

PRESBYTERIAN BANNER & ADVOCATE.

Presbyterian Banner, Vol. VI, No. 18.
Presbyterian Advocate, Vol. XX, No. 13.

"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL;" "ONE THING HAVE I DESIRED OF THE LORD;" "THIS ONE THING I DO."

WHOLE NO. 978

DAVID MCKINNEY, Editor and Proprietor.

TERMS.—IN ADVANCE.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, GAZETTE BUILDING, FIFTH STREET, ABOVE SMITHFIELD, PITTSBURGH, PA.

Philadelphia, 111 South Tenth Street, below Chestnut
By Mail, or at the Office, \$1.50 per Year; *see Prospectus.*
Delivered in the City, 1.75 " "

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1858.

Original Poetry.

The Days that are Past.

By W. WHITTON REDICE, A. M.

Man hath a weary pilgrimage,
As through the world he wends;
With heaviness he casts his eye
Upon the road before;
And still remembers with a sigh
The days that are no more."

Read Southw.

Oh, oft when I think of the days that are past,
Sad thoughts will intrinsically swell in my breast;
And I wish, Oh I wish, how I wish for the hours
When my path was strew'd only with sunshine and flowers.

I love to recall the bright days of my youth,
The happiest, the best, and the dearest in truth;
So careless, so artless, so sprightly, so gay
With their scenes of enjoyment all passed away.

Then life was before me full, full of delight,
E'en the fields and the groves had new charms for
my sight;
And the birds, the gay birds, ch, the birds sweetly
trilled,

As my heart with a rapturous melody filled.

Then friendship and love, and all truthfulness
dwelt in this bosom, now harrowed by trouble and guilt;

And my friends, youthful friends—all those
friends are now gone;

They're changed like all else—oh, how dreary
and lone!

Home! father! and mother!—how quick to my
heart!

These words, with home joys and endearments,
now start!

Oh, brothers! oh, sisters!—such friends I once
had,

They're far away scattered, I'm lonely and sad.

As year rolls on year, life is passing away,

Still the guide star of Hope points the Furness
to-day;

But never, no never, no never again
Shall return the bright hopes that I sing in this
strain.

Pittsburgh, Jan. 1858.

For the Presbyterian Banner and Advocate.

A Religious Revival—Its Signs.

Questions like the following have often passed through my mind. What will be the results of the late Convention? Do the precious fruits of it begin to appear in any of the churches? How do the brethren feel? and what are they doing? Are their hearts warmed with love, and fired with zeal? And are they encouraged to study and pray, to labor and watch for souls? Do they find their hands strengthened and borne up, by the prayers and faithful co-operation of their people—especially the elder-ship? Have any of the Sessions got to work with their ministers, in the pastoral visitation that was recommended? Or is all dark and cold, and discouraging? Perhaps, many of the pastors, since their return, have had their hearts filled with sadness and their eyes with tears, in view of their coldness, unbelief, hardness of heart, and extreme backwardness in duty among their people; and are ready to sit down in discouragement, and say with the mourning captives of Israel, "We see not our signs?" With such brethren, I can most heartily sympathize. Week after week, and month after month, I have said, with heavy heart, "We see not our signs: there is no more, any prophet: neither is there an angel in any that knoweth how long."

Perhaps it may encourage and strengthen each other, to talk over and meditate upon what are some of the signs of a true religious revival in a congregation? What are its antecedents, and how does it usually begin?

Something such a season is preceded by a time of unusual coldness, dead formality and spiritual darkness; in connection with deep and long continued anxiety on the part of the pastor. In this state of things, and under such circumstances, he frequently feels that his way is hedged up, (like that of the Israelites at the Red Sea,) and he knows not what to preach, or what to do, that he may wake up the church and save sinners; and perhaps comes to the conclusion, like the minister spoke of by brother T., in the Convention, that it is his duty to leave the place, and seek another field. But more commonly the Lord indicates his coming, and prepares the way for it, by first humbling the pastor to see his own ignorance, weakness, utter unworthiness, and past unfaithfulness; then opens his eyes to see the deplorable state of the church and the perishing condition of sinners, and gives him such an impressive, heart-moving view of the value of immortal souls, the danger of their being lost, and the weight of his own responsibility, that he is led to preach the truth with a bitterness and decision, tenderness of feeling and prayerful earnestness, which he has seldom, if ever, done before. In this state of mind, he regards not what men will think or say of him, if he sees clear the path of duty. He cares little for his own ease, or worldly interest or honor, so that souls are saved and God honored. And, rising above the fear of man, with death, judgment and eternity in full view, he preaches the Word, instant in season, out of season—represents, rebukes, exhorts, with all long suffering and doctrine. As he retires from the sanctuary to his study, to meditate and pray, he feels a desire, an anxious desire, for souls, "amounting" (as Dr. McFarland said,) to distress." It is there that weeps, as between the porch and the altar, crying, "Spare thy people, O Lord!" Again, with prayerful solicitude, he goes up to the house of God, and, with fear and trembling, (his heart being lifted up to the Lord for help,) he rebukes, warns and entreats; and with affectionate earnestness, he beseeches his dear people to be reconciled to God. At the close, as he casts a wishful eye over the congregation, he says, in his heart, "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall run down with tears because the Lord's book is carried away captive." At this crisis, if not before, the members of the church usually begin to see their need, confess their faults one to another, repent and pray, "and do their first works." If not—if they have fallen into such death-like slumbers that they will not be awakened,

they are so hard hearted, and unbelieving, and proud, that they will not do their duty, there is danger that the Lord will remove their candlestick out of its place—that he will take away their minister by death, or remove him to another field.

In connexion with these signs, or immediately following them, there is often seen the conviction and hopeful conversion of here and there an individual, as a kind of first fruits of a general harvest. If the church are satisfied with this, and take it as the answer of their prayers, and if this be the extent of their faith, then God will say, "Be it unto you according to thy faith."

On the subjects of the *Theatre*, and *Dancing*, the General Assembly says:

"On the fashionable thought, we believe, deserves attention of theological societies, and dancing, &c., when it is necessary to make a few observations."

The *Theatre* we have always considered as a school of immorality. If any person wishes for honest conviction on this subject, let him consult the *Christian Standard*, which is faithfully exhibited on the stage. We wish a copy of that address to be placed in the hands of every Western man.

It was published in pamphlet form, and distributed to some extent, and has since disappeared, in part, in various papers throughout the region. But it would be very desirable, if it could, with its noble sentiments, find its way into every Christian family; and be kept among the cherished articles of domestic reading. I know of no document better calculated to set before the minds the value of Western civilization, as far as compatible with the stability of their rule, and the prosperity of their dividends. Higher praise than this, can scarcely be claimed for them."

Before we leave this subject, we would call the attention of our Western readers, to an address of Dr. Van Rensselaer at the commencement of Carol College, last September.

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There are some other signs of revival which I had designed to mention; but lest I should weary the patience of the reader, and encroach upon my time for other duties, I will lay down my pen for the present.

Meanwhile let us bear in mind the warning of our college. It is to be feared that this day has not been as generally observed by our Western churches, and by

Western Christians as it should be. We have been so absorbed in the rush of business that we have neglected to unite, as we should, with other portions of our land in the discharge of this important duty.

We have, even yet, perhaps, some of us, that as colleges were few, and college students few with us in the West, that we might leave the duty of prayer in their behalf, to those who, in this regard, live in more favored localities. This is a great mistake.

There are special and peculiar reasons why the West should observe this day—some of which I present and recite.

At present, the Convention, composed of ministers and elders from different Synods, after much prayer and deliberation, recommended to all the churches under their care, to humble themselves before God, and to repent of their sins, which caused God to hide his face from them, and withdraw the awaking and saving influences of his Spirit from midst. As the result, therefore, of these earnest and solemn recommendations, our ministers have felt themselves constrained most earnestly to bring before your minds, in their pulpit ministrations, these sins which have grieved the Holy Spirit from us, and to call upon them to those who are in any other portion of our land, to shew themselves before God, and to make their houses to dancing, and some of our youthful members have forgotten their high vocation and solemn vows—in turning aside to the sinful pleasures of the world, in resorting to frequent parties, where carnal and promiscuous dancing, in the order of the evening's exercise—thus dishonoring God, wounding their Saviour, grieving the Holy Spirit, distressing the hearts of ministers and all serious and godly persons, as well as causing the enemy to reproach and blaspheme.

We, therefore, who stand for the defense of the Gospel, who love your souls, and watch for your salvation as those who must give an account of their ministry, do most solemnly and tenderly warn and admonish you against these evil practices, enticing and alluring in their nature, destroying all love for God's Word, and all delight and pleasure in daily communion with him in the closet, as well as placing you in a position where your good must be evil spoken of, and your disposition and ability to do good to the perishing around you, completely destroyed.

And that you may know what views our Church holds, and always held, in reference to these ensnaring pleasures. We direct your attention to the hundred and thirty-ninth question of the Larger Catechism, and to the action of the Synod of Pittsburgh in 1817, and that of the General Assembly in 1818, condemning dancing and other sinful amusements, and enjoining the Church Sessions to be faithful in administering discipline upon those who will persevere, after admonition and warning, in these practices, which all must know belong to the ungodly world. The Synod says:

"Attendance upon balls, dances, &c., theatrical exhibitions, and other vain amusements, is censurable in the members of our Church; and the Synod were more especially induced at this solemn and interesting period of conflict of the cause of God, against the depraved and impious spirit of the world, to call upon all the church and Sessions in their respective parishes to intercede in such cases with prudence and firmness, and further enjoin upon the members of their respective congregations, to beware that when God appears to be arising to promote extensively the interests of his children's Kingdom, they appear not to be aiding the world in its opposition to the cause of God, nor to be aiding the devil in his designs for the destruction of souls."

God has been pleased to give us great encouragement, in times past, in complying with this duty. He has proved himself emphatically a prayer-hearing God, in answering petitions presented in behalf of colleges and institutions of learning. If an inquiry is instituted, it is believed that it will be found that God has invariably, and in marked and peculiar manner, smiled upon the prayers of his people, in behalf of institutions of learning. Let us therefore, take courage, and be not afraid to trust in God, for he is a faithful God, who will not fail us.

The *Abolition of the East India Company*, on which doubts were thrown, is now stated by the Ministerial *Globe*, a measure actually resolved on. It is affirmed that the East India Government has received formal notice, that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to bring in, in the next session of Parliament, to abolish "the double

government" of India, and to establish, in that country the direct government of the Queen. I believe that the country will be satisfied with nothing less than this, and that the Premier is well aware of the state of public opinion. As to the Company, as a correspondent of the *Record*, "thirty-five years, resident in India," says, "An impartial observer will concede to the East India Company, that their desire and endeavors have been to communicate to their subjects the benefits of Western civilization, as far as compatible with the judgment, with the stability of their rule, and the prosperity of their dividends. Higher praise than this, can scarcely be claimed for them."

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