

From the Landmark.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSALISM.*

A man recently died, in a town not a hundred miles of Salem, whose life was cut short in the midst of his days by intemperance. He had for several years been habituated to excessive indulgence in intoxicating liquors, which were obviously undermining his constitution, till in the last period of his life his indulgence in his狂ious vice became more frequent and unrestrained, and finished the work of destruction which had been previously going on. He was a decided Universalist, or, in other words his opinion was, that moral conduct in this life has no connexion with our condition after death, and that however vice and guilty a person may be in this world, he will upon his entrance into the next be immediately taken to the society of saints in Heaven, and be rewarded equally with those who have been the most virtuous and holy of men. His conduct corresponded with these principles. He believed that drunkards and tipplers would inherit the kingdom of Heaven, and he acted on the belief. At his funeral a Universalist preacher was called to preach a sermon. The text was from Romans xiv. 18: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. The preacher, with the usual skill of his sect, applied it to all men, though the Apostle had exclusive reference to Christians. Whether the learned preacher thought that the Apostle addressed his remarks to all mankind, or that the words in Romans meant all people, or that saints to whom he was speaking, Romans, 4, 7, included drunkards as well as sober and holy men, or whether, happening to light on some words which seemed to favor his doctrine, he dragged them into the support of his communion who have never been cordial in their attachment to her standards. In this case a diminution of numbers will not necessarily be a diminution of strength. The readiness, however, with which many are willing to lay aside their nominal Presbyterianism, has alarmed their leaders, who have never contemplated or desired this alternative. They merely contemplated such a modification in Presbyterian doctrine and government as would give them greater latitude in indulging their speculations and errors, without subjecting them to the many inconveniences of unmitigated Congregationalism. In the apprehension of being thrown back into Congregationalism, they now begin, in a certain sense, to plead the superior advantages of Presbyterianism. One writer in the N. Y. Evangelist, who writes over the signature of 'A Presbyterian,' is in favor of Presbyterianism, provided a little more liberality could be infused into it, and some of its strict features could be relaxed; or in other words, provided it would so modify its creed as to embrace all *men*. Another correspondent of the same paper who subscribes himself 'J. Hopkins,' and who, although now a Presbyterian clergyman, was a pastor in the Congregational church for twenty years, deprecates any change in the Presbyterian Church, which would affect the government of the church by a session. This feature of our church is popular with Congregational ministers for very obvious reasons; but the reasons which induce Mr. Hopkins to prefer it, as they are strong against the system of Congregationalism, we insert at length.

1. We see the demoralizing influence of universalism. An immoral man embraces the opinion that there will be no punishment for sin in the future world; that all, without respect to character and conduct in this life, will be released from suffering at death, and taken immediately to Heaven, or at the resurrection. Upon a comparison of the pleasure which he thinks he shall derive from the opposite courses of virtue and vice, he decides in favor of the former. And he has nothing to fear beyond death, for Heaven is just as certain to him as to the man of piety and virtue. If he is told, as was the man whose death I have announced, that his habits will shorten his days, the reflection immediately arises, then I shall obtain Heaven so much the sooner. After a delusion carried through the week, if his reflections happen to be made a little gloomy by the stillness and restraints of the Sabbath, he has only to repair to a Universalist house of worship, and hear the glad tidings of great joy, that drunkards and thieves, and all sorts of persons shall inherit the kingdom of God, and his fears subside, his conscience is at ease, and he is braced up for another week's work of sin. If one of his companions in sin has life cut short, and dies a miserable victim to his vices, and some natural fears are awakened in his bosom by the awful providence, let him go to the funeral and hear a pretended minister of Christ thank God that another soul has gone to rest, and let him hear that the wretched sinner lived to the Lord, and died to the Lord, and is the Lord's, and will be made happy forever; and if his conscience and his fears are not pacified, his faith must be weak indeed.

2. We see why drunkards and tipplers are generally friends to universalism and haters to orthodoxy. The latter holds up to them the terrors of the Lord beyond the grave, it points the incorrigible drunkard to that hell where the fire will not be quenched, and bids him break off his transgressions if he would escape the wrath to come. But universalism tells him that this is all superstition, the dream of fanatic priests; that what he suffers here for his sins is all that he will experience or need to fear; and that if he can manage to go along with the present consequences of his vice; if the pleasure of his cup outweighs the loss which he incurs, and the evils which he suffers in the body, he need give himself no further trouble. If in the delirium of drunken debauch, he should come cooling home at night, as some have done, and murder his wife and family, and then cut his own throat to escape the gallows, what then—why they would all go to rest together; his children would no longer cry for bread; his wife would no longer weep and freeze over a scanty fire, and sit late at night dreading the approach of a wild beast from the grotto shop, and ruminating in heart-broken agony over the joys of by-gone days. Is it to be wondered at that universalism is popular with drunkards?

3. We see the gross inconsistency of those Universalist preachers who advocate the cause of temperance. They in common with others will expatiate on the guilt and mischief of intemperance; point to poverty, ruin, and disgrace to which it conducts its victims, and then promise the drunkard an eternity of happiness in Heaven, although he might die in a fit of intoxication, yea though he should die by his own hand, and should be found hatched in his own blood, and that of his family. They threaten him with the loss of a little worldly property, but promise him everlasting riches; they threaten him with transient disgrace on earth, but hold out to him a prospect of eternal honor; they tell him he will cut short his natural life, but encourage with the assurance of an immortal life of bliss beyond the grave, they will come to his funeral, sing a requiem over his grave, and thank God that he has escaped hell and gone to Heaven. What inconsistency, what absurdity. It is like attempting to deter a miser from an unwise course, by threatening him with the loss of a dollar, and promising him ten million in its stead. They betray as much ignorance of the law of the mind as of scriptural interpretation.

4. We see why universalism does not reform. Since the day it was first preached no man has been made better by it. It holds out a premium for all sorts of vice and ungodliness. For the drunkard, the thief, the murderer, it has no terror beyond this life. Without any remorse, without any virtue, death is rest to him. He falls asleep in Christ; he breathes out his soul into the hands of God; and an angel and glorified spirit welcome him to their society. Go and preach universalism to gamblers, to thieves, to profane swarmers, to drunkards; tell them there is no judgment, no hell, but what they see and suffer here, or what the wicked Jews suffered eight

hundred years ago; that if they die without penitence, with all his sins and guilt clearing to them, they will be safe, happy forever; let them believe that a preacher will deliver a eulogy at their funerals, and number them among the saints—and when will they be reformed? You might as well expect to draw out the fangs of a rattle snake by the music of a fiddle. Such a thing as reform through such an influence never was accomplished; it never will, it never can be, till all the laws of the human mind are reversed.

From the Presbytery.

PROBLEMS CHANGED.—We have already, in several instances, intimated the danger which threatens Presbyterian institutions from the Congregational force, which has secured a lodgement within the citadel of our church; and the more the question is agitated, the stronger is our conviction, that our alarm is neither ill-founded nor premature. The controversy, however, appears to be assuming a new aspect. A change is in progress, and one which we have been desirous of facilitating, and which is evidently alarming many of the new school leaders. We have pleaded for an entire separation between the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists, and it appears that many of the latter, who are beginning to examine the question honestly, are disposed to adopt the suggestion, and retire from the Presbyterian church to form themselves into Congregational associations. Such a measure has been regarded with much favor in the New England settlements, which are covered by the Western Reserve Synod; and in the state of New York an Association has actually been organized. We care not how soon the measure may be matured; the Presbyterian Church can lose nothing by the departure of those from her communion who have never been cordial in their attachment to her standards. In this case a diminution of numbers will not necessarily be a diminution of strength. The readiness, however, with which many are willing to lay aside their nominal Presbyterianism, has alarmed their leaders, who have never contemplated or desired this alternative. They merely contemplated such a modification in Presbyterian doctrine and government as would give them greater latitude in indulging their speculations and errors, without subjecting them to the many inconveniences of unmitigated Congregationalism. In the apprehension of being thrown back into Congregationalism, they now begin, in a certain sense, to plead the superior advantages of Presbyterianism. One writer in the N. Y. Evangelist, who writes over the signature of 'A Presbyterian,' is in favor of Presbyterianism, provided a little more liberality could be infused into it, and some of its strict features could be relaxed; or in other words, provided it would so modify its creed as to embrace all *men*. Another correspondent of the same paper who subscribes himself 'J. Hopkins,' and who, although now a Presbyterian clergyman, was a pastor in the Congregational church for twenty years, deprecates any change in the Presbyterian Church, which would affect the government of the church by a session. This feature of our church is popular with Congregational ministers for very obvious reasons; but the reasons which induce Mr. Hopkins to prefer it, as they are strong against the system of Congregationalism, we insert at length.

2. There is, in most men, such a disposition to throw off responsibility, that when discipline depends on a whole church, it is extremely liable to be neglected. One will wait for another, and think there are reasons why himself should be excused. It is believed that men are not as liable to be influenced by a spirit like this, if they feel that they are solemnly set apart for this work.

3. When a man commences a course of discipline, the delinquent is more likely to suspect him of prejudice or of some improper motives, if he has taken it upon himself from among a whole church than if it were expected of him as the duty of his office, and of course he will be less likely to succeed in reclaming him.

4. The public discussion of many cases of discipline exerts an influence exceedingly unfavorable to the cause of truth. This needs no proof.

5. If the discipline depends on the whole church, no one will feel so deeply his obligation to look into it and understand it, when a case is presented, as if the responsibility rested upon a few, and they felt themselves to be under the most solemn vows to be impartial before God. Is it not true, that while churches are frequently led, both in their discussion and their votes, by a less number than usually compose a batch of elders? Who would not prefer, if they were to be tried for their lives, and wished to have justice done them, to be tried by a jury or by judges, rather than by a multitude?

6. Meetings for the business of discipline exert a bad influence on the piety of a church, as they may be led, from trivial circumstances or motives first to differ, and then other motives will lead them to persist in endeavoring to maintain their ground.

7. When discipline depends upon a whole church, a delinquent has far greater encouragement to endeavor to enlist a party in his favor. In how many cases, by an influence such as this, are churches rent into parties! and, indeed, often to that extent does the spirit of division proceed, that the breach is found to be impossible.

8. Men are not so likely to remain impartial and candid in a discussion where the number is large, as where it is small, &c. &c. &c.

Now these things have not been stated as arguments in form, in support of Presbyterianism; in that case, they would have been stated with more care and at greater length. The object is to make a statement only of some of the most prominent practical evils that attend the business of discipline where it is conducted by the whole church. Reasons like these are what induce men to seek for the appointment of committees in many Congregational churches, and render them unwilling, if not unwilling, to give up their batch of elders. This list might be easily extended.

There is another reason that operates with great force on the minds of pastors, that I will name, as I am aware that their feelings on that subject are not understood. When discipline depends on the whole church, there is too much power in the hands of the pastor—it he has the affections of his church as he ought, his opinion need only to be known to induce many of the members to examine no further. For this reason, decisions in Congregational churches are viewed as exhibiting his opinions much more evidently than in Presbyterian. In many cases, an opinion that the decision is wholly the effect of his influence, is an injury to his usefulness. No man who has enjoyed the assistance and advice of a judicious session in the government of a church for any number of years, would be willing to take such a responsibility upon himself as he must, if the business is done by the church.

These reasons are conclusive, but what are they designed in this case to prove? Simply this, that Presbyterianism has one peculiarity in its form of

government, of such singular excellence, that Congregational ministers should be willing to accept, nominally, the whole system for the sake of securing the advantages of this one feature! Thus says Mr. Hopkins:

"In the thoughts that I shall suggest, I wish to be understood as speaking of Presbyterianism as the government of a church by a session, rather than in her appellate system. It is for this part of a Presbyterianism (if the term be proper) for which I am most zealous."

Thus is the truth becoming more obvious every day, that Congregationalists remain in our church, not because they admire the general structure of its government, or believe in its doctrinal creed, but because it promotes their convenience and comfort in some respects. Is this honest? Is it Christian? Is there not sufficient principle left to induce Congregationalists to leave a church whose formularies they cannot subscribe in sincerity and truth? Will they continue professedly to adopt a whole system, merely because it embraces a few points in which they can agree? Or will they continue professedly to adopt a system, and yet systematically proceed to subvert its great and distinguishing principles? We lament that we have not the opportunity of proposing such questions to Congregationalist and New School ministers in our Church. Reflection would certainly induce them to retire from the Presbyterian Church, or remain in it with other and more consistent principles.

THE SEVEN SLEEPING CHRISTIANS.

AN EASTERN TALE.

In a volume of sermons, by Bishop Heber, he introduces one of the discourses with this story, for the purpose of calling attention to the great concerns of eternity and of practical religion. His text is, 2 Cor. iv, 17, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

"There is an ancient fable told by the Greek and Roman churches—which, fable as it is, may for its beauty and singularity well deserve to be remembered—that in one of the earliest persecutions to which the Christian world was exposed, seven Christian youths sought concealment in a lonely cave, and there by God's appointment, fell into a deep and death-like slumber. They slept, the legend runs, two hundred years, till the greater part of mankind had received the faith of the gospel, and that church, which they had left a poor and afflicted orphan, had 'kings' for her nursing fathers, and 'queens' for her nursing mothers. They then at length awoke, and entering into their native Ephesus, so altered now that its streets were altogether unknown to them, they cautiously inquired if there were any Christians in that city? 'Christian' was the answer, 'we are all Christians here!' and they heard with thankful joy the change which, since they left the world, had taken place in the opinions of its inhabitants. On one side, they were shown a stately fabric adorned with a gilded cross, and dedicated, as they were told, to the worship of their crucified Master, on another, schools for the public exposition of those gospels, of which, so short a time before, the bare profession was proscribed and deadly. But no fear was now to be entertained of the miseries which had encircled the cradle of Christianity; no danger now of the rack, the lions, or the sword; the emperor and his prefects held the same faith with themselves, and all the wealth of the east, and all the valor and authority of the western world were exerted to protect and endow the professors and the teachers of their religion.

But joyful as these tidings must at first have been to them, their further inquiries are said to have met with answers which very deeply surprised and pained them. They learn that the greater part of those, who called themselves by the name of Christ, were strangely regardless of the blessings which Christ had bestowed, and of the obligations which he had laid on his followers. They found that as the world had become Christian, Christianity itself had become worldly; and, wearied and sorrowful, they besought of God to lay them asleep again, crying out to those who followed them, You have shown us many heathens who have given up their old idolatry, without gaining any thing better in its room; many who are of no religion at all; and many with whom the religion of Christ is no more than a cloak of licentiousness; but where are the Christians? And thus they returned to their cave; and there God had compassed on them, releasing them once for all, from that world for whose reprobation their days had been lengthened, and removing their souls to the society of their ancient friends and pastors, the martyrs and saints of an earlier and better generation."

MURREL, THE LAND PIRATE.

A religious paper in Columbia, South Carolina, has asked the question why the people of Tennessee suffer the infamous man named above to live, to which we answer, because the people of Tennessee have a reverence for the laws and the demands of justice. Murrel is immured, within the substantial masonry of the Tennessee Penitentiary, and at a late attempt to escape which was detected and which he was believed to have originated he was honored with a block, chained to his leg, while he is in the labor yard, so that he is in a hopeless situation during the day of gaining liberty by an escalade or rush. Besides which he has been given plainly to understand by the Superintendent, Mr. McTrosen, the value of whose words all western rogues know well how to estimate, that on the least attempt to escape either among the prisoners, or by an assault of the Murrel clan from without the *very first step shall be to put an instant end to his life!* This Murrel know! It has been told him by an iron-souled man whose countenance turns the villian pale for years after he has been discharged from his wardship. Measures have been taken to make this matter secure; and thus ten years of Murrell's life will pass, if death do not release him. At the expiration of his sentence the people of Tennessee do not expect to see him set at liberty. For this man there is no more sun, no pleasant flowery world—no laughing brook, or gentle fire-side home. He is an outlaw upon a boisterous sea—every wave his enemy and every breeze his foe.—*Western Methodist.*

COLONIZATION.—The results of Mr. Gurley's efforts in this city have not been communicated to us. The amount collected here, as announced in the meeting last Wednesday evening, was between \$500 and \$600. Something was added the next day, but how much we know not. We are desired to acknowledge the following from Gorham.

Gorham Benevolent Society 20.00
Josiah Price 25.00
\$45.00

LIBERTY OF THE PRESS IN MEXICO.—There are only twenty-seven newspapers published in Mexico, all of which are subservient to the present government. Two opposition journals, the *Opposition* and the *Atlantic Courier*, were attempted sometime since, but they were soon suppressed by Santa Anna. The Editor of the former was banished to California—the latter, Santango, to the United States.

KENTUCKY.—Bishop Smith has raised, mainly in the State of New York, 24,000 dollars, for the endowment of a Theological Seminary.

THE STANDARD.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1835.

(C) The Cincinnati Journal is, by a resolution of the Synod of Indiana, requested to publish the articles found below, under the heads—"A day of Fasting and Prayer," "Monthly Concert of Prayer," and "A Narrative of the state of Religion," &c.

SYNOD OF INDIANA.

This body met, agreeably to adjournment, at Salem, on Wednesday, the 14th inst., and continued its session until the Tuesday morning following. The meeting was, upon the whole, a pleasant and harmonious one. No unkind feeling was manifested in the discussions which took place, though some of the subjects were of an exciting nature. The only items of general interest will be found below.

A New Presbytery.

In answer to a petition from the Crawfordsville Presbytery, the territory included within the bounds of said Presbytery, north of the counties of Warren, Montgomery, and Boone, and so much of the territory of Indianapolis Presbytery as lies north of Hamilton, Madison, and Delaware counties, was formed into a new Presbytery, to be called the Presbytery of Logansport; embracing the following Ministers, viz. The Rev. Messrs. L. G. Bell, J. A. Carnahan, M. M. Post, and M. Hunter. The first meeting of this Presbytery was directed to be held at Logansport, on the first Thursday of April, 1836.

A day of Fasting and Prayer.

On this subject the following overture was adopted, viz.

"The Synod of Indiana, considering themselves as overseers in the house of God, and bound 'to watch for souls as those that must give an account,' would be deeply penetrated with the fact that there is at present a very low state of religion in all our churches; and would impress on the beloved people under our care, that we are called upon to humble ourselves before God for our sins, which have prompted him to depart from us; in ploring a return of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, in his quickening power.

To this end we appoint Friday, the 20th of November next, to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer to God; that he would be pleased to visit all our churches in mercy, and build us up in our most holy faith. And we would exhort all the people under our care, to turn aside from their worldly concers, and unfeudly improve the blessing of God.

We would also recommend that our Ministers and Elders should spend as much of the preceding week as may be necessary, in visiting every member of their respective churches, for the purpose of arousing them to duty; and that a part of the afternoon of said Friday be spent in catechising and instructing the children of the church, and in imploring the blessing of God on our offspring."

Monthly Concert of Prayer.

The following is the Report of a committee on this subject:

"They consider the monthly concert of prayer to be an institution of the highest interest both to the Church and the world. It is by prayer as well as by other efforts of the church, that the world's conversion is to be carried forward. And we are grieved that so few of the members of our churches avail themselves of the privilege of thus advancing the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of the millions of our fellow men, who are perishing in ignorance and sin; especially as it is a means equally within the reach of all of the poor as well as of the rich. We, therefore, consider it highly important to the heathen world that an increased interest be enlisted in behalf of this institution. It is important, also, to the interests of the churches at home. Nothing tends more directly to increase in them that spirit which was manifested by our blessed Lord in visiting our world on his errand of love, than directing their attention to the condition and wants of those parts of our world where the light of the gospel is not yet enjoyed, and endeavors to excite them to extend that relief which the gospel alone can give. To do this is the obvious tendency of the monthly concert for prayer, when rightly conducted. And, as a means of exciting deeper interest in this institution, we suggest to Synod the expediency of recommending to our churches.

1st. An increased circulation of missionary intelligence. The necessity of this is too obvious to need remark. On this subject especially information gives interest.

2d. The adoption, in all cases, of the system of monthly contributions. This will tend, in two ways, to increase the attendance and interest of the occasion.

3d. It will magnify its intrinsic importance. The object of the meeting will be two fold. The people will meet to pray and to labor. To their prayers they are to add their alms. Hence they will pray with stronger faith and with greater fervency, and both the number and satisfaction of the attendants will be proportionately increased.

4d. The interest in the concert will also be increased by the fact that the contributors will then regard themselves as sustaining an important relation, that of benefactors to the missions for which they pray."

A Narrative of the state of Religion within the bounds of the Synod of Indiana.

"Never has this Synod been called upon to prepare a report on the state of religion