

# THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

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For the Central Presbyterian. Systematic Benevolence.

(CONTINUED.)

II. Notwithstanding the great simplicity and brevity of the resolution adopted by the Assembly, the plan of operation they unfold has been somewhat misapprehended, and, undesignedly no doubt, misrepresented!

1. Some have intimated that the scheme is a failure because in less than two years it has not availed to fill the treasuries of our Boards. If ever any such expectation was held out either in "prophecies, speeches, resolutions or reports," those channels of communication have certainly failed to reach many parts of our Church.

Indeed this speedy condemnation of a plan, which in one year enlists the co-operation of nearly one fifth of our Presbyteries, is unfair. How long had the agency system been tried and yet it had not succeeded in bringing to the aid of our Boards one half of our Churches. It ought to be borne in mind, that the amounts of money contributed in any one year, however intrinsically an important consideration, is not the only purpose of such a plan.

The efficiency of this plan depends materially on the earnest and cordial co-operation of each Presbytery. Instead of finding fault or predicting failure, let each go to work in his Church and Presbytery, and we shall soon realize the benefits of a system so well adapted to our wants and so fully accordant with our Presbyterian polity.

2. The plan has been represented as somewhat opposed to agents and our Boards. Nothing is said or implied as to agents. It only provides that every minister and Church Session afford the people annually opportunities for contributing their money, and give an invitation to do so.

The idea of any thing antagonistic to the Boards or their policy is really strange, considering the origin of the plan, adopted by the Assembly. The resolutions, excepting the first, were drawn by one of the Secretaries and contain substantially the principles presented in two overtures, from the Presbyteries of Lexington and Elizabethtown which were laid before the Assembly. Those overtures were drawn by the same pen, and the original copy of both was a paper, prepared with a view of its presentation to the Assembly, as the overtures of the Secretaries of the four Boards. It was submitted to these brethren and received their most cordial approbation.

and other Church officers can be rallied to perform their whole duty, by all means let every opportunity be afforded for the experiment to be made. Let not such a scheme be cried down either as impracticable or as antagonistic to any existing interests.

It deserves notice that those Boards which employ collecting agents are those which are most embarrassed for want of funds. It is in no sense true, that an effort to conform to the Assembly's plan, has produced a deficiency in the receipts of the Boards.

After all that has been said for or against the agency system, the main defect of that system is its inefficiency. Like all other stimulants its remedies make their operation inevitable, and like all others, it gradually loses its effect. It is inefficient as to the Church, as a whole, because no such system, as ever yet devised, could reach the whole, or even a large moiety of our Churches. Those too, which generally, less need, obtain most of this help, while those which need special excitement fail to obtain it. The smaller and feebler Churches, whose collections will not pay for the labor and time required to reach them, are left out. They generally need stimulating, while most of the Churches in large towns and cities will probably do as well without as with agencies.

The proposed plan makes no war against the agency system or indeed against any thing except sloth and covetousness, negligence and apathy. It proposes, it is true, to supersede what its most zealous advocates have generally admitted to be only an expedient, and what all wish to see laid aside, whenever the desired results can otherwise be obtained. But we have no sympathy with Reformers, whose only developed organ is that of destructiveness. The Assembly, by no means, aims to cripple or retard the operations of the Boards. Agents may be still employed when and where needed, and a judicious use of their services may contribute to aid in that training of the Church which is contemplated.

3. Some one has expressed regret that the Assembly did not send to the Churches a detailed plan, providing for simultaneous collections. The disposition to imitate our Scotch brethren, in minor matters and those rather peculiar to them by reason of geographical and other incidental circumstances, is by no reason surprising, when we remember how much that is worthy of imitation they have held up to us. But obviously we cannot, in our widely extended country, manage our financial matters as they can, on a part of a small island. And the failure of such an effort would be at once pronounced as a failure of the whole scheme.

The diversities of climate, the differing modes of procuring an income, the scattered state of some of our congregations, and various other peculiarities in our condition, must ever forbid promptness and regularity in any attempt at executing a plan, providing for simultaneous collections or for contributions to be made in all cases in any special mode. The Assembly will have accomplished a most important work when it shall have succeeded in inducing every Presbytery to undertake the organization of its Churches. A still greater work will have been accomplished when such organization may have been completed, and a yet greater when by the continued exercise of the power of "review and control," the Presbyteries will have been induced to require and the Churches to present annual reports of diligence in making their contributions. It will be seen too that the Assembly presents as suggestions in the form of recommendations appended to the resolutions three different methods of conjunctive action, which have all been found plans of practical value.

But let each Church adopt the scheme which best suits its particular circumstances. If the best plan is not found practicable adopt that which can be executed; for the plan which will answer the exigency is, in fact, the best. Improvements can be introduced. Let none wait, doing nothing, until they can act just in the mode preferred. *Dimidium fecit, qui incipit.*

III. Let us now briefly advert to some cogent reasons which should induce all who love our Church most cordially and efficiently to co-operate in sustaining the action of the Assembly.

1. It is by such an organization that we shall fully illustrate the scriptural character of our Church. Not only is the "grace of giving" presented in the Bible as a most important element in Christian character, but the great work of the Church in propagating the gospel is intimately connected with its cultivation. The Church is no half-way scheme. Its divine founder has provided for sustaining its external as well as internal life. Its dependence on the State, or on any human contrivance to provide the means for sustaining its Institutions, is a surrender of its truth and an abrogation of an essential principle of its vitality. Irrespective of all evil consequences which have invariably followed this policy, it is dishonoring to Christ and enfeebles the moral strength of the Church. Avowing then, as we do, that ours is a truly scriptural Church, let us evince in fact, what we claim in theory. The plan proposed demands no additional powers, or officers, or agencies. Our form of government supplies all. This cannot be said of others than Presbyterian Churches. And

it is remarkable and instructive to observe, that such alone of all Churches, transplanted from foreign countries to our own, not only find no change necessary to supply the wants of an establishment, but at the same time, to conduct religious enterprises, find no need for any organizations outside of themselves.

2. The proposed plan as already observed, while not regardless of the intrinsic value of contributions, directs its strength to the cultivation of the "grace of giving." "The poor ye have always with you." God by his wise and holy Providence has so ordered, that the incentives to benevolent enterprise and efforts shall never be wanting. He could as easily have ordered it differently. But as he has chosen earthen vessels to hold and set forth his gospel, so he has chosen that in sustaining its Institutions, the agency of his Church should be continually called into requisition. But the "grace of giving," like other graces is to be increased and strengthened by its exercise. If it is the duty of the people to give, it is the duty of pastors to train them to the service. This is as obligatory as to train to the cultivation and exercise of all right tempers and holy dispositions. As well delegate to some particular individuals, the office of going around among the Churches and inculcating the duty of prayer or grace of faith as to depute men whose special business it is to cultivate this "grace."

3. There are scores and hundreds of Churches in our bounds which have adopted the principles of this plan in respect to some or all of the objects of benevolence, recognised by the Assembly. The fact that they will contribute, is so well established that by recurring to their contributions of a previous year, the officers of our boards are able to calculate with a very small margin of uncertainty on the prospective income of another year. Now let this be realized in respect to the great body of our Churches, and it may easily be seen that all our benevolent schemes could be conducted with more regularity and of course efficiency; and the longer our Churches cultivate the habit of giving, the more rapidly and steadily will their contributions increase, new members and children growing up in such Churches gradually fall in with existing plans and in less perhaps than a generation, we may behold our Churches fully alive to their duty, and cheerfully and systematically bringing the tithes into the storehouse. God will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. Then "from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same." His name shall be great among the Gentiles, and "in every place shall be offered incense and a pure offering."

PREBYTER. For the Central Presbyterian.

### Preaching by Proxy.

Much is said of the want of preachers. With all our efforts to endow our Seminary, and with the best exertions of the able men who compose its faculty, still, "the laborers are few." The fourth Thursday of February is generally observed as a day of prayer for colleges. On this day the young men of the church are addressed on the ministry, and prayer is offered that God would call, qualify and send forth many to preach the gospel. And yet the ranks of other professions continue to be crowded; even young men who have professed to consecrate themselves to Christ, turn their backs upon the ministry of the gospel, and seem to think that they can more fully perform unto God their vows, more effectually live to the glory of his name as lawyers or doctors, than as preachers.

The consequence is that large tracts of country still continue a moral waste, and many churches have none to break unto them the bread of life. No fewer than 500 of our churches are now vacant, with 20,000 communicants and 50,000 hearers. It is estimated that there are now 5000 young men belonging to the schools of medicine and law in this country. How many there are in all the Theological schools of the country, I have not the means of determining. But the number of those belonging to the Presbyterian church (O. S.) falls below 350. The Synod of Virginia reported at their last meeting an increase of one in her ministry, since their previous annual meeting.

For this sad state of things, there is a cause, and there is a remedy. What that cause may be, I do not undertake to say. Nor is it my purpose now to speak of the remedy. But I do wish to say something of a substitute by which our fathers and mothers, our young men and maidens may, in part, supply this lack of service.

The wise and the good who have gone to their reward, 'tho' dead yet speak.' Through them our Presbyterial Book Committees propose to preach the Gospel to the destitute, as our Theological Seminaries do, through their living candidates for the ministry. Now this preaching by proxy, has been practised far more extensively than it is at the present time. And God has signally sealed it with his blessing. There used to be preachers of this sort in Richmond. Wm. Fenwick was one of them. He was an Englishman of some eccentricities of character, but he did much good. And one of the chief means by which he became a blessing to others, was by recommending and distributing good books.

A few in your city may still linger this side the grave, who remember the intelligent, the pious Mrs. Gen'l Wood. Does not your "Jean Wood Association" still exist? She was its founder and from her it took its name. As far as man can see, that lady was chiefly instrumental in establishing one of the best churches of our denomination in the county of Albemarle. And what to some may seem very strange, she never saw the church, nor any member belonging to it. It happened on this wise. She made the acquaintance of a lady from that part of the country, whom she met at the Virginia Springs. This lady was not pious. She was in extremely ill health, and during their sojourn together at the Springs, Mrs. Wood became really interested in her spiritual welfare. On her return to Richmond she still remembered her afflicted friend, and resolved to make another effort for her salvation. She accordingly stated the case to her pastor, Dr. J. H. Rice, and he suggested to her the propriety of sending Doddridge's Rise and Progress to her friend. The book was sent, but did not reach her for whom it was intended until she was too near her end to read it or even hear it read. But this effort was not lost. The surviving friends and relatives of the deceased lady read this book. None can say precisely how many were thus hopefully converted, but this is known, that it went from house to house, awakening here one and there another, and exciting in the public mind so deep an interest on the subject of religion, that in a short time a church was organized which continues to this day. One of the persons awakened by that book spent ten years as a missionary to the Nestorians in Persia, but being obliged to return to her native land, is now the wife of the present pastor of that church.

Gilbert Tement Snowden was another book-preacher in Richmond, in the days of the great and good Dr. John H. Rice. He then held the humble office of merchant's clerk. But he was strong in faith and mighty in prayer. There are doubtless those in Richmond now, who remember how he used to pray at the prayer meetings held in private parlors on Saturday evenings. It was of him the eccentric Wm. Fenwick said, "He stammers somewhat when he talks to men, but never when he talks to God."

And there was then another young man there; who after spending a year at Hampden Sidney, had left and taken a school in Richmond. He was blessed with the confidence and the love of Snowden. On going into the store one day he was somewhat startled on being accosted by him thus. "Have you taken the necessary pains to ascertain whether God calls you to spend your life in teaching school?" and without waiting for an answer, immediately handed the embarrassed school-master a book—only adding, as his eyes filled with tears, "read that book and ask, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'" This book was the life of Rev'd Cornelius Winter, by Wm. Jay. It was read, the prayer indicated was offered, and the result was a determination, by the help of God, to preach the Gospel or die in the attempt.

Snowden subsequently went to Columbia, S. Carolina, where he lived—labored and died in peace, as extensively and favorably known—as useful while he lived, and as much lamented when he died, as perhaps any other ruling elder who ever belonged to our connection. His friend to whom he gave the life of the good Mr. Winter, still lives, having preached the gospel now these twenty-nine years.

But did not Snowden preach before him; and does he not this day preach by him and through him? Who makes the garment? They who spin, or they who weave, or they who cut and sew the material? Through whose instrumentality was Timothy converted? Was it Paul who preached to him, or his mother, or his grandmother who, from a child, taught him the Holy Scriptures?

"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one, and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are workers together with God." IOTA.

For the Central Presbyterian.

### Reports of Sessions.

Mr. Editor.—Allow me to remind my brother clerks of Sessions, that the Board of Publication have printed Forms, of the Annual Reports of Sessions to the Presbytery. If these officers will enclose three or four postage stamps, addressed to J. P. Engles, Publishing Agent, 265 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, they will receive these Forms by mail.

The Annual Reports are somewhat different from those formerly made by Sessions: and as our elders do not all see the Minutes of the Assembly, (all ought to obtain them every year.) I have supposed that it may be appropriate, respectfully to remind clerks, that these reports now embrace the following subjects:—viz.

- I. COMMUNICANTS.—1. Added by examination; 2. By certificate; 3. Colored communicants; 4. Whole number of communicants.
- II. BAPTISMS.—1 adult; 2 infants.
- III. Children in SABBATH SCHOOLS, BIBLE CLASSES (number of).

IV. FUNDS COLLECTED.—1. Domestic Missions, whether for the Board or other judicatories; 2. Foreign Missions; 3. Education, embracing contributions to the Board, to Seminary, Schools, Colleges, &c.; 4. Publication; 5. Church Extension, whether to the General Fund or for building other Churches than their own; 6. Presbyterial, including commissioners fund, contingent expenses of the Presbytery; 7. Congregational, including pastor's salaries, Church expenses, building or repairing house of worship, &c.; 8. Miscellaneous, including all other contributions.

The Post Office (and county and State) of the Pastor, Stated Supply and the Clerk of the Session should be given. A CLERK OF SESSION.

### "The Grave of the Early Dead."

'Tis a lowly grave, but it suits her best, Since it breathes of fragrance and speaks of rest; And meet for her, is its calm repose, Whose life was so stormy and sad to its close.

'Tis a shady dell, where they've laid her form, And the hill gathers round it to break the storm; While above her head, the bending trees Arrest the wing of each ruder breeze.

A trickling stream, as it winds below, Has a music of peace in its quiet flow; And the buds that are always in bloom above Tell of some ministering spirit's love.

It is sweet to think, that when all is o'er, And life's fevered pulses shall fret us no more, There still shall be some, with a gentle regret, Who will not forsake, and who cannot forget.

Some kinder heart, all untainted by earth, That has kept its sweet bloom from its bud and its birth, Whose tears for the sorrows of youth shall be shed, And whose thoughts shall still rest on the early dead.

For the Central Presbyterian.

### Biographical Scraps from a Pastor's Journal.—No. 3.

In the scrap of last week, the pastor is greatly cheered with the fond hope of the infidel physician's early avowment of the Christian faith. But alas! How dreadfully deceitful and desperately wicked, is the human heart.

As the Dr.'s convalescence advanced, he visited the pastor less frequently and was evidently becoming more reserved; and was occasionally seen to go down street, instead of going to Church, on the Sabbath; and was again associating familiarly with his former companions, who, as well as himself, had long ago been poisoned by the Age of Reason. Very soon, he avoided the pastor as diligently as he had recently sought his company. And now it was painfully evident that the Dr. is returning to his house, from whence he had gone out, and that finding it empty, swept and garnished; he is taking with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and that the last state of that man is likely to be worse than the first. The pastor is mortified and sorrow-stricken: the infidel fraternity are rejoicing with fiendish triumph.

The judgments of God being delayed for months; the Dr.'s heart is fully set in him to do evil, waxing worse and worse in infidelity, open wickedness, and even bitter scoffing at religion—utterly absenting himself from the house of God, and abandoning all intercourse with the pious.

The seeds of a fatal disease, however, are evidently striking their roots deeper in his system, and rapidly preparing his body for an early grave. Already is his cough deep and hollow, his body emaciated, and his strength enfeebled. As a last resort, he has determined upon a sea voyage, and a trip to several of the European States, for the recovery of his health. Prior to his departure, however, having taken leave of his weeping family, he calls upon the pastor. The interview is a brief one. The Dr. assumes to be in fine spirits, and says to the pastor, "I could not consent to leave without calling to bid you farewell, and especially to say to you that I go, not knowing whether I shall ever return or not, but fully satisfied with the religion of nature—having no use for the religion of the Bible, and expecting to meet many kindred spirits in France and Italy." The pastor wished him success in his search for health, and a safe return with different views and feelings upon the subject of religion—reminding him of the value of the soul, that he might be mistaken touching its safety, and that if it was once lost, it would be an irreparable, and eternal loss.

The travel for health was terminated in about eighteen months; and the Dr. returned to his native country and village home, apparently somewhat improved; at any rate, with even a higher flow of spirits than before. He very soon called upon the pastor avowedly to assure him how much he had enjoyed himself during his absence, that he had found his own sentiments and feelings to be almost universally prevalent, wherever he had been, and that now he was more firmly than ever established in his belief.

His disease, however, was too deeply seated, and that upon a vital organ—to admit of a cure. The Dr. dragged along a wearisome existence, through the fall and winter, the ensuing spring and summer. It can be readily imagined what is soon to take place. The pastor, now, is professionally called to be absent for several

consecutive weeks. On Saturday, he calls on the physician, and says to him kindly, "Dr. I expect to leave home on Monday; and to be absent for some time to come; I have come to take final leave of you; in all probability, I shall not find you here upon my return, and our next interview will be at the bar of God; I have endeavored to preach the pure gospel faithfully to you, sincerely desiring that your soul might be saved, and my skirts kept clear of your blood. Dr. will you not seriously and prayerfully reconsider your prospects, and the ground of your hope for eternity? Be once more assured, Dr., that there is no possibility of salvation, except by repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the fruits of a change of heart by the Holy Spirit. Will you allow me to pray with you once more, before we part?" He promptly answered, "certainly." The pastor offered a prayer, commending, as he thought for the last time, a dying man to the mercy and grace of God. The prayer being closed, the pastor approached and gave his hand to the Dr., who was confined to his bed, and said, "farewell, Dr. till we meet at the judgment. May I hope that you will reconsider and prepare for death?" The Dr. answered hesitatingly, "I will think of it." The next day being Sabbath, between the morning and evening services, the Dr. expressed a wish to see the pastor. He called and sat some half hour. The subject of religion not being introduced by the Dr., the pastor again prayed with him and left him. The Dr. expressed great surprise that he should say nothing upon religion, and asked, "Does he think, there is no hope for me?"

Some four weeks elapsed, and the pastor has returned from his journey. The Dr. is still living, but it is thought that he can last only a few days. It is but an hour or two before he sends for the pastor. When he is present, the Dr. addresses him most earnestly; Mr. —, "I have reconsidered, and changed my views entirely." In what respects, have you changed, Dr., inquired the anxious pastor? He answered—"in regard to the truth of the Bible, the wickedness of my heart, and my need of a Saviour." Still more anxiously enquired the pastor, "Are you conscious of a change of heart—do you hate sin, love Jesus Christ, trust and hope in Him as your Saviour?" He replied—"I would give the world to know experimentally what regeneration is. I now am convinced that I am a great sinner; that my whole life has been sinful; that my heart, the fountain of moral action, is all that the Bible represents it to be; that a change of heart is indispensable; and that I ought to repent, and believe and love God. But it is too late. My heart is as hard as adamant. I can neither feel, nor repent, nor love. I know that Christ is an Almighty and a willing Saviour; but I have rejected him and resisted his Spirit, in despite of my better judgment, until my conscience is seared and my just damnation is sealed."

The pastor often repeated the rich promises of the Bible, and the precious invitations and assurances of the gospel to him, urged him to cast his soul with all its pollution and sin, upon the mercy of Christ, trusting in the efficacy of his death and intercession. But it all seemed to be unavailing. He gave no evidence of contrition of heart, or of hope in God. A few moments before his last struggle for life, he whispered to the pastor, "O! what would I not give to be in your situation"—meaning as the pastor thought—to be a Christian. A few more offers of Christ were made to him; and his soul made its plunge into eternity.

How fearful the consequences of reading infidel books, imbibing infidel sentiments, associating with infidel companions, and grieving the Spirit of grace! Who can estimate the responsibility of those who write infidel books, and propagate infidel sentiments? How awful and hopeless is the condition of him who is given up to hardness of heart! Who that knowingly rejects the Saviour and continues in sin, may not, at any moment, be thus given over to a reprobate mind! Z.

THE FISH OF GOLD.—Theocritus tells of a fisherman that dreamed he had taken "a fish of gold," on which, being overjoyed, he made a vow that he would never fish more; but when he waked he soon declared his vow to be null, because he found his golden fish was escaped away through the holes of his eyes when he first opened them. Just so we do in the purpose of religion. Sometimes, in a good mood, we seem to see heaven opened, and all the heavenly Jerusalem paved with gold and precious stones, and we are ravished with spiritual apprehensions, and resolve never to return to the low affections of the world and the impure adherences of sin; but when this flash of lightning is gone and we converse again with the inclinations and habitual desires of our false hearts, those other desires and fine considerations disband, and the resolutions taken in that pious fit melt into indifference and old customs. Those religious thoughts which are sent into us to condemn and disrepute the thoughts of sin and vanity are esteemed only dreams; and so all those instruments which the grace of God hath invented for the destruction of impiety are rendered ineffectual, either by our direct opposing them, or by our want of consideration.—Jeremy Taylor.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA,

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 1856.

## PRAY FOR YOUR COUNTRY.

Our common country is in danger of disunion. It is almost with trembling that we note it, lest its very publication may tend somehow to familiarize our minds with the dread fact, and thus to precipitate it. We would fain hope that the danger is not inevitable, but only imminent; and it is therefore, we now invoke the attention of Christians to it. If it is less urgent than some may fear, then there is more encouragement to labor now for its removal; for after its presence is confessed by all, it will be too late.

Remember then, that this anti-slavery agitation has been growing from its ominous birth, for twenty five years. What has been its career? It has constantly acquired more and more power; has overleaped every bar interposed by political sagacity to its extension, has very high swallowed up every other political question and party, has ruptured the ties of most of the Christian sects in the land, and has now nearly consummated the division of the people into two great parties of that sectional distinction of which the first symptom startled the sagacious Jefferson "like a fire-bell in the night." Its course has been thus far, ever onward. It is no longer the narrow and comparatively impotent principle of *Abolition*, the war cry of a frantic fragment; but the grave, pervading, national question of *Free-soil*. On the one side stands the majority saying; "The national domain belongs to the federal Government of which we hold the effective control; and while we claim no right to dictate in your domestic concerns, we resolve that this common domain shall not be polluted by the encroachments of slavery." On the other side, the large and determined minority retorts: "This common domain was purchased by the money, toil, and blood, of us and our fathers, as well as by yours; and we will have our share in its enjoyment." Here are principles confronting each other, of irreconcilable opposition. Meantime the strife is fanned by reckless faction-mongers, and by more guilty fanatics invoking the holy name of christianity; and who that knows man's history does not know, that when national passions once clothe themselves in the garb of religion, they are as ungovernable as a storm, and as implacable as death? We are fast tending to this, that the whole North will be arrayed against the whole South, on a question which each supposes essential to its honor, its religion and its existence.

And meantime, men are debating on both sides, the miserable and guilty question, which section will be most prepared for a separate existence and for the strife it will have to endure; thus goading with insult on the one hand, and inflating on the other the arrogance which would precipitate the conflict; as though it were not sadly evident, that whichever side may be the weakest, it will yet have strength enough to inflict and endure miseries which might make angels weep! Already do the low mutterings of the rising cloud of civil war come from our Western border. Let that cloud break forth into the thunder of battle, and before the winds have swept its roar to the Atlantic, the angry passions now smouldering in magazine will be lit into universal blaze as if by the touch of lightning. Let those weapons, now pointed against each other in angry array, be once lifted up to the nation reeking with fratricidal slaughter, and they will muster the foemen from North and South to the battle, like the fiery, red cross of clan-Alpine.

And yet, the many wise and good, whose voices would otherwise be firmly raised for forbearance, are not aroused; because they see that the original agitators of the mischief are moved by principles so hollow and worthless, that they cannot think a great nation will be deluded by them; and because, seeing that all parties have so much to lose, and so little to gain by the strife, they will not believe that men can be so insane as to push on the suicidal contest to an issue. Alas! they forget that the power of bad men for mischief is out of all proportion to their own importance; and that when they play successfully on national passions, their own insignificance is lost amidst the might of the influences they arouse. Alas! they forget how often parties and nations have been seen to sacrifice self-interest, safety, existence, to the indulgence of inveterate sentiments. Did not Girondists and Mountain-men wear out each other in France, in deadly strife, while the nation was reeling under the blows of combined Europe? Did not theological hatred cause Saxony to stand coolly by, while her sister Bohemia was beaten, disarmed, and trampled down, in the beginning of the thirty years' war, by Popish Austria, the

common foe of them both? Did not the Jewish factions in Jerusalem strew the streets daily with the slaughter of civil battle, while Titus was thundering at the last defences of their last strong holds? Passion does not reason. Popular phrenzy does not count the cost.

Consider then, we pray you, how portentous are all things of danger. Here are men urging on aggression with arrogant recklessness; there are others regarding their grievances real or supposed, with the grim and gloomy determination to resist; here self-seeking demagogues, either blindly or treasonably, tamper with national passions whose awakened might they will be impotent to allay; and there, men calling themselves ministers of the Prince of Peace, invoke his sacred name to sanctify the guilty elements of strife and murder.

Second; if disunion comes, it must be accompanied or followed by war. Let no one fancy that such a rupture can be peacefully effected, and that two republics can quietly arise in place of one, to pursue their course with no rivalry but that of prosperous increase. If all the ties which now bind us together are insufficient to unite our hearts; if, in spite of them, such hostility has arisen as threatens to break the strong and beneficent bands of law and custom, to what heat will not that hatred grow, when all these ties are broken? There will then be no genial meeting and mixing in our common seat of government, at our great watering places, and on the great thoroughfares, in ecclesiastical assemblies, and at our great commercial marts. It will be far easier for two foreign and rival powers to rupture a mere treaty of peace, than it had been for sister commonwealths to cast off the dear and time-honored ties of family. Will the passions which break the latter, respect the former; and that too when exasperated by a thousand new causes? And, upon a division, there must immediately arise a host of questions so grave, so essential to the very existence of each party, so without precedent or guide for their settlement, that it is only too certain, the impatient temper of the times will at once hurry them to the bloody arbitrament of the sword. Whose shall be the common seat of Government, treasures and archives? Which confederacy shall inherit our ships of war, our armies and munitions? Where shall be the boundary line, which is to separate into two, the parts once so intimately welded? Who shall control the lower course of the Father of rivers, the necessary and common thoroughfare of so many commonwealths? Will the North relinquish its navigation, and thus condemn themselves to commercial insulation and ruin? Will the South permit a stream which bisects its bosom to be the highway of rival and unfriendly foreigners? Who shall divide that vacant domain, the common property of both, which even now threatens to become the fatal subject of strife?

And above all, the seduction of fugitive slaves and their recapture, that festering sore of the body politic, will inevitably break out into fatal mischief, just as soon as the Constitution and the Union are removed. What are its difficulties? What the anger, bitterness and agitation which it causes now? Every one can see to what these things must grow, when all restraints of law are removed, when injured masters seek to redress their losses by the strong hand, and these attempts are resisted as invasion. All along our extended frontier, where the very intimacy of the previous union and neighborhood will aggravate the evil there will be spread the flame of a border warfare. And the strife will extend to every creek, river and bay of our sea coasts, to which our coasting commerce penetrates.

And what a war will that be? Civil feud has ever been known as the most bitter of all. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." The very tenderness of brothers' love makes them more tender to the injury. The strength of the mutual obligations which should have bound them to offices of kindness, enhances the hot indignation at mutual outrage. When the twin lands which now lie so intimately side by side, parted by a line so long, so faint, so invisible that it does not separate, begin to strike each other the very nearness and intimacy make each more naked to the other's blow. How dire then will be the conflagration of battle which will rage along this narrow line, across the whole breadth of a continent? How fatal the blows, when the Republican hardihood and chivalry, the giant strength and the teeming wealth which begin to make the mightiest despots respectful, are turned against each other. Some among us seem fond of placing the relative prowess and courage of North and South in odious comparison. Brothers! Should we not rather weep tears of blood at the wretched and wicked thought, that the common process, which hath so often made North and South side by side carry dismay and

rount into the ranks of common enemies, that terrible prowess, which, in North and South alike, withstood all the force of the British Lion while we were yet in the gristle of our youth, and which, ever since, has overthrown and broken and pierced every enemy with the lion's force and the swiftness of the king of birds combined, should hereafter expend its might in fratricidal blows? And then this vast frontier must be fortified and guarded. This hostile neighborhood, so dangerous, because so intimate, must be watched on either hand by armies. This giant strength and enterprise, which were covering broad lands and broader seas with the blessings and fruitfulness of industry, must be diverted to the barren, devouring waste of warlike preparation and labor. These teeming fields, whose crops bless the granaries of the famishing nations, and cause their owners' bosoms to run over with wealth, must be sown with dragons teeth, and rear crops of armed men! Farewell to the benign career of imperial Peace, by which we hoped the Empire Republic would teach the angry nations nobler triumphs than those of war. A long farewell to that dream we had indulged; dream not unworthy surely to have been inspired by the Spirit of the Prince of Peace; that here a nation was to grow up, on this soil which God had kept till "the fulness of time was come," wrapped up in the mysteries of pathless seas, and untainted by the step of civilized despot, or organized crime; a nation composed of the strong, the free, the bold, the oppressed of all other peoples, and like the Corinthian brass, more precious than any that composed it, which should come, by the righteous arts of peace, to a greatness such as at last to shame and frighten war away from the family of kingdoms, which should work out the great experiment of equal laws and a free conscience for the first time, for the imitation of the world, and from whose bosom a free Church, unstained by the guilt of persecution, and unburdened with the leaden protection of the State, should send forth her light and salvation to the ends of the earth, to bring the millennial morning. Our future growth will be swelled by the devouring maw of strife. This cunning machine of law, which now regulates our rights, will be wrecked amidst the jars of revolution. The stern exigencies of danger will compel both the rivals, perhaps, to substitute the strong but harsh will of the soldier for the mild protection of constitutions. Christianity will sicken and droop amidst the crimes of national convulsion, and the license of camps. Despotisms will sing their scornful peans over the realizing of all their envious prophecies that our liberty would run into license, and our freedom be used for self-destruction. The world will be remanded to the guardianship of bondage; and the clock of time may be put back again for ages as long as those during which Europe before languished under the night of popery. And meantime, the redemption of the race is by so many ages postponed; and sin and hell prey upon so many more of the teeming generations!

CHRISTIANS OF AMERICA; will ye suffer this? If such a crime against God and man be wrought in this land of thirty thousand evangelical ministers, and four millions of Christians, how burning the sarcasm which it will contain against your Christianity! What; was there not enough of the oil of love in all these four millions of servants of the God of love, to soothe the surging billows of party strife? Was there not enough of the majesty of moral weight in these four millions of Christians, to say to the angry waters; 'Peace; be still?' Were not all these strong enough to throw the arms of their love around their fellow-citizens, keep down the hands that sought each others' throats, and constrain them by a sweet compulsion to be brethren? Did this mighty Church stand idly by, and see Phrenzy immolate so many of the dearest hopes of man and so much of the glory of God, on her hellish altar, and not rather rush between, and receive the sword in its own breast? And this Church knew too, that the fiend had borrowed the torch of discord from the altar of Christianity, and that therefore Christians were doubly bound to arrest her murderous hand before the precious sacrifice was lost in the conflagration! If this be suffered, then shame on the boasted christianity of America, and of the nineteenth century! With all its parade of light and evangelism, wherein will it be less impotent and spurious than the false christianity, which permitted and sanctioned the butcheries of the crusades, the tortures of the Inquisition or any other great iniquity of the dark ages?

For, brethren, you are able to control this nation, if you please, and will do your duty. Here are four millions of men and women, chiefly adults, among a people of twenty six millions of men, women, children, and slaves; four millions who profess to be supremely ruled by principles of righteousness, peace and love, and to be united to each other in the brotherhood of

a heavenly birth. If even the voters among these would go together to the polls, to uphold the cause of peace, they would turn the scale of every election. Where is the community, in all our land, where the male citizens who are professors of Christianity would not give the victory to that party to which they gave their united support? But alas; how often do we go on Monday to the hustings, after having appeared on the Sabbath as servants of the prince of peace, and brethren of all his servants, and in our political action forget that we are Christians? Here then is our first need, if we would save our country; that we shall carry our citizenship in the kingdom of Heaven every where, and make it dominate over every public act. And next, the Christians of this country must sternly claim, that wicked men shall no longer hold the helm of state; that party fidelity shall no longer atone for that worst crime against citizenship, a wicked life. But why do we speak of the mere numerical weight of Christians? Let them, embracing so much as they do of moral weight and influence, but speak to public opinion with the calm voice of patriotism and moderation, and their words will be potential. Let every one of our thirty thousand pulpits echo the accents of that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and let every one of these four million tongues speak to its neighbor the language of forbearance and long suffering, and lo; there will be a great calm. Are we not brethren? What more does any one of us wish to exact of his brother, than that which is just and righteous? And what one of us desires to withhold this? But since we all know that human frailty is ever apt to over estimate its rights, and to exaggerate its wrongs, let us each one resolve that, for our country's sake and our Saviour's, we will forego much of what seems to us our due, and endure much of what seems to us injury. Let us all resolve thus: and soon our only strife will be, which side shall go farthest to meet the other in the magnanimous reparation of wrongs, and the generous concession of rights. And above all should the guilty Churches of all our land humble themselves before a holy God, for our Christian backslidings and our national sins—"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and those that suck the breasts; let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say: Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach."

## THE SUMMER OF THE PESTILENCE.

This is the striking title of a little book by Rev. Dr. Armstrong, of Norfolk, that has just reached us, and which we have perused with deep and painful interest. It is in the form of letters, purporting to have been written from time to time, as the disease developed itself in Norfolk, and detailing, minutely and carefully, from personal observation, the steps of this fearful messenger of God. Some of the letters were actually written at the time specified in the date, and all of them are prepared from full notes taken during the scenes described, and revised for this publication. This form of composition gives much more vividness to the work than a formal history could do, and enables us to pass through that fearful summer in a way that a more methodical mode of statement would fail to do. Dr. A. does not think that the pestilence was imported to Norfolk by the Ben Franklin, but that this pest-freighted vessel only hastened a condition of things that must have occurred in any event. The fuel was all prepared, that only applied the lighted match to it. He also thinks that the curious insect called the plague-fly, that marks the crisis of this pestilence, is probably, only the common shad-fly in a diseased condition. But we will not anticipate our readers in the perusal of a volume, which all will desire to see for themselves. The letters are addressed to the revered and honored Secretary of the Historical Society of Virginia, William Maxwell, Esq., whose name is identified with so much that is excellent in the recent history of this State, and whose high position and character, as well as his former relations in Norfolk, make him worthy of the honor of introducing this book to the people of Virginia. It will be seen from an advertisement in our columns that Messrs. Price & Cardozo offer to furnish the book to subscribers as soon as it can reach the city. We are sure that no one can read it without a deeper sense of the awful sovereignty of God, and with a higher appreciation of that religion that enabled our dear brother and his associates in suffering, to pass with unshrinking courage through scenes more fearful than those that have reddened the rocks of the Crimea during the Summer of battle.

## OMISSIONS AFTER PRAYER.

A child once asked his father at the conclusion of service in the church, whether the sermon was done. The father replied, "no my son, the sermon is preached, but it must be done by us." In the same way it is true of our prayers, that they are not done when they are uttered with our lips. Many persons feel that their prayers need no further attention than a simple offering at a throne of grace where they leave them without any subsequent thought or care. This is perhaps one of the great reasons why our prayers are not answered. Pre-vailling prayer has its conditions both before, during, and after its utterance by the lips, and if we disregard these conditions at either stage of the process, we need not look for an answer. When a man desires the fruits of the earth, he must not only prepare the ground before planting, and attend to the requisite conditions of germination during the planting, but he must watch the seed after planting, and gather the fruit when it is ripe. Here we reach a very common defect in prayer.

We do not look for an answer to our prayers. That we ought to look for an answer is as plain as the duty of praying at all. Why pray, if we do not believe that our prayers will be answered? And how can we believe that they will be answered, and desire that answer, and yet not look for it? Are prayers mere ostrich eggs to be laid in the sand, and left to be hatched by the sun? Is it the nature of human desire to ask a thing, and then never think of it afterwards? Does not this fact then lead us to what is after all the great taproot of all our defects in prayer, unbelief? Unbelief in the power of prayer causes us to neglect due preparation before its utterance, due reverence during its utterance, and due looking for what we have asked, after its utterance. It is one of the offshoots of that grand central sin of unbelief, which we are expressly assured must effectually prevent the offering of acceptable prayer. When we fail to look for an answer to our prayers, we unwittingly confess, either that we did not desire the thing we prayed for, or that we did not expect to receive it. In either case we betray a state of mind incompatible with successful prayer.

How far this defect is chargeable on each Christian must be testified by his own consciousness. Each of us can determine by a very little self-examination how much we have looked for an answer to the many prayers we have offered. We have prayed for example, for an outpouring of the Spirit of God on our Churches. But have we looked for it? Like Elijah on Carmel, we may have bent on the earth that was beneath us as iron, and looked to the heavens that were above us as brass, and cried to the Lord God of Israel, but did we like him look for the rising of the little cloud from the distant sea, and send and look, and pray and send, until it began to rise like a man's hand on the far-off horizon? If not, we may see why the prayer was not answered even in our own hearts, and why the windows of heaven were still closed.

We do not follow our prayers with corresponding efforts. This is an after condition of prayer the neglect of which is very common, at least in spiritual things. When a man in an hour of shipwreck cries to God in his wild agony for help, he does not on that account struggle the less for life, but rather the more. When a man prays, "give us this day our daily bread," he does not fold his hands in idleness and expect his bread to be brought to him by the birds of heaven, but goes forth and works with a more strenuous earnestness, in proportion as he has prayed in a simple trust. Thus ought it to be in spiritual things, and thus must it be if we would be equally successful. We must work with fear and trembling, with hope and courage, for the very reason that it is God who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and that His working may be invoked by prayer. If we have honestly prayed for any spiritual blessing, either for ourselves or for others, we must honestly work for these blessings in the way appointed. Real wishing will always make real working, in spiritual, as well as, in temporal things, and he that longs for a blessing will not neglect to labor for it, if he professes to pray for it.

We neglect importunity. This is another of those cardinal conditions of prayer that run back to the great central root of the whole, faith, or the want of it. Importunity is urged repeatedly in the Bible, and especially by our Lord. The parables of the unjust judge, and the friend at midnight, set forth in the most emphatic manner the necessity of importunity in prayer, if we would have it successful. The reason of this fact is that only importunity can properly demonstrate faith and desire. The heart that is not ready to wrestle in persevering importunity for a blessing, is not ready to receive it in a profitable manner. Hence Christ would have men to pray always and not to faint.

Let us then as praying Christians look at these defects in our prayers and seek honestly for their correction, and it will not so often be said that praying breath is spent in vain, but

"Our cheerful song shall often be  
See what the Lord hath done for me."

## APOSTATES AGAIN.

The Catholic Miscellany has honored us with an elaborate reply to our article on "Apostates from the Apostacy" in a late number of this paper, and devotes nearly two columns to our particular benefit, the first of which is complimentary and personal, and the second, explanatory and doctrinal. Really we feel almost too much overcome by this condescension to know exactly how to frame our reply, but as these compliments have put us in a particularly good humor, we cannot keep entirely quiet, but must make some acknowledgement of the Catholic courtesy of our Miscellaneous contemporary.

But as our readers are doubtless anxious to see these compliments, we will give them in the words of our Catholic brother (*editorial*), we mean of course, lest he should be horrified by such a presumptuous claim.) "At all events we will compliment the editor by assuring him that the spirit of the Watchman and Observer has evidently passed into its successor, and breathes with vigor unimpaired in its pages. Or what he may consider yet higher praise—he inherits, as most polemical Calvinists do, a goodly share of the spirit of the Genevan patriarch."

We are aware that some of our readers may consider these compliments, like the tender mercies of the Holy Mother church, somewhat cruel, considering the estimate in which the Miscellany holds the venerable patriarch of Geneva, and his worthy successor, the Watchman and Observer. But we are thankful for the smallest favors, and as we know that Calvin, if caught, would be recommended to the mercy of the civil authorities with great gusto, we feel that we are specially honored by being classed with the great heretic.

And as these compliments have put us in a very amiable mood, we are inclined to be a little complimentary in return. We are sorry that our excellent contemporary feels worried at what we said about the system of Popery, and we beg to assure him that, judging from the good taste he shows in paying compliments, he is not one half so bad as his system. We have no doubt that he is as conscientious and compassionate a gentleman as his Church will permit him to be. We have no notion, for example that he would think of eating roast beef on Friday, or boiled ham in Lent, whatever might be the temptation. And we seriously doubt whether he would be willing to roast a Protestant on All-heretics day, even if all the conveniences of the Inquisition were put at his disposal; especially if he was an editor, as these unfortunate unbelievers are so frequently roasted in other ways. We therefore do most cordially compliment our brother editor on the possession of all these conscientious and compassionate feelings.

But if any obstinate Calvinist should refuse to agree with us about this matter, there is another which he must concede, that is the profound and original learning of our friend. It is not often now-a-days, that newspapers are able to make original contributions to church history, or bring to light facts that have escaped the keen eyes of learned polemics. But our most incredulous reader must be struck with the lore of our friend in the recondite and obscure historical allusion that he makes in the following sentence:

"Calvin was not always able to lay bodily hands on his enemies, as he did with Servetus, and the leaders of the moderate party in Geneva; but he took revenge, as best he could."

Now for the benefit of our readers who have contracted the inconvenient habit of reading English according to English grammar, we beg to annotate this sentence by assuring them that it does not mean that Calvin with Servetus laid bodily hands on Calvin's enemies, but that Calvin laid bodily hands on Servetus. In what way he laid these bodily hands upon him, or who Servetus was, the learned editor does not explain. This was a great oversight in bringing to light a historic discovery like this, and putting a new weapon into the hands of his brother polemics. And it was really unfeeling to exume a buried fact so utterly forgotten as the existence of one Servetus, a fact that might have rested in its old oblivion but for the remorseless research of the Miscellany. And now we should not wonder if Catholic polemics will on every occasion be casting in our teeth this newly discovered fact and making terribly severe allusions to poor Servetus, and cruel Calvin. It was really very unfeeling to take such an advantage of us.

And now what shall we do to meet this historical discovery? We had some notion of retorting by the relation of another recondite chapter of history, concerning one John Rogers with nine small children, &c., &c., but we could not find our Primer to refresh our memory; and then we thought of one Galileo, but recollected that Nott and Gliddon had anticipated us. So we sat down in despair, and are still meditating on some historical discovery with which we hope to annihilate our Charleston scholar.