

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN
AND
GENESEE EVANGELIST.
A RELIGIOUS AND FAMILY NEWSPAPER
IN THE INTEREST OF THE
Constitutional Presbyterian Church.
PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY
AT THE PRESBYTERIAN HOUSE,
1384 Chestnut Street, (2d story,) Philadelphia.
Rev. John W. Mears, Editor and Publisher.

American Presbyterian.

New Series. Vol. I, No. 4.

Genesee Evangelist, No. 923.

PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1864.

LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HUSS.

During the several years' independent existence of the PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY REVIEW, under the editorial control of the lamented Dr. Wallace, there appeared in its pages, a series of elaborate historical studies or monographs, upon the leading characters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in whom the spirit and tendencies of the great Reformation were foreshadowed. Nicholas de Clemencia, Laurentius Valla, Vincent Ferrer, England after Wicliff, the Taborites and Calixtines, John Huss and his Writings, are some of the titles of these articles which attracted great attention at the time, from the novelty of the sources, freshness of description, force of statement and general unity of design which seemed to pervade them. Some of the most popular newspaper articles of the day were extracted from these sketches, and expectation was beginning to be aroused as to the greater work of which they might be symptomatic.

It now turns out that they arose in the course of long and extensive investigations necessary to the production of a work which, as soon as it appears, is recognized by the theological world as a standard: "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN HUSS." These review articles were the shavings thrown off in the course of the work; the real purpose of the workman is at last revealed in these two handsome volumes. We welcome them with gratification skin to pride, as the work of a Presbyterian minister—a pastor too—at Harlem, New York, who has suddenly earned no mean reputation among the historians and theological writers of America. He chose a subject of the deepest interest, which had as yet received no adequate attention from historians, and he has thrown around a familiar name the charm of novelty. More than this, he has given us a graphic account of a hundred of the most stirring years of the world's history, concluding with the thirty years' war in Bohemia.

It was a troublous time in the Romish Church when Huss appeared. The power of the Popes had already reached the height which it never afterwards attained. The corruption and hypocrisy of Romish ecclesiastics was kindling universal indignation. Wicliff, the "morning star of the Reformation," had already appeared in England, and was dealing terrible blows at the monks, which were heard with sympathy in the heart of Europe. And alas for papal infallibility! Two rival Popes claimed the chair of St. Peter, one in France and one in Italy, but neither at Rome, and thundered anathemas at each other and sadly perplexed Christendom with their conflicting, irreconcilable pretensions. It was an age of the world deplorably in need of Reformation. If Luther and Calvin could not appear, then a herald in the spirit and power of Elias must come, and the path be made straight for the true Reformation.

Two such heralds came in Germany, in the persons of Jerome and Huss, both of Bohemia, contemporaries and warm friends of each other, fellow-laborers and fellow-martyrs for the truth. Jerome was the orator, Huss was the logician, the controversialist, and, when driven from the pulpit of Prague, the voluminous and powerful writer. In his first attacks upon the abuses of the hierarchy, he carried the popular sentiment with him, or rather became its organ; for the people all over Europe groaned under the burden of priestly arrogance, extortion and brutality. His own ecclesiastical superior, Sbyneo, Archbishop of Prague, sustained him warmly. Having risen by the force of his talents and the purity and nobleness of his character, from the position of a charity student to the rectorship of the great University of Prague, to be confessor to the Queen of Bavaria, and preacher to the celebrated Bethlehem Chapel, he held on his bold career for a number of years undisturbed.

In 1402 he was made preacher of the chapel; in 1403, the writings of Wicliff were condemned by the University, with little or no opposition on the part of Huss, who probably had as yet little acquaintance with them. But he had begun to study them, and from that time became more and more convinced of the truth of the English Reformer's positions in regard to the supremacy of the law of Christ and

the teachings of the apostles, over all the commandments of men. Being detected in the perusal of his writings, he was coarsely reminded that the arch-heretic's soul had been condemned to hell. Huss warmly replied: "I wish only that my soul, when it leaves this body, may reach the place where that of this excellent Briton now dwells." He was however not molested then, nor when he openly denounced an imposture: a pretended miracle announced by a priest at Wilsnack. The Archbishop was still in sympathy with Huss, and forbade any one in his diocese to visit the scene of the pretended miracle.

But Sbyneo and many others who appeared to sympathize with Huss in the desire for a reform in the Church, had no profound religious interest in the question. They soon drew back when they saw the radical nature of any measures which would prove effectual. The Bishop ordered the writings of Wicliff to be burned, and in spite of the University, and the people, of Huss and the king himself, persisted in his determination. In the course of the proceedings, Huss was excommunicated by the Bishop and forbidden to preach in Bethlehem chapel.

Here commences the long struggle, the recital of which lends its chief interest to the volumes before us. We cannot follow the thrilling course of the narrative, told as it is with graphic power, and without tedious pauses, digressions or expansions; how Huss triumphed over the Bishop who soon after died; how, when all the powerful friends who had hitherto sustained him, at length yielded to the weight of pontifical authority, Huss continued fearlessly to rebuke the glaring and monstrous vices and martial policy, which disgraced the papal chair, in the person of Balthazar, called John XXIII; how he maintained before immense assemblages in Prague the anti-Christian character of the measures taken by the Pope; how, after years of suspense, the arch-bishop's sentence is confirmed by the Pope, and Huss, excommunicated, leaves Prague, to save the city from the interdict which his presence brought upon it; how diligently he employs his leisure in the use of his pen for the great principles which he may no longer preach; how the futility of all other attempts to suppress the heresy he was spreading and to save Bohemia to the Papacy, combined with other reasons to bring about the celebrated council of Constance; how treacherously the pious and brave Reformer was treated by this assembly, claiming to represent the purest of all organizations, the church of Christ, who in spite of the "safe conduct" of the Emperor, under which he had come to Constance, thrust him into a loathsome underground cell and retained their hold on him to the last moment; how the very Pope who had excommunicated him, came, by a decision of the council to occupy a cell in the same prison with his former victim; how the attempts of Huss to defend himself before the council were frustrated, and how at length on the 6th of July 1415 he was burned at the stake, on his forty-second birth day, in the full vigor of his remarkable powers, which, if they had been spared to the world, would, in all probability, have given us half a century more of Protestantism than the race has enjoyed.

The martyrdom of Huss, however, brings us only to the end of the second chapter of the second volume. To complete the description of the immediate results of Huss' teaching, the historian carries us through the proceedings of the council, the persecutions, recantation, repentance, noble bearing and martyrdom of Jerome, the friend and fellow reformer of Huss; recounts the efforts to win back the people of Bohemia, now thoroughly enlisted on the side of their fallen teachers and heroes, to the Papacy; depicts the repeated and entirely unsuccessful attempts of the Emperor Sigismund to crush by force of arms, the awakened spirit of his people; and tell us how even the disastrous divisions of the Bohemian Christians did not give their enemies sufficient advantage to accomplish their overthrow. Down to the early part of the seventeenth century, Protestantism was flourishing in Bohemia. The dreadful era of the Thirty Years' War, from 1622 to 1655, was necessary to crush the leaven which John Huss, by the grace of God, had introduced into the hearts of his countrymen. The Moravians still remain however, as a living proof of the power of his influence; the rise of that remarkable branch of Christ's Church, being traced by

Mr. Gillett to the sect of Bohemians called Taborites, one of the two great Protestant parties into which the people were divided after the death of Huss; the other party being called Calixtines.

Around this principal theme of the narrative, are skillfully grouped by the historian all of the great characters of the times in the church and the world, and all the leading incidents of the contemporary history. For this comprehensive result, this triumph as we may call it, on an entirely new field, Mr. Gillett prepared himself by the skirmishes of his review articles upon isolated subjects and characters. He first gained thorough mastery over his materials, and has been able to finish his tower successfully, because he thus counted the cost at the beginning. It is a work which needed to be done, and which must do good, as exposing in a most masterly manner the weakness, the corruption, the internal discord and the utter rottenness of the Papal hierarchy, before the era of the Reformation; and as a powerful historic justification of that movement.

"There is," says Prof. Shedd, in the introduction to his late work on Christian Doctrine, "an inexpressible charm in the biographic monograph, especially when passing to it from the severer and graver portions of dogmatic history. We have been following the impersonal spirit of the age, the great tendency of the period, and now we come to a single living man and a single beating heart. The forces of the period play through him, and that which had begun to appear somewhat rigid, though even impressive and weighty, is now felt to have an intensely human interest, and a vivid vitality."

Mr. Gillett has, perhaps, scarcely written in the spirit of a profound student of the philosophy of the history of Christian doctrine, but we believe he has more nearly fulfilled the description given by Prof. Shedd of the appropriate style of such monographs, than either of the three or four instances cited in the foot-note.

"The lights and shadows play more strikingly and variedly, and there is far more opportunity for vivid sketching, brilliant description and rapid narration, than in those more central parts of the subject, which we have been describing."

CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM IN ITALY.

The *Christian Advocate and Journal* of last week gives prominence to the following on the relations of various doctrinal systems to the work of evangelizing Italy:

But whatever failures some Protestant denominations may experience in their efforts to evangelize the Italians, there are very evident indications that Methodist labors will be eminently fruitful in that department of missionary work. The secret of our present and prospective success seems to lie here, that predestinarianism is peculiarly repulsive and obnoxious to the Italian mind. The progress of the Waldensian movement is hindered by the drag which Calvinism puts upon its wheels; while on the other hand, Arminian doctrines, when clearly placed before the people of Italy, seem to stand commended to their approval.

I may add that the Italians are not alone in this respect among the nations of the Continent, though the trait may be marked with peculiar distinctness in their case.

While we welcome upon the wide field of Christian effort every true and zealous friend of our common Master, and while we recognize gratefully the extraordinary services of the Methodist Church in that field, we cannot let such an assertion pass unchallenged. Whether facts will bear it out or not we have no means of knowing; we should think that the very brief experience of the various systems as yet tried in Italy, was insufficient to warrant any conclusions whatever as to the greater or less fitness of any, as a permanent instrumentality. All laborers in this interesting country express themselves as encouraged.

But grant the assertion; it would not be wonderful if a people saturated with Jesuit teachings upon the freedom of the will drawn from Pelagius, should cherish a prejudice against the views once taught by Augustine, nor that they should find it easy to fall in with a new creed which, on that point, approximates their old one. Nor in general is the doctrine of the divine sovereignty to be reckoned among the popular, taking, doctrines of the gospel, any more than that of depravity and the consequent need of regeneration. Drop the doctrine of depravity from your creed, or at least modify and mitigate it from the severity of the gospel, and you will render the creed still less liable to objection on

the part of unregenerate men. The truth is, the fitness of a creed to the purposes of evangelization is to be tested, not by its repulsiveness to the natural man, nor even at first by its success, but by its conformity to the statements and proportions of the Scriptures.

The doctrine of divine sovereignty may indeed be repulsive to those who have not as yet thought deeply upon religious subjects; a system which ignores or opposes it may sweep over a new community rapidly, where a different system would work its way with slower steps and less immediate encouragement. It may be that the Arminian body of the Church has a call, or is adapted even by its defects, as well as by its zeal, for a preliminary and necessarily superficial work, a work in itself of little value or promise of permanence, and chiefly serviceable as preparing the way for those systems which appeal to the profounder religious sensibilities of men, which grasp the more vital and secret elements of scriptural truth, which exercise and strengthen the reflective faculties and which root themselves deeply in the habits and characters of individuals and the community.

It is ominous, too, in this connection, that Methodists are themselves discussing the causes of the decline of their denomination in the cities. A writer in one of their journals, whom we have quoted in another part of this paper, ascribes the fact, which he takes for granted, to their system of removals in the pastoral office. To us, the itineracy seems but a part of a system which is, throughout, in a certain sense, "without depth of earth." To prolong the term of office, will not avail, unless that change is accompanied with extension in the other dimension of doctrinal depth. We are inclined to the opinion, that a change is going on, in both directions, as to polity and doctrine simultaneously, in the Methodist Church. We believe it would be a great gain to the cause of Christ if liberal Calvinism should spread among the clergy and educated laity of this active and zealous denomination.

Meanwhile, we hold to the opinion that God's truth wielded by his Spirit, is the best instrument for converting Italy as well as every other Papal or heathen nation; and as Calvinism in our judgment is the most scriptural of all systems, we go for wisely and boldly pressing its grand principles upon the minds of men everywhere.

MORE NOTICES.

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.—This valuable and ably conducted paper, which represents in the Presbyterian church the type of theology, anti-slavery and loyalty, of which Dr. Barnes is an exponent, has taken the quarto form. It has done good service in the cause of religion and the country. We wish it increased prosperity. — *Vermont Chronicle.*

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.—The *American Presbyterian and Genesee Evangelist*, published at Philadelphia, comes out with the New Year in quarto form, and with an enlarged sheet. We are happy to note this evidence of prosperity. This is one of our most enterprising religious weeklies, and richly deserves success. — *Buffalo Advocate.*

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.—This valuable religious journal comes to us greatly enlarged and in quarto form. As it has hitherto been among the best, so now it is also among the largest religious papers published. — *Cumberland Presbyterian.*

AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.—This excellent paper in the first number of the new year, makes its appearance in an enlarged form on a double sheet, and otherwise much improved. The *American Presbyterian*, which is in the interest of the Constitutional Presbyterian Church, published in Philadelphia, has hitherto ranked among the best religious newspapers of the country. Among our exchanges, we value this highly. In its enlarged form, with an additional corps of contributors and correspondents, it will doubtless be all that its warmest friends can wish. This engagement is made without advancing the price. — *Lutheran Observer.*

ENLARGEMENT.—The *American Presbyterian* comes to us in a new and enlarged form. It is now issued as a double sheet, and presents a greatly improved appearance. We wish our cotemporary and neighbor the success which his industry and enterprise deserve. — *Presbyterian, Philada.*

THE FIRST NUMBER of the New Series is now exhausted. Orders coming from new subscribers can be filled only from Number 3 and onward.

THE LETTER of our London Correspondent arrived after our columns were full. It will appear in our next.

A CHURCH OF OUR BRANCH IN INDIA.

We invite attention to a communication in another column in regard to a Presbyterian Church in India. The enterprise deserves attention at once.

A gentleman known to us offers to subscribe \$100 for four others will put up a like amount, so as to raise at once \$500, to be sent to Mr. Wilder to assist in building the church.

Will four of our laymen send their names to our office at once, so that the \$500 can be sent out immediately? Who would not covet the happiness of owning a share in the First Presbyterian Church, of Kolapore, India?

FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

Canton, St. Lawrence Co., N. Y., Jan. 21st, 1864.

DEAR EDITOR:—You see by my date that I am wandering about, over some of the remoter portions of my field of observation; and yet I am not by any means so near the north pole as you may imagine. Although snug winter weather is prevailing in this region, yet it is not extremely cold; and if we may trust the representations of sensible people whom we have met, the climate of northern New York is by no means so severe as many may suppose.

And still the atmosphere is sufficiently bracing to make an earnest, active, enterprising and highly prosperous people; while the climate is not the best for grain or fruit. It is rather a grazing country, and the staples of this region are butter and cheese. We have been told of one man in this small village, who pays out \$200,000 a year, for a house in Boston, for the purchase of these products of the dairy alone. And these articles here command a price almost equal to that which rules in our great cities; so are these matters equalized by our wonderful facilities for transportation; so is the market brought to every man's door. We are told that the farmers of this region are rich—made so within a few years, by the iron pathways which eastern and metropolitan capital have built between their peaceful homes and the great marts of the sea board. The farmer is a friend to internal improvements, or else he is not a friend to his own interests.

This county contains 88,000 inhabitants. It is a patriotic county. The people are great lovers of liberty, and firm supporters of the government. They are ably represented in congress in the person of Hon. C. T. Hulburd, a warm friend of the government, and of everything that is good and true. The county has furnished nearly 6,000 soldiers for the armies of the Union; and still the new enlistments are going on freely. Nearly every town has already filled its quota, and all will escape the draft. One veteran regiment, the 60th, which bore an honorable part in the capture of Lookout Mountain, is now home on furlough. It has re-enlisted, and is re-filling its depleted ranks, to go again to honorable service.

THE ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY ANNIVERSARIES.

It may not be known to all the readers of the *Presbyterian*, what an admirable arrangement they have in this region, for keeping alive and deepening the interest in all the great causes of benevolence. First, let it be remembered that St. Lawrence county is almost as large as some of the little kingdoms of the old world. It is somewhat remote from our great religious centres, where the May Anniversaries are held, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. The friends of the good causes cannot all go up to those great festivals, so they get up some of their own.

As we write, we are in the midst of these Anniversaries. They are "movable feasts," one year held in one of the larger villages, and another year in another, so passing around the county, and leaving a blessing, it is believed, wherever they go. They commence on Tuesday evening, and continue through all day Wednesday and Thursday, one session, (morning, afternoon, or evening,) being devoted to each one of the great causes of benevolence, represented in the local organization bearing its name. And here is the County Temperance Society, the Bible Society, and Societies for Home Missions, for Foreign Missions, for Tracts, for Sabbath Schools, and for the American and Foreign Christian Union, all pleasantly and harmoniously holding their anniversaries through these successive days. Leading citizens and clergymen are gathered from all parts of the county in attendance. Each society

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has its own officers, its own reports, and its speakers; and each one seems to be a live institution, and there are live men sustaining them.

First, on Tuesday evening, came the anniversary of the County Temperance Society; appropriately first, as one of the speakers said, because it is the pioneer regiment, going forward to clear the way for the triumphant march of every other good cause. This was a rousing meeting. The old fires for temperance seemed to be thoroughly re-kindled; and it was resolved to attempt at once to employ an able, and earnest temperance lecturer to go through the county. The meeting for the American and Foreign Christian Union came off on Wednesday morning, and was made interesting by a very peculiar and striking address of Rev. Mr. Welsh, an Irishman, who was a Roman Catholic, and knew by bitter experience the folly and degradation of that system of false religion from which this society is rescuing so many thousands every year.

At the Anniversary of the County Bible Society, Rev. Mr. Miller, of Ogdensburg, gave a brief historic discourse, presenting a succinct account of the origin and work of the society. It was organized in 1819, and has held on its useful way from that time to this. Hon. John Fine, of Ogdensburg, was its first corresponding secretary, and has been for many of the late years the honored, earnest and active president. Beside paying its surplus funds into the treasury of the Parent Society at New York, this organization has again and again explored its own territory, and supplied every destitute family with a copy of the holy Scriptures. The history of its activity and usefulness for the five years of its existence was alike interesting and honorable. The speech of Rev. Dr. Pearne, one of the agents of the Parent Society, at this meeting, was one of the most interesting and touching of all the speeches we have listened to in a long time. Without seeming to make any special effort, he has great power over an audience, and moves them to smiles or tears at his will.

Of the anniversary of the Home and Foreign Missionary Societies, and of the Tract Society we can not particularly speak. They were all deeply interesting, and well attended. In connection with the first, Rev. G. W. Warner, who has been a missionary of the Assembly's Committee in Colorado, gave some very interesting facts in regard to the progress of the gospel in that new territory; and in connection with the last, Rev. Mr. Doane, a returned missionary from the Island of Micronesia thrilled and delighted the audience with a simple, but touching narrative of the trials and successes of missionary labor in these lands.

But the closing meeting, and that which was intended, perhaps, for the best, was in behalf of Sabbath Schools. A great throng of little ones, and larger ones, crowded a large hall, and listened to short and lively addresses, interspersed with sweet music by the children, after which a beautiful collation was served. In this connection, however, it was reported that there are 34,000 children in the county, of a suitable age to attend Sabbath Schools, and only some 7,000 as yet gathered into these blessed institutions; but measures are already on foot to employ a Sabbath School Missionary, to explore all the towns, and organize schools. It is hoped that the reports of next year will show a great improvement in this direction.

An interesting revival we find in progress in *Stockholm*, one of the two neighboring parishes to which, as we mentioned last summer, Rev. W. S. Pratt, a recent graduate of Auburn Seminary, is now preaching. His faithful labors are already being blessed by the presence and converting power of the Holy Spirit. The work seems but just begun, and the praying ones are hoping great results in both the churches to which this brother ministers. We have admired again the admirable arrangement by which this minister is settled. Here are two small churches, at Brasher Falls and Stockholm, three miles apart; neither are able alone, as they suppose, to support a pastor. But the two combine. Each one raises \$300, and besides that, one generous individual furnishes a very neat and comfortable house for a parsonage, and so the minister is admirably settled, happy, and useful in his labors, preaching one sermon in the Sabbath in each of his pulpits. Other small and contiguous churches might well imitate this excellent arrangement.

GENESEE.

*The readers of the REVIEW for September 1856 found in a foot note to the article on "Huss and his Writings," the following significant words: "Surely the time has come for the vindication of a name that deserves to be ranked by the side of Luther and of Calvin."