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The Morning Star - volume 30 number 49 - March 12, 1856

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Recommended Citation

Freewill Baptist printers, "The Morning Star - volume 30 number 49 - March 12, 1856" (1856). *The Morning Star*. 2116.

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1886.

PLENARY INSPIRATION—INTRODUCTION.

In discussing the inspiration of the Scriptures, a careful and even critical examination of the sacred text will not be out of place. Our opponents will attempt first to impair it, and then they can readily impair the doctrine of plenary inspiration. If the text is as imperfect as they contend, there can be no such thing as textual inspiration, or, indeed, any other. They make a display of learning and research, and, as is generally the case on the wrong side of the question, they lay themselves open to criticism. If we take up the gauntlet against them, and indulge in some animadversions, it will be, we trust, not merely for the sake of criticism, but in defence of the truth, and because we think the Bible too serious a matter to be trifled with, and deteriorated by making "men of straw" for targets to display one's acumen. Such men-of-straw on such an arena are dangerous. We do not accuse them of this design, but when we perceive apparent errors and discrepancies, under cover of the closest criticism, we cannot repress our suspicions.

In our estimation, our opponents exaggerate the errors of the sacred text for sinister purposes. They expatiate on its "several hundred thousand various readings," as if with delight. What is the demand for this, unless it is the desire to see the destruction of this beautiful fabric? The extraction of a pin here will accomplish more in the direction of ruin, than the insertion of a pillar can possibly repair. They admit that "it was universally acknowledged that all Greek and Latin manuscripts had been greatly corrupted through the carelessness of transcribers," and yet they make these very translations, with all their acknowledged imperfections, sufficient authority for the correction of the Hebrew text. They would give the impression that the latter was subject to all the corruption of the former! Now we do not contend that "No error could possibly stand in the sacred text," but we do utter our disclaimer against using fallacy to prove it to be there.

After saying "The Christian fathers, ignorant of the Hebrew, supposed that every word and every letter of the inspired volume was guarded by supernatural agency," they exclaim, "O, the quietude, the bliss of ignorance!" What an argument! It is evident on the very face of it, that those "ignorant of the Hebrew," could have comparatively nothing to do in preserving its purity. Our opponents should go farther back to the Israelites, and to the transcribers themselves. But this would not answer their purpose. They must then speak of the exceeding carelessness with which the Israelites preserved it in the Ark of the Covenant, and in the Temple. "There," says Stuart in his Old Testament canon, "constant guardians of it were always found by day and by night. There of course, the mutilation or interpolation of it would be difficult, if not an impossible thing." After quoting Aben Ezra on this same point, Prof. S. continues, "The absolute impossibility of corrupting the sacred books, indeed, need not be assumed, &c.; but the improbability that such a thing was done in a place so public and sacred, may well be maintained." They must tell us that the sacred writings were transcribed as no other books were transcribed. The word "careless" could hardly be admitted as belonging to the transcribers; for if a single mistake was made so as to need the addition or erasure of a letter, or if two letters happened to touch each other so that the parchment could not be clearly seen about each; or if the letter was not perfectly formed, the whole book was destroyed. It must be written with ink, on parchment prepared by an Israelite, for this very purpose. The scribe then, having drawn a line upon the parchment, looked at the word, and pronounced it orally, before transcribing it. He must not trust his memory, his ear, or his sight alone. The length and breadth of each sheet, and the spaces between the letters, words, and sections, were also prescribed. According to Maimonides, these rules, with others, must be observed or the book must be destroyed.

"Even to this day," says Carpenter, "it is an obligation on the persons who copy the sacred writings to observe them (these rules), and those who have not seen the rolls used in the synagogues, can have no conception of the exquisite beauty, correctness, and equality of the writing."

With this view of the subject, how can it be that "Christians severely dared to whisper the result of their investigations" as we are informed? Is the Hebrew Bible such a tissue of corruption, that the only rest to be found in it is the "bliss of ignorance"? By no means. Our opponents themselves virtually admit it all to be a "man of straw," when they admit "that the great mass of these different readings are as unessential as the letter K in public or u in honour." It is to be seen, where is the ground for censure and controversy? And what is the propriety of the commendation and copying of Morinus, a Romish priest of the 17th century, who made bold assault upon the word of God? That this has been done with all the Philological knowledge and critical acumen which a desperate cause will admit we may learn in the future.—J. M. B.

TRUE GREATNESS.

One thought more. In our state of finiteness and imperfection we do not expect all the elements of greatness to be developed to their highest point of susceptibility in the same person. Indeed, if one element stands out in bold relief, we almost instinctively look for corresponding depressions or deficiencies somewhere else. How often is it the case that one noble excellence is offset by an ignoble fault! We find sagacity and decision coupled with coldness and insensibility; tenderness and enthusiasm, wedded to irresolution and inanity; dignity associated with pride, and familiarity with the want of self-respect. Where there is great intellectual development, we rarely expect to find the proportionate cultivation of the affections; and the great development of the affections, precludes the expectation of high mental culture. Thus it is that men who obtain the appellation of great are often, when viewed from an opposite standpoint, more to be distinguished—least numerically—for their vices than for their virtues. They have power—great power, which off-balances defects, surges the populace, and carries off the palm of glory, but they have their prominent weakness also. We see the splendor was a great monomania—a puff of empty glory, and conceit; his expedition to Greece fully demonstrated. Alexander the Great was great in debauchery and effeminacy, as his tears on the sea-shore, his irregularities, and the circumstances of his consequent premature death confirm. So Louis XIV. was great in adultery and shameless iniquity. He could with a wonderful power hold in subjection the feudal hordes, and

govern the various conflicting interests of his empire, but he could not, or did not, govern himself. His subjects feared him—he feared no man. They were completely under his control; and he was, at the same time, as completely under the control of his mistress. Such examples are but the representatives of a class—they exhibit a rule of general application.

If we analyze any individual character we shall also find some ground of criticism. There is no man above it, simply because no man is perfect. Our idea of true greatness is answered only by a great heart, a great heart, and a great hand; a heart to feel, a head to devise, and a hand to execute—or a great intellect, affection, will.—We do not often, I might say ever, find these equally disciplined. No two cultivate either of them alike. Mental physiognomy differs as much as physical. One man is a mathematician, another a linguist, and another a metaphysician. Each superior in his department, and deficient in the others. They may all be great, and still either of them, tried by the others, as a standard, would fall. Hence the fatality and folly of invidious comparisons! For these reasons the apostle has uttered his censure; and taught us that measuring ourselves by ourselves, and comparing ourselves among ourselves, is not wise.

There is one, however, with whom it is safe to compare ourselves—one who is endowed with the most generous and overflowing heart, the most profound wisdom, and the most invincible decision. Though possessed of a commanding dignity, yet he was perfectly accessible to all. In intellect, in morals, and in the various relations of life, Christ was a complete example. How easy and dignified, and full of freshness, ingenuousness, and simplicity, is all his deportment! Nothing is assumed, artificial, or constrained. What he is, he appears to be, without exaggeration or diminution, in every variety of station—with the multitude, and with friends—in public & in private life. If we imitate him, I repeat, we are useful and happy.—see safe—J. M. B.

LIFE OF LOVE.

"The love of Christ constraineth me." Who can assert this? It is a significant saying. It denotes that we are not selfish, wilful, proud, sensual; that we have discarded the ordinary low motives which actuate men, and that our hearts are inspired with new and higher purposes and affections, that we live not to self, but to do good to others, and glorify God. And this state of the soul is rich in noble aspirations and pleasant hopes. Every one is constrained by love. Some are slaves to a love of wealth, some of exciting drinks, some pleasure, some of fame, some of ease, others of power and authority. But this is worldly love, and has self for its centre. It directs genius, enterprise, strength, all the powers of being to self-serving; and strives to lay all other minds, all the elements of nature, and the wisdom and power of God, under contribution to serve the same end. But the love of Christ is wholly unlike this. It seeks not its own, but lays all wisdom, power and skill under contribution to serve humanity and God. Mark two noble looking men, with powers of mind superior in strength and vigor. What thoughts fill their hearts? Entirely dissimilar. One reviews the movements of nations, changes in society, peculiar contingencies of trade, politics, morals, and the course of popular influence, and balances all in his capacious mind, and sums up the probable profits to himself that may result from skillful movements. The other takes the same review, estimates his ability to control, use, manage the forces before him, is as deeply interested as his neighbor, and balances results, but scarcely thinks of self in the prospect of enlightening the ignorant, relieving the suffering, saving the lost, carrying peace where sin and sorrow reign, and scattering blessings on every hand. The all of life to the former is to get; to the latter, to impart. The former estimates all things with reference to his own good; the latter, with reference to the good of humanity. Is there no difference in the interior life of these men? Has not the latter attained unto a higher, better life than is common to the world? He is constrained by the love of Christ, and feels that his life is a failure, if he does no good. His mission is noble, merciful; his ideas of life expansive; to make himself the chief object of solicitude, appears to him to be mean, ignoble, degrading, unworthy of his immortal powers. No one can fail to admire such a spirit, though few fully appreciate its real wealth of goodness. Happy is the man who can say truly, "The love of Christ constraineth me." That love is remarkable. It is strong, quiet in manner, tender, impartial, disinterested, enduring. That it is possible for a selfish, sinful man to become possessed of this love through the gospel, is a glorious tribute to the power of redeeming grace. This new creation, that inspires to new and noble motives, gives new views of life and its duties, is not a whit behind God's mightiest works. But let us return to the question, who can say "The love of Christ constraineth me"? What is our interest in the main object of the Savior's mission?—What are our feelings for those who are ready to perish? If all Christians pursued the course that two-thirds of the church members do, there would not be another soul converted on earth, by the agencies now employed. There would not be a prayer meeting among men. Indeed, I doubt whether there would be a Sabbath school, or a religious meeting of any kind.—What is done for sinners, is done by a very few, while the others are in pursuit of wealth, ease, pleasure. Does this look as if the love of Christ constrained them? Did not his love lead him to sacrifice, labor, pray, teach, die for sinners? Did it not move Paul to great sorrow for his brethren according to the flesh? Does it not lead all who possess it to make great efforts to save men?

How much love, suppose you, those have who seldom offer a prayer, never make a decided effort, practice any self-denial, to save souls? We are all in danger of losing this love under the pressure of excitement and hum of business life. These visible, every day concerns steal the heart and absorb the attention. And there is reason to fear that many have already abandoned the life of love, for lower pursuits and purposes. Suppose that we pass through all the churches, and ask for those who live, act, pray, give, desire, as if they were constrained by the love of Christ, how many would we find? Yet the delinquent ones are contented, dreaming, gliding along to the judgment, where they will meet their children and neighbors, whom they ought to have led to Christ, and soon they will sink to darkness, like the virgins who allowed their lamps to go out. There are sinners who seem contented to fill the routine of professional duty, and while sinners are perishing, they have none of that "continual sorrow" which Paul speaks of. Blood of souls will be found in their skirts. They provoke infidelity to laugh Christianity to scorn, and ask tauntingly, "Where now is the power of your religion?"

Where your converts? When do you expect at this rate to see the world converted? And yet there is no agony in the closet, no unquiet in the sermons, no prayer like Jacob's. Then how many deacons there are, who are cold, selfish, formal. Their children are growing up in sin, they are more noted for worldliness than piety; the love of Christ does not constrain them. How many, who, by the most solemn oath that man can take, when they were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, pledged themselves to a life of holiness and love, agreed to follow Christ, cherish his spirit and advance his cause, now have only the name of a Christian, while the heart has returned to the mire of sin! Will they not recall that sacred oath? Will they not remember what they called heaven and earth to witness that they were to be forever the Lord's? Will they not call to mind the numerous souls that will perish, if they continue in sin? Why should men return to the miserable life of a sinner, after having learned by experience of a better way? But here we find many of our brethren, neither cold nor hot. Caring but little whether religion prosper or become extinct. God has need of them in his cause; the church has need of them; sinners have need of them; they need the grace of God for themselves, and yet they slumber. Must we despair of their ever doing any thing more for Christ? Can it be that they will never return to the path of duty? That they will go down to the grave to mourn forever over their broken covenant, the discouragement they have caused to their brethren, the injury they have done to the cause they had agreed to sustain? But let the influence of these persons prevail, and no one could say, "the love of Christ constraineth me." In all the earth there would not be a true representative of Jesus, not one. The entire church would bring up a false report of the Christian life; and give new courage to infidels and blasphemers.

But there are still a few who are constrained by love. The high, pure, unselfish motives of the gospel fill their hearts, and stimulate them to effort. They toil in the Sabbath school, their voice is heard in the prayer room; the slave and the heathen are not forgotten by them; their prayers bear up the spirits of the ministers of Christ, and ensure the grace of God on his labors; they cease not to work and pray, and pray and work, that salvation may appear to all men. The love of Christ constrains them. May their number increase.—G. H. B.

TEACHING AND PREACHING.

A special meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is now being held at Albany, N. Y., to receive the report of their deputations, appointed to visit their various mission stations in the east. It is understood that some important changes are contemplated, or perhaps have been already made, and are to be presented for the sanction of the Board. It is well known that teaching has been heretofore made a prominent part of missionary labor in many stations. The Seminary for education of the natives in Ceylon and other parts of Asia have had a wide celebrity. It is now proposed to diminish these educational means, and have the missionaries more exclusively devoted to preaching. It is not the design to give up the schools, but to bestow less comparative attention upon them. Some of the reasons given for the change are, that preaching was the chief primary means of spreading the gospel, that heathen children and youth, after being educated, frequently use a greater influence therein in opposing Christianity; and that more strength is needed in the department of preaching.

As might be expected, such changes will not be made, if made at all, without strenuous opposition. Nearly all the missionaries have most earnestly deprecated them. They have regarded the schools, as in a great measure, the nurseries of the church. Numbers of the youth educated in them, it is true, have gone forth unconverted, and have never, as they know, become Christians; but many others of them have believed, and become most successful missionaries, and useful citizens. In their view, that will be a dark cloud upon the prospects of the missions, which shall in any degree obscure the light of these efficient educational institutions. The minds of youth are plastic, and yield with comparative readiness to the influence of truth; while it requires almost a miracle to affect those imbued and confirmed in the prejudices and habits of the heathen.

This subject has excited deep interest, has been much discussed in the journals friendly to the Board, as well as in various meetings. It is indeed a subject of general interest; for what ever is important to one class of missionary efforts must be so to all. Nor will it confine itself to efforts for the spread of the gospel in heathen lands; for the same principles must apply more or less everywhere. Hence the deliberations and decisions on this subject adopted by the able body as the American Board cannot be regarded as of small consequence. Still we are to remember, that the views of untrained men are always fallible.

Far would we be from deprecating in any measure the importance of preaching, great as is the tendency to do so in some directions. But the example of Christ and the apostles, endowed as they were with miraculous gifts, is not an absolute rule to us. For us to forsake the mental and moral training of the young among the heathen or anywhere else, and rely wholly upon efforts for the salvation of adults, would, in our judgment, be most unwise and wrong. If we have bestowed undue attention upon education, some change may be needed by them, though such should guard against going to the other extreme. How is the heathen world to be converted? Wholly by means of missionaries sent forth from Christendom? Surely not. And if we must rely greatly upon native missionaries, they must have facilities for improvement. The more that is done to make the mission stations self-propagating and self-sustaining, the better the prospect. Never, anywhere, should teaching and preaching be regarded as rival or opposing interests, but mutual aids and supports. Both should be strengthened, neither diminished.—J. M. B.

POLYGAMY IN THE CHURCH.

We have recently seen a review of a work on India, by Rev. Dr. Allen, who if said to have embodied in his book the results of twenty-five years' acquaintance with India and its institutions. The following extract exhibits his views with regard to polygamy in the church:

"Now what shall be done in respect to such persons (polygamists) when they give credible evidence of personal piety and seek admission into the Christian church? No case of this kind occurred in my own missionary experience. But some cases have occurred in India, and this difficulty will occur in numerous instances in the progress of the gospel. The subject will also have the consideration and decision of the highest authority, ecclesiastical and judicial, in India and England. My opinion is that the general practice in missions in respect to such cases will be as follows: When any man who has more than one wife to whom he has been legally married, wishes to be admitted into the Chris-

tian church, he will be required to make a free and full statement of his domestic relations. He will be permitted to retain his married connection with all his wives, and his parental relation to all his children, subject to the discipline of the church for the proper government of his household. Whether he may or may not cohabit with his different wives, I believe, entirely to him and to them, according to their views of duty. At the same time the nature of the married relation, according to the Christian dispensation and the usage of the church, and the reason why such cases are for a while tolerated, will be fully explained. No man thus admitted while a polygamist can be ordained a Christian teacher. In this way polygamy will have the testimony of the church against it; and as no Christian man can ever become a polygamist, all such cases will cease with the lives of those thus admitted."

It would be difficult to find another paragraph of the same length expressing a greater amount of gross inconsistency. It admits, directly or indirectly, that "no Christian man can ever become a polygamist," that "no polygamist can be ordained a Christian teacher," and that "the Christian dispensation and the usage of the church" are against polygamy. Yet polygamists professing Christianity "will be permitted to retain their marital connection with their wives, and 'cohabit' with them, if so desired," and their wives choose to do so! So much for the consistency, logic, and theology of this missionary D. D. of twenty-five years' experience. Truly we have fallen upon strange times, or at least upon strange men.

But he is not the only one in the face of the original institution of marriage in Eden, whereby one wife, as a helpmate, and not several as helpmates, was assigned to man; in the face of the letter and spirit of the gospel, teaching that each man should have his own wife, and not several; if yet disposed to tolerate this practice of polygamy for a while. The same sentiment has been endorsed by a conference of missionaries at Calcutta, in the following terms:

"If a convert, before becoming a Christian, has married more wives than one, in accordance with the practice of the Jewish and primitive Christian churches, he shall be permitted to keep them all, but such a person is not eligible to any office in the church."

We will not dwell upon the ambiguity of this declaration. That will be no bar to its reception by our expected new sister State of Utah. It will find few to question it at the south, unless any should be so fastidious as to prefer to substitute some other word instead of wives. The free love associations in New York and elsewhere will be surprised to find their own benevolent schemes so much anticipated even in high places.

That there may be much practical difficulty in dealing with such cases among the heathen, there can be no doubt. But nothing is to be gained by making compromises with sin. The Catholics tried that long ago in their efforts to convert the Chinese. Many converts were made, but the result was, that it was difficult to say whether the heathen had been the more Christianized, or the Christians heathenized. This policy of tolerating known wrong for a time never works well. It is like the sinner's making himself better, before he gives his heart to God. He is all the time growing worse. So in the other case, things are ever growing worse. The only safe course is to do right now.

The conference of missionaries which adopted the above named declaration is termed a "general" one. For the honor of Christian missions we hope this is a mistake. We see it stated that the missionaries of the American Board did not concur in it. We hope they, and all others dissenting from these gross sentiments, will make their protest as public as the views of the other side have been. If the Mohammedan have it to find tolerance, temporarily or otherwise, under the Christian name, let it be done by those who, to gratify political ambition, care not to trumpet all the sacred and the profane; but that it should be done by hallowed and revered missionaries, shocks all feelings of Christian decency.—J. M. B.

FIRE AT MEREDITH VILLAGE.

Thursday morning, Feb. 27, about 2 o'clock, we were aroused from our slumbers by the cry of fire. Barron's store, so called, was found to be on fire, underneath our place of worship. Mr. Elliot, the present trader there, fixed up his fire with usual care on retiring. He slept in a small bed room, in a part of the store. It seems that the fire took about the stove or chimney. He was awake by the falling of the crockery shelves in that corner, which made no small crash, and found himself almost in a state of suffocation; but, opening the window, gave the alarm. He had time to take only a trunk or two in his room, containing watches and jewelry, and get out at the window. Every thing else in the store was burnt. Our instrument, singing books, most of the hymn books and Sabbath school library, lamps, &c., were destroyed. Lebeus Smith lost his house, barn, and outbuildings connected with them. Mr. Cram's house was badly damaged. Three families, with boarders, besides others having temporary residence here, were turned out of doors.

Our place of worship, where so many heavenly seasons have been enjoyed, so many souls have been converted, so many have been fed with the bread of life, is now among the things that were. The C. B. brethren generously opened their house to us last Sabbath. The Congregational clergyman also very kindly solicited me to share his pulpit with him.

We are not by any means disheartened, but shall enter, upon immediate efforts to build a new meeting house, in which enterprise we shall probably need some assistance from abroad.

HORSA QUINBY.

THE POOR WHITES OF THE SOUTH.—We invite the particular attention of our readers to the article under this caption on our last page. It is an article which every man, and especially every laboring man, should read and consider. The effects of slavery upon the great body of the white people of the South are almost if not quite as disastrous as they are upon the negro. This is shown by facts and quotations from slaveholders themselves, which cannot be disproved.

WHITESTOWN SEMINARY.—The number of students at the winter term of this Institution was unusually large, being 224; and we are happy to learn from BRO. GARDNER, the Principal, that it was favored with a good religious interest, attended with some conversions.

We are pleased to state (says the Evangelical Lutheran), that the late revival in Wittenburg (C. lego) has been attended with very happy results. Nearly all the young men in the institution who are not professors of religion at the commencement of the session have been hopelessly converted; and the remainder are earnestly engaged in seeking Christ. The congregation in town has also shared largely in the blessed fruits of this work of grace, and a number of the young have found in Christ the fountain of life.

Various Paragraphs.

Pardon Davis, who was sentenced to the Louisiana Penitentiary for twenty years, has been pardoned by the Governor of that State after a confinement of one year and five months. Mr. Davis had a saw-mill near the Mississippi river, and was sentenced for aiding some slaves to escape, who came to his mill one day for assistance. We infer from the *Sabbath Recorder* that he is a Seventh Day Baptist, which paper is ignorant of the reasons which led to this act of Executive clemency, but thinks that he was liberated in answer to prayer, the General Conference of Seventh Day Baptists having resolved, some six months ago, "that the case of Pardon Davis be earnestly remembered—of the throne of grace, for his support while in prison, and for his deliverance thereafter."

MOSLEM CUSTOMS.—If a Moslem perform ablution, he pronounces a prayer as this water is applied to each portion of the body. He washes his hands three times, saying, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful." Throwing water in his mouth with his right hand, he says, "Assist me to read Thy Law." Washing his nose, he says, "Make me smell the odors of Paradise." Flinging water in his face he says, "Make my face, O God, white with Thy light." The Moslems believe that in the resurrection the wicked will rise with their faces black, and the righteous with white countenances; hence a common impression is, "God blacken thy face."

President Frelinghuysen gives to the Christian Intelligencer an interesting account of the religious condition of Rutgers College. He says, that "there are forty-one professors of religion in the college of whom thirty-four hope to labor in the Gospel ministry."

The friends of Rev. Mr. Brown, of Cleveland, deeded him from home in the 1st Jan., and detained him and wife in a sleigh-rill till eight o'clock in the evening, when, driving up to his door, he was surprised to find his house full of guests. Long tables loaded with provisions were spread, and valuable presents were showered upon him from all sides. It was indeed a surprise party. Not the least interesting item was the presentation of a purse containing five hundred dollars in cash.

As long as the influence of Russia in the Turkish Empire was predominant, the Oriental churches were effectually assisted by her in opposing the constant endeavors of the Roman Catholic Church to create in their midst a party favorable to a union of these churches, as a body, with Rome. Since Russia's influence has been broken by the war, the Roman Church, aided by France and Austria, redoubles her efforts.

CRITICISM.—When Paradise Lost was published, the celebrated Waller wrote this passage: "The blind schoolmaster, John Milton, hath published a tedious poem on the Fall of Man; if its length be not considered as merit, it hath no other."

THE CROSS AND THE CHAIN.—The *Sydney Chronicle* says that a gentleman of that city, who lately returned from the South, saw, on a Sunday, a coachman at church chained to the wheel of the carriage, the chain being round the poor fellow's neck, and then fastened to the carriage, so as to prevent his escape. His master was inside partaking of the sacrament!

There are now living in Massachusetts eighteen clergymen whose ages range from seventy-three to ninety-two years.

New Orleans has three colored Methodist Episcopal churches, and three colored local preachers who are slaves, as are most of the 1,200 communicants—one is the driver of a day, another a carpenter, and the third a porter in a wholesale coffee store; over all is a white pastor appointed by the Louisiana conference.

A writer in the *Boston Traveller*, after reviewing the religious experience of the various Colleges in the United States during the past year, concludes as follows:

"In the light of these cheering facts, it is evident that the past year was, in respect to our Colleges and Academies, a year of 'the right hand of the Most High,' and a comparison of these statistics with those of former years will show that, relatively, the year 1855 was one of signal spiritual blessings. In 1854 I made twenty memoranda of revivals, in Colleges and other literary institutions; in 1853, nineteen; in 1851, twelve; and in 1850, seven."

SUPPORTING THE GOSPEL.—The Hard Shell Baptists seem to be furnishing a variety of amusing matters just now. A correspondent writes:

"This sect (the Hard Shells) are in the habit of holding a yearly association in our vicinity, generally in a piece of woods near to a good spring. The brethren from abroad are quartered upon those in the neighborhood of the meeting; and these are required, of course, to lay in a good supply of the creature comforts, and among them, as the most important, a quantity of whiskey. A short time ago, such a place having been selected, the brethren near by were busy putting up benches, and making the place ready, when Brother Smith said:

"Wall, Brother Goblin, what preparations have you made to home for the big association?"

"Why I've laid in a barrel of flour or so, and a gallon of whiskey."

Brother Smith expressed great contempt at this preparation. "A gallon of whiskey for a big meeting!" "Why, I've laid in a whole barrel; and you're just as well able to handle a gallon, as I am to support the gospel,"—Harper's Mag.

EXCOMMUNICATION.—The Romish Church looking upon marriage as a sacrament, regards with horror the subsidence of the relation into a civil contract, solemnized before civil authorities only. Marriage by civil functionaries is held to be but legalized sin. This view has given rise to a recent excommunication at Coblenz, Germany, of which the following account is given in the *Journal de Frankfurt*:

"On Sunday we were witnesses of a ceremony which has not been performed for centuries, viz.—an excommunication—the subject being M. Sontag, a merchant at Coblenz, who was divorced from his first wife, and eight years ago was married by the civil authorities only to his present one. Last summer, M. Sontag was commanded by the clergy to separate from his wife, and not obeying their decree, he was on Sunday excommunicated. Dean Kramets, after preaching a sermon against the civil marriage, put on some other sacerdotal garments, and accompanied by two clergymen bearing wax tapers, read, standing in the middle of the church, the sentence of excommunication against M. Sontag and his lady. He then extinguished the tapers, saying that the individuals named were not worthy to see the day of the Lord, and throwing the candlesticks to the ground, breaking them to pieces, exclaimed, 'Let the bells sound the funeral knell!' We immediately heard the sound of bells and the chants for the dead. The Dean, in conclusion, proclaimed that no one who was so held relations with the excommunicated, to salute them, &c. This prohibition has not had much effect, for their house has been filled ever since with visitors, and at night they have been serenaded."

SUBSTANTIAL AID FOR KANSAS. A party of courageous young men will start from Exeter, on or about the 26th inst, under the direction of Mr. A. W. Cole. It is their intention to settle upon some of the lands of Kansas and assist in making it a Free State. All who wish to join in this expedition may learn further particulars by addressing Prof. J. G. Hoyt, of Exeter.

New York Correspondence.

A Caution to Country-Shoes.—Condition of Streets.—Broadway, Canaled and Dyked.—Plymouth Collection of Hymns and Tunes. Criticisms and Compiler.—High-Land Fires on the Low-Lands.—Revolutions—Progress of the Season.—The Pacific.

NEW YORK, March 1, 1856.

My Dear Editor and Star-readers.—The shame of our city-life at the coarse shoes of our country-roads, is illustrated in the character of our streets and squares as it manifests itself just now, and for two weeks past, most eminently. To think of those country-shoes here!—that they would need the pugatorial wear of a long home-way by our country-roads, and free workings in mountain-brooks, not to foul our country-roads, foul grounds and barn-yards at their return. Combine all this with dirt and foul country, follow-grounds, swamps, muddy roads and barn-yards—it is the sweetness of a silver-bed, and neatness of the ever-scrubbed, never-used Dutch parlor, in comparison with this out-door of New York, as it is revealed this winter by the snow, making manifest only what exists here, less visibly, even—this visible street surface indicating the qualities of the invisible street atmosphere saturated with this matter in viewless exhalations. To imagine a barn-yard without a straw, a corn or clover-stalk to cover its feculence with the carpeting vestiges and lingering perfumes of meadow and harvest field, trodden by a thronging herd to mire and liquid pour, were an approach to the idea of this city scene, exhibiting the excrement of ten thousand driven brutes on the two months snow, mixed with the ashes, sweepings, and offals of a hundred thousand fires and tenements for this term, ground up together by the millions of feet, by wheels and runners, with the unmitigated feculence left on all the surface (except the side-walks) by the partial melting of the snow-portion of the composition, leaving the higher ridges coated with the revolting deposit and making liquid pools of it in the lower beds of the streets.

Whatever depths of unclean snow may yet lie intact under the foul surface in those streets where the drift of a single night was so deep that wheels and runners, and hoofs, have not yet worn down to the pavement, all the surface of streets and squares is overspread, in many places heaped with abomination, with variety of freezing and consistency, in its alternations of depth and thawing, its iceed, heaps and granular beds and liquid pools. There are tales of African sand-deserts and the American Diemal Swamp; but of any scene so revoltingly dismal as many of these streets I cannot conceive.—Broadway—this is the aspect of our grand street, Broadway now: A long black morass between tall, grand buildings and cleared side-walks on either side, with a dyke of nearly a man's height, perhaps a rod in width, running through its middle, parallel with the buildings, and side walks, coated with the more condensed and black muck that lies in liquid beds on each side of it, and perforated at the distances of the cross-streets to admit passage the lateral travel, while on one side flows the living tide of travel up toward, and on the other the downward current. Flows—but not all the time in all the course of the long lines, for there is not being width on either side the dyke for teams to pass, when a team comes to a stop by breaking down the carriage, the fall of the horses or any dismemberment, those behind must stop too, so that, in some instances, a long stretch of the travel stream becomes stagnant, till the obstruction is somehow removed. The street has been put into this style as a method for making it passable at all, after the thick bed of snow and ice upon it had become worn into impracticable holes and ridges, when it was cut up to the pavement for a width for teams, on either side, and the material piled in rows along the middle, slowly to liquify and settle under the sun and rains; if they shine and fall, as no doubt they will, sometime, to sufficient influence for that effect—though a new snow-storm setting in this afternoon, as in attempt to cover over all this city foulness with the purity of country, of the heavens themselves. As vain for any permanent effect as the attempts to make the outer character holy while the inner is unholily.

Critics—that would be—not are yet content to leave Mr. Beecher's "Plymouth Collection of Hymns and Tunes" to be judged of by the churches and the public for whom it was prepared and to whom it is offered. The *New York Evangelist*, I believe, took the lead in showing of bad scholarship and worse Evangelism against it. After a longer waiting, by many times over, than the Indian council takes before giving answer, Mr. Beecher replied to the *Evangelist* criticism in a manner that must have made an end of him at once, and finally, if there had been substance enough of him to make him palpable to refutation and shame. He proved himself the genius of the genus that have not the sense to know when they are demonstrated; unlikable because there is not consistency enough in them to be touched by the finest spear or hit by a cannon ball. So much more shadowy than the angels of Milton's great war, susceptible of sword cuts and the sweeping volleys of celestial artillery, (though the wounds healed with happy celerity,) and sensible to the prick of a spear. Demolished, ground to powder, blown away into nonentity by the aroused might of the book-maker he had so wantonly and ignorantly assailed, this assumed critic, in all his assumption, ignorance, impudence and rancorous malignity, was yet there, unabashed, unmurdered, intact, doughty to pronounce and denounce; exalted, on hymnology, and on the personality of the compiler of Plymouth collection, as though he had suffered nothing—so continuing till he proved his opponent a man having sensibility, susceptible of feeling, when misrepresented, insulted, maligned, and injured in both the cause for which he labored and his own person—proved him (by such provocations as this criticism and personal assault afforded) to be of the "genus irritabile," as was asserted; and having convicted of being such, this critic pronounced him an unfit object for his further notice, and in the dignity of that assumption left the field. Yet now comes back again claiming that he is sustained by the *New England Review*, and in the strength of this giving the dead lion a further kick. The more they give him, the more a live lion, the more they kill and kick him. And the excellent hymn and tune book he has compiled, will live and prosper on to bless the singers of live-Christianity after its merits shall have sunk down these criticisms of the *New York Evangelist* and the *New Haven New Englander*, and their little train into contempt and oblivion.

The chief offence to these high bishops of hymn singing by Plymouth Collection is in its hymns and tunes of the camp meeting, revival meeting and conference meeting class, such as the compiler gathered and put into his book, because, as he says, "they have done good service," and he thinks they will still do good service to live-Christian souls in their way to join the great choir of the unveiled throne.

These hymns and tunes the critics (that would be) condemn as not of the perfect arts of poetry and music, and as such not of dignity for Christian psalmody. They bring to my mind the expression of dea, Elder B.,—Free-will Elder B.,—of your Maine Lebanon, whom I first met up in your latitude, and who was once mentioning a revival in the church of the standing order in his vicinity. When he heard of it he went over to see it, feeling a lively desire to "see how the fire would run on the low-lands." These critics are profoundly low-land. If not intolerant of all the fire to absolute extinction, admitting of only such as have their circumference within mathematically marked lines, or fire-places and smoke-floes constructed by rules artistically exact. So they sport like whales floods of artistic criticism, to put out the free running, upward leaping mountain flames of Plymouth Collection, and properly to chastise the compiler for having such highland fire in his soul, and presuming to set it a running on the marshes. Happily it is a "fire that many waters cannot quench."

I am glad to be able to say that revivals are in a considerable number of churches in the city, the number increasing, I think. An extensive revival has been in process all the winter in the Baptist church, Forty-third-street, Elder J. W. Holman, pastor—where the same free gospel is preached that was sometime preached by the same preacher in churches of free name as well as spirit and "with a will to it."

MARCH 4.—Within the last week a passage has been effected, at much expense, through the ice of East river, covering it for six weeks from Wards Island (at the upper end of Hell Gate) to fifteen miles eastward. The Eastern boats have resumed their trips, and now and then a sail is seen passing. And yesterday I saw the sails of sail-boats flitting with the high wind on Harlem river, but they carried instead of boats a sort of extemporaneous sled, running very swiftly on the ice. Much difficulty in the city is arising from lack of water, the pipes under ground becoming more and more frozen as the weather moderates to some thawings above. In digging to thaw them out, the earth is found to be frozen solid to the depth of four or five feet. Many of the streets are bare of snow or ice, while on others it lies in thickness from one to four, five, perhaps six feet, worn into holes, little hills and hollows that torment the teaming and wreck many a horse and carriage. The adjacent country is mostly covered with snow yet, though the main roads are bare.

A shadow lies upon thousands of hearts from the long waiting for the Pacific, one of the Collins' line of steamers, and the mystery of her condition since leaving Liverpool forty-two days ago. Stories of the sight of a steamer of her appearance—having been seen putting back, disabled, have been told, to mock for a moment the solitude of those whose anxieties are especially interested in the case. Fall of them so far proving to be false. The hope still is that the fact is what these fictitious reports assume—the fear that the ocean depths hold the secret of the fate of the vessel and her passengers, never perhaps to be divulged till the "sea shall give up the dead that is

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