

# The American Presbyterian.

June 1 Weic

1867

New Series, Vol. IV, No. 7.

Genesee Evangelist, No. 1082.

PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1867.

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### ETERNITY.

The child and the old man are more open to the thought of eternity than the youth and the middle aged. The mind of the child has not become absorbed in the pleasures and cares of the present, or habituated to their way; the old man has gone through with them all, and stands close upon the borders of the unknown world, of which he must soon become an occupant.

But so vast is the thought, so immense are the possibilities, and so near to every one are the realities of the future, that nothing is so amazing as the ability and the practice of men to exclude it from their minds. The disproportion between time and eternity, between mortal and immortal existence is so great, that the devotion of men to the former and their neglect of the latter is the grand miracle of human life. We are kinder to ourselves—we who reprove and censure at others. We catch ourselves in names of mind, and even in prolonged courses of action, into which the idea of eternity and of our immortal destiny does not seem to enter. And yet there is a time coming, and not far distant, either, when the longest earthly life will show but as a span, when the highest earthly interest will seem almost as the more earnest plays of children, when millions of money will dwindle to a mill, and when nothing—absolutely nothing—will seem important, except as it was spiritual, immortal, divine in its bearings and relations.

The immeasurable folly of man appears in his eagerness to sacrifice the interests of this present era of his existence for the merest chance of enjoyment in the narrow limits of the present; in his aversion to any act of self-denial, which may be needful in securing his eternal good; in his unwillingness to dwell upon the exceedingly simple and solemn problem: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" It appears in the frivolity and levity and brief indulgence—the mere mess of pottage—for which thousands and millions sell their immortal birth-right; in the mad perverseness with which they thrust the whole subject away from them, as the most unwelcome that could enter into the mind.

But another form taken by this unwillingness to know and act rationally upon our destiny, is to believe it. Men who are accustomed to give a reason to themselves for their conduct on all other matters of importance,—intelligent men, who will not yield to the claims of religion, unable to rest under the inconsistency of their conduct in his supreme instance, are driven to deny their own immortality, and to commit a sort of moral suicide to get rid of the duties and responsibilities of life. Nor is it only the idle and the consciously guilty—to whom an endless future is but another word for endless torment—nor the devotee of sensual pleasure and fashionable folly, to whom the thought is a most unwelcome interruption—it is not these classes alone that would argue themselves out of the belief in an eternal future state. There have been, and there are to-day, grave teachers of philosophic materialism, who come to the aid of the sensualist and who justify the sinner's neglect of the Gospel, by systematic and logical processes, by well-braced theories of life and of history, and even by preaching a sort of religion from which all reference to the future is shut out as irrelevant and injurious! All human energy of soul and of body is to be developed with reference to the present, and is to be concentrated during the whole of life upon life's affairs. All thought of an eternal future is to be banished as a disturbance and an interruption: as unfitting manner a proper degree of regard to his real business which is of this life, as thwarting his true destiny which is found in the present.

Doubtless it is well that modern materialism and secularism should assume such a definite shape. After all, they only body forth the secret practical unbelief of multitudes. The rejecter of the Gospel may see, in these theories, to what conclusion his conduct, logically carried out, would lead him. Does he, indeed, believe in an eternity beyond the grave; does he believe himself an heir to that boundless spiritual existence;

does he believe that to-morrow, that in another hour, the boundary between the two worlds may be irrevocably passed? He will answer, if you ask him, that he does believe it; he shrinks from reckoning himself among the adherents of material, godless systems; he refuses to them his countenance and support; he is a thorough practical, friend of the outward ordinances of the Gospel. Yet he lives an inward, and, for the most part, outward, life, consistent only with the sweeping and daring theories which he repudiates.

The men who are so zealous for temporal affairs that they ignore the eternal, must not flatter themselves as if at least their temporal interests were thereby more effectually secured; as if they really drew greater enjoyment and satisfaction out of the present, by shutting out the future; as if, in a word, they had any thing in exchange for their souls which they might not have had without that costly sacrifice. To live for eternity, is to live most wisely for time. Time's great object and significance is to introduce us, to fit us for eternity. There can be no real interest of this life which crosses the interest of the next. That greatness of soul, that elevation above narrow selfishness, that reverence for the eternal principles of rectitude, that steadiness and calmness of temper arising from a sense of eternal security and blessedness, that moderation which the believer shows in using and not abusing the things of this world; that greatest of all moral restraints which arises from the belief that the consequences of our acts in this life will never end—are each and all indispensable to the best, highest, happiest, most successful temporal life. They best develop our energies, best fit us for enjoying the pleasures, for meeting the responsibilities and for avoiding the evils of time. Eternity in time is the only thing which will secure time from littleness, life from worthlessness, passion from bestiality, politics from crime, expediency, society from dissolution, anarchy and anarchy and the human soul from madness and despair. The moral suicide will be followed by that of the body, by that of society and civilization itself. The real source of hope for this life, is hope of a future life.

### DENOMINATIONALISM IN SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

Without doubt the first religious lesson to be imparted to man, woman or child, is to give the heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. The church or Sunday-school which fails to convey an impression of the supreme importance of this act, whatever other good it may do, fails utterly as a Christian institution. It is salt which has lost its savour.

But if Christ is the head, the church is his body, and if the whole management and policy of the Sunday-school does not coincide with the interests of the church and promote its welfare it is false to its own high object. If Sunday-school training communicates only a vague sort of catholicity, and leaves the children's minds devoid of all clear doctrinal views and denominational attachments then it fails in a duty, second only to that of pointing the scholar to the Saviour of sinners. If nothing is done to strengthen the hold of his own church upon him, nothing certainly is done to attach the scholar to any other branch, and so that entire part of the spiritual nature which finds its appropriate field in Christian brotherhood and church relationships is neglected.

We are speaking now especially, of Sunday-schools in old fields and in connection with established churches. Whatever may be said of others, these latter schools have no plainer duty than to aid pastor and parents in training up the children to an intelligent attachment to the doctrine, polity, history and organization of that branch of the church with which they are connected. To this end the catechism should form part of the regular instruction of the school, year in and year out. Our own Shorter Catechism is one of the best summaries of Scripture doctrine devised by man; systematic, comprehensive, brief, strong. It will do any mind good to memorize its compact statements, to pass over its well-arranged course of theology—doctrinal and practical,—to get its rich and exhaustive definitions imbedded in the mind as a protection against vague thinking and error on the most important subjects. Those who avoid it on the ground of "denominationalism," miss the best human instrumentality they could employ in training the youthful mind in the accurate knowledge of scripture truth.

No more important duty, and we may add,

no more delightful nor encouraging employment belongs to the church session, than the direct supervision of the Sabbath-school. They should feel it their own affair, no more to be left to chance management than the supply of the pulpit. They should see to it that it be truly part and parcel of the church life; not an independent something, whose contributions to the welfare of the church are but incidental; whose influence upon the families and the future hope of the church through its teachers, mode of government, festivals, anniversaries and library books, is unknown to the authorities, or not at all under their control.

Much is doing to cultivate a spirit of liberality in the children of our Sunday-schools; at a very low estimate, the aggregate gifts of the Sunday-schools of our country in a year must reach a million of dollars. It is a noble work. But we fear an investigation would show that an incredibly small degree of attention is given in the schools of our branch, to the important matter of directing this liberality towards our own denominational interests. So far as the great number of our Sabbath-schools are concerned, the mass of the children of our churches are growing up in perfect ignorance of the benevolent in schemes of our body, or are under the impression that only outside general objects of benevolence are any concern of theirs. We have sat and listened, or have read in perfect amazement, when the schedule of Sabbath-school appropriations for a year has now and then come under our notice, from large or from small schools alike, and have observed no place whatever, or the very smallest place allotted to some one of our churches, struggling enterprises, while the children's contributions have been lavishly poured out upon some general object, or upon some church or school of an entirely different denomination, as if we alone had a sufficiency in the coffers of our committees, or were less deserving of the sympathy and gifts of our own children than the others. Not a few of our large Sunday-schools give hundreds of dollars, or even the entire support, year by year of missionaries under a general charity, and no one has the thought to remind them that missionaries of our own church are starving or abandoning hopeful fields for lack of the very support they are bestowing upon others. It cannot be denied that the tendency of things in our schools is to bring forward a generation of givers, trained to the idea that their own denominational enterprises are least important of all, and whose education must be gone over again if the denomination is ever to reckon them among her liberal supporters.

What our church wants now is an apostle of denominationalism to our Sunday-schools; one who, by voice or pen, shall kindle in the scholars' minds a glow of interest in our own church and in its own work, who shall awaken a concern in their breasts for the struggling home missionary, who is planting, amid untold toils and denials, a church like their own and their fathers'; a Sabbath school with their own lessons and library books; and who is striving to put up a church edifice in some infant colony in the west, or in some neglected neighborhood nearer home. Why should not the ambition of the school be awakened to sustain, wholly or in part, some such agent of our own body, one known to our committee, who will do a work within the limits, and under the supervision and for the strengthening of our own body, as well as the cause in general. All general work must assume a denominational form in time, if it is not utterly lost; can it be a positive objection that it should be New School Presbyterian from the start and all the way through?

We commend this whole subject to our permanent committee or Sabbath schools, lately organized. We hope they will grasp it with a bold hand and stir the church with a vigorous appeal. We fear the denominational revival we grown up people experienced, fifteen years ago, will produce no permanent efforts if it is not carried into our Sabbath schools and that speedily.

"IN THE LOWEST DEEP, A LOWER DEEP."—Since the 22nd of last February, the American people have had so many occasions for shame and indignation at the conduct of their rulers, that they are rather surprised at any thing creditable in their doings and sayings. They have almost sunk into indifference as to the whole matter. But their apathy was

broken last week, upon the publication of a letter on which Secretary Seward based his action in advising the removal of Mr. Mottey, our minister to Austria. That letter is a specimen of diplomatic eaves-dropping which would disgrace the court of any modern despot, and which only such a monarch as Philip of Spain, the great enemy of liberty in United Netherlands, would have allowed to influence his policy. Nothing in all Mr. Seward's melancholy and surprising subservience to the Johnson policy is so belittling to his character as a statesman, and we may add as a gentleman, as this scandalous manoeuvre. A man of true honor and self-respect, would have quietly put such a document as the McCracken letter in the waste-basket; and this Mr. Seward should have advised Mr. Johnson to do. It was, we confess worse, a good deal worse, than anything we had thought ourselves to believe Mr. Seward capable of. We trust Congress will take some action to relieve the nation of the disgrace of any complicity in this attempted degradation of one of America's brightest ornaments, through the contemptible impertinencies of a substantially anonymous letter-writer.

### THE POPE'S LAST MOVE.

As the great waves of modern opinion and national revolution roll nearer the foot of the Papal chair, its occupant shows still less ability to comprehend their force, and still greater determination never to yield to their demands. If Canute the Great had been in earnest in commanding the tide to retire from his royal seat on the sands, he would have been a type of Pope Pius in his obstinate, senseless struggle with the advancing light, liberty and true Christianity of the present age. Abandoned by his French allies, whom he insulted in the going, his remnant of power depending on the sufferance of his misgoverned and exasperated subjects, and the treaty engagements of Napoleon and the hated Victor Emmanuel; in a critical moment when he could not have done a wiser thing to disarm his foes than to make some graceful concession, what does the foolish old man, ripe-mad for destruction, but bring out the rusty old arms of the inquisition and threaten the representatives of two Protestant powers with its pains and penalties, if they do not remove their places of worship outside the walls of the sacred city! These humble chapels have been for years in quiet occupation, and have been used for no purpose, but the adification of Protestant strangers in the city. But the Pope, almost as soon as the French soldiers have turned their backs, as if released from the constraint of enemies, instead of abandoned by supporters and allies immediately proceeds to show how bent he is upon the ruin which only their presence prevented. He gives the world new and quite unexpected proof how little he has learned of events, how determined he is rather to go back upon his track, how unfit, he is for alliance with the free Kingdom of Italy, how, in short, he is Pope of Rome and nothing else, the unalterable foe of the smallest measure of religious liberty, the incarnation of bigotry and intolerance. "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will his foolishness not depart from him."

The chapels are indeed removed, but the reaction of such a measure must be felt in all the subsequent transactions of the Roman Pontiff with the enlightened powers of the world. The prompt action of the House of Representatives in abolishing the ministry at Rome, and thus withdrawing a national recognition of the Papal government, is worthy of all praise. If it becomes a law it will not be without effect upon the general sentiment of Christendom; and the Pope will be likely even to be more severely left alone with his own subjects than before. Such madness is only a preparation for the sort of overthrow which prophecy seems to indicate for the Roman power.

BROOKLYN, L. I.—A correspondent of the Presbyterian (O. S.) says of Lafayette Avenue Church (Dr. T. L. Cuyler's), that it was fully organized, and installed its first pastor six and a half years ago and now numbers 1020 communicants, and has 1300 children in its Sabbath-schools; it sustains also two separate free chapels, in which the Gospel is preached and Sabbath-schools maintained every Lord's day, the main edifice and its auxiliary chapels affording accommodation for three thousand hearers. In connection with the church is a temperance society of

over one thousand members, which, during the winter and spring, hold a series of monthly meetings, which are addressed by eminent speakers and attended by vast audiences.

### OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

Nebraska comes into the Union, and ranges herself by the side of the loyal States. No thanks to the President, however. He is carrying out his threat made at St. Louis, that he would veto every measure of the Radical Congress. But Congress gives him a Roland for his Oliver. The bill was passed without debate, and his arguments allowed to go for what they are worth.

Reconstruction is now the all-engrossing subject. Since Mr. Stevens' bill was sent to the "tomb" of the Capulets, two new plans have been brought forward,—one by the President and the other by Congress. The Executive, alive to the opportunities of the hour, sprung his plan upon the country when no other proposition was before it. If by conceding any minor points, he supposed the people would surrender their convictions and gulp down whatever he might offer, he was greatly mistaken. They have stated their ultimatum. The rebels have rejected it. Now let Congress step up higher and require all that the interests of liberty and justice will justify.

Former bills have proposed civil governments over Southern States; the present bill before the House of Representatives proposes to establish military rule over the same territory. It is time that some plan was adopted, either civil or military. Any plan which does not surrender what was gained by the war, will be a relief. True, the subject is hedged about by many difficulties, and Congress has no precedent,—the great help of legislators to guide them. Besides the President's own "policy" has been a great bar to the passage of any efficient measure. But two years have been consumed in learning the condition of the South, and the sentiment of the North. There is now no room for doubt on either point. The loyalist of the former need, and demand protection; while those of the latter section are willing to sustain Congress in giving them the most ample. Neither life, liberty, nor property are secure at the South. A gentleman of extended observation in that part of our country declares that the rebel rule is as oppressive now in many portions as during the rebellion.

Union men in New Orleans are only protected by the presence of Union bayonets, from the assassin's dagger. Withdraw these, and Union men and Freedmen would be at the mercy of such men as Dick Taylor and Mayor Monroe. It is no better in Arkansas. Every day some loyalist suffers death for his faith. A secession judge, and a secession jury of Savannah, find guilty, and sentence to imprisonment, a union editor. The courts offer no protection to loyalty, nor are the laws of the United States respected. The spirit of secession is as strong and defiant as ever.

But a few days of the present session remain. The country will be disappointed if some plan is not agreed upon before adjournment. There is an ambition among some congressmen, to have their names go down in history, connected with some original bill or amendment for the reconstruction of our divided country. This is no doubt, the foundation of many of the captious objections that have been made to plans already proposed.

The recent debate in Congress, on the subject of reconstruction, has been one of the most interesting of the session. The speeches were generally short and to the point, and developed a clearer understanding of the situation and necessities of the case than any previous debate. One member did not go over the ground of another, as is often the case, but each presented his own point. "To one was given the attack, and to another the onslaught." The discussion will do the country good. It will show the South that none of the fruits of the war are to be given up; that protection must be given to loyalty, and equal rights to all. The subject must be grappled with soon, and if the Thirty-ninth Congress does not exhibit a genuine radicalism, and go to the root of the difficulty, we must transfer our hope to the Fortieth. The time has arrived now, when delay helps the President alone. Indecision on the part of Congress, is his best, and almost only friend.