

His sincere but misjudging servants, the responsible authors of the schism, that they might eat the fruit of their own rash sowing, has taken away—in the one case by death, and in the other by prostrating disease—the two honored brethren whom we put forward to guide our steps toward the goal of re-union. We mourn at such a time as this, the loss of those bright intellects, those warm hearts, those genial and conciliating manners, that could have effected so much in smoothing for us the way of peace.

And I cannot but mention in this place, and on this occasion, that younger brother, whose active, enterprising character had made him already well known to our Church; who stood with us a year ago, in all the vigor of his robust constitution, on the summit of Pilot Knob; and who would have come from his home by the Mississippi, to his earlier home on the banks of the Genesee, to mingle his greetings with ours. But an all-wise Providence called him away in the midst of his career. Others of us, who climbed with difficulty that iron summit, seemed far more likely to cease from our labors before another Assembly, than he. Let us hasten to finish up our work, that we may leave the Church nearer her ideal perfection than we found her; that we may not lose our share in the blessing that comes on the peace-makers, and the further blessing that awaits those faithful servants whom the Lord when He comes shall find waiting and ready.

Miscellaneous.

DIVORCES.

The frequency of divorces is certainly becoming sufficiently scandalous in our country. Every day seems to add to the disgraceful statistics which, in this matter, stand recorded against us. It is well to be proud of the high point to which our civilization has attained, but it is worse than foolish to close our eyes to the wretched blotches which are, here and there, stamped upon it. None are more vitiating to the moral tone of our social life, and at the same time more destructive to our fair fame in the eyes of the Christian world, than these filthy sores which arise from the prostitution of the sacred estate of marriage.

The causes of this foul disease in our otherwise elevated social being are variously judged of. By some they are mainly traced to the low view which the law seems to take of the marriage relation—calling it an agreement merely, or a civil contract. That a degrading tendency has arisen from this source there can hardly be any room to doubt. If this is taken as the full and complete view of the relation that holds between husband and wife, it is then, of course, the veriest plaything of every changing fancy, and at the mercy of every fitful gust of passion. But we have never learned that it was the design of the law, in holding marriage in the light of a contract, thereby to define its full nature, or to say that it is nothing more than this. Its object is simply to say that this only is the aspect of it which is cognizable by the legal eye, or by which it becomes incorporated in the civil code and is brought under the regulative authority of law. Its moral and spiritual nature, as lying beyond this, is not necessarily denied. With this, however, the law as such, has nothing to do. Still, without any direct design on the part of the law, we cannot but admit that great damage has been done to the whole subject of marriage, by the low legal phraseology in which it is thus clothed. What is thus said of it is by many taken as a full definition of its nature; and we can very easily conceive how, in such cases, the way would be opened for the most irreverent feeling and reckless conduct in regard to it. The ignorance which such cases involve is, however, too great to induce the conviction that the mischief, from this source, is very extended or wide-spread. We cannot therefore admit that the legal aspect of the marriage relation is by any means the main cause of the fearful divorce pest which is so rapidly spreading throughout the land.

A greater cause, in our view at least, lies in the facility by which these divorces are obtained. At this point the moral animus of the legal view comes to much bolder and clearer light. We cannot roll off the conviction that it involves a degrading practical infidelity. Facts, however much we may be disposed to shun them, cannot be set aside. The sacredness of the relation and its binding authority, as these lie in its divine and spiritual nature, lying back of its legal contract feature, seems to be almost entirely disregarded. It makes no account of what God has done in the act of marriage, and what, in the nature of the case, the law can have no power to undo, except on the condition which God has revealed. The law has recklessly, it would seem, taken the whole subject, in this view, under its control; and this too, plainly without any care to ascertain the will of God in regard to it. Causes of the most trivial character are often admitted as fully sufficient to separate what God has joined together. In this way, what in its own nature is the most elevated institution which God has established in the bosom of our social existence, is torn down to the miserable level of every irregular feeling and wicked human passion. To a great extent it is placed at the mercy of these changing feelings and degraded passions themselves. It is not unfrequently that the mere matter of money is itself sufficient to blast what God had established, and to convert into a moral pestilence what He designed should be a source of blessing to the race. No one can muster sufficient courage to look the loathsome subject fully in the face, without clearly perceiving that our legislatures, and the courts under them, have in this view committed an error for which they must, and will, some day, be held to a strict account.

But the subject does not end at this point. Would to God it did. We regard the main cause of this dire evil, which at this time is

sapping the very life of our social being more than any other, as arising in the low and unworthy views of the marriage relation which obtain even in our nominally Christian communities. As a Christian institution, it is plainly the duty of the Christian Church to foster and guard it. The practical view which the Christian community may have of it, must be regarded as the measure in which the Church has either performed or neglected its duty in this direction. No one will deny that the marriage relation is a legitimate pulpit theme. It meets the man of God, at various points in divine revelation, and not only as always sacred in itself, but as still more so in its solemn associations. It is made the herald frequently of the most central mysteries of Christianity. And yet we seem to listen in vain for those solemn and distinct annunciations in regard to it from the pulpit, which its own high nature and spiritual sacredness demand. When it is dwelt upon, it is, as a general rule, more for vain sensation effect, than for any other purpose. The light, rapid romance of the day is—when this subject is the theme—made to take the place of the deep and solemn Gospel. The holy image of this holy estate, which may have been formed within the minds of the young by conscientious parents in the sacred circle of home, is thus severed, and often wholly destroyed, by the very agency which God has constituted to foster, elevate and guard it. If a great responsibility rests upon the State in regard to this general subject, one of no less solemn character, to say the least, hangs also upon the Church; for it must be confessed that both in the way of "omission and commission," the Church has, in this view, terribly fallen behind her whole duty.

The subject is one of a central and practical character. The disruptions of this kind, which are occurring in all sections of the land, and in all grades of society, are seriously telling upon the structure of our whole moral and social being. Wickedness of the most blasting power is at work, undermining our very foundations. They seem even to be patronized by the State and connived at by the Church. Already have they grown bold in their sin. Is the sad result not yet sufficiently sad to arrest public attention? It is surprising that the Church, knowing the facts as she must know them, can allow herself to remain calm and silent in regard to the matter. The time has evidently come when she should take a bold and decided stand in relation to the subject, and speak out her whole mind. A strong standard needs to be lifted up against the filthy floods which are sweeping over the land, bearing away the fairest flowers of virtue and breaking up the foundations of moral being itself.

We write earnestly, because we feel earnestly the blighting evil which, lurking within our social organization. What is the moral worth of our civilization, if it involve a wrecked marriage? What is the hope of the Church if the material and moral basis of the covenant be thus shattered? What future prospect, indeed, in any view, can we entertain, if the fountain of being be allowed, to any general extent, to become thus poisoned by infidelity? Let Synods awake to their duty in this regard. Let the pulpits of the land raise their trumpet voices, from the true gospel standpoint, on this subject. Then, after we have discharged our duty, let us humbly hope and pray that we may not be utterly consumed by this fire of hell.—*Ger. Ref. Messenger.*

PAUL'S QUOTATIONS FROM THE GREEK POETS.

The Apostle Paul is the only one of the inspired writers who manifests any acquaintance with the classic literature of Greece. The earlier apostles were not only unlettered men, but their training was strictly and exclusively Jewish. Paul was a Roman citizen by right of birth, and a native of Tarsus, a city celebrated then and long before for its schools, and although he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and belonged to the strictest sect of the Jews, his education was doubtless far more cosmopolitan than that of the best educated Palestinian Jews. On three occasions he cites passages from Greek poets, twice formally introducing their words as quotations, but without naming the authors, and in the third instance merely using the poet's words, without any intimation that they are quoted.

The first instance is in his discourse on Mars Hill: "As also some of your own poets have said: 'For His offspring also we are.'" (Acts 17:28.) The words here cited are taken from a poem by Aratus, who flourished about two hundred and seventy years before Christ. He was a native of Cilicia, and therefore a fellow-countryman of Paul. He wrote many poems; but only two have come down to us. The one from which the apostle quotes the first half of a hexameter line was an astronomical poem, of which Ovid says that the author's fame would live as long as the sun and moon endure: "Cum sole et luna semper Aratus erit." Cicero made a metrical translation of this poem; but it has not come down to us. It was translated into Latin by two other ancient scholars. One of these translations is extant, and also a part of the other. A German translation was also published by J. H. Voss, at Heidelberg, in 1824. Virgil is said to have been indebted to the poems of Aratus for some of the facts and ideas embodied in his Georgics. The Cilicians erected a monument to his memory, and three ancient biographies of him are extant, though the authors of them are unknown.

The Athenians who heard this quotation, no doubt regarded Aratus as a renowned

poet, while they regarded Paul as an obscure barbarian and an insignificant babbling. (v.18.) The times have changed. The only interest of what we have written about Aratus, to men of his age, arises from the fact that Paul quoted half a line from one of his poems.

Almost the same words are found in a hymn to Jupiter, composed by Cleanthes, a Stoic poet, who flourished only a few years later than Aratus. This hymn, which has come down to us entire, consists of about forty hexameter lines. Doddridge says of it: "It is the purest and finest piece of natural religion in all pagan antiquity; and it contains nothing unworthy of a Christian, nay, I had almost said, of an inspired writer."

The same idea, though not so distinctly and fully expressed, may be found also in the poems of Pindar and Tyrtaeus. Hence there was a propriety in the apostle's use of the plural number—"some of your own poets,"—although the precise word which he quotes are found only in Aratus.

—*Watchman and Reflector.*

SPIRITUALISM.

The spiritualist of the present would have us believe, and does, perhaps, himself believe, that what he has embraced is new—that it is an indication of the world's progress—a step in advance. But there are few delusions of the present that are not a reproduction of something in the past—sometimes but a poor and feeble imitation of it. The more we know of the deceptions which have been practised and gained currency in ages long ago, the less liable shall we be to be brought under the power of modern deception. The resurrection of an old delusion that has lived its day, died and been buried, may dupe one who is ignorant of its previous history, but can hardly deceive him who has read its biography. In reading that learned and able work, "The Conversion of the Roman Empire, by Charles Merivale," we came upon the following picture of the deceptions by which men were duped in the third century:

"We are acquainted with some, at least, of the expedients employed to represent the apparition of gods, and demons, and the spirits of the departed to the half-delirious votary. He was bid to look into a basin filled with water, the bottom of which had been covertly replaced with glass, with an opening in the floor beneath. The form for which he inquired was revealed to him from below; or the figure was traced invisibly on the wall, and lightly touched with a combustible composition; a torch was applied, and the god, or demon, or spirit was suddenly displayed in fire. The ancients, it seems, could employ many of our secret agents of deceit; sympathetic ink was not unknown to their adepts and impostors. Their conjurers and jugglers were to the full as skillful as ours; and their arts were turned to account for objects far more serious than the mere buffoonery of the streets. It is well, even for our use and instruction, that those tricks were exposed at the time, and the record of them perpetuated. The phenomena of modern spiritualism, whatever their actual origin, are, I believe, an exact reproduction of the presumed wonders of the third century; of an age not unlike our own in credulity and incredulity, in nervous irritability, in impatience of the grave teachings of experience."

It seems incredible that men, under the full light of Christianity, in this nineteenth century, can be cheated by the same tricks that were practiced and exposed in that early period. But so it is. It is a blessed consideration that as these delusions appear and disappear, create their brief excitements and pass away, "the foundation of God standeth sure."

THE SPIRIT OF PREACHING.

That unearthly sermonizing of Baxter and Howe, so abstracted from all the temporal and secular interests of man, so rigorously confined to human guilt and human redemption; that preaching which upon the face of it does not seem even to recognize that man has any relations to this little ball of earth, which takes him off the planet entirely, and contemplates him simply as a sinner in the presence of God; that preaching, so destitute of all literary, scientific, economical, and political elements and allusions, was nevertheless one of the most fertile causes of the progress of England and America. Subtract it as one of the forces of English history, and the career of the Anglo-Saxon race would be like that of Italy and Spain.

Dare, my brethren, to work upon this theory. Make and keep your sermons thoroughly evangelical in their substantial matter. The temptations are many, in the present age, to multiply topics, and to introduce themes into the pulpit upon which Christ and his Apostles never preached. It is enough that the disciple be as his master. And if the Son of God, possessing an infinite intelligence, and capable of comprehending in his intuition the whole abyss of truth, physical and moral, natural religion and revealed art, all beauty, and all grandeur; if the Son of God, the omniscient One, was nevertheless reticent regarding the vast universe of truth that lay outside of the Christian scheme, and confined himself to that range of ideas which relate to sin and redemption, then who are we that we should venture beyond his limits, and counteract his example?

If the Christian preacher would suffuse his thoughts with that yearning charity which St. Paul describes, let him live in the light of the cross; let him feel the virtue of expiating blood in his conscience. The immediate intuition of the great atonement arms the preacher with a wonderful tenderness and power of entreaty. Other doctrines are powerful, but this carries him beyond himself, and fills him with a deathless affection for God and the soul of man, that seems madness itself to the natural mind. Whitefield's, Summerfield's and McCheyne's glow-

ing and seraphic fervor was inspired almost wholly by this single truth. And what a pathetic earnestness, what a tender and gentle sympathy ever mingled with the strong flood-tide of Chalmers' emotion after that memorable sickness, when he sat for weeks upon the brink of eternity, and there, in the face of endless doom and death, obtained the first clear, calming view of his dying Redeemer.—*Prof. W. G. T. Shedd.*

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