The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

Rev. J. McLEOD, "THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter. Editor and Proprietor.

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The Intelligencer.

IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE.

BY C. H. ZIMMEMAN.

Why should men repent? Because they are sinners. If any are not sinners, they are not commanded to repent. Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." But "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Men know that they are sinners. It needs no argument to convince them of it. The evidence of sin are written in their physical, mental and moral nature. The consciousness of sin is as universal as the knowledge of the law of God; for, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Moreover, the Holy Spirit applies the word to the sinner's conscience and produces the conviction of sin. So that all unconverted men who hear or read the word have an abiding witness of their sinfulness and know that it is their duty to repent.

But why should sinners repent? Because sin is a thing that is essentially hateful and odious and damning, and, unless repented of, will of itself sink the soul into eternal misery. There are no compensations for sin: nothing to mitigate its utter wickedness. If it were otherwise, if there were anything good in sin, sinners might possibly find some shadow or excuse for refusing to repent. But since sin is evil, and only evil, and that continually, all men ought to loathe it and shun it as they would the most poisonous viper.

But when should sinners repent? Now. Immediately. For God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." And "now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Now is God's time and the only time you are sure of.

"To morrow it may be too late
Why then do you delay?"

While Archeus of Thebes was feasting with a number of learned men, a messenger put into his hand a message saying, "Make haste, tomorrow you die." He replied "Business to-morrow." But on the morrow he was a corpse. So, you may be dead to-morrow.

But if you should live until the "to-morrow" you have set for your repentance, you will bitterly regret your delay. You will certainly regret it if you do not repent, for "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." You should therefore fear to delay because on account of that day you may never repent. Your refusal to repent now, and the acts of sin which will inevitably follow that refusal, will strengthen the power of sin over you and render it more likely that you will never repent.

But you will also regret your delay even if you do repent at some future time, because the longer you remain in sin the more you will have to repent of, the more complete will be the degradation of your nature, the more abject your bondage; and therefore, your repentance will be more bitter and painful and difficult for having been deferred. And though you should finally succeed, through riches of divine mercy and grace, in breaking away from the bondage of sin and escaping future damnation, you cannot possibly restore neglected opportunities or escape the debasement of character produced by protracted sinning, or ever attain that moral excellence and happiness which you may have if you will repent now. Hence, whether you do or do not repent at some future time, in either case your delay will entail endless regret.

But you say, I have no feeling, no sorrow for my sins, nor can I produce in myself the feeling of sorrow. How then can I repent now? Why, simply stop sinning and immediately commence praying God to help you to do right. "Cease to do evil and learn to do well." "Let him that stole steal no more." "Break off your sins by righteousness and your iniquities by turning unto God." That is, repentance is simply "turning from sin and turning to God; and you can do that, "now," if you will.

This notion which so many have that they cannot repent 'now,' grows out of the misapprehension that repentance is mainly sorrow for sin. But sorrow is only an *emotion* depending upon influences over which the soul has no control. This sorrow may or may not lead to repentance. A man may have the deepest sorrow, may be moved to tears by a sense of the number and enormity of his sins, but yet not repent.

Repentance is an an *act* of reformation involving an exertion of the will both in the initial resolution to reform and in subsequently carrying that resolution into practice. There are two factors necessary to every genuine repentance—the divine Spirit and the human will; and neither can be efficient without the other. Nor does the first secure the other; God never coerces the human will. Yet many think that the essential part of repentance is great emotional excitement of grief and tears produced by the Spirit, and are waiting for such a mighty exertion of divine power upon themselves as shall break their wills. They expect to be caught up in a whirlwind of spiritual influences and godly sorrow, and carried, without any exertion of their own, through all the work and experiences of repentance and reformation into a state of salvation. They expect God to do everything and themselves nothing; whereas the exertion of divine power is never carried to the extent of superseding the free use and fullest exertion of their own faculties.

Clearly, then, the notion that repentance consists mainly of godly sorrow or any ecstasy of grief for sin is a mistake. True, there must be sorrow for sin in every genuine repentance. Sooner or later, every man who sincerely strives to reform—to "break off his sins by righteousness"—will have sorrow enough. As the Spirit of God reveals to him the extent of his guilt and danger, and he discovers how hard it is to break away from the bondage of sin, he will be led to cry out with the apostle, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the sorrow is not repentance and does not always precede it. It may come after, and does frequently follow the resolution and the act of repentance. For consider that the ministry have been called and authorized to preach immediate repentance to all men; and if repentance is mainly sorrow, or must be invariably preceded by sorrow, such preaching would be utterly useless; for sorrow is an emotion which men cannot produce in themselves, and therefore they could not repent immediately. No man can be sorry by an effort of the will. Nevertheless, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent," and declares that they must perish if they do not repent. Would He have done this if repentance depended upon an emotion of grief which men have no power to produce themselves? No. The fact that God commands men to repent, and enforces the command with such fearful sanctions, proves that they are endowed with power to repent, and are so blameable for not doing it, as to deserve punishment—that is, that repentance is an act of which all consciously sinful men are capable when they will.

Wherefore there is no reason why you should not repent at this moment. Do not say you have no feeling. God does not command you to have feeling, but to repent. It is his place to give you feeling, and he will in due time if you will repent. The only thing in the way of your immediate repentance is your will. That you can control. You cannot produce the feeling of sorrow, and you are not responsible for that. But you can repent now, and for that you are responsible. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

WHAT ARE SERMONS FOR?

The people of a parish are apt to think that a minister must preach to suit them. That is what they elect him for. Not as an exponent of a faith, not as a man of conduct and ability, not as a man whose honest independence they are to respect and to help; but a man whose prime work it must be to suit those who have called him to be their minister, and who pay him a salary. He is not to suit his own standard, his own conscience, his own conviction, but to take the standard, conviction, conscience of others—to be be a servant in a very deplorable sense.

In nothing is this necessity of suiting more marked than in the matter of the sermon. Whatever else it is, it must be something that agrees with the opinion, desires, convictions, interests of those who hear it. In it each man must hear something more than the echo of his own thought—the distincter utterance which is the consent of another independent judgment. The hearer puts it down as a blemish against the preacher, "I don't agree with him," and dismisses the matter into a petulant silence or a profitable oblivion; and the parishioner feels a sort of wrong done him when his own thought is traversed, resents it in feeling and brings it up at the critical moment against his minister. The way in which people say to one another within fifty feet of the church door, the way in which they say to the man himself, "I don't agree with you," has a lingering of disapprobation in the tone, if nothing more positive. Our very boastful liberality is reduced to a very low "minimum" oftentimes, and however broad toward other people's views, we hold our clergy, our own special minister, with a very stiff curb, within very narrow lines.

Now the prime essential of a sermon is not that it should suit the thought of the hearer. It should never be calculated for that meridian. It should never be content with that level. Preaching, if it be good for anything, must be at least gently stimulant and wisely irritant at times. It must not have its portion only among smooth things. It must sometimes go against established opinions. It is healthiest often when most disagreed with. Men sometimes say, "I don't agree with you." My answer is, "I am glad of it." I feel then that something has been done. To disagree in a choleric sort of way, as if a personal injustice had been done, in the spirit of contention and fault-finding, is one thing, and a discreditable thing and a useless thing; but to disagree thoroughly, honestly, diametrically, is perhaps the healthiest thing for the hearer or the preacher. I remember that in the class discussions of the Divinity School, it got to be a habit, after one or two had spoken, to reply, "I concur"; and those concurrent exercises were about the deadest things possible, and the concurring of a whole parish in the minister's thought, or the necessity he may feel under of so preaching that they shall concur, must result in a deadness which may be very orthodox, very respectable, but must be thoroughly fatal. The best thing a minister can do, at any time, is not to secure a facile endorsement, a lazy or a satisfied agreement, but to set his hearers thinking, to tempt them out toward independent judgment, and provoke some internal questionings about the matter handled, leading possibly to thorough revision and reversal. It is great gain—and a man may leave the pulpit feeling he has accomplished something, and may close the day's account with some satisfaction—when he has provoked a hearty dissent from one and another honest hearer, and set him at work upon the matter. It is the best way of waking life and keeping alive.

The lack of agreement with the preacher—provided it be within the restrictions candor easily recognizes and a fair justice always observes—is an element of health and of hope. Those parishes will grow in the best strength which do not demand agreement, but are stimulated to think, and are willing to hear, to look into, to rejudge matters which are presented to them in other than the stereotyped way, under other than the one old, and sometimes dim, light, which has been for generations growing dimmer and dimmer, and less and less sure as a guide. Those preachers will have most life in their work, and give most truth to their people, who are not repressed by the cries, "I don't agree," "He don't suit," but who feel that the honest word of best conviction will have the courtesy of respectful rejection, though it should not win the hospitality of cordial approval. The people who run to an editor, breathless and hoarse, "Stop my paper, stop my paper," whenever the editor crosses the line drawn by their party, their interest, their prejudice or whim, in their small way strike not at his reputation or bread and butter, but at the very bulwark of the republic, at the very fountain source of truth and hope. The parishioners who greet the preacher's honesty with the threat, "I shall give up my pew," who take their names from the subscription list, who withdraw from his hearing, or gives cold looks or colder cuts—and every honest minister has had all these in his experience as his reward for his best fidelity to his best light—are not injuring him, taking away his reputation, his happiness, his hopeful toil, so much as they are striking deadly blows at the very foundations of that religious liberty in which our best hopes reside, on which our denomination profess to base and establish itself. Hospitality to the thought of the minister, not approval or endorsal necessarily, is a prime, a vital condition of his success, that of the parish, that of the church, that of the truth; and our parishes waste and wane, the church and the truth suffer, and the ministerial profession loses its hold upon the desire of the honest and the brave, from the conviction, which too potent facts face, that the great implement of the ministry—the sermon—must be a thing on which all agree; that to differ is fatal. Our parishes are liberal enough in their opinions, and in the range they allow and welcome in very many ways, while in many particular cases, "I don't agree with that, it don't suit *me*," are working fatal and insidious mischief.

Don't think it the prime, the vital thing that there should be always agreement with the thought of your preacher. Don't become his Pope, Infallibility must not get into parishes, committees, or individuals. It is bad enough at Rome. Let it stay there. Oftentimes that sermon will answer the highest end of preaching which does not enlist sympathy even, but which does set in motion the whole interior man, and call upon him for a just scrutiny of previous opinion or present conviction. If the pulpit is not to become a mere "mush of concession," it must be allowed a liberty which no thoughtful man, because of its now and then disagreement with himself, will seek to curtail.—*J. F. W. W., in Christian Register.*

ECHOES, NOT ANSWERS.

A disconsolate Christian was wont to go out on the mountain side to pray, and while pouring out the anguish of a despairing soul to God, the echoes of his own plaints came back upon him from the opposite mountainside, only separated by a stream. As one after another of his half-uttered petitions came echoing back upon his own lips, he rose in confusion, as one that had been mocked, exclaiming:—"I can get echoes, but not answers!" He did not suspect the cause, but the old apostle could have told him. "You ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

Faithless prayers have no place in them on which to lay answers; nay, they are too leaky to hold answers borne so far as from heaven to earth. He that cometh to God must *believe*. And then we are told what is the jewel of His faith, *that* He is; and the radiance of His faith is that He is rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The faith with which many prayers are winged is of the nature of the faith of a venerable woman who, having somewhat literally read of faith as a grain of mustard-seed removing mountains, thought she would try hers in an effort to remove a mountain between her own and son's houses. So before retiring to her rest, she prayed that this intervening mountain might be removed with the night. At the dawn of the morning when she rose to witness the evidence of the omnipotence of her faith, the mountain stood still on its ancient foundation. At the sight of which she exclaimed to her son, just coming in, "Just as I expected, the old mountain is still in the way!"

We get echoes, not answers, from another cause—impatience. We are often childish in this respect, saying, "Please, mamma," with the charms and smiles of an angel, but kicking and squalling most violently, because the favor is not at hand as soon as sought. While it is certain that the prayer of faith is sure to succeed in the end, still we practise, in our prayers, the tricks of children, who go from house to house ringing the door-bells on Hollow Eve, but who run away before answers can be given. And so we pray, O how fervently, and run away from the mercy-seat, as if we were afraid that they would be answered.

But the few spurious motives mentioned do not yet exhaust the reasons why, to so many prayers, men get echoes, but not answers. The inspired penman gives one—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Its ugly face, even in desire, as a frame around the picture, is enough to cut us off from all possibility of answer. We had, in former years, several interviews with a man who, according to his account, prayed hours and days for peace in believing, and could not obtain it; it seemed an apparent contradiction to God's promises.

But we were determined not to have God's promises so publicly dishonored. So we visited him, and to our amazement, this man of so much prayer without answer kept a rum-shop, and was selling it as basily as he could every moment, except when he was at prayer meeting telling what a big "prayman" he was, and how unfaithful God was; it was all clear how it had been impossible for him to shove his bogus coin on God. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." So much the worse if this iniquity gets out of this cage, and embodies itself in acts.

A young lady of one of our city churches was overheard at the sea-side in a fashionable hotel, saying: "I am as mad as I can be; I would have had a splendid time last night at the ball. Several splendid gentlemen asked me to waltz with them, and I could not do it because I had joined the church last spring, and I promised the session not to go to balls. I tell you, ma, religion deprives me of a great deal of enjoyment. But as I am into it, I suppose I will have to stick to it. I will have to die some day, and there is no other way of getting into heaven, is there, ma?" It is not necessary to say a word as to the probabilities of answers to any prayers from that source, while guided by such motives; and yet she was better than multitudes, who would not even have been deterred by obligation, who would, under the circumstances, have cared no more for their covenant with God, than for the last meteor which shot across the heavens.

And still another among the many reasons that might be given why so many get echoes of their petitions, instead of answers from God, is the fact that we so soon stop asking. A little girl, but a few days ago, accosted a couple of gentlemen on Chestnut street, so absorbed in their conversation that they did not perceive the little hand, red with cold, thrust out before them, with upturned eyes watching for a glance with a piteous, "Please sir!" at each apparent lull in their conversation, for five squares, before she got their attention and their alms. And there are better reasons why God lets us plead for a time unanswered. He shows us, in His delay, how much of the persistence of faith we have, and how much importunity with which to enforce our privileges in His promises. In the wonderful intercession of Abraham with God, in behalf of Sodom, God never ceased granting as long as Abraham kept asking. And there are examples in the New Testament, where the Master appeared, in the first pleadings, to be utterly indifferent, in which the petitioners succeeded in the end through their importunity.

As further illustrative of this point, a fable comes to our consciousness out of the reminiscences of youth. A crow ready to die, being wing-wearied over a desert, and almost dead of thirst, saw a pitcher, left by the caravan of the night before, in which was water, but so low, that with all his efforts in stretching, he could not reach it. He then tried to break the pitcher, but his strength was already too far exhausted. In his desperation, the thought occurred to him to drop in some pebbles which lay hard by, until, as one by one was dropped in, the water was raised to a point accessible to his thirsty bill, through which his fever was quenched and his life saved. So it is in our importunity in prayer. Every prayer offered may be a pebble to bring the water of life nearer the thirsty soul. The Lord may intend by our apparently fruitless efforts to awaken and increased the craving of desire, and to lead us to patient continuance in the use of the means; but every seemingly futile effort brings the blessing nearer, until in time the famished soul is fully satisfied, and the needed measure of our prayers is full.—*Presby.*

VISIT TO MAMMOTH CAVE.

From a Lady Correspondent.

As you expressed a desire to hear from us during our absence from the city, it gives me pleasure to tell you something of our visit to the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. It is a constant source of wonderment to me that so few people, comparatively speaking, visit this famous cave, for among all the marvellous works of the Deity none can excel this. That one may walk nearly two hundred miles through connected under ground avenues, already discovered, seems almost incredible, but such is the fact, and the remarkable purity of the atmosphere, together with the uniformity of temperature, which never varies from fifty-nine degrees, renders it possible for persons who could not walk upon the ground without fatigue, to take what is called the short route, a distance of nine miles, with perfect ease. I can testify to this with assurance, having tried it.

We make our trips by way of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad to Cincinnati, making our first stop at Louisville, from thence to Cave City, a distance of eighty miles. The first morning we found ourselves, with others, seated, at an early hour, inside the inevitable Concord stage for a ride of nine miles over a rough, mountainous road, which, in spite of its roughness, was so charming that we really regretted when the old stage drew up at the Cave Hotel, and the door was opened for us to alight. On learning, upon our arrival, that a party, with William, the favorite guide, for their leader, was in readiness to enter the Cave, we took a hasty survey of the surroundings, made our preparations and joined them. Our party, consisting of five besides the guide, met upon the long corridor of the Hotel, where a staff was placed in the hand of each, while William led off with the lanterns. The sun poured its most burning heat upon us, and we were glad to know that our walk to the Cave was short. The path led down a charming grassy slope, and as we drew near the entrance the current of air was so strong and chilling that I shrank from going in, but when the guide assured me that I should not take cold, that he scarcely ever knew of such an instance, my next anxiety was to keep my lamp burning, which I succeeded in doing, though others of the party were less fortunate. It is a very exciting episode—this getting through the draft of the entrance, for, no matter how much oil one's lamp contains, or how well trimmed and burning it may be, it is only by dint of the most skilful manœuvre that one escapes the fate of the "foolish virgin." The excitement at the beginning puts one in a frame of mind devoutly to be desired on entering this weird and awfully sublime place. The stillness, such as it is impossible to realize upon the earth, makes it desirable to have cheerful voices around and near one. The entrance is situated in a deep ravine, and is extremely picturesque; a few shining drops of water trickle down from among the feathery ferns and grasses overhead, reaching the depths at the left of the path. The moisture just here clothes the entrance with peculiar verdure.

The opening is about twenty-five feet high and thirty wide. The passage first entered is called the Narrows, at the extreme end of which are situated the Vats, in which the saltpetre was made for the manufacture of gunpowder for the war of 1812. It was drawn out through the steep narrow declivity in ox-carts, and by wagons taken to Philadelphia.

The Rotunda came next in order. It is said to be directly under the Hotel, is about one hundred feet in height and one hundred and seventy-five feet in diameter. At the right of it is an avenue one-half a mile long, called Audubon's Avenue, at the entrance of which several cottages were built, some years ago, as a resort for consumptives, with the idea that the uniformity of temperature would prove beneficial, but alas, the experiment was a fatal one, for of the number (I think thirteen), three died soon after taking up their residence there, and others died within a few weeks after coming out. It is said that their appearance on being exposed to the daylight was too frightful for description. The sight of these ruins and the history as narrated, made us glad to retrace our steps to the main avenue again, where we soon found ourselves seated in the Church, from the natural pulpit of which the Gospel has often been preached—the first time more than fifty years ago.

Coming through the main avenue we came to the Gothic Gallery, after which followed the Grand Arch and the Giant's Coffin; the latter is a rock forty feet in length and very striking in its resemblance to the old-fashioned coffin.

The next peculiarity is a dark figure upon the ceiling, called the Ant-Eater, composed of gypsum upon a background of white limestone. In like manner the figures farther on, called the Giant's Family are formed. They resemble a huge man and woman sitting face to face, with a child apparently suspended in the air, as though it were being tossed from one to the other.

The next chamber is the grandest and most wonderful of any we saw. The Star Chamber is sixty feet high, seventy wide and five hundred long. Entering it the guide conducted us to some seats, and taking our lanterns from us, said, "Here I must leave you," at the same time insinuating a doubt as to whether or not he would return, but our faith in him was not in the least shaken, so we sat patiently waiting to see what new wonder would be presented to us next. As he hastily retreated behind a ledge of rock, no

"Pensive twilight in her dusky car
Came slowly on to meet the evening star,"

but impenetrable darkness reigned—at first so thick and awful that the blood fairly chilled in my veins, and I fancy the whole party experienced a similar effect (although they were all of the sterner sex), for not a word was spoken, and the darkness grew more terrible as I began to feel that "the world was left to darkness and to me."

After a brief interval, which seemed an hour, a glimmering light was thrown upon the ceiling, producing such a perfect illusion that we could not persuade ourselves for the moment that we were not looking from out a deep cavern upon a starry sky. Soon the deep cheery voice of our William was heard, saying, "Look to the right and see the Comet," and sure enought it was perfect; a strip of the dark gypsum had peeled off, leaving the sparkling limestone, which was also the case in the star illusion. There have been several instances in which persons have been lost in the Cave, and although they have been found after many hours search, the effect upon the minds of some proved very serious. William had taken care to inform us of these facts so that by a feat of ventriloquism he might play a little joke upon us; thus after a brief silence, a mournful voice proceeding from a new and distant corner was heard, saying, "I'm lost, O, I'm lost." Short as the deception was, our delight on learning the truth may be better imagined than described. After this came the imitating of chanticleer, with the information that the "morning light was breaking," which we might see by looking toward the rising sun. Of course we were not left long to conjecture which was east, taking the reflected light from the six lanterns upon the wall at our left as a guide.

The illusion was also very fine. Again we took up our line of march, but to retrace our steps, as far as the Giant's Coffin. There we entred the Deserted Chamber, which is at the entrance of the Long Route, a part of which we took, having seen the most and the best of the short one. On leaving the Deserted Chamber, we soon found ourselves in the Wooden Bowl Cave, the ceiling of which resembles an inverted wooden bowl, and it is a curious coincidence, but "they say" that at the time this cave was discovered a wooden bowl like those used by the Indians, was found here.

Opassing up the Steps of Time we entered Marna's Palace, hard by which is a spring from which she has no doubt procured water, although it is called Wandering Willie's Spring. The story they tell of the young man whose name it bears, is that he was devoted to music, and travelling on foot from Cincinnati with his violin, he begged leave to remain by the spring all night with his violin as his sole companion. His request was granted upon his promising that he would not leave the spot. He told those who sought him in the morning that "he had passed a glorious night." As we stood there regaling ourselves from the crystal fountain, William, in a very grave manner, said, "I can tell you exactly to a quart how much water boils up into this spring in a year." We all saw at once that there was some catch about it, but what it was none could conjecture. When interrogated he said, "*Two pints to a quart.*"

Passing on through the Arched Way, we came to the Side Saddle Pit, over which rests a dome some sixty feet in height. Throughout our route the guide kindled Bengal lights, or burned pieces of paper saturated with chemicals, throwing their light into dome and pit, upon wall and ceiling, thus giving us the most complete and marvellous views of the dark places. The Bridge of Sighs, which spans the Bottomless pit, came in our route. Crossing it, the possibilities of never re-crossing, to again behold the beauties and the friends of this world, reminded one of what must have been the feelings of these poor mortals, who, crossing that more historic bridge, were conscious of their impending fate. This pit is one hundred and seventy-five feet deep, and and about twenty in width.

We also took a look into Reveller's Hall, which exhibited a "deep trail in *human* nature," judging from the numerous bottles, broken and otherwise, which were strewn about.

We concluded in passing through the Valley of Humility, which is a low, smooth passage about four feet high,—how long I cannot say,—that we preferred to exhibit our humility in some other way, and were glad to pass from it, even if we must next enter the Scotchman's Trap, although I could not have said this, nor indeed could I have entered it during those years when it was the only known outlet, since at the entrance is suspended an immense rock, which looks as though it might fall at any moment, and entirely close the passage. Now there are three ways of escape in case of such an event.

Gorin's Dome is the most beautiful one we saw. It is approached by passing up a flight of steps, and seen through a small natural window, midway from point of dome to floor of pit. As William threw his light in at a side opening, it seemed as though I must be looking upon the handiwork of man, so like chiselled stone did it appear. At the opposite side a curtain was suspended, at least one hundred feet in length, with folds so perfect that it would have done a sculptor credit to have produced them.

The Bacon Chamber is very appropriately so called, the ceiling being thickly studded with limestone projections resembling hams. The Gothic Chapel is a chamber of exceeding beauty. The Altar, so called, is composed of columns formed of stalacites and stalagmites; the ceiling also has the appearance of being supported by similar columns. Three marriages have taken place in this Chapel,—the first under slightly discordant circumstances. The bride's relatives being opposed to the union, exacted from her the promise that she would never marry this man of her choice *on the face of the earth.* She, no doubt, had previously received a suggestion (for that sly little urchin, who, although blind, is quick to think) that the ceremony might be performed here without breaking her promise; thus it came to pass.

We may almost say we crossed the river Styx upon a bridge, as one push of our oar took our boat to the opposite bank, a little distance beyond. However, we embarked upon a longer voyage upon Lake Lethe, a placid little body of water, one hundred and fifty yards long and about forty wide. Upon arriving at the other side, we left the boat to continue our trip through Great Walk, which extends from the Lake to Echo River, a distance, at low water, of five hundred yards, but to our regret and dismay, after a short walk, we found the water had risen so high as to cause the inundation of the boat far beyond our reach, so we had to content ourselves with what we had seen and retrace our steps.

Pausing at the margin of Lake Lethe, we observed some eyeless crawfish, one of which the guide was fortunate enough to catch. He also succeeded in securing a cricket, which, when I asked him to catch, he said he would, if he had any place to carry it. I told him I would look out for that, so while he was securing the prize, I was making ready my glove, where he found lodgment until we put him with the crawfish and an eyeless fish into a bottle of alcohol, to bring away as souvenirs of our trip to Mammoth Cave.

H. A. C.

NOVEL-READING.

When I was quite young I was a very great lover of novels. I would rather read novels than do anything else. I could read them all day and dream of them all night; and after a time I became indifferent to everything else but feeding my mind on a trashy novel. I did not care for my studies; I did not care anything about reading the Bible. It was not exciting enough.

After a while, when I grew older and began to reflect, I found that I was not pursuing the right course, and by continued exertion I have overcome my desire for novels. And now I will proceed to give my objections to them. In the first place it is wasting precious time. The time that God has given us to prepare our souls for eternity, to do good to our fellow-creatures, to visit the sick, the widows, and orphans, is spent in reading a light, trashy novel which will not make our hearts any better or our heads any wiser. Then when we are reading novels we are not watching and praying. When we are honestly engaged our thoughts, can be one moment centered on the object before us, and the next moment be wafted to heaven on wings of prayer. But we never feel like praying when we are reading novels. I never heard of anyone being converted while reading a novel. I never heard of a Christian being made happy or more steadfast in the faith by reading anything as nugatory as a novel. It takes away all desire for sensible reading; it fills the soul with desires that never can be satisfied by all the wealth and honor of this world.

Nothing satisfies the thirsty soul but the religion of Christ; nothing gives perfect happiness to the poor unsatisfied heart but the love of God. And novels do not teach us the way of salvation; they do not teach us to fly to Christ and have that longing for permanent happiness which is implanted in every human heart gratified by the fullness of his love. And last, but not least, I expect to be called away from earth some time, and I may be called without a moment's warning. When the summons comes for me to leave this earth I do not want to be found with a novel in my hand. I do not want the last thing my eyes rest upon here on earth to be a novel. Therefore I say, away with novels. Give me something that will tend toward making me usful in life, triumphant in death, and happy throughout all eternity.

SALLIE E. ZENOR.

Evansville, Indiana.

HE REDEEMED ME.

A gentlemen had paid his money for the ransom of a slave, and had given her her freedom. She had been born a slave, and knew not what freedom meant. Her tears fell fast on the signed parchment which her deliverer brought to prove it to her; she only looked at him with fear. At last he got ready to go his way, and as he told her what she must do when he was gone, it did dawn on her what freedom was. With the first breath, "I will follow him," she said, "I will follow him: I will serve him all my days;" and to every reason against it she only cried, "He redeemed me! He redeemed me! He redeemed me!"

When strangers used to visit that master's house, and noticed—as all did—the loving, constant service of the glad-hearted girl, and asked her why she was so eager with unbidden service, night by night, and day by day, she had but one answer, and she loved to give it: "He redeemed me! He redeemed me! He redeemed me!"

Is this *your* motive-power for serving God—"He redeemed me?" or is it only, "Well, I hope I may yet be found among the redeemed, and meanwhile I do the best I can?" Wretched slavery, with the chain of death or doubt hanging on the limbs! Rather take God at his word now, and joyfully exclaim, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant. . . . Thou hast loosed my bonds."

A STORY BY LAMARTINE.

In the tribe of Neggodeh there was a horse whose fame was spread far and near, and a Bedouin of another tribe, by name Daher, desired extremely to possess it. Having offered in vain for it his camels and his whole wealth, he hit at length upon the following device, by which he hoped to gain the object of his desire. He resolved to stain his face with the juice of an herb, to clothe himself in rags, to tie his neck and legs together, so as to appear like a lame beggar. Thus equipped, he went to look for Naber, the owner of the horse, whom he knew was to pass that way. When he saw Naber approaching on his beautiful steed, he cried out in a weak voice:

"I am a poor stranger; for three days I have been unable to move from this spot to seek for food. I am dying; help me, and heaven will reward you."

The Bedouin kindly offered to take him upon his horse and carry him home, but the rogue replied;

"I can not rise; I have no strength left."

Naber, touched with pity, dismounted, led his horse to the spot, and with great difficulty set the seeming beggar on its back. But no sooner did Daher feel himself in the saddle than he set spurs to the horse, and galloped off, calling out, as he did so:

"It is I, Daher. I have got the horse and am off with him."

Naber called after him to stop and listen. Certain of not being pursued, he turned and halted at a short distance from Naber, who was armed with a spear.

"Since heaven has willed it, I wish you joy of it; but I do conjure you never to tell anyone how you obtained it."

"And why not?" said Daher.

"Because," said the noble Arab, "another might be really ill, and men would fear to help him. You would be the cause of many refusing to perform an act of charity, for fear of being duped, as I have been."

Struck with shame at these words, Daher was silent for a moment, then, springing from the horse, returned it to its owner, embracing him. Naber made him accompany him to his tent, where they spent a few days together, and became fast friends for life.

How shall the drunkard be saved?

By personal effort, which is the outgrowth of true Gospel faith, and is carried forward with the persistency of "eternal vigilance." Nothing short.

How shall the liquor seller be saved?

Not by calling him hard names.

Well, but he ought to know better.

Doubtless, and I presume he does. But, will that pave the way for the Gospel, which only can save him?

But I believe in something besides Gospel for such fellows.

Ah! some new way to save them, then?

A way to stop them from running others, at least.

Do you think that anything is better than the Gospel, for that? One liquor seller saved by the power of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would be better than a score of them prosecuted.

But, What if they won't be influenced by the Gospel?

Wait at least till you have shown them all sides of it, and done as much as Jesus would do if he was in your place, before you bring in that supposition.

Ramseller! Follow your murdered victims to the bar of God and when He, who called the first fratricide to account, shall ask you "Where are thy brethren?" What will your answer be? There will be no prevarication there. You must speak the truth, and say, before the stern Majesty of Eternal Justice, "I slew them and brought endless perdition upon myself, for the sake of a short and infamous life on earth."