

# WEEKLY



# MESSAGE.

"FOR EVERY THING THAT'S VIEWED ON EARTH, WELL PONDERED, LEADS THE SOUL TO HEAVEN."

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## THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

BY THE EDITOR.

The existence of such an agency—wide-spread in its operations, and powerful in its influences—is an established fact. The continuance of this influence down to the latest generations of time, may be numbered among the strongest probabilities of an unknown future. And the only choice in this matter, which seems to be left to the man of grace, is, to examine closely its moral character, and shape his own course accordingly.

And unquestionably, there is much evil done by the newspaper press. It is the organ of party strife—the vehicle of fiction and falsehood—the abettor of licentiousness. It seeks to array interest against interest, and man against man. It fosters the vilest passions of our nature, and panders to the lowest appetites. While thousands, worse than the Athenians of old, spend a precious life-time in recounting its foul slanders. Such, and nothing less than superlatives of the same kind—multiplied by every impression of the type-form, and scattered broadcast over the land by every passing mail—is the newspaper press in the hands of wicked and designing men; while in the hands of the upright, it is not less powerful for good. As it now exists, it is of a mixed character—partly false and partly true; partly evil and partly good. Between these two elements a contest is going on, and it is a matter still to be decided which shall ultimately prevail. Whether the

newspaper press of the land is to become a practical preacher, or an infidel lecturer, or the dispensations of divine providence—a profitable visiter, or a most dangerous gossip—a messenger of peace, or a fomentor of strife—a faithful friend, or an artful deceiver—a herald of good tidings, or a journal of profligacy and crimes—the favored organ of the millennial reign, or the dark sheet upon which are to be stereotyped the sullen growls of hell. He must be stranger to the signs of the times, who does not know, that the legions of infidelity, driven from almost every other post, are now striving to seize upon this, as a frontier strong hold, from which to annoy the march of christianity, and be worse than a coward—a down-right traitor—who is willing to abandon such a vantage-ground to his Master's deadliest foe. But there is no need to argue the question; the church has long since determined to occupy this ground, and thinks her most gifted sons well employed in defending it.

In all public services, it is expected of every man to do his duty. And in this case, self-interest demands it.—Each individual, no less than the community at large, needs the knowledge gained through the newspaper press. A knowledge of the passing world—of its improvements or deteriorations, its virtues or its vices—is what the mind will seek—if not from books and newspapers, yet from gossip and rumor. And the information gained is sure to have an influence, either for good or evil, on the moral character. With all its failings, the existing state of newspaper knowledge is better than that of common rumor. It is more likely to be true—more excellent—more ge-

neral and extensive—in a more tangible and permanent form—and consequently is calculated to elevate human nature in several respects. It takes the place of knowledge, less valuable; gives employment to the mind, and opens up before it a field of usefulness. While, on the other hand, the lack of such knowledge never fails to place the defaulter under great disadvantages.

Newspaper knowledge is the general subject of conversation, and any person must appear to great disadvantage in the social circle without it. If he has to be told of what every body else knows—of the world's fair, of Mr. Layard's discoveries, Sir John Franklin's loss;—if he has never heard of the last revolution in Europe, the late fire at the North, or the dreadful steam boat disaster on the Mississippi—how can he enter into the conversation? and what chance is there for him to profit the well informed? He may be well bred, but conscious ignorance will make him awkward; and diffidence will cripple the influence of his pious zeal.

Newspaper literature is the morning twilight of knowledge in almost every department. He that would drink the dew-drops of science, witness the first efforts of genius or art, hear the earliest warbles of the muses, or learn the freshest and noblest deeds of benevolence, must look for it in newspapers—if he wait until these things find their way into books, he will be five or ten years behind the times. And from what other source can the man of God learn the latest devices of his great enemy?—the habits of thought and subjects of conversation among the thousands to whom he ministers?—the glorious results of