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Communications

Revival of Religion.
In the number of the *Church Intelligencer* of 21st inst., is an article from the pen of one of the Editors on this subject. We cordially concur in its spirit for the country and Christian simplicity which characterizes it. But there are some assertions and conclusions of the Editor which in the same generous spirit we propose briefly to notice. He alludes to a deep sense of religious truth and to their souls' salvation, as "therein do rejoice, and will rejoice." And we can do this heartily, though we believe there is a truer and more excellent way. It is well known that the Episcopal Church has never adopted, and does not countenance the seasons of "massing" that is known as the "Revival System."

Is it not a little remarkable that a Church should refuse not only to *believe* but to *contemplate* a system, concerning which they avow that they "rejoice and will rejoice?" Is that consistency? What you may say of a "Revival System," is not this self-contradiction?
Again he writes "there are few of her (P. E. Church) who have faithfully tried her system, who do not earnestly thank God that they have been measured and trained by her in the ways of truth and life. We at least feel this in this respect, "the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places." While we sincerely congratulate the accomplished Editor on his contentment with his Church and his system—we take many of his own witnesses and (as to the sphere of his and our observance) a few more numerous organs of equally reliable witnesses than his Church in our land numbers, to prove the excellence of that system which his Church rejects in but will not *contemplate*. In the Episcopal Church are very many who are the living monuments of the efficacy of revivals. Our system gathered them from the world, secured to them under God a knowledge of pardon and the joys of religion. They love the system still and when refreshing seasons come from the presence of the Lord, they flock again to our sanctuaries, and even go beyond the fence granted by their Church, in participating in the happy, hopeful scenes that recall their expiation to Heaven. Surely there are none of these "who do not earnestly thank God that they have been nurtured and trained by the Revival System" in the ways of truth and life? In addition to these are the hundreds of thousands in the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist denominations, who are as fully associated with their Churches and their true system, and who feel as much "that in this respect the lines have fallen unto them in pleasant places," as the Editor of the *Intelligencer*. Our witnesses are for more numerous. We point to the eloquent host who have spoken in the midst of living joys and final triumphs. Again the Editor informs us that the characteristic of the method of training in his Church is its inferiority, that the experience of the world attests the wisdom of such a method, and that those who have made a fair trial of it have learned to value it most highly. By "uniformity" he evidently means the stereotyped forms of worship, as given in their Prayer-book. His declaration that "the experience of the world attests the wisdom of such a method" not only needs proof, but we think cannot be proved. The experience of the world shows that a system that is trammelled on all occasions by earthborn forms must be destroyed by the inevitable pressure of changing circumstances, or must sometimes display its inefficiency or total impotency to meet the exigencies which arise. Hence the contracted borders of the Episcopal Church in our land—hence the more rapid growth of those Churches who while they have the necessary forms and observe them, at the same time possess the power to adapt themselves to the condition and necessities of those whom they would save. The Scriptures present the true Church as a massive tower rising forth by the help of God to the conquest and subjugation of the world to the empire of Immanuel. This feature is preserved and signally displayed by those Churches that adopt and countenance the Revival System—while practically, and in a great degree theoretically, it is ignored by the form fettered Episcopalian establishment.

But let us consider the avowal that those who have made a fair trial of their

system have learned to value it most highly. The Editor has assuredly made that fair trial. What is his testimony? In another column in the same number he seeks to show the superior value of a religious newspaper over books, in our efforts to improve the morals and save the souls of the address. In the following words: "It (the paper) presents to them something new every week. The old impression is repeated in a new form. The call to a better life is enforced upon the mind by the repetition of the same truth in a new and powerful way. There is often much gain in this apparent indifference." We have indicated these words because they are so completely contradictory to what is affirmed of the value of unvarying forms in the other article. How can we like this subject of forms? When the Editor looks at it with his "renewed eye," it is perfectly white; but when he looks at it with a "faded Christian eye," it is but a brown speck and blurred. It was the eye and not the object that changed. The "Gothic Christian" vision is far the best. He would surely rejoice the other and give us the trouble of farther replies.

For the Advocate.
Wilmington.
DEAR BRO. BAXTER.—On last Wednesday a rumor was in circulation that one of our fleet was off our bar, yet as we had been so often deceived, there were but few who placed any confidence in the report. On Thursday the report was pronounced untrue, and the number of vessels reported to be over 50, with the delay of the expected reinforcements gave us some anxiety as regards our dear city. Prayer was offered to God for a wind to scatter our enemies, and the faithful to His promises, gave us the wind which I have no doubt scattered Wilmington, the fleet was scattered and did not collect together again until some of our reinforcements arrived. The next day commenced firing on Fort Fisher. We were rejoiced on the Sabbath, and we received news of the guns which had been captured by the men and women of our army, and the fort. Several efforts were undertaken were made by them to take Fort Fisher, but they were repulsed. Our men were in fine spirits and fought bravely, and it is said that the "Junior Reserves" fought like tigers.

Many false reports were in circulation to excite the mind, but a few of God's people who believed in prayer continued to call upon their Heavenly Father for "protection," "help," "to drive them off," "to scatter them with a wind," "to never let their feet tread the streets of Wilmington." These petitions offered in faith have I must be answered, as this morning our enemies are reported as having disappeared last night, and besides this our commissary stores have been greatly increased by fresh arrivals in the night. To God's name be all the glory. Oh! that all would praise the Lord for His goodness to the children of men, and especially for the preservation of our homes. I tell you my Brother, chance or luck has not preserved Wilmington, or made the wind to blow every time our enemies have been expected, it was the great God answering the petitions of His people. I therefore say that Wilmington is a living monument in answer to prayer. I do not pretend to give you a description of the light, nor the various rumors in circulation for the same reason that I do not mention the casualties, viz: that the official dispatches, published in our town papers have already been read by those who are interested, neither do I wish to convey the impression that the enemy has entirely disappeared; given up the job, and Wilmington secure. I think in all probability he may search for and try a weaker point, yet I have great faith in believing that God will preserve us. My object in this communication is to call attention to God's goodness to the children of men, and to encourage His people to still put their trust in Him, and to pray for the preservation of almost our only seaport, as well as for peace.

Dec. 29th 1864.
Prayer in the Family.
How many omit this duty! How many fail to use this holy privilege! "If," says Baxter, "every door was marked, where families do not morning and evening, earnestly seek the Lord in prayer, that his wrath might be poured out upon such prayerless families, our towns would be as places overthrown by the plague; the people being dead within, and the mark of judgment without. I fear where one house would escape, ten would be marked out for death; and then they might reach their doors to pray, 'Lord have mercy upon us, because the people would not pray themselves.'"
There are some who omit this sacred duty from sheer ungodliness. God is not in all their thoughts, and they think

"what profit is it to call upon the name of the Lord?" Let us pray for them that they may be forgiven wisdom. But there are others who omit family prayer from other motives, custom, tradition. Let such weigh well the evils they entail, and the blessings they deny their families and themselves, and they will not long deny to cast aside their unworthy motives, and to seek the benefits which God has promised to the families that call upon Him.

Selections.

[From the Southern Presbyterian] Communion with God.

Communion with God implies fellowship with any person, there must be some harmony, between that person and ourselves. Harmony of feeling is essential to friendly intercourse. Adam, during the short period of his innocence, enjoyed fellowship with God, because his heart beat in harmony with that of his Maker; he enjoyed communion with God, not only with the keen relish of a being to whom every sight and sound, every action performed and every word spoken, brought the charm of novelty, stimulating, strengthening, and expanding the powers of his intellect and frame, but of one who also felt the moral and social qualities of his nature inflamed into adoration. With him, holiness, to learn and to praise, the evening hour and converse with God, were synonymous terms.

But we, his degenerate children, are not what Adam was before the fall. Sin has entered the world; and men, designed to live in daily enjoyment of the benefits of God, as far as he could grasp them, has received a blight.
If then "the gold has become dim and the fine gold is changed," the "sons of Zion comparable to fine gold" are exchanged as earthen pitchers; "if their visage is blacker than a coal;" is their case hopeless? Must a creature, made capable of appreciating the Most High and of holding converse with God, be condemned to perdition? Is this noble creature, with whose features are the lineaments of his Maker, so fearfully debilitated, that he must inevitably be shut out from God's presence and forbidden to feel His love? Must his tongue, his glory, be silent forever or else used only in wails and execrations?

God forbid! "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." By the work of redemption, a way is not only opened by which man may return to God, but he is also invited and commanded to embrace salvation and be restored to the favor and image of his Maker. Hear the tender accents of a Saviour: "I have not called you servants but friends; greater love hath no man than that, that he lay down his life for his friends; and notice His conduct, 'having loved His own, He loved them to the end.'"
By faith in the Atonement I am justified, and the invitation is extended to me to return to fellowship with God; but, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one!" "Of what use, then, is my justification? If I remain polluted from the presence of the Most Holy, as unfit to hold communion with Him.

"Oh, wretched state! of deep despair; To see my God remove, And fix my dearest station, where I cannot taste His love."
Fear not, O sin stricken soul! He who hath begun a good work in you, will carry it on to perfection.

Restoration to the Divine Image, by which man is qualified to enjoy fellowship with God, is the work of the Holy Spirit's work as a sanctifier, is complementary to that of the Son as a Redeemer. Before our election Jesus told His disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go I will send Him unto you."
By the Spirit's agency we are effectually called, convinced of our guilt and depravity, induced to embrace the Saviour, and to desire that being vitally united unto Him, we may "bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

The Spirit helps our infirmities; He suggests good thoughts and strengthens our resolutions; He assists us in prayer; give us mental illumination, and assures us of our acceptance with God, in short, He sides with the renewed soul in its conflicts with "the world, the flesh and the devil," and enables it "so come off more than conqueror, through Him that hath loved us."

Restored to fellowship with God, through the Son and by the Spirit, we should cultivate a growing conformity to the Divine Image; every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth, even as He is pure. We do not expect the ignorant young convert of yesterday to appreciate holiness and God, as did the aged Paul, with his highly sanctified heart and intellect, and his experience as a soldier of the cross; but we do expect that, "in proportion to the measure of faith," those who "have risen with Christ should seek those things which are above and set their affections on things above."
The privilege and capacity to have fellowship with God on earth, will continue

and increase through eternity. "Now we see through a glass darkly," when Moses prayed to behold the glory of God, he was only permitted to have a partial view of Him; but then face to face; now we know in part, but then shall we know even as also we are known." As long as we live in this world, we understand but of the perfection and love of God; still, enough of Him are caught by "Faith's illumined eye" to raise our aspirations to "Heaven."
There we will behold the King in His beauty, and casting our crowns at His feet, will join the white robed throng "from all nations, and kindreds and people and tongues," and striking our harps will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints."

We shall go no more out. Our eyes shall see and our ears shall hear, and we shall enjoy "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."
"God will wipe away all tears from our eyes there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; former things are passed away."
"He that overcometh shall inherit all things." To him that overcometh will Jesus grant to sit with Him on His throne, even as He also overcame, and is set in His Father's throne.
"O glorious hour! O blessed abode! I shall be near and like my God; And flesh and sin no more control The sweet pleasures of my soul!"
"How blest these things shall seem! I come quickly! Amen!"
"Even so; come, Lord Jesus!"
X. Y. Z.

Jefferson, Webster, and the Bible.
Many years ago, I spent a Sabbath with Thomas Jefferson, at his residence in Virginia. It was in the month of June, and the weather was delightful. While engaged in discussing the beauties of the Bible, the sound of a bell broke upon our ears—when, turning to the side of the Mauticelle, I remarked, "How sweetly, how very sweetly sounds that Sabbath bell!" The distinguished statesman (a moment seemed lost in thought, and then replied, "Yes, my dear Webster, it melts the heart, it calms our passions and makes us boys again." Here I observed that man was formed for religious worship, and that notwithstanding all the sophistry of Epicurus, Lucretius and Voltaire, the Scriptures stood upon a rock as firm, as immovable as truth itself. Man, in his praver, lofter breathing, turned his mental eye towards immortality, and that the poet only echoed the general sentiment of our nature, in saying that "the soul, secure in her existence, smiles at the drawn dagger, and defies its point."
Mr. Jefferson fully concurred in this opinion, and observed that the tendency of the American mind was in a different direction, a very different direction; and that Sunday schools (he did not use our more correct term, Sabbath,) presented the only legitimate means, under the Constitution, of avoiding the rock on which the French Republic was wrecked. "But," said he, "never uttered a more important truth than when he exclaimed that religious education is the cheapest defence of nations." "Raikes," said Mr. Jefferson, "has done more for our country than the present generation will acknowledge; perhaps, when I am cold, he will obtain his reward; I hope so, earnestly hope so. I am considered by many, Mr. Webster, to have little religion, but this is not the time to correct errors of this sort. I have always said, and always will say, that the studious perusal of this sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands. Of the distinguished Raikes, he was *clarm et venerabile nomen*." I took the liberty of saying that I found more pleasure in Hebrew poetry than in the best productions of Greece and Rome. That the "harp upon the willows by the waters of Babylon," had charms for me beyond anything in the blind man of Sice. I then turned to Jeremiah (there was a fine folio of the Scriptures before me, of 1458.) and read aloud some of the most sublime passages, that used to delight me on my father's knee. But I fear, my dear friend, I shall tire you with my prolix account of what a pleasant, very pleasant Sabbath, I spent in the company of one who has filled a very large space in our political and literary annals.—Daniel Webster.

[From the Manchester Guardian] Great Works of the Age in Europe. RAILWAY THROUGH THE ALPS.
We are glad to learn that this scheme is progressing, and that it is likely to be attended with a success commensurate with the magnitude of the undertaking. There are at present in Switzerland three gentlemen representing the board of directors of the Central European Railway Company—namely: Mr. Cave, sheriff of London and Middlesex; Mr. Walford, a director of the Finance Corporation, and Mr. J. W. Maclure, of Manchester. They went out to inaugurate the commencement of the works.

The object of the line, as is known, is to connect the lines running from Ostend to Rotterdam to Basle, with the Lombard and Italian systems, thereby shortening the overland route to India by about four hundred miles, or sixty hours, making England independent of France, and affording a rail route through Belgium and Switzerland, not rail countries, in the event of a European war. The line to be made will leave the Lombard-Venetian railway at Como, and run by Chiasso, Lugano and Bellinzona to Basle. Thence it will take either the pass of the Saint Gothard, or the Lunknauer Pass, according to the decision of the Swiss Federal Government. A letter from a member of the deputation, dated the 18th inst., states that on the previous day the deputation, with the local representatives of the company, Signor Cattani, and others, visited the works at Lugano, where they were received with salutes of artillery.
The united bands of the canton of Ticino played in front of the hotel where the deputation stayed, and the mayor, with the leading inhabitants, paid them complimentary visits, prior to their interview with the government of the canton. It was hoped that very shortly about ten miles of the line would be open for traffic. On the 20th inst. the deputation was to meet the Federal government at Bern, where they expected to learn what the government's sanction would be. The line from Como to Basle is estimated to cost about a million and a half, of which about seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds is already issued and held by British capitalists.

TRAMWAY ON MOUNT CENIS.
Newspaper readers have at different times been informed of the proposal submitted by Mr. Fell, in concert with Messrs. Brassey and Jackson, to the French and Italian governments, for laying down a tramway on the present Mount Cenis route, covering the same with wood, iron and stone galleries, and working it by means of a new and lighter species of locomotive, so that the distance between Susa and St. Michael, which now takes ten hours, might be safely and regularly traversed in a period of from four to five hours. The first series of these Mount Cenis locomotive experiments, forwarding a low engine capable of carrying a train of one hundred passengers, with their luggage, over the mountain, have had satisfactory results. The trials have been made on an incline of one in thirteen (the Mount Cenis being one in twelve), and the experimental engine, a new one, on Mr. Fell's peculiar system, has taken up and down the entire lead proposed, while the break power for descending is most perfect. A great number of practical and scientific men have been witnessing these locomotive experiments with much interest, and now a second series of experiments is just being commenced—viz: on a gradient of twelve, and curves of thirty and fifty metres radius combined, for which a piece of line is in process of construction, the *face* of Mount Cenis.

An Important Event to Happen two Years Hence.
The date of the end of the world is satisfactorily fixed for the year 1868.—There is an ancient prediction, repeated by Nostrodomus in his "Centuries," which says that when St. George shall conquer the Lord, when St. Mark shall raise Him, and St. John shall assist at His ascension, the end of the war shall come. In 1866, it will happen that Good Friday shall fall on St. George's day, Easter Sunday on St. Mark's day, and Holy Trinity day, or Ascension Day, will also be the Feast of St. John the Baptist.

We clip this from an exchange for readers of the Courier who may wish to preserve it for reference or investigation.—It is known to all intelligent readers versed in prophetic lore and interpretation, that according to the schemes and arguments of many expositors, widely differing otherwise, some important epoch in prophecy is about to open, and in many of these schemes the time fixed for some signal development, like the opening of one of the vials or seals of the Apocalypse, ranges from 1862 to 1868.
The founding of this was now no more, and its vast growth and its vast calamity, so far beyond what was expected by either of the belligerent people during the first year of it, are attracting and directing increased attention to the subject of the "United States in prophecy," and the probable designs of Providence in permitting and overruling such a war.

A well known citizen and member of this State since an early stage of this war, has privately and to friends expressed his belief that we are approaching one of the prophetic epochs of the *Apocalypse* and of Daniel.

It will do no harm to accept such a theory, any scheme or proposition which will direct any reader to the Bible for the first time, or with new attention and dignity of mind. Of course all well disposed readers and students of the Bible will read with respect due to the new assembly, equivocal or doubtful significance of prophecy before its full solution in history.
One of the accepted tests and exams of prophecy is that it must be so clearly decisive as to leave no doubt as to whether it ends in 1866 or not. "The things that are revealed belong to us," and measure and mark out our duty and destiny with sufficient clearness.

A Foreign Echo.
A French gentleman of ripe culture who, just before the outbreak of civil war spent several years in the United States for the purpose of minutely observing and studying our institutions, in a recent private letter held the following language which was not intended for publication, we translate for our readers, as containing the thoughts of an enlightened foreigner qualified as well by his own former knowledge of our country, as by his point of view to look no less intelligently than dispassionately on our struggle. He says:

I am neutral between the parties to your strife, and I think that no good can possibly result from it except by means of mutual reconciliation. If it is the cannon which has the last word, you may have conquered subjects, but not political Confederates, still less friends. The Union in such a case would no longer be anything but a lie, for it cannot be imposed, it would be freely assented to.

And on another side of the question, the blacks transformed into freedom, present a problem which it is not easy to solve. What shall you do with four millions of persons, but yesterday slavish and degraded, and to day the equals of the former masters? The prejudices of races still so deep rooted at the North, and much more tenacious at the South, are not to be extirpated in a day. You have proposed to yourselves terrible problems before knowing how you can solve them. Your future, therefore, is big with difficulties which, sooner or later, must bring on a crisis and revolution, the nature of which no man can now foresee. May God save your country from still more deplorable calamities! You are now paying dearly for long years of prosperity which you have won without burdens. I offer fervent prayer that you may soon see the end of it. I can truly add that this is the wish of the whole of Europe; for, if you have no personal resolutions of revolution, you must admit that you are outstripping all other nations in this bloody path, on which you have entered, and over which the whole world mourns.—*Vat. Let.*

A Word of Encouragement.
We would add a few encouraging words to the religious soldiers. Keep up the spirit of religion by reading the word of God, by self-examination, and by earnest prayer. If your Chaplain is called away do not neglect the regular prayer meeting; come together and mutually encourage one another in the service of God. Never be ashamed of your religion, confess Christ, not with ostentation, but humbly, sincerely, gladly, before any man, from the lowest private to the highest General. Keep your spirit free from the vice of the camp. Never indulge in sinful amusements to kill time; if you do, sin will, in the end, kill your soul. Resolve that if God shall spare your life, you will return to your home a pure and true man, and if you should fall, you will fall as a Christian praying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
The converted soldier! take a few words of advice and warning. You are still spared. God has shielded your head in many battles. What return have you made? Are you still thoughtless, profane, and openly wicked? Stop, reflect, you may be killed in the next skirmish or battle. How would you appear before the Judge? Ah! you know you would have to charge your ruin to your own neglect of salvation. While you read this, resolve to change your life: begin now to pray. There is mercy for you.—The Lord of the Kingdom is before you, and all that shall be opened.—*Soldier's Paper.*

A Guilty Conscience.
One of the most memorable passages recorded in the authority of conscience is that of Proverbs, on a trial for a dark and mysterious murder. "The guilty soul cannot keep its own secret. It is able to do it, or rather it feels an irresistible impulse to do so to itself. It confesses under its guilty possession, and knows not what to do with it. The human heart was not made for the residence of such an inhabitant. It finds itself peevish upon by a torment which it does not know how to give up to God or man. A vulgar man deprecating it, and it can ask no sympathy or assistance, either from heaven or earth. The secret which the murderer possesses soon comes to possess him; and like the evil spirit of which we read, it overcomes him, and leads him whithersoever it will. He feels it heating at his heart, rising in his throat, and demanding disclosure. He thinks the whole world sees it in his face, reads it in his eyes, and almost hears its workings in the very silence of his thoughts. It has become his master. It betrays his discretion, breaks down his courage, conquers his prudence. When suspicious men without begin to embarrass him, and the net of circumstances to entangle him, the secret struggles with still greater violence to burst forth. It must be confessed—it will be confessed—there is no refuge from confession but suicide, and suicide is confession."

Sorrow comes soon enough without despondency; it does a man no good to carry around a lightning rod to attract trouble.