o'er, ended earth's pilgrimage,
Life closeth not,—the spirit never dies.

E. E. C.

Religious.

Fashionable Life.

A SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. G. W.
M'CREE, ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY
18, IN BOROUGH-ROAD BAPTIST
CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, LONDON.

"The fashion of this world passeth
away." 1 Cor. vii. 31.

We should have great sympathy
with the gay temper and innocent pleas-
ures of the young. We should not
frown upon pleasant laughter and harm-
less games. We should promote the
sweetness and charming elegancies of
life. But this is a different thing alto-
gether from conformity to "the fashion
of this world." And I need not hesi-
tate to say that a fashionable life can-
not be a Christian life. "If any man
love the world, the love of the Father
is not in him." This is decisive. It is
the verdict of eternal truth, and there
is no higher court to which you can
carry your appeal.

In my picture of a fashionable life, I
desire to be true, generous, and large-
hearted; but I do desire, at the same
time, to speak without fear.

A fashionable life, then, is wrong in
its very foundations. A true, and
noble, and religious life has its source in
God. It is built alone upon His grace
and love. It is moulded according to
His commandments. Its pattern is
Divine. But one who leads a fashion-
able life looks to the world, and
the world alone, for its laws, im-
pulses, customs, delights, and rewards.
God is not in the thoughts of the votar-
ies of fashion. Their questions are
these:—"What does the world say?
What does the world expect? How
does the world eat, drink, and dress?
What amusement does the world love?
Where does the world go?" The higher
questions—"What is true? What
is of good report? What is innocent?
What is best for society? What will
make humanity better or happier?
What will wipe away falling tears and
heal broken hearts? What will make
my life useful and blessed?"—these ques-
tions are never asked. Fashionable
life, therefore, is wrong at its very
foundations. It knows nothing of God.

It is also mistaken in its objects. Any
one who ardently pursues a fashionable
life has certain objects in view. What
are they? Chiefly these—admiration,
flattery, riches, pleasure, elevation in
society, a splendid marriage, intimacy
with gay circles, titles and honours, and
the pride of life. Usefulness—the
grandest thing in any man or woman's
career—usefulness is never thought of.
Look at Elizabeth Fry with her scarlet
boots and shining silks, when following
the fashion of this world, and Elizabeth
Fry, in Quakeress garb, in Newgate
Prison, seeking the reformation of the
vilest women in all London, and

you will see the difference between the
butterflies of fashionable life and the
great souls who remember that—

This world is full of beauty
As other worlds above,
And if we did our duty
It would be full of love.

Yes, let that word duty take the
place of the lower word fashion, and the
whole aspect of society would be changed,
and ignorance, crime, and sorrow would
vanish before the sweet ministry of
women who are now a vain show, and
the deeds of men whose lives are now
wasted and forlorn.

You will find that a fashionable life is
also erroneous in its laws of action.
Consider for a moment, is there a God? Is
He a lawgiver? Are we His creatures?
Will He be our judge? If so, then
most clearly life should be in harmony
with the will and Word of God. Some
words like these should be present with
us:—"Thy statutes have been my
songs in the house of my pilgrimage;"

"Thou art my portion, O Lord; I have
said that I would keep thy words;" "I
made haste, and delayed not to keep
Thy commandments;" "Thy word is
a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto
my path;" "Make thy face to shine
upon Thy servants, and teach me Thy
statutes." But those who pursue a
fashionable life, whether men or women,
never hide such holy words in their
hearts. The laws of this world are the
only laws they know and love; and
what cruel, base, frivolous, bad laws
they are! They once insisted on duels,
and even shot at each other like targets.

They prescribed two, three, or four
bottles of wine at dinner, and lords
and ladies were drunken every night. They
now commend French plays with foul
plots, midnight dances in hot rooms un-
til morning dawns, costumes for maids
and matrons which make modest men
blush, extravagant dinners and balls
which lead to embezzlement, and fraud,
and bankruptcy, mercenary marriages
for the sake of titles, lands, and gold,
where love is unknown, and other fol-
lies and vices which degrade and ruin
their poor, fluttering, foolish victims for
time and for eternity.

And see how a fashionable life tends
to ignore all the higher laws of God.
Take war, for instance. How eagerly
fashionable society applaud war! Its
cruelty, its debasement, its awful hor-
rors, its infinite destructiveness are
nothing to them. Let the Prince Im-
perial go to kill Zulul with whom he,
at least, could have no quarrel, and fall
ignobly in a bloody scuffle, and the
fashionable world goes into mourning
for him, and demands that he shall have
a monument in Westminster Abbey;
but for the ten thousand Zululs who fell
in battle they have not a tear. Yet
they were men, and brave men too.

A Government may be false, coward-
ly, extravagant, corrupt, deceptive, and
ruinous; but if it is "aristocratic," if
it scatters titles and pensions, if it pro-
vides balls and battles for fools and
fighters, then it is a great Government.
Of its injustice, its wastefulness, its
mendacity, and its opposition to all leg-
islative progress, the fashionable world
said nothing. Why should it? It only
worships the god of this world.

But, surely, justice, righteousness,
peace, and freedom are greater than all
things. Surely wars and theatres, balls
and banquets, horse racing and billiards,
royal reviews and military honours, are
not more glorious than humanity, virtue
and truth. Surely a ploughman who
prepares a field for the golden harvest
is a more worthy toiler than the soldier
who burns the sheaves of corn to ashes.
Surely a Band of Hope conductor who
trains children in the way of temper-
ance is a more useful member of society
than a comic singer who pollutes the
ears of young men and women with
lewd and stupid songs. Surely a Chris-
tian church with its solemn worship, its
benevolent efforts, and its holy living,
does more for the greatness of England
than all the theatres that ever were
built. And, surely, men and women
—immortal beings as they are—should
sometimes remember that the law of
God is the ultimate law of life. This
goes to the root of the matter. Let

the Law of God guide us in business,
in pleasure, in diet, in costume, in
amusements, in creed, in worship, in
life, and in death, and we shall be
blessed as individuals, happy as families,
and great in national glory; but let
the fashion of this world be our god,
and nothing can prevent our utter
and shameful ruin.

None ever think of what life might
be without feeling how mean and poor
a fashionable life is. Here, taken from
the twenty-ninth chapter of the Book
of Job, is a picture of a really beautiful
life. "When the ear heard me, then it
blessed me; and when the eye saw
me, it gave witness to me; because I
delivered the poor that cried, and the
fatherless, and him that had none to
help him. The blessing of Him that
was ready to perish came upon me; and
I caused the widow's heart to sing for
joy. I put on righteousness, and it
clothed me; my judgment was as a robe
and a diadem." How different this
from the levity, the self-indulgence, the
wine-drinking, the revelling, the idleness,
the glittering show, and the gilded
vice of fashionable life.

The personal associations of such
fashionable life, are not unworthy of
serious thought. I will select only one
feature of it. I refer to the theatre. I
am not going to dilate on the morality
or immorality of plays. My purpose
at present is more simple than that. As
I pass along some of our crowded thor-
oughfares, I see shop windows filled
with the photographs of popular actress-
es. A glance at them show a number
of low-browed, strangely-attired, vol-
uptuous women in unwomanly attitudes,
and I am told that these women are
popular actresses in London theatres.
These? And are these the women who
are to delight us, to hold up to us the
mirror of life—these women whose as-
tounding costumes, immodest attitudes,
and leering eyes, I see represented in
those photographs! These the teachers
and models of the daughters we cherish,
and the sweet little girls we tenderly
love! Surely not. The theatre never
did promote human virtue, goodness,
and moral exaltation; and if these wo-
men are the goddesses of fashionable
life, then I do not wonder at the scan-
dals and sins of Vanity Fair. Imperial
Rome fell when it became corrupt—
let Great Britain take heed and repent.
Wealth, power, and pleasure are all
lawful and right, but when public amuse-
ments lower the tone of public life, and
women of vile name are crowned with
flowers and pearls of price, then the
doom of society is not far distant, and a
revolution of fire and blood may be the
due punishment of our deeds. Say not
this cannot be. It has been so in Paris
more than once. It has been so in
Greece, and Rome, and Jerusalem, and
Nineveh, and Babylon, and it may be
so in London. Hear ye the lamentation
over Babylon, the Great. "Alas! alas,
that great city, that was clothed in
fine linen and purple and scarlet, and
decked with gold and precious stones of
pearls. For in one hour so great riches
is come to nought. And every ship-
master and all the company in ships and
sailors and as many as trade by sea, stood
afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke
of her burning, saying, What city is like
this great city! And they cast dust on
their heads, and cried, weeping and
wailing, saying, Alas! alas, that great
city, wherein were made rich all that
had ships in the sea by reason of her
costliness! for in one hour she is made
desolate!" Such is the lesson and lam-
entation of history, and it will be well
for us if we do not treat it as an idle
tale.

The awful evanescence of this world
should not escape our solemn considera-
tion. Not many days ago I was far away
from London on the King's business which
required haste. A friend said to me,
"Come and see our old oak before you
go." So we went up the village, and
through the churchyard, until on one of
its green borders we found a mighty oak,
forty feet in girth, and a thousand years
old. There were its great bosses pol-
ished by old men and children, and
lads and lasses sitting often in the sun.
A thousand years ago an acorn fell in-

to the ground here, and lo! this vener-
able giant was born. And since then,
what changes have come and gone!
Kingdoms, armies, peoples, and thrones
have vanished like the golden mist of
morning, and still—"the fashion
of this world passeth away." Only God
—the living God—abideth the same.
A thousand years in His sight are but
as yesterday when it is past, and as a
watch in the night. Oh! happy is the
man whose hope is in the Lord his God.
For He saith,—"He shall call upon
Me, and I will answer him: I will be
with him in trouble: I will deliver him
and honour him. With long life will
I satisfy him, and show him My salva-
tion." Oh! let your souls find peace
and life in His holy service, and care
not for the fashion of this world.

But, you say, "I am not willing to
be singular, and therefore I conform in
most things to the fashion of this world."
Singular! Well, do not be afraid of a
word. I do not wish you to be coarse,
or rude, or absurd, or untimely, or in-
hospitable, or eccentric. Let sweet-
ness and grace, manliness and woman-
liness, sincerity and truth, liberality
and courage, beauty and strength be
found in all your words and deeds. Be
a true man. Be a perfect woman. Be
a brave youth. Be a charming girl.
But do not fear to stand apart from the
slavery, the snobbishness, the empti-
ness, the fickleness, the extravagance,
and the debasement associated with the
fashion of this world. Singular! Are
you afraid of that? Listen to these
sacred words: "We ought to obey God
rather than men." "That which is
highly esteemed among men is abomina-
tion in the sight of God." "Ye should
turn from these vanities to serve the
living God." "If any man love the
world, the love of the Father is not in
him." "If any man have not the spirit
of Christ, he is none of His." Singu-
lar!

They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse
Rather than in silence shrink
For the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

Remember that society never has
been and never can be purified, and
that the redemption of humanity never
can be accomplished by conformity to
popular passion, national prejudices,
traditional creeds, and worldly follies.
If we want to see men and women
grow better, and wiser, and happier,
we must show them a higher and more
Divine life than our own. Our Great
Master taught us this. "Ye are the
salt of the earth." Ye are the light
of the world." An honest man makes his
neighbours honest. An abstainer from
strong drink makes the nation more
sober. A member of the Peace Society
is a protector against war. A Chris-
tian statesman purifies political life. A
Prince—like Albert the Good—makes
a whole nation more noble, and free,
and happy. But a mere devotee of
fashionable life—a person who looks
upon life as a toy, a show, a pageant,
a time for self-indulgence—a person who
thinks, and eats, and dresses; who buys,
and sells, and votes; who lives and dies,
and is buried just as the world orders
him—then, I say, he does not know
why he was born, and "His remem-
brance shall perish from the earth;"
and he—having wasted his life—shall
depart into a "land of darkness, as dark-
ness itself; and of the shadow of death,
without any order, and where the light
is as darkness." Oh! use life well.
Do not waste it. Be true, be useful,
be gentle, be good after the model of
the ineffable goodness of the Lord Christ;
and then, "Whatsoever thy heart find-
eth to do, do it with thy might; for
there is no work, nor device, nor know-
ledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither
thou goest."

The power to do this is not in our-
selves. It was not in Moses, although
it was written of him: "He refused to
be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
choosing rather to suffer affliction with
the people of God, than to enjoy the
pleasures of sin for a season." This
power to live a great spiritual, splendid
life must come from the abounding

grace of Christ in the soul. Without
Him we can do nothing in the stress
and warfare of the life set before
us. We need the wisdom of Christ.
We require the patience of Christ. We
must have the love of Christ. O, if he
be in us—if we do know that the
power of Christ is ours—if, when we
are poor and weak in ourselves, we
are rich and strong in Him, we shall
not fail and faint in the burden and
heat of the day. O Jesus, be with us!
O Lord, help us! O King of Glory,
leave us not in our loneliness and
feebleness, but come and be our peace,
and our righteousness, and our life.

O Master, at thy feet
I bow in rapture sweet!
Before me, as in darkening glass,
Some glorious outlines pass
Of love, and truth, and holiness, and
power:
I own them Thine, O Christ, and bless
Thee for this hour.

Yes, let my whole life be
One anthem unto Thee,
And let the praise of lip and life
Out ring all sin and strife.
O Jesus, Master! be Thy name supreme,
For heaven and earth the one, the grand,
eternal theme.

Yes, give me Christ in my heart, let
Him be enthroned there, and my life
shall rise from the dust, and walk in fair
beauty side by side with Him. Let
me have His large grace within, and
my heart shall be like a temple of
choicest marble filled with the incense
of heaven. Oh! give me Christ, and
when "the fashion of this world passeth
away," and bears with it to eternal
darkness and doom those deluded ones
who have trusted in it, I shall find Him,
my Lord and my Love, "the same
yesterday, to-day, and forever." O
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

I could not do without Thee,
For years are fleeting fast,
And soon in solemn loneliness
The river must be passed;
But Thou wilt never leave me,
And though the waves roll high,
I know Thou wilt be near me,
And whisper, "It is I."

Even so, come Lord Jesus, come
quickly." Amen.

An Epic in a Breath.

A poor woman, supported entirely
by charity for the last few years, de-
parted this life a few hours before the
present writing. She was a plain un-
cultured woman, of the poorer class,
having had no opportunities at any pe-
riod of life, and her mental endowments
to begin with were of inferior order.
From such a person no expression
marked by either force or beauty would
be expected. But though she was ig-
norant and unlearned, she had been
with Jesus; and to some extent the
history of Peter and John repeated it-
self in her. Having endured great
bodily affliction for many years, her
disease finally reached its last stage
and she lay apparently at the point of
death for four weeks. Every day and
almost every hour was thought to be
the last, but to the astonishment of all,
she continued to breathe. Her suffer-
ings were very severe, and knowing
her to be ready for the great change,
her friends were almost hoping for the
moment of her release. Said one of
them to her, "Well M—, are you
ready to go?" "Ye," said she, "ready
to go, but willing to wait!" Was
there ever anything more beautiful?
Is it possible to say as much in fewer
words? Is it possible that language
could be more happily chosen?
The prompt word "ready," the un-
sought alliteration, "willing to wait,"
the heroic faith, the patience and
meekness, all so briefly and sharply ex-
pressed, with epigrammatic point, by one
wholly unconscious that she had uttered
an epic in a breath, is an instance for
which it would be hard to find a par-
allel on any page of history, poetry,
philosophy, or religion. "Yes, ready
to go, but willing to wait."—*Christian
Index.*

No man can lift himself above the
world unless he takes hold of something
higher than the world; he cannot lift
himself out of himself unless he grasps
something higher than himself.