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### THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

§ 15. CALVIN'S CHARACTER AND DEATH.

The character of Calvin is entitled to our separate and special contemplation. The world has produced few men, who may be considered in all respects as great. A large part of the character and history of the age to which he belonged, may be said to have been comprehended in his person. His spirit wrought mightily upon nations while he lived, and has been felt through all generations since. The entire "Reformed Church" in particular, has been subjected so deeply to its action, as to include necessarily in the very idea of its constitution, a constant reference to this plastic power. To understand the history of the Church, we must look into the soul of Calvin, as well as to the outward facts connected with its origin. His character is not to be regarded as an accidental appendage simply to this history. It enters into the core and marrow of the subject itself. In this respect the relation of Calvin to the Church is peculiar, and such as belongs to no other man. No one in sixteenth century stood in the same intimate and vital connection with its constitution.—Zuingli's relation must be looked upon, as altogether more outward and accidental. Calvin placed the whole interest on a new and higher footing, gave to it consistency and form, clothed it with life and strength, and extended vastly the sphere of its authority.\* He is the Moses, properly speaking, not of Geneva simply, but of the entire Reformed Church.

He was a man of middle size, lean, and darkly pallid in his complexion. On his countenance sat the clear light of thought, combined with deep moral earnestness; severe yet not repulsive; full of energy and resolution,—and yet at the same time placid and serene. His long visage, aquiline nose, and dark beard, comported well with the authority and weight which belonged to his spirit; especially as illuminated, and set off with full expression, by an uncommonly lucid eye, which seemed to look into the very soul of those on whom it fell.

His physical organization was from the beginning rather weak. By severe studies, it became in the end deranged and shattered, to a distressing degree. During the most active period of his life, for years before he died, he was the subject of constant disease, often under the most painful form. He was a man, as he says himself, of almost no sleep. For at least ten years, he took but one meal a day. This abstinence was found necessary, as a remedy for the pains with which he was afflicted in his head. Some times, he would go without food, on this account, as much as thirty six hours. Yet one of the calamities reported against him, was that he lived too sumptuously! For years, he was a sufferer from asthma, vertigo, gout, and stone, besides other maladies of a less serious nature.

He describes himself as naturally of a retiring disposition. It was not of his own seeking, that he came into public view. His taste would have led him from the first, to keep himself in the shade. ("Umbram et otium semper amavi.") It was always with a sort of violence done to his feelings, that he found himself drawn into notice, and constrained to act a prominent part. He shrunk from contact and collision with the busy world, and would have counted it a particular privilege, only to be allowed to bury himself in some obscure retreat, and pursue his studies without distraction. He charges himself with a measure of pusillanimity even in his natural temperament. ("Natura, timido, molli, et pusillo animo me esse fateor.") Constitutionally, he found himself rarely always to quail before the presence of his fellow men, and to shun as far as possible all direct and open conflict with those who might stand in his way. One of his strongest temptations was, to turn aside from the way in which he was called to walk, when it became necessary, in going forward, to brave the flood and wrestle with the angry storm.

All this must be understood and kept in view, in forming an estimate of his life and character. What he accomplished, was the result wholly of moral strength, rising superior to all obstructions in his own organization, as well as in the surrounding world. In this respect, Luther may be said to have been less severely tried. He too was emphatically a man of faith. Not by might and by power, under any fleshly view, did he subdue kingdoms, work righteousness, stop the mouths of lions, and quench the violence of fire; but by the Spirit of the living God, in which his soul might be said habitually to live, and move, and have its being. But still his physical conformation might be viewed as favorable, in many respects, to the activity which he was thus led to maintain. He was naturally framed to be an iron pillar and a wall of brass, where it might be needed to withstand opposition.—"Thou art Peter," it might have been said to him from the very start, in view of his constitutional temperament, "and upon this rock will I build my Church." Luther was not ambitious at all to appear before the world, and he had no pleasure in strife for its own sake; but it required no special effort to push himself forward, under any circumstances, when the case seemed to call for it. With Calvin, on the contrary, this always required a vigorous exercise of the will, to surmount in the first place his own internal repugnance to action. It cost Calvin far more than it cost Luther, to bear up successfully against a given amount of opposition, in the work and conflict of the gospel. As compared with Zuingli, still more must be allowed to him, under this view. The Swiss reformer not only felt it easy to bring himself into action, where the sense of duty demanded it, but his temperament, apart from religion altogether, might be said to carry him strongly in this direction. He was constitutionally a hero; just as Calvin exhibits himself in the character of a constitutional coward. The spirit of William Tell glowed in his veins. He was formed to look all danger boldly in the face, and could meet the enemy, without shrinking, under the most formidable aspect. How much easier must it not have been for such a man—thus powerfully moved and upheld from a lower sphere, in his own psychological conformation—to carry out actively the work to which he was called by religion, so soon as its requisitions came to be felt and understood; than it was for the timid, shrinking nature of Calvin, with-

out any such ground of strength in itself, to go forward in the same way. Here however precisely appears the immense superiority of Calvin's character. His greatness was emphatically that of the soul. The world may admire more other forms of character, in which greater scope is given for the play of natural "might and power," as distinguished from the pure, deep element of the Spirit. But the judgment is superficial and false. What comparison can there be, in point of grandeur, between Paul, glorying in his own infirmities, and Julius Caesar, filling the ear of the world with the noise of his exploits? So undoubtedly one of the grandest spectacles presented to us in the history of the sixteenth century, is the soul of John Calvin; touched with fire from heaven, standing forth giant-like, under conditions of such extreme disadvantage in his own person, and accomplishing, in the face of all imaginable opposition, the great work which stands connected with his name. How small the greatness of Charles V., in comparison! What an inward energy that must have been, which could enable a man so unfavorably circumstanced in the flesh, to burst through all obstructions, and sustain such immense labors, so as to make himself felt, by the simple force of his spirit, from one side of Europe to the other!

In the midst of all this shrinking from observation and notoriety, God by his providence and Spirit forced him continually more and more into view, and laid upon him labors and trials of the heaviest kind. These served as a powerful discipline, to draw out and strengthen the powers of his soul, in the way of counterpoise to the constitutional tendencies which have been mentioned. Few cases are to be found, in which a man's life can be more clearly seen, to have been ordered, in all its leading points, by divine direction. Without plan or calculation of any sort, on his own part, he was led, often against his wishes, step by step, forward to the sphere in which he became at last so great; so that all the world might see, as clearly almost as in the case of Moses or Jeremiah, that he had been raised up and designated for his work by God himself. He refers to this himself, in the preface to his Commentary on the Psalms, in a very interesting way. "If he has succeeded to any extent, he says, in expounding this rich portion of God's word, it must be ascribed in a large measure to the fact of his having passed through so many trials himself, and being thus by personal experience prepared to sympathize with the depth of feeling, in which most of the psalms have been composed. He then institutes a general comparison between his own history and the circumstances of David glancing rapidly over his whole past life. As the psalmist was raised from sheep folds to the highest dignity in the State, so, says he, hath God brought me up from obscure and low beginnings, and clothed me with this most honorable distinction, that I should be a preacher and minister of the gospel. When destined to the law, a secret providence wrought effectually to turn his life in a different direction. Out of the mire of popery, he was brought by a sudden conversion to taste the liberty of the blessed gospel. Now before a year had passed, those who were thirsting for truth, began to gather to him, in notice as he was, for religious instruction. While he courted the shade, his places of retreat became still like public schools. God never suffered him to rest but carried him about by various turns, till at length in spite of all his desires after ignominy, he was forced fully into the light. He withdrew to Basil. The sufferings of his countrymen, called to die for their faith, and the foul calamities which were circulated through Europe, by the artifice of the French court, to excuse and justify the persecution, took hold of his soul. I felt he says, that my silence, if I refused to make opposition manfully, would be inexcusable perfidy. This feeling gave birth to the *Institutes*. After this, he still sought retirement and rest. Bent on this object, he set his face towards Strasburg. War shut up the direct route for him, and he must needs go through Savoy. He stopped to spend one night at Geneva. There the "formidable oblation" of Farel held him fast, and forced him into the stormy sea of public life. Trials rolled, wave after wave, upon his yet comparatively inexperienced head. And tho', says he, I did not succumb to their force, my magnanimity was not so great, but that I felt an unbecoming joy, in being turbulently cast out. Again, he proposed to rest. But Bucer, at Strasburg, terrified him with the case of Jonah, and compelled him to preach and teach. Now too, he found himself called to attend councils, and to take a prominent part in the leading ecclesiastical transactions of the time, so that he became known far and wide. At length Geneva invited him back again to her bosom; and a sense of duty engaged him to yield to the solicitation, in spite of all his misgivings and fears. He went back, bound in spirit, to that stormy field. ("Quanto tamen cum morore, quantis lacrymis, et quanta anxietate, Dominus mihi optinuit testis est.") From that time, his life had been an almost uninterrupted conflict, with opposition and difficulty of all sorts. While Satan bent all his power, from time to time, to overthrow the Church, it had gone so far that he had been forced even, ("ego, qui imbellis sum ac meticulosus,") to throw himself personally into the midst of a deadly fray, to stop its progress. Error and corruption had been rampant in the place from year to year. It had required a constant struggle to keep up discipline. Wicked men had tried every device which the ingenuity of Satan could furnish, to turn all things upside down, willing to bring ruin upon themselves as well as others, rather than submit to Christian order. Slanders of every sort had been heaped upon his head. He was charged with luxurious living; with laying up treasures for himself; with making himself a sort of prince or pope. Yet he would ask none, not even the most common persons, to be more frugal than himself in dress or diet. As to his having much money, the contrary would appear at his death at least, if not believed sooner. And I wish, he says, they might themselves succeed to my power, who make it the subject of their envy and reproach; they judge of my kingdom, by the mass of labors with which I am overwhelmed. These were the trials which fell upon him, without intermission, at home. To all which, however, was to be added the many fierce assaults that came upon him from abroad. On one side, he was set upon with intertemperate violence, by a certain class in the protestant Church itself, because he would not

receive their gross dogma with regard to eating Christ's flesh. On the other, he was exposed to the merciless fury of Rome. Thus had he, like David of old, spent his days, in the midst of contradiction from his own people, and opposition from without. "And this experience," he concludes, "has assisted me no little in understanding the psalms, so that I have not been as one wandering over a strange region. My readers will acknowledge, if I mistake not, that when I expound the workings of the psalmist's soul, I do it as treating of matters familiarly known."

It is not easy to form an adequate conception, of the nature and extent of the trials, to which Calvin was subjected, year after year, in Geneva. His history during this period, as given by Beza, exhibits him, buffeting the billows and battling with the storm, during a great part of the time, without intermission. The malice and violence of his enemies, were very great; and for years it seemed doubtful, whether they would not, in the end, acquire the ascendancy, and carry all things according to their own pleasure. The deadly fray referred to in the preceding outline, took place in the year 1547. For some time, a tumult was apprehended. On the 16th of September, the Council of Two Hundred was summoned. Calvin had gone to the place of meeting. A tumultuous cry arose, close at hand, which was soon found to indicate an insurrection. "I ran to them immediately," he writes afterwards to his friend Viret. "The night was fearful. I threw myself into the thickest of the throng. Though much excited, all hastened to me, and tried to bear me hither and thither, to save me from harm. I called God and man to witness, that I came to offer my body to their swords, and besought them, if blood must be shed, to begin with me." "At length, I was forced into the meeting of the Council. Here was a new conflict, into the midst of which I cast myself. All are of opinion that by my presence, I prevented a great and horrible carnage." Farel and Viret came twice to Geneva, to assist in composing this quarrel. By all who hated religion, or wished for change on any account, Calvin was hated most heartily. At times, he was insulted in the streets, and threats were uttered against his life. To show their spite, some gave the name of *Calvin* to their dogs. It was neither interest nor ambition that held him in Geneva. His soul might be said to dwell there, in the midst of lions. Writing to Farel on one occasion, in expectation of the Lord's Supper, he says, "If it could be solemnized without me, I would be willing to creep to you on my hands and knees."

In the midst of all this commotion and distraction, his pastoral and pulpit labors were kept up, as we have already seen, with the most untiring diligence. Almost every day, he lectured or preached. He always took part in the consistorial affairs, the clerical association, and the popular conference. Catechetical instruction, visitation of the sick, and family visitation, with strict inquiry into the spiritual state of every inmate (the servants not excepted), all belonged to his pastoral system. He often speaks of a solicitude for the salvation of his flock, that filled him even with anguish; considering himself accountable for every individual, and deprecating the thought of having the blood of souls upon his garments.

To look at these labors, one would suppose he could have found neither time nor strength for action of a more general and public character. And yet the amount of labor which he performed in this latter way is so great, that in view of it we find it difficult to realize again the other side of the picture; we can hardly persuade ourselves that one who wrote so much, and entered so deeply into the affairs of the Church at large, could have been so circumstanced, as we have just seen him to have been, in point of infirmities and toils and troubles, at home. His time seems to have been always restlessly employed; not in writing sermons, for he preached without written preparation; but in writing letters and books. Without undertaking to be more particular, it may be sufficient to say here, with regard to this point, that his works published make in one edition 12 folio volumes. In the Amsterdam edition, they are compressed into nine. But this exhibits only a partial view of what he wrote. Mr. Henry, of Berlin, who has recently gone so thoroughly into the biography of Calvin, informs us, that a large body of his autograph epistles, extant in Germany and Switzerland, have never yet been published. The number of such letters, in the library of Geneva alone, amounts to 554, of which 436 are written in Latin, and the rest in French. The libraries at Gotha and Zurich are richly supplied in the same way. Altogether, his writings as preserved at Zurich make 150 folio volumes. In the library of Geneva there are preserved, besides other productions, in forty-four volumes 2023 manuscript sermons of Calvin, most of which have never been printed. These however were not written out by himself, but taken from his lips by various scribes. There was a man at Geneva, who at one time made his living by reporting his sermons. As he spoke slowly, by reason of the asthma, this was not difficult.

The correspondence of the 16th century was a more serious business by far, than the letter-writing of modern times; especially in the case of those who stood at the head of affairs, in the world of science and religion. It had to do often with the most weighty and difficult points. In many cases, to write a letter was much the same thing as penning an article in our days for a magazine or review. With Calvin, in particular, as with Luther also and Melancthon, all manner of questions of casuistry and the most weighty topics of doctrine, were to be met and discussed under this form; not as they might originate in a single corner of the Church only, but as they sprung out of its varying circumstances throughout the whole protestant world. On his shoulders, in a certain sense, might be said to rest the care of all the churches.

When we look at the man, and his situation, we may well be astonished at the amount and variety of his labors; marvelling, as Beza says, that so much should have been accomplished by one so diminutive, as it might seem, in the flesh; ("tot tantisque laboribus unicum homunculum sufficere potuisse.") In the midst of all his bodily infirmities, while all around him was rocking like the ocean lashed by angry winds, he could still so abstract his thoughts and feelings, as to be always carrying forward his Commentary on the Scriptures, or executing some other work for the benefit of the Church at large. We may be reminded of the case of Richard Baxter, who in the midst of continual revolution, himself a mere complication of diseases, wrote and worked at such a prodigious

rate in the following century.§ But the "homunculus" of Geneva moved in a higher sphere. He was not merely tossed upon the bosom of the storm, but held its reins in his hand. His activity was pervaded with power. His mind was felt to the utmost ends of Europe. He reigned, with the spiritual sceptre, as a "king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together."

The man who could perform so much, and exert an influence so deep and deep, must have been possessed of extraordinary powers in his spirit. Seldom indeed has the world beheld a case, in which mind appeared to greater advantage, in its whole constitution and development. This eminence does not appear so much, in the shining aspect of one particular quality or attribute taken separately, as in the full, round, symmetrical and well proportioned development of the entire inner man. In Calvin, the intellectual and moral, the speculative and the practical, were blended together in the most happy combination. Memory, imagination, judgment, reason, faith, were all vigorous, each working in due measure in its own proper sphere, without trenching on the prerogatives of the rest. The play of the affections too, was for the most part healthy, harmonious and free. It is not to be imagined of course, that no sort of obliquity had place in the structure of his mind; the best nature among men, is in this respect merely an approximation towards the *idea*, in which only at last, humanity finds its proper form; and infirmities reveal themselves in Calvin, which are amply sufficient, if considered, to hold our veneration for his person in due bounds. There have been few however, it is believed, who with the same amount of strength and cultivation, have been less one-sided in their spiritual conformation.

In the sphere of mere understanding, his vision was uncommonly clear. No mind could well be more logical, or less at the mercy of prejudices, conceits or baseless phantasies of any kind. Euphuism, fanaticism, mysticism, found no place whatever in his soul. Guericke, (who in his zeal for Lutheranism, loads the whole Reformed Church indeed with the reproach of rationalism, in its very constitution—a favorite imagination latterly, it may be added, with a certain class of mystical "Oxfordists" in Germany, who still stickle for the idea of consubstantiation in the eucharist;) Guericke, I say, while he awards the highest praise to the *Institutes*, makes the very depth which belongs to it in the way of speculation, an objection to the religious character of the author. His spirit, in its inmost ground, he says, looked more to speculation and science, than to genuine, unconditional faith.¶ Zuingli, characteristically distinguished as he was for looking to thought more than feeling in religion, fell after all far short of Calvin in the power of rigorous ratiocination, lucid and deep at the same time, applied to divine as well as human things.—Whatever advantage Zuingli might have had in certain points, under this view, as compared with Luther, it was possessed by Calvin in a far higher degree. His mind saw objects, through a clearer medium, than that through which they appeared often to Luther. This appeared, not only in the case of the Lord's Supper, but in his religious views generally. No one among the reformers had the same clear insight into the evangelical system, in its internal relations and connections, as distinguished from all the spurious elements which had been introduced into it, doctrinally or ritually, by the great apostasy. No one rose more fully above the manifold superstitions of the age to which he belonged. He wrote against astrology, when even the accomplished spirit of Melancthon was as yet enthralled by the authority of that false science. We hear nothing from him, miserable valetudinarian as he was, of those diabolical apparitions, sometimes in one form and sometimes in another which were so familiar to the brain of honest Luther. His views on the troublesome question of rites and ceremonies, on the constitution of the Church as distinguished from the State, and on the subject of ecclesiastical government and discipline generally, carried him at once far ahead of his illustrious contemporaries. His mind moved pre-eminently in an atmosphere of common sense and sound judgment, pervaded with knowledge like the broad light of day.

But Calvin was a man of faith as well as understanding. Whatever advantage Luther might have had in this respect again, over the constitutionally rationalistic Zuingli, he was possessed also by the reformer of Geneva.—It is not easy of course to estimate the comparative strength of the religious principle, in two men, whose minds were in many respects so differently constructed; nor will it be attempted in this place. It is enough to say, that both stood in the innermost circle of discipleship, with regard to the Master's person.—There is something unspeakably great, an apostolic majesty it may be called, in the Christian character of Luther, when we come near enough to him to understand and feel the actual spirit of the man. The piety of Calvin, under a different form, is entitled to similar veneration and respect. If Luther's faith seem to possess at times the attribute of inspiration in the greatest degree, we must allow to the divine life in Calvin a more full and finished organization. Nothing can well be more beautiful than the general symmetry of his religious character, when we consider the intellectual strength of the man, and the circumstances with which he was surrounded. Here we have perhaps the first mind of the age, not simply honoring Christianity as a divine revelation, like Grotius, Bacon or Locke, but surrendering itself with child-like homage to its authority. The authority of God was more to him, than all other considerations; not only bringing him to renounce all outwardly for the sake of the gospel, but engaging him also to do violence to his love of ease and rest, and to take his post, "offering his slain heart as a sacrifice to God," where

the greatest trials were to be endured, in this sacred cause. His conscientiousness was uncommonly great. He was, it must be confessed, naturally impatient and irritable; and this temper often displayed itself, both in his preaching and in his writings. In reproving vice particularly and opposing error, his zeal at times became a sort of absolute indignation. It must be remembered however, that he was exposed in this way to provocations of the most stirring kind. For his irritability, there existed a deep ground also in the morbid condition of his body. At the same time, no man was more sensible than himself, of his own infirmity in this respect, or more ready to condemn it, when it appeared. He was distinguished for his humility, and for the simplicity of his character in general. His faith in God was firm and steady, amounting as it would seem to habitual assurance; which was not always the case with the other reformers.

He manifested great seriousness, and nothing of the boisterous jovial manner, which sometimes prevailed with Luther. And yet he was by no means harsh or sour in his disposition, as the haters of his theology have been generally pleased to imagine. He was of a cheerful spirit, and on proper occasions could be altogether mirthful. It is a grand mistake too to suppose, that he was cold and stoical in his feelings. His history abounds with proofs, that he was kind, affectionate and tender. "In a multitude of letters," says Mr. Henry, "written at the most distant periods of his life, and amidst the greatest sufferings, I find earnestness and excitement, (sometimes even zeal and indignation,) trust in God, and a mild and friendly temper. Moreover, all the letters addressed to him, are written with the openness of the most child-like confidence. One does not thus address a sour and ill-natured man, whom it is irksome to approach. It was so even in the last period of his life, when he was revered by all as a father and a patriarch. There was in him nothing stiff, formal, or constrained. Even women were not afraid of him, but were in spiritual converse admitted to manifold and intimate correspondence. And still farther, his colleagues, after his death, celebrated his mildness and agreeable temper." His references to his wife, both while she lived and after her death, are full of tenderness. "Knowing as you do," he writes to Viret, on the occasion of this bereavement, "the sensibility, or rather weakness of my heart, I need not tell you, that it required the utmost struggle of my mind, to save me from sinking." Seven years later, we hear him thus expressing himself in a letter to a brother in the ministry, who had been visited with a like affliction: "I feel in my own case how painful and agonizing must be the wound, which you have suffered in the death of your excellent wife—remembering my own grief seven years ago. I call to mind how hard it was for me, to gain the mastery of my sorrow." We have a fine illustration of his social character also, in the friendship which existed so happily through life between him and his early colleagues Farel and Viret. It speaks much for Farel's character, that with all his peculiarities, he stood so high in the estimation of Oecolampadius first, and afterwards of Calvin, men whose minds were of so orderly and severe a cast.—But it speaks for Calvin full as much, that with all his intellectual superiority his heart should have given itself so fully to this faithful servant of God. Where shall we find any thing of the sort more beautiful, than the reference he himself makes to this friendship, in the preface to his Commentary on Titus, where he puts himself in the same relation to Farel and Viret, that this young disciple formerly sustained to Paul. "I do not think," he says "there has ever been a pair of friends, who have been so truly united in ordinary life, as we have been in our ministry." As Calvin drew near his end, he wrote to Farel: "Fare thee well, my best and dearest brother! As it is the will of God, that you should survive me, be mindful of our friendship, which as it has been serviceable to the Church of God, will bring forth fruit for us in heaven. I am painfully awaiting every moment my last breath. My consolation is to live and to die unto Christ who in life and in death bestows gain upon his people. Farewell once more to you and all the brethren!" Farel, now eighty years old, hastened to Geneva, on foot, to embrace his dying friend. "O that I could die in his stead!" he cried; "God grant that we may end our course like him!" In the course of the next year, the weather-beaten veteran was himself dismissed, to rejoice his friend in heaven.

Calvin's piety was eminently practical. It did not spend itself in lazy contemplations, or in mere exhibitions of feeling. It gave rise to action and sacrifice, not fitful, in rickety and distorted forms, but on principle and with method, as the free natural expression of its own life. He was temperate and frugal in all things. His manner of life was not only simple, but absolutely poor; and he seems to have been conscientiously concerned, to remain always in this state. In seeking a wife for himself, one quality required in the case was, that she should be *parca*, frugal. At Strasburg, his circumstances must have been extremely narrow. In one case we find him transferring to Farel a claim which he had in another quarter for a single crown, with the remark: "Retain it as so much towards what I owe you; the remainder I will pay when I can; at present, I have not a single farthing." Presents from his friends, he declined receiving. His salary in Geneva, was fifty crowns, about eighty bushels of corn, two barrels of wine, and his lodging.

When it was proposed in certain cases, to add something to his income he would not suffer it to be done; and in the end he required the council to make a very considerable reduction in the amount, as not being necessary for his economical style of life. When cardinal Sadoleto travelled thro' Geneva incognito, he felt a wish to see Calvin who had written against him with so much power; expecting to find him surrounded with a measure at least of outward state. But what was his surprise, when a common mean looking house was pointed out to him as the place of his residence, at which when he had knocked, the door was opened, not by a servant, but by Calvin himself, clad in the plainest garb! And yet, as we have seen, his enemies charged him with amassing wealth. At his death, his whole property was found to be two hundred crowns. The same self-denying spirit ran through all his character. No man could well live less for himself, or more for the benefit of others. In his pastoral labors, he showed himself true to the principle, "Not you, but

you," ready always to spend and be spent for his flock. When the plague raged at Geneva, and most persons shrunk from all contact with the sick, he offered himself to serve as Chaplain in the hospital; which however the Council would not allow, considering his life too valuable to be put to such hazard. The service devolved accordingly on another, who ten months afterwards fell a victim to the disease. Care for the souls of his people especially rested on Calvin's spirit, with a constant and heavy weight. Then his sympathies extended besides, like those of Paul to the whole Church, at a distance as well as near at hand. In every direction he was ready to assist, as he could, with his counsels, his exhortations, and his prayers. Especially did he enter with lively feeling into the sufferings of those who, in any part of the world, were called to seal their testimony to the truth with their own blood. When the religious war broke out in Germany, and all the interests of the gospel seemed to be in danger of suffering a bloody overthrow, forgetful of his own difficulties, his soul, as Beza informs us, was filled with the most distressing concern; as might naturally be supposed, since even in times of peace, the weight of all the Churches seemed to come upon his shoulders.¶

His death was answerable to his life. Thro' all his sufferings, he had exhibited previously the greatest patience. His watchword was still, *How long, O Lord*, uttered with uplifted eyes, expressive at once of his hope and his submission; though even this was often in his mouth, in view of the sufferings of his brethren, than on account of his own. In February, 1564, his asthma became so bad, that he was no longer able to preach. Occasionally after this, he was carried to the congregational conference, and spoke a few words. On the 27th of March he had himself taken to the Council chamber, which he entered on his feet, supported by two friends. There, with uncovered head, he returned thanks to the body, for all the favors he had received from it in times past, and particularly for the regard manifested towards him since his sickness. His voice soon failed, and he bade the sorrowful and weeping assembly farewell. On the 2nd of April, (Easter,) he was carried, in his chair, to church, and remained there during the whole service.

"He took the sacrament from my hand," says Beza, "and as he joined with tremulous voice in the general hymn, the countenance of the dying man told plainly enough his inward joy." On the 25th of April, he made his will resigning himself to God in Christ, praising him for his mercies, and declaring his faith to be the same in dying that he had preached during his life. Beza gives the instrument in full. This finished, he proposed to meet the syndics and senators once more, in the Council hall. They however would not allow him to be carried thither, in his weak state, but came in a body to his house. After salutations exchanged, he asked them to bear with him in putting them to this trouble. He had all along wished such a meeting, but had put it off till he might know certainly that his end was at hand. He thanked them now most heartily, that they had, notwithstanding his unworthiness, bestowed upon him so many honors and borne so patiently with his many infirmities. Whatever conflicts and trials he had met in his office, as every good man must, he acknowledged to have been without any fault of theirs. And where he had himself failed, he begged it might be charged to his capacity and not to his heart; for he had the testimony of his conscience, that he had studied in all things the good of the State. He would not affect to think, that his efforts had been of no worth, in the Lord's hand. But this I beg of you again and again, he said, that I may find indulgence with you for having done so little altogether, in public or private, in comparison with what I ought to have done. I freely own myself moreover to be greatly under debt to you on this account, that you have borne so patiently with the vehemence of my spirit, carried at times to excess. These my sins are pardoned also, as I trust, by God. But as to the doctrine he had preached, it had not been his own; it was drawn from the divine word; and they must be on their guard against false and corrupt men, whom Satan would certainly raise up to turn it into a new form. He reminded them then of the immense benefits they had received from the Lord, and exhorted them to set his presence always before them, whether in prosperity or adversity; all studying in their several places and relations, to do right and promote the general good. In conclusion, he again asked them to pardon his infirmities; which, says he, I own and confess before God and angels, as also, venerable masters, in your presence. With this he prayed, beseeching God to bless them more and more, and to guide them by his Spirit, for the public good; and then taking each of them by the hand, he suffered them to depart. They went away in tears, as from the presence of their common father.—On the day following all the ministers of the republic, at his request, came to him in like manner. He exhorted them, not to be discouraged by his death, but to go forward firmly in their work; referring them, for their encouragement, to the trials through which the Church had happily been brought in that republic since he had been called to labor there; and charging them to see to it, that what had been already gained should not be lost in any manner again by their want of faithfulness. He had lived in the most affectionate union with them, he said, and parted from them now in the same spirit. His faults they must forgive, and for their kindness they had his warmest thanks. Having finished, he offered each his right hand. We left him, says Beza, with hearts full of sadness, and eyes anything but dry. Shortly after this, the good old Farel made his visit. The two friends communed together, for the last time on earth, and on the next day parted. Calvin now spent his time, almost constantly in prayer, laboring with asthma, his eyes, (clear and bright to the last,) lifted to heaven, and his whole countenance expressive of the most earnest devotion. On the 27th day of May, in the evening, having become previously so emaciated as to be little more than spirit, without moving hand or limb, in the quiet possession of his senses to the last breath, the great good man fell gently into the arms of death. With the setting sun, on that day, it seemed as if Geneva had been shorn of her glory.—The night which followed, carried sorrow and lamentation over the whole city.

J. W. N.

\* "Durch seine Schriften, Rathschlaege, Dienstleistungen, und durch die Theologen, die er erbaute, verbreitete sich sein Einfluss im siegreichen Gegen-satz gegen Zwingli's Richtung ueber die ganze Reformirte Kirche, deren Mittelpunkt Genf durch ihn geworden ist." Hase.

† "Dum hoc mihi unum in animo est, ignoble otium colere, Deus ita per varios flexus me conuenit, ut nusquam tamen quiescere permitteret, donec repugnante ingenio, in lucem pertractum sum."

‡ Even Bayle has to say here, "Ce fut une direction particuliere de la providence."

§ His writings, it is said, printed in a uniform edition, would make sixty ordinary octavo volumes, containing from thirty to forty thousand closely printed pages. And yet he was diseased literally from head to foot; his stomach flatulent and acidulous; violent rheumatic headaches; prodigious bleedings at the nose; his blood so thin and acid that it oozed out from the points of his fingers, and kept them often raw and bloody; his legs swelled and dropsical, &c.—"Orne's Life of Baxter."

¶ "Das klassische dogmatische Lehrbuch der Reformirten Kirche, die Frucht seines tief speculativen wissenschaftlichen Geistes—den es nun freilich auch im tiefsten Grunde auf speculation und Wissenschaft noch mehr als auf Glauben, wahrhaften, unbefangenen Glauben, ankam—mit grosser Klarheit, kraft und Schoenheit der Darstellung geschrieben, einfach in der Anlage, reich und vielfach gruendlich in der Ausfuhrung, und mehr als Melancthon's 'Locutiones abgerundetes Ganzes.'" Kirchengesch. Sect. 210.

\* "His publicis tot Ecclesiarum calamitatibus quantum pre illud pectus cruciatum existimamus, non aliter atque in media pace in Ecclesia quantumvis smotas afflicto, quam si omnes illas humeris impositas gestaret!"

Original.

The Centenary movement in the Second Street Church, Baltimore, Md.

The following are the closing paragraphs of our correspondent's remarks in reference to the above movement. The preceding paragraphs which are omitted contain a statement of the same facts, which were given by the pastor of the congregation himself in a previous number. We presume that "R. R." did not see that statement before his communication was written, as the paper containing it could not have reached him before that time, and this doubtless will account for his repetition.

After stating the facts referred to, the writer proceeds:

Now, Messrs. Editors, I cannot but think that great blessings are awaiting all these liberal minded individuals, which will certainly distil upon them like the dew of Hermon.—For God promises, "They that water others, shall be watered also themselves." And "I will render seven fold unto them, good measure, pressed down." And again, "I will pour out my blessing upon them, inasmuch that there shall not be room enough to contain it." May their faith realize all these, and a thousand similar divine promises, whilst they are "laying up their treasures in heaven."

But what an encouragement is this expression of a noble, Christian sentiment, on the part of this congregation, to their beloved pastor; and what an epistle and commentary on his usefulness among them! With Paul, he may truly say to them, "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to Godward." 2 Cor. 2: 3, 4. They evince that they feel they are not their own; but that being purchased with a price, it becomes them to glorify God in their bodies and their spirits which are Christ's 1 Cor. 6: 20. And by thus "letting their liberty abound," they strengthen their pastor's hands, greatly encourage his heart, and urge him to go forward in his work with renewed energy and delight. O! that every evangelical pastor could realize such good fruit from his labours, and such demonstrations of genuine devotedness to the Lord in person and property on the part of his people, as this brother has been permitted to witness. His congregation has greatly increased in number during the last few years, under his ministry. The Lord's prospering blessing has been there of a truth, and in the recent development of his usefulness, the Lord has given him renewed encouragement to humble, sedulous and energetic efforts for the still further upbuilding of his kingdom in this "monumental city."

But what an encouragement does this noble example afford to all our churches, to go forward and "do likewise." There is scarcely a pastoral charge in our connection that cannot do likewise, if all its members are actuated by the same reformed spirit, and a similar Christian self-dedication. And many there are, which may do much more, and ought to do much more, being much larger in numbers, or at least, in the aggregate of wealth possessed, than this congregation. And all that can be done, should be done during this centenary year; and let such examples as the above, animate and stimulate all our churches to rise and act, vigorously, prayerfully, and unitedly; then our centenary year will truly eventuate in the rearing up of a monument of our gratitude to God for his mercies to our fathers and to us, in perpetuating and sustaining the time-honored and hallowed doctrines, principles and standards of our ancient German Reformed Church,—such a monument as will constitute a new epoch in her history in this country and in the world, and as our posterity will look upon with mingled gratification and gratitude. And as this is an age of Christian enterprise, and of general and enlarged benevolence in which we live; and as this year especially, is a special year of jubilee and of effort for our Zion, do, Messrs. Editors, speak unto our churches, that they all arise and "go forward,"—and that "they honor the Lord with their substance."

"Thus shall they best proclaim abroad  
The honors of their Savior God,  
While his salvation reigns within,  
And grace subdues the power of sin."

R. R.

March 15, 1841.

For the Weekly Messenger.

LITTLE EMILY'S CONVERSION.

At a meeting one evening, Mr. D. the Reformed minister, requested all who felt anxious for their souls, and were resolved to attend to it as their first concern, to meet him at Mr. B's, on the following evening, and he would give them such instruction as they severally needed. A large number met accordingly, and among them was little Emily. She attracted his special attention and he immediately asked her if she felt herself to be a sinner.

"I do," said she; "one of the greatest."  
He then asked her what made her think so.  
"My Bible tells me so; and I see it in my own heart."

Have you always thought yourself such a sinner?  
"No sir, only two or three months. I once thought I was better than other children; but now I find I am worse."

"What makes you think you are worse?"  
"Because I have a worse heart."

Mr. D. proposed a number of other questions, which she readily answered; and he soon found that a deep work was going on in her heart. He endeavored to direct her to the great Redeemer, and urged her immediately to give up her soul into the hands of Christ, who stood ready to receive and save her.

Several Christians in the neighbourhood became much interested in her case, and often called to see her, and converse with her. The views which she had of the holy character of God, and of her own sinfulness, were such, that they had no doubt but the spirit of the Lord was at work in her heart. So great was her anxiety, and such confidence had she in the prayers of Christians that unless they offered to pray before leaving her, she would always ask of them the favour; and when they had done as she desired, she would entreat them to remember her in all their prayers, that God might have mercy on her soul.

While in this deep distress of mind, deploring and weeping over the depravity of her heart, she attended an evening meeting, where she heard a number of young people give an account of their religious experiences. They described the views which they had of their lost condition as sinners, and how they found pardon, and peace, and hope, by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. She found that they related many things which corresponded with her own feelings. But they had found mercy, while she was left to mourn in darkness and sorrow. Why was this? She feared that it was an indication that God did not intend to

save her. And she thought too that it was hard; for she had been distressed and mourning for months, while some of these "new converts" had been "under conviction" only a few days.

Often would she exclaim, "My sins, O my sins are too great to be forgiven; she was at length, at a late hour, persuaded to retire, but not to sleep. "Frightful views of her sinfulness and danger kept her constantly agitated and restless. Nothing but destruction appeared before her. She felt that she deserved it, and she confessed it to God. She thought much of Christ; especially how he suffered for sin, and she felt that her own sins had helped to crucify him, and added to his pain. She reflected upon the whole story of the garden, and the judgment hall, and the cross, until her soul melted within in her, and she saw and felt that Jesus was just such a Saviour as she needed. She saw that he was able and willing to save, and that all the difficulty existed in herself. She had not come to Christ and given herself up to him, and this she knew was the reason why she had not found relief to her troubled soul. The next thought was,

"Here Lord, I give myself away."

"Thy all that I can do."

At this instant, her mind became perfectly calm. The tears still flowed, but they were not the tears of anguish. The cloud which had long hung over her soul, now rolled away, and she beheld the lovely character of God, as she had never before seen it. Her prayers of agony were turned into praises; and as previously she could not sleep because of grief, so now she could not sleep for joy. She felt so grateful to Christ for bleeding and dying as a Saviour, that she wanted to glorify him with all her strength of body and soul. Her sins seemed to be all washed away by his blood, and when the thought came across her mind, that this might be all a dream, she spoke out aloud "It is not a dream, for I am awake."

AMELIA.

March, 1841.

Religious Selections.

From the New York Observer.

SINS SEARCHED OUT.

But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?—1 Chron. xvi. 10.

The time had come for God to chastise Judah, and he was pleased to employ Israel for this purpose. He permits Israel to prevail over Judah; one hundred and twenty thousand valiant men are slain in one day, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers; and two hundred thousand captives are taken, women, sons and daughters, and much spoil. These captives they intended to reduce to servitude. They rejoiced in their successes as if they were themselves free from sin. But a prophet of the Lord delivers them a message from his Master. "Behold," he says, "behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hands, and ye have slain them with a rage that reacheth unto heaven. And now ye purpose, to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you; but—look at your own hearts and lives—examine yourselves—ye may be more guilty than they—are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me, therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you!"

Some sins are more especially sins against our fellow men. They injure them in their person, property, or good name; wound their feelings, conflict their interests, and interrupt, if not destroy, their happiness. But, notwithstanding this, all sins are against God, being violations of his law, abuses of his goodness, and injuries to his creatures. Hence, whenever we sin, no matter how, or where, we sin against the Lord our God. And herein consists the chief evil of sin.

Professing Christians have covenanted to be the Lord's; but they forget that they are not their own. They have taken the Lord for their Father and Guide; and yet, like Israel of old, they depart from him, as a wife treacherously departed from her husband. Jer. iii. 4, 20. They have taken the Lord Jesus Christ for their Savior; and yet they are too prone to rely upon their own performances. They have received the Spirit as their comfort and sanctifier; and yet they are too un mindful of their dependence upon his gracious influences. They are witnesses for God; Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord. The covenant into which they entered on joining the church of Christ, is the oath they took to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; but alas, how many are perjured witnesses! Their conduct does not tell the truth respecting the religion of Jesus. With their lips they confess Christ; in their practice they deny him. And thus they sin against the Lord their God.

In the neglect of family devotions there may be sin against the Lord. That it is a duty to worship God in our families, I take for granted. And if a duty, then to neglect it is sin. There are very few who are not competent to conduct the exercises of family worship in some form. If you cannot pray, you can read a portion of Scripture, or Jay's Morning or Evening Exercises, or a prayer, and then sing a verse or two, and spend a few moments in silent devotion. Where practicable, there should be audible prayer in the family, that all may join in it. Exercises of some kind there should be; and to neglect them is to sin against the Lord our God.

And so of secret devotions. The Savior has taught us to retire to our closets, and to pray to our Father which is in secret. Where there is no closet devotion, there is no religion. Yet there is danger that the cares of the world may infringe upon the hours of retirement, and either abridge our private devotions, or render them interrupted and broken. And where this is not the case, we are very liable to become hasty, dull, and formal in our closets. We should have regular, stated seasons for retirement; and nothing should prevent our observance of those seasons. There must be regularity that there may be spirituality. We should ever be in the Spirit in our closets; and if not so when we enter we should not leave them till we are. But alas, how prone are we to irregularity, and consequently to formality! O! our sins keep us from our closets; and the desertion of our closets leads us farther into sin. Thus our closets often testify that there are with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God.

Among these sins corrupt imaginations may be specified. It is one of the blessed designs of the gospel to bring every imagination of the heart into subjection. It is designed to make the heart a temple of the Holy Ghost. But the heart is deceitful. It needs to be kept with all diligence. How frequently do our thoughts wander to the ends of the earth! Improper feelings towards ministers or members of the church are common sins. God requires us to respect, and love, and obey the officers of the church. He says, Let

the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, The laborer is worthy of his reward. Again, Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18; Heb. xiii. 17. In his desire to do right, to arrive at wise and safe conclusions, the minister may have looked at all sides of difficult questions; he may have read what is advanced by the advocates of different opinions; and after weighing the matter well in all its bearings, he may have arrived at opposite conclusions to ourselves; should he therefore be persecuted, or hated, or reproached? Or he may have taken but a one-sided view of a subject, and hence concluded partially and erroneously; even then he deserves our pity and our prayers, not our anger, nor reproach nor revenge. Or the officers of the church may have been called to exercise discipline towards our friends. This was to them a painful duty. They went forward with much prayer and trembling. But we feel aggrieved by their decision. We cherish toward them unkind feelings. We are scarcely willing to admit that they can be Christians. O how unchristian is this! It may be they did wrong; for the best men err. Suppose they did; do we do right to cherish such feelings toward them? Is it Christ-like to do so? It may be, after all, that they are right; and then how criminal are we! Sometimes misunderstandings arise among professors of religion; their feelings are excited; they get estranged from each other; perhaps will not even speak when they meet. Is this the Spirit of Christ? Has he not taught us to forgive? Has he not told us that if we forgive not, our heavenly Father will not forgive us? Look well at the context. See with what feelings Israel regarded Judah; and then ponder the searching question of the prophet. Read Eph. iv. 30—32 and 5: 1, 2.

Another sin against God is withholding our substance from the support of the gospel at home and abroad. The Lord has made it the duty of his people to sustain the gospel and gospel institutions. They are to do this where they live; and none can refuse to do it and yet give good evidence of piety. And not only is the gospel to be supported at home, but it is also enjoined upon the church to preach the gospel to every creature. In this work the whole sacramental host are to enlist labouring according to their talents, and giving according to their ability. When we withhold our contributions, we fail to comply with the injunctions of our Divine Master, and we cannot expect his approbation. There is that withholdeth more than is meet—and longer than is meet—but it tendeth to poverty! The gospel requires a punctual as well as an adequate support.

Another sin is worldliness. First, it causes us to withhold our substance from benevolent enterprises; and then this withholding tends to increase our worldliness. The more we give and the offender we give, the more willing are we usually to give; but the less we give and the seldom we give, the more difficult is it for us to give. We keep our money till we love it so well, that we cannot be persuaded that we ought to give any of it to the Lord. And when we get a little we wish to get more—and to keep getting more—we want to be rich. O how this has obscured the light of the Church! The spirit of the world has rolled in upon the Church of Christ, marred her beauty and sullied her garments! And where is the difference now between the Church and the world? Did not Jesus die that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; but where now is the peculiarity of his followers? Should not our faith give us the victory over the world? How is it then that the world is victorious over us? In this is there not with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God?

Another sin is placing a low estimate on the regular, stated, ordinary means of grace. These means were instituted by the great Head of the Church, for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints. They are, with the Divine blessing, adequate to accomplish the purposes of love which God has toward a fallen world. We should make sacrifices, if necessary to sustain them, and be diligent in attending upon them. We should believe in their efficiency, under God, and expect success to attend them. We should expect to receive benefit to our own souls from every sermon, and expect sinners to be converted; and for these things we should pray in faith, believing. But, alas, we go to the sanctuary without expecting to receive benefit ourselves, and without expecting the conversion of sinners; we do not believe the means of grace we enjoy will be blessed to us and others; and according to our faith it is unto us—we expect nothing, and therefore receive nothing. O this unbelief as to the success of the ordinary means of grace! It offends God—it must be repented of—ministers and people are guilty in this thing—and we all need to humble ourselves and repent together. May the Lord forgive us! God has said his word shall not return void; and why should we not expect to reap fruit from every sermon? We must expect it, and pray for it. We must have confidence in the Head of the Church—in the means he has instituted—in the spirit he has promised—or we sin against the Lord our God, and expose ourselves to his displeasure!

Such are some of the sins against the Lord, of which professors of religion may be guilty. There are others, pride, envy, vain-glory—but I need not dwell upon them. In another part I may show the consequences of retaining and cherishing these sins. In the meantime, let every one inquire, Is there not with me, even with me, sins against the Lord my God?

W. J. M.

THE DIVINE LIFE.

"On the means for the attainment of these higher graces of the spiritual life we might have expatiated, but we must close our remarks without almost one glance on the heights of Christian experience, or those loftier attainments after which we are ever doomed to aspire, with hardly ever the satisfaction in this world of having realized them; and for which it would almost appear indispensable that the spiritual life should be nourished in solitude, and that after from the din, and the broil, and the tumult of ordinary life, the candidate for heaven should give himself up to the discipline of prayer, and constant watchfulness. It is indeed most humbling to reflect on the paltry ascent that we yet have made along that hidden path by which it is that the pilgrim travels toward Zion; and how short are, after years of something like earnestness, from those untouched untrodden eminences which are so far above us. Where, may most of us ask, is our delight in God? Where is the triumph of our serene confidence in him, over all the anxieties of the world? Where is that love of Christ and that rejoicing in him, which in

the days of primitive Christianity were so often exemplified by the believer, and formed in the truth the hourly and familiar habits of the soul? Do we count it enough, in the absence of this world's smiles, and when the whole sunshine of life is withdrawn from the bottom, that we will live amid bright anticipations of faith with the protection of heaven above us, and the full radiance of eternity before us? These are the achievements to which we must yet press onward."

Chalmers.

WHITEFIELD'S PREACHING.—An intimate friend of the infidel Hume, asked what he thought of Mr. Whitefield's preaching; for he had listened to the latter part of one of his sermons at Edinburgh. "He is, sir," said Mr. Hume, the most ingenious preacher I ever heard. "It is worth while to go twenty miles to hear him." He then repeated a passage towards the close of that discourse which he addressed. "After a solemn pause, he thus addressed a numerous audience:—"The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold, and ascend to heaven. And shall he ascend and bear with him the news of one sinner among all this multitude, reclaimed from the errors of his way?"

"To give the greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped his foot lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven and, with gushing tears, cried aloud, 'Stop Gabriel! Stop ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God.' He then, in the most simple, but energetic language, described what he called a Saviour's dying love to sinful men; so that almost the whole assembly melted into tears. This address was accompanied with so much animated natural action, that it surpassed all I ever saw or heard in any other." Happy for the church would it be if all the ministers were so heartily engaged in their work as to feel for souls as Whitefield did.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER.

CHAMBERSBURG, MARCH 31, 1841.

The Profits of this Paper are devoted to the cause of Home Missions.

TERMS: \$2 50, if payment is delayed beyond 3 months. \$2 00, if paid in advance, or within 3 months.

FROM THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.  
Faintly legible text.

TO CORRESPONDENTS. An article may be sufficiently good to ensure its insertion in our columns; but unless it is legibly written, it may be postponed from week to week, and at length find its way under the table. We have several communications of this description now on hand. We are too much engrossed with various duties, to spend an hour or more in reading over what may, perchance, prove to be nothing more than "a sheet of paper with some words written on it."

Those of our Town subscribers who expect to change their residences on the first of April, will please inform the Carrier, or else leave a notice of the change at the Printing Office.

CENTENARY DEPARTMENT.

We have opened a special Department for this subject in our columns to day, and intend in future, to continue it.

To Agents and Subscribers.

We have repeatedly requested our agents, and others, in forwarding new subscribers for our periodicals, always to state with what number the subscribers wish to commence. This has not been generally attended to of late. In those cases in which no number is specified, we have been in the habit of sending the back numbers of the volume commenced, as far as we were able to do so. In some instances, this may perhaps, not be desired by the subscribers, and we should not do so, if we knew their wishes in this respect. Will our agents and subscribers be kind enough to attend to this matter hereafter?

MEETINGS OF CLASSES.

The time for the annual meeting of the several Classes, is fast approaching. We hope every member will endeavor, by all means, to be in his place. Much, very much of the success of the Centenary effort depends on the action which the different Classes will take upon the subject. They can give a new impetus to it, if they so determine to do.

Brethren in the ministry and others, who have not yet settled their accounts for Inaugural Addresses, or Books from the Printing Establishment, generally, will have an opportunity afforded them at these meetings to settle up their accounts. One of the Editors will attend the meetings of at least several of the neighboring Classes.

The profits arising from the sale of these, is to be applied to the cause of Beneficent Education; and therefore an additional argument, why payment should be made without delay.

INTEMPERANCE IN HIGH PLACES.

The habitual use of ardent spirits, as it is the high road to intemperance, is censurable in any one; but more especially so, in those who fill offices of public trust. It is of the utmost importance to the community, that the duties of such officers should be faithfully discharged, and whatever tends to disqualify them for this, as is the case with the habitual use of ardent spirits, should be sufficient to close against them the door of access to such places. Thomas Jefferson entertained this sentiment; and it would be well were it to be carried out, by all officers of government entrusted with the appointing power; and especially by the people in selecting men for such offices. He expressed himself in the following forcible manner after he had been President of the United States:

"The habit of using ardent spirits, by men in public offices, has occasioned more injury to the public service, and more trouble to me than any other circumstances which occurred in the internal concerns of the country, during my administration. And were I to commence my administration again, with the knowledge which from experience I have acquired, the first question which I would ask, with regard to every candidate for office, should be, 'Is he addicted to the use of ardent spirits?'"

SINGING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Some eight or ten months ago, we wrote an article on this subject; and feel induced at this time to add a few more remarks.

That singing is an important as well as a delightful part of public worship, in which the whole congregation should participate, is a sentiment the truth of which but few will deny. And nothing can be more gratifying to a lover of the services of God's house, than to witness a whole congregation with full and united voice singing songs of praise to God. This privilege however, is seldom to be enjoyed in the present age. There are now but comparatively few congregations, in which singing constitutes the exercise of all the worshippers. As a general thing, it is confined to a comparatively small number of the congregation, and in some instances, even to those who compose the choir. We have often been pained to witness this state of things; and have as often been led to inquire into its cause. The result of this inquiry, we purpose giving, so far as it has not been previously done.

That there is too little attention given to the cultivation of the science and practice of music, is undoubtedly true, and upon the inexcusable, yea rather, the criminality of this negligence, we have previously dwelt. But this is certainly, not the sole

cause of the silence of so many voices during the time of singing in our churches. We conceive a more prolific source of the evil to consist in the fact, that very frequently tunes are introduced into public worship by those who lead in this exercise, with which the body of the congregation are unacquainted, and from whom an acquaintance with which cannot be expected. Such persons are thus necessarily precluded from participating in this part of worship, and it is often with no little pain to themselves that they take place. The manner in which many of our choirs are conducted, it must be admitted, has had no little agency in bringing about this evil. We have no more objection to choirs, when they are properly conducted, than we can have to simply employing a clerk to lead in singing. But when they proceed to such lengths in the introduction of strange tunes, as virtually to monopolize this part of public worship, they become an evil which requires correction. And if it cannot be remedied, except by abolishing the choir system, (which however we do not think to be necessary,) it is better that this should take place, than that it should continue to exist.

This is a subject of greater moment, than many persons perhaps, will at first admit. So great an importance does that intelligent and pious body of people, commonly designated as Scotch Presbyterians, attach to it, that in many of their churches in this country, they still are as unwilling to permit any one to lead their singing in public worship, as they are to permit him to serve as an officer in the church, without first being chosen for that purpose by the people; and they often go so far as to prescribe the very tunes which are to be used, and will not permit the introduction of new ones, without permission from the church council, and in some instances, even from the congregation itself. The consequence is, that in their churches the singing is performed by the whole congregation, thus constituting in themselves a full choir. We do not wish to intimate, that the same course of procedure should be introduced into our churches; but certainly something that would give rise to similar results with respect to the subject referred to, seems to be imperiously called for by the peculiarity of the present times.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS.

The Second Dozen. The brother from whose letter we make the following extract, has been in the habit of sending us one or more subscribers every few weeks. Of late however he has found out, that by a little extra exertion, he could send on a dozen at a time as easily as not—especially, when he found that others had done it before him. The consequence of this has been, that we have already received the Second dozen of "good and responsible subscribers."

"I now send you 12 more subscribers for the Weekly Messenger—subscribers who will both read and pay for it. I will try and raise another dozen by the time our Classics meets. However, as I shall be very much engaged from this time forward until then, it is possible I may not succeed until a short time after my return from Classis: for then I am quite certain of obtaining the number mentioned, because I know that all my members will wish to know how matters went at Classis, and how all things are going on in the Church. And then by just hinting that they could read every thing about the Church in the Messenger, they will doubtless hand in their names at once."

Will our Delinquent Subscribers please remember.

1. That every dollar which is due at this office, is due to the cause of Domestic Missions, inasmuch as the profits arising from this paper are devoted to that object.  
2. That we have about 800 subscribers who owe from two to eight, and even ten dollars each—and if you are one of them, dear reader, will you recollect, that you are paying interest on this money? And  
3. That if each of you, who thus owe us, were to pay up, we would be not only enabled to pay off the debt on our Printing Establishment, but we would also have upwards of ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS to pay into the Missionary treasury.

In view of these facts, will you please to think of it, and so think of it, as to "not owe us anything?"

From the Congregationalist.

PUNCTUALITY IN SMALL THINGS.

Punctuality is often viewed as of little importance by individuals of moral worth and of Christian character.—They seem to overlook obligations of duty in small debts, and fail in punctuality to discharge them, which failure is exceedingly detrimental to those to whom these debts are due. If such persons owe at the Bank, they will make punctual payment, but for a weekly newspaper, they will withhold payment without thinking that they are defrauding the publishers; they have no intention to defraud or injure, when in fact it is injuring, greatly injuring the publishers. They depend on the good faith and punctual payment of their patrons to enable them to sustain their press. Their own expenses must be paid from week to week, and they are relying on the small sums due from subscribers to enable them to fulfil their contracts. Small debts are just—they ought to be paid, and punctually paid; and in some connexions it is more important that they should be punctually paid, than if they were of large amount. Thus the small debts for a weekly, religious or political newspaper, require a punctual payment. If they are expected to be paid in advance, and if on that account the price of the paper is reduced to subscribers, the payment should be made promptly in the commencement of the year. If three or six months pass away, and payment not be made, injury is occasioned by this delay to the conductors of the paper, and in such cases it cannot properly be considered as an advance payment, and the reduction for such payment ought not in justice to be expected by the subscriber. The slackness of subscribers to make punctual payment is a great evil—it is an evil to the publishers, and it may easily be corrected by a little attention. There is no good reason why we should be slack in paying debts, because they are of small amount. Every man who subscribes for a religious paper, and receives it regularly from week to week, is bound in good faith, as a man and as a Christian to pay for it punctually. It is a debt which, more than one class of small debts, calls for a punctual payment.

A SUBSCRIBER WHO PAYS IN ADVANCE.

CHURCH AND STATE.

In the Kirk of Scotland the novel and disgraceful spectacle lately occurred, of a minister's installation and settlement over a congregation, by the officers of the government, and in opposition to the wishes of the people! The description of this farce is truly pitiful—a minister without a congregation, and that minister installed by the hands of the law!

May God save our country from governmental interference in the affairs of religion.

CENTENARY HYMN AND MUSIC.

A stereotype plate has been procured, containing Mrs. Pearson's Centenary hymn, with an original piece of music. Also—an original hymn in the German language by the Rev. R. Duenger, with the same music.

To be had by the dozen or hundred at the Publication Office; and at the following places:

PHILADELPHIA—of D. Schneek, corner of 2nd and Race streets. Of D. Weidner, 62 North 4th St.

FREDERICK CITY—of Rev. D. Zacharias.

HAGERSTOWN—of Mr. M. Rickenbaugh.

MILLERSBURG—of Rev. I. Gerhart.

PRICES: On Letter paper—three dollars per hundred, or fifty cents per dozen.

On Colored paper—two dollars per hundred, or thirty seven cents per dozen.

\* \* We are indebted to Mr. Killinger, of the Senate, for a copy of the "Fifth annual Report on the Geological Exploration of Pennsylvania"—for which he will please accept our thanks.

Pictorial Geography.—We are pleased to find that Mr. Alden the agent is succeeding so well in his efforts to circulate the Pictorial Geography. He expects to visit through the county during this week, and we have no doubt will find many who will be glad of the opportunity of procuring such an interesting work. The more we examine, the better we like it.

TAVERN LICENSES.

From a paragraph found amongst our summary, it will be perceived, that a bill regulating the Tavern Licenses, has passed both Houses of the Pennsylvania Legislature, and only requires the signature of the Governor to become a law. The principal provisions of the bill are the following:

1. It raises the price of license considerably.
2. It requires all who purpose applying for license, to give public notice to that effect for three successive weeks, the last of which shall be given at least ten days before the application is made. The names of the twelve respectable citizens required to sign the petition, are also to appear in the above notice.
3. It legalizes houses of public entertainment without license, in which spiritual or vinous liquors are not sold.

This bill will doubtless if carried into effect, accomplish much towards advancing the temperance reformation. We hope, that there will be no hesitation on the part of the Governor, to give it his signature.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT.

Postmasters.—John C. Montgomery at Philadelphia, in the place of James Page, removed.

James Rees, at Geneva, New York, in the place of G. J. Grosvenor, removed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO MARSHALL COLLEGE.

We are requested by the Rev. B. C. Wolf, Agent for Marshall College, to state that D. H. Doll Esq. of Martinsburg, Va., is authorised to receive payment for subscriptions to Marshall College, in the above place and vicinity, and the subscribers are requested to make payment accordingly.

CENTENARY DEPARTMENT.

Reading, Pa. The Rev. Jacob Mayer has just returned from this place. He informs us, that a very favorable feeling is manifested towards the centenary enterprise. The subject has not yet been brought publicly before the congregation. Preparatory measures are however being taken, and some effort has been made in a private way. About two thousand dollars have already been subscribed, and the agent is confident that the centenary contribution of this place will amount to at least between five and six thousand dollars.

On his return, he passed through Chester and Lancaster counties, and found the brethren in this region preparing for a general and vigorous effort.

Second District Synod of Ohio.—From a letter received from a member of this body, we learn, that an effort was made some time ago, to convene this Synod for the purpose of acting upon the Centenary question. The impassable state of the roads at the time and the inclemency of the weather, prevented such an attendance as was thought necessary to move efficiently in so great a work. He states however, that a general interest is manifested in the enterprise, and that he has no doubt, but that in May next, the Synod will give it full attention, and will not be behind any of its neighbors in pushing it forward.

For the Weekly Messenger.

The Customs and Usages of the Church.

In several numbers of the Messenger and Zeitschrift, fears have been expressed, of a tendency to deviate from the established customs and usages of the Church. To the writer, such apprehensions appear entirely ungrounded, and the reflections which they imply, extremely uncharitable and censorious. As he has no knowledge of the evil adverted to, he can see no propriety in cautioning the churches against it. Changes, indeed, have in some places been introduced—changes, in perfect accordance with our Catechism and Constitution—changes, which every friend of Zion should hail with joy, and which have no doubt occasioned songs of praise among the Angels of God.

The writer can remember the time, when, in most of our churches, such a thing as a prayer-meeting was unknown, and would scarcely have been tolerated. Now meetings of this description have become common, and are regarded as indispensable to the prosperity of the Church.

He can refer to a period, when, in the election of Elders, their spiritual qualifications were hardly taken into account—when, external morality and cold orthodoxy, where considered the highest requisite for that responsible office. Now the same churches in which this evil prevailed, would no more think of choosing an Elder of

gether under such circumstances, it might be expected would have their sympathies more or less excited, and how easy is it to mistake that excitement for the workings of piety—the godly sorrow of repentance!

In respect to the rite of Confirmation, few if any of our Ministers regard it as of divine appointment. It is viewed simply as a form of admission into the Church, and in this light can be objected to by none. And if some of our brethren do not go through all the ceremonies which others choose to connect with this form, are they on that account to be charged with a departure from ancient customs, or with attempting to establish a new order of things? Even among the Fathers of our Church there was far from being uniformity. Some were in the practice of imposing hands at Confirmation—others simply raised their hands in the attitude of prayer. Some adopted one set of words—some another. And their sons to be charged with removing ancient landmarks because they exercise the same liberty? The Ger. Ref. Church has always been distinguished for its liberality of sentiment. Its members united in the fundamental truths of the Bible, in reference to non-essentials have agreed to differ; and while we would deprecate a laxity which has no regard for truth or order, we would equally deprecate the day when brethren must be charged with heresy and fanaticism, because they have independence enough to think and act for themselves.

#### MANY.

The above communication was furnished by a worthy brother in the ministry, and as it refers to a subject of great importance to the vital interests of the German Reformed Church, and involves our own course as editors, as well as that of our correspondents, we feel ourselves called upon to give a full and faithful exhibition of the subject to which it refers.

That "fears have been expressed of a tendency" in some instances, "to deviate from the established customs and usages of the Church," is undoubtedly true; and these fears have been entertained by some of the "fathers" and other members of the Church, whose piety is unquestionable, and whose anxiety and efforts for the true welfare and prosperity of the Church, have been unsurpassed by any of others. These fears moreover, are not "entirely unfounded," nor does the expression of them which has been given, in any wise "imply reflections, that are extremely uncharitable and censorious." Many profess to have "no knowledge of the existence of the evil adverted to," but still proceed to comment upon certain things, in which, he doubtless presumes, it is supposed to exist. He has, however, to some extent, mistaken the particular points to which reference is had.

Important changes, in perfect accordance with the Catechism and Constitution, "have indeed taken place, in many sections of the Church, and no one, not even himself, can be more rejoiced at these, than we and the brethren whose conduct he comments upon. The introduction of prayer-meetings, of a strict regard to spiritual qualifications in the choice of Church-officers, of protracted meetings and special efforts for the salvation of souls, of the strict enforcement of discipline, and of requiring of candidates for Church-membership, an *experimental* as well as an *intellectual* acquaintance with the doctrines of the Christian religion, are improvements in our spiritual condition as a Church, which we hail with special delight, and those very men who entertain the "fears of a tendency to deviate from the established customs and usages of the Church," have been among the most active in employing their influence to bring them about, and will doubtless continue their efforts to the same effect, until these changes shall have become general. The fears, then, which have been expressed, we are prepared to say, have no reference to these improvements. They relate to objects entirely different, and fidelity to our trust as the conductors of the periodicals of the Church, requires us to point them out specifically and fearlessly. The crisis, to which the above communication brings the subject in question, is such, as to render a longer continued silence highly improper.

The particulars, in reference to which, principally, fears are indulged of a tendency to deviate from the established customs and usages of the Church, are *catechetical instruction* and the *reception of members into the Church by the rite of confirmation*, as distinguishing characteristics of the German Reformed Church. These appear to have been, in some measure, anticipated by "Many," and hence he has taken special pains, to show that the fears in reference to these, are without foundation. His efforts to establish his point, are, however, very lame, and evidence that he had a difficulty here to grapple with not so easily to be overcome. We rejoice in view of the fact, that the doctrines of the Church are now better understood and appreciated, than they ever were before; and charity requires us to put the best construction upon the "cordial approbation of catechetical instruction," and "the observance of it in some form," or other, professed in behalf of every minister in our connection. But we feel constrained to say, that the practical results, in the history of those for whose course our correspondent is apologizing, so far as they have come to our knowledge, are not so favorable as is to be wished, and that certainly he is regarded as the best criterion, by which to judge of the tendency and consequent expediency of any particular measure.

What have such in reality accomplished, in the way of communicating catechetical instruction to the young? Their most successful efforts have been but sickly at best. Though they may have succeeded in getting together a considerable class, and in keeping the members of it in regular attendance for a short time, yet has not this attendance generally slackened by degrees until, in the end, the discontinuance of the class became a matter of necessity, and left but little visible fruit behind! Are there then no fears to be indulged in reference to the final results of such a course? Must not catechetical instruction eventually come into disuse, by means of its continuance, and all the happy consequences secured to immortal souls and to the Church by such instruction, be entirely lost? What has brought about that great discontinuance of the system of catechetical instruction once generally pursued in the Presbyterian Church with the greatest fidelity and success, which now prevails, and is so greatly lamented by all who have the true interests of religion at heart, but the giving of too great a prominence to other favorite systems of operation, to the improper exclusion of the excellent system of catechetical instruction both the young and the old? Many a pious father in that Church now weeps over the ruinous consequences, that have followed this discontinuance, and would gladly employ his remaining strength in endeavoring to restore the endangered and prevailing custom of his earlier years, were it probable that this would be available. And it is certainly not anticipating too much, to indulge fears, that our situation may become similar to that of those just adverted to, provided the prevailing tendency to bring catechetical instruction into disuse, is not speedily checked.

We do not wish to be understood as pleading for the custom which too generally prevailed some years ago in our churches, of catechizing the youth for a short time before communion, and then admitting them indiscriminately into the Church, without any reference to their religious experience and spiritual qualifications. Such a course of procedure must prove ruinous to the soul, and cannot be too carefully guarded against; and it is best but a gross perversion and abuse of the system of catechetical instruction as adopted by our fathers and characteristic of us as a Church. The custom we are advocating and which is expressly required by the Constitution, (see Part III. Sec. 1, Art. 4.), consists, in frequently assembling the children and youth of the Church together throughout the whole year, if practicable, or

at least for some months previous to each communion season, for the purpose of receiving catechetical instruction, and that with a special reference to their admission to the ordinances of the Church, as soon as they shall evidence an experimental acquaintance with the doctrines and truths of religion. This is the system of catechetical instruction as properly characteristic of the German Reformed Church, (see Constitution as above) and whenever faithfully and carefully carried out, as required by the Constitution, cannot fail to be attended with the most happy results. Instead of being "calculated to encourage false hopes, and thus deceive and ruin the soul," it has the double advantage of enlightening the understanding and thoroughly indoctrinating the youth in the religion of the Gospel, whilst it effectually brings home the truth to the heart, and thus makes them both intelligent and thorough Christians.

It constitutes no valid objection to this system, that by means of it "the sympathies are liable to become more or less excited, and that it is easy to mistake that excitement for the workings of piety—the godly sorrow of repentance." This objection will apply with much greater force to all the technically so termed "special efforts" for the salvation of souls, than to it. As it operates principally through the understanding by enlightening it, it is less liable to produce that animal excitement which is the result of mere sympathy, than the species of efforts just adverted to; and it is certainly as easy, if not more easy, to mistake the excitement produced by the latter for the workings of piety—the godly sorrow of repentance, than it is to mistake that produced by the former. We are confident, that in this respect, the system of catechetical instruction, we are advocating, wherever it is faithfully pursued, will not suffer by a comparison of the *tested results* of the two systems. These remarks however, are not intended to imply any disapproval of "special efforts" for the salvation of souls, appropriately and judiciously prosecuted.

The other particular specified, with respect to which fears are entertained of a tendency to depart from the established customs and usages of the Church, is the *rite of confirmation*. It is true, that none of our ministers regard it as of divine appointment; but simply as a form of admission into the Church. The "laying on of hands" and the extending of the right hand of fellowship" are the only things which distinguish this mode of admission into the Church, from that practised in many of the Presbyterian and other churches; and as this is a distinguishing feature of the rite as characteristic of our Church, [see Constitution Part III., Sec. 1, Art. 2.,] it has become sacred by its antiquity alone, it is highly improper, to say the least, to endeavor to remove it, and thus rob the Church of one of its peculiarities, and trample upon the requirements of its constitution. There certainly cannot be any thing objectionable, "in the laying on of hands and extending the right hand of fellowship" in connection with the act of receiving members into the Church; and one should think, that those who can conscientiously pass through the other part of the ceremony usually observed on such occasions apart from this, cannot consistently object to passing through this also. At all events, if there should after all be conscientious scruples against conforming to this peculiarity, *Christian honesty* at least, should constrain such not to seek a connection with the Church, or if already connected with it, to seek a connection elsewhere more congenial to their feelings, rather than by thus improperly meddling with one of the established usages of the Church, to introduce confusion and distraction among its members.

There has been amongst the fathers of the Church, it is true, no perfect uniformity so far as the mere form of words used in the rite of confirmation is concerned; but with respect to the *distinguishing features of the rite*, "the laying on of hands, and the extending the right hand of fellowship," there has been, so far as our knowledge extends, but *one uniform practice*. The idea "that some simply raised their hands in the attitude of prayer," is entirely new to us; and if this were done in a few solitary instances, it certainly was not the rite of confirmation, as characteristic of the German Reformed Church, (see Constitution as above,) and hence furnishes no properly authorized precedent for imitation.

In this connection, it seems necessary to observe, that in addition to the particulars specified, fears have also been entertained of a "tendency to deviate from the established customs and usages of the Church" with respect to the *reception of members from other churches on certificate*. It is in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, if we understand that instrument, (see Part III., Sec. 1, Art. 5.,) and has been customary for years, to receive members from other churches solely upon the ground of their certificate of dismission. On such occasions, it has been customary to ask no further questions of the applicant than such as relate to the certificate presented; nor does the constitution authorize more; (see Constitution as above.) And if the certificate were regular, they were admitted simply by having their names announced to the congregation from the pulpit. Some of our brethren however, no doubt from motives satisfactory to themselves, have seen proper to deviate from this established custom. With them, even a regular certificate of dismission constitutes no sufficient passport from one church to another. The applicant must pass through the same routine of examination to which applicants for the first time are subjected. If the examination is not sustained, the applicant is rejected, *irrespective of his former reception*. If however, it is sustained, he must then pass through the whole congregation, in the presence of the whole congregation, through which applicants for the first time have to pass; and thus be confirmed over again, so far as the particular form observed on such occasions, deserves to be regarded as a rite of confirmation. The inconsistency, impropriety, and evil tendency of such a course, in a Church like the German Reformed, where the acts of the different ministers and congregations are, mutually respected and regarded as valid, and the rite of confirmation is viewed as a ceremony not to be repeated in the case of the same individual, must be manifest to every candid and unbiased mind. It certainly betrays a great want of confidence in the acts of other ministers and consistories; and is only befitting such organizations as the Congregational Church, in which it is common, and in which every congregation is an organization in itself independent of all other ecclesiastical connection, and of the rite of confirmation is far from being a distinguishing characteristic. This unauthorized invasion of the established customs and Constitution of the German Reformed Church, is a gross and unbecoming act, and one which we cannot but regard as a gross perversion and abuse of the system of catechetical instruction both the young and the old? Many a pious father in that Church now weeps over the ruinous consequences, that have followed this discontinuance, and would gladly employ his remaining strength in endeavoring to restore the endangered and prevailing custom of his earlier years, were it probable that this would be available. And it is certainly not anticipating too much, to indulge fears, that our situation may become similar to that of those just adverted to, provided the prevailing tendency to bring catechetical instruction into disuse, is not speedily checked.

The particulars, in reference to which, principally, fears are indulged of a tendency to deviate from the established customs and usages of the Church, are *catechetical instruction* and the *reception of members into the Church by the rite of confirmation*, as distinguishing characteristics of the German Reformed Church. These appear to have been, in some measure, anticipated by "Many," and hence he has taken special pains, to show that the fears in reference to these, are without foundation. His efforts to establish his point, are, however, very lame, and evidence that he had a difficulty here to grapple with not so easily to be overcome. We rejoice in view of the fact, that the doctrines of the Church are now better understood and appreciated, than they ever were before; and charity requires us to put the best construction upon the "cordial approbation of catechetical instruction," and "the observance of it in some form," or other, professed in behalf of every minister in our connection. But we feel constrained to say, that the practical results, in the history of those for whose course our correspondent is apologizing, so far as they have come to our knowledge, are not so favorable as is to be wished, and that certainly he is regarded as the best criterion, by which to judge of the tendency and consequent expediency of any particular measure.

What have such in reality accomplished, in the way of communicating catechetical instruction to the young? Their most successful efforts have been but sickly at best. Though they may have succeeded in getting together a considerable class, and in keeping the members of it in regular attendance for a short time, yet has not this attendance generally slackened by degrees until, in the end, the discontinuance of the class became a matter of necessity, and left but little visible fruit behind! Are there then no fears to be indulged in reference to the final results of such a course? Must not catechetical instruction eventually come into disuse, by means of its continuance, and all the happy consequences secured to immortal souls and to the Church by such instruction, be entirely lost? What has brought about that great discontinuance of the system of catechetical instruction once generally pursued in the Presbyterian Church with the greatest fidelity and success, which now prevails, and is so greatly lamented by all who have the true interests of religion at heart, but the giving of too great a prominence to other favorite systems of operation, to the improper exclusion of the excellent system of catechetical instruction both the young and the old? Many a pious father in that Church now weeps over the ruinous consequences, that have followed this discontinuance, and would gladly employ his remaining strength in endeavoring to restore the endangered and prevailing custom of his earlier years, were it probable that this would be available. And it is certainly not anticipating too much, to indulge fears, that our situation may become similar to that of those just adverted to, provided the prevailing tendency to bring catechetical instruction into disuse, is not speedily checked.

We do not wish to be understood as pleading for the custom which too generally prevailed some years ago in our churches, of catechizing the youth for a short time before communion, and then admitting them indiscriminately into the Church, without any reference to their religious experience and spiritual qualifications. Such a course of procedure must prove ruinous to the soul, and cannot be too carefully guarded against; and it is best but a gross perversion and abuse of the system of catechetical instruction as adopted by our fathers and characteristic of us as a Church. The custom we are advocating and which is expressly required by the Constitution, (see Part III. Sec. 1, Art. 4.), consists, in frequently assembling the children and youth of the Church together throughout the whole year, if practicable, or

would shrink with indignation from the very idea of proposing any sympathy. We trust therefore, that he has used it without due reflection as to its real import.

It sounds very strange moreover, to hear him speaking of "brethren being charged with heresy and fanaticism." Who, we ask, has ever preferred any such charge? Has there ever been any thing even implied in what has been said in expressing fears of a tendency to "depart from the established customs and usages of the Church," which can at all be construed in that way? We are ignorant of the existence of any thing of the kind. And when the established usages and the constitution of the Church are assailed, or any thing of a dangerous tendency is becoming prevalent, must those who love her peculiarities and labor and pray for her welfare, and especially those whose specific duty it is to guard her interests, forbear to sound the alarm, lest peradventure it might wear the appearance of preferring the charge of heresy and fanaticism! "Many" himself, according to his own principles, would not submit to such dictation, and much less can it be expected of us, whatever he or others may say to the contrary.

We have presented our sentiments on the several points involved, with great freedom and plainness—Fidelity to the Church and to the important trust committed to us, has demanded this course at our hands. The discussion is not one of our own choosing, but has been forced upon us by the circumstances in which our correspondent has placed us. We hope that our motives will be properly appreciated; and that if any upon whose conduct we have been obliged to comment, should feel themselves aggrieved by what has been written, they will attribute it to our zeal in defending the cause whose interests are entrusted to us, and to a sense of duty, and not to any improper motive or design on our part.

#### Domestic Intelligence.

**How to save them.**—A writer in the Philadelphia Ledger says, that in case of a stable catching fire when there are horses therein, if any part of their harness is put on, they will suffer themselves to be led out without the least resistance. The publishing of this may be useful. The Editor of that paper, however, says that success will depend much upon the manner of the person attempting the experiment. If he be frightened and exhibit evidence of the fact by a hurried and confused manner, he will be readily obeyed, and instead of allaying his fears will but increase them, and add to the difficulty of removing him.

**Pennsylvania Canals.**—The Philadelphia North American states that the water has been let into the line of the State Canals, and that the route between that city and Pittsburgh is now in navigable order, except at the new aqueduct near Huntingdon, the ends of which are yet to be puddled. This operation can be completed with good weather in a few days.

**The Tide Water Canal** will be ready for navigation in a few days.

**Great Flood.**—The Raleigh N. C. Register of the 19th instant says—

The unprecedented quantity of Rain, which has recently fallen, has caused an extraordinary rise in all our water courses—the greatest is said, since 1794. At Smithfield, the River has overflowed its Western bank to the distance of nearly half a mile, while Waynesboro' is perfectly inundated. We understand that the inhabitants there, as at Venice visit each other in their Gondolas, (alias Canoes) the streets and lower parts of the houses being entirely submerged.

The "Fayetteville Observer" says, that the River at that place, rose 35 feet above the water mark, reaching within 11 feet of Clarenceville Bridge, and backing water up Cross Creek, over four mill-dams, to the very heart of the Town.

The most intense artificial cold that has ever been produced is from a mixture of sulphuric acid and snow; and the temperature of which, has been known to sink to 91 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, one hundred and twenty-three below the freezing point.

Governor Page, of New Hampshire, has appointed the 15th of April, to be observed throughout the state as a day of Humiliation, fasting and Prayer.

**Serious accident.**—The New York Journal of commerce states that on Thursday morning, about 1 o'clock, a small boat containing 8 persons, one of whom was a child, was wrecked on the shore of the North River, for the ship Francis 1st, bound to Havre, lying in the North River, ready to sail. When near the ship, the boat filled with water. Mr. Beatty 2d officer, and J. Beard, seaman, both belonging to the ship, and two other passengers were drowned. The passengers were Frederick Hans, of Cincinnati, Ohio, where his family reside; and Valentine Ziegler of Louisville, Ky. who left a wife. Each of these men had about \$300 in gold and silver about their persons. The second man has left a wife in New York. Charles Davis, and Charles Thomas, and two seamen, were rescued, very much exhausted, by a boat from the ship—Am.

**Appointments by the President.**—Capt. Thomas Hayes has been appointed Navy Agent at Philadelphia. William M. McCreary, Attorney U. S. for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Walter Forward, Attorney U. S. for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

**Associate Judges.**—The Governor sent to the Senate the following nominations for Associate Judges: JOSEPH ENGL, Delaware county. ABRAHAM GOODWIN, Bradford county. GILMAN MERRILL, Warren county. GEORGE CHOPPINING and JOHN McCARTY, Somerset county.

**JOHN THOMAS and THOMAS TAGGART** Lycoming county. MATTHIAS S. RICHARDS, Berks county. JAMES WINSLOW, Jefferson county. JOHN PATTON, Clearfield county.

**Tavern Licenses.**—The bill requiring public notice of applications for tavern licenses in newspapers, passed both Houses of the Legislature and will be presented to the Governor for his signature.

**County Treasurers.**—In the Senate bill was passed through committee of the whole, authorizing the election of county treasurers in several of the counties of the state.

It is stated that the Harrisburg and Lancaster Railroad Company have issued twenty thousand dollars worth of small notes.

**Another Bank Bill.**—Synopsis of a bill reported in Senate on the 17th inst. by Mr. Spaackman, from the committee on Banks.

§ 1. All provisions for the forfeiture of charters in cases of suspension repealed. § 2. Laws prohibiting the issue of small notes repealed, for five years. § 3. Prohibits all loans to cashiers, clerks, tellers or other persons in the employment of the banks respectively. § 4. All directors, officers, &c. to be sworn before an alderman or justice of the peace, before entering upon the duties of their office. § 5. Dividends allowed during suspensions. § 6. Quarterly statements of the condition of the banks, required to be made under oath. § 7. Penalties provided against officers who neglect their duties. § 8. False entries, issues, &c., to be punished by fine and imprisonment. § 9. The above bill passed its final reading in both Houses, and only awaits the signature of the Governor to make it a Law.

Among the numerous on duty, of the day, it is rumored that Nicholas Biddle, Esq., is about to put forth a publication upon the concerns of the United States Bank, with special reference to its condition at the time he resigned the Presidency.

**Voted Down.**—The prayer of the petitioners asking for a repeal of the laws prohibiting blasphemy and Sabbath breaking, was decided by the Legislature to be disregarded, to that body and not to be entertained. It received but one vote in its favor, and that on account of the right of petition, and not of the doctrines of the petition presented.—*Phila. Ledger.*

**The Navy.**—The Navy Appropriation bill appropriated for the increase, repair, and equipment of the Navy, and wear and tear of vessels in commission, \$2,000,000, of which \$400,000 is to be expended in building and equipping war steamers of the medium class. For pay of officers and seamen, \$2,500,000. For provisions, \$1,000,737. Total, \$5,855,737.

**Loss of the Schooner Col. Crockett.**—The Newburgh (N. Y.) Journal of Saturday gives an interesting narrative of the loss of this schooner. It seems that the vessel sailed from Newburgh on the 29th of June, 1839, on a trading voyage to the coast of Africa and the neighboring islands. In May last she entered the river and sailed up the stream nearly 100 miles, where Captain Austin ordered a trade with the natives, and having succeeded in completing a valuable cargo of ivory, gold dust, ostrich feathers, shells, ebony wood, &c., was returning to the Bay with the intention of coming immediately home, when the vessel was unfortunately grounded on a bar at the mouth of the river.

On her way down the river, most of the crew were taken sick with the fever of the country, and the remainder were unable to haul off the vessel. The Captain and a part of the crew then attempted to proceed for medical assistance to the Portuguese settlement at English River sixty miles from the place of the disaster, but they could not pass the surf. Mr. Reed, the second mate, then volunteered to accompany the Captain over land. It was unfortunately determined to go unarmed, so as to afford the natives less temptation for molesting them. At first they were treated with kindness, but towards night, after travelling about 35 miles, the savages fell upon them with spears, killed the Captain, and wounded the mate so severely that they supposed him to be also dead.

Mr. Reed states that he presented his side and received most of the valuable articles, but in the meantime struck him near his eye, and he for a time became senseless. On his recovery he observed the negroes cutting up and roasting and making their supper on the body of the Captain. He lay still until night when the Captain's faithful servant, who had been sent to the shore, came back with a canoe, which he reached a miserable condition. A few days after the return of Mr. Reed with the melancholy intelligence of the murder of Captain Austin, Mr. Daniel Wood, of Poughkeepsie, chief mate, Robert McKurks of this village, Robert Blaney and John Fowler, a colored seaman of this place, died of fever.

A part of the survivors, burying their dead companions in the sand of the beach, again took the yawl, and making another attempt, succeeded in getting through the surf and reaching the settlement on English River, from whence the boat was sent to the schooner, which returned with the sick that were left on board. The Governor subsequently dispatched a boat to the wreck with a crew of six or seven natives to save a portion of the cargo. It was loaded with the most valuable articles, but in returning the boat was swamped, and all on board perished.

Only three of the company survive—Charles Wilson (shipped in a foreign port), and David Baker, a lad, the only person living of the crew that left this village in 1839, who sailed on the English River Steamer Nemesis, and consequently got to the shore. A long-toned whale ship, which arrived last week, Baker got back to Newburgh last Thursday. David Reed the second mate, not having sufficiently recovered from his wounds at the fever, was left at Delago Bay. Captain Austin's faithful servant, who was caught by the citizens of Newburgh. They made several voyages in the ships Portland and Illinois, in the employ of the Newburgh Whaling Company.

On their return home from the last cruise of these ships, the crew were seized with a violent fever, the result of which are above related, and which until the schooner grounded at the bar of the river on her return, had been very successful; her cargo at the time being worth twenty or thirty thousand dollars. They had experienced no sickness on the coast until a few days previous to that unfortunate event. There was no insurance on the vessel or cargo, which was owned by the captain and Mr. Wood and two or three citizens of Newburgh.

The Legislature of Guadeloupe and Martinique (French Islands) is opposed to the emancipation of the slaves of those Islands, but the Governor has told them that it will be done *volens volens*.

The bill in the Virginia Legislature to prevent citizens of N. York from carrying slaves out of that Commonwealth, and to prevent the escape of persons charged with the commission of any crime, has become a law.

**An Unprofitable Business.**—The Paymaster General of the Missouri militia has made a report, in which he states, that he calls the *Mormon War*, cost of that state one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The Hon. Charles B. Penrose has resigned the office of Speaker of the Senate of Pennsylvania, and the Hon. John H. Ewing, of Washington County, has been elected Speaker in his place.

**Texan.**—The *Times* from Galveston, received at New Orleans, are to the 28th ult. According to the Bulletin of tranquility seems to prevail on the Texas frontier. The whole country is represented as improving rapidly. Agriculture is the order of the day. Great preparations are making for the cultivation of cotton. The recent establishment at Galveston and Houston of English mercantile houses, and the prices which are offered, have given a new impulse to the culture of that great staple.

The Galveston papers state that Col. Danglefield has been appointed chargé d'affaires to France, Judge Webb, Minister to Mexico; and General Green, chargé d'affaires to Spain.

The second man has left a wife in New York. Charles Davis, and Charles Thomas, and two seamen, were rescued, very much exhausted, by a boat from the ship—Am.

**Receipts of the American Colonization Society.** for the month ending February 20th, were \$3,254 56¢.

**Letter from Liberia.**—We have received a file of Africa's Luminary, published at Monrovia, to the beginning of January, brought by the bark Hobart, which arrived with colored emigrants, on the 24th of November. The whole country is represented as improving rapidly. Agriculture is the order of the day. Great preparations are making for the cultivation of cotton. The recent establishment at Galveston and Houston of English mercantile houses, and the prices which are offered, have given a new impulse to the culture of that great staple.

**Lancaster Co. Bank.**—The bill incorporating a Bank with this title, has passed both Houses of Penn. Legislature.

**Virginia and New York.**—Another step in the controversy—It appears from an official publication in the Richmond Whig dated Saturday, the 24th of April, that a man named Croxey, charged with forgery under the laws of New York, has been arrested in the State of Virginia; and further that the Executive of the former State has in the usual manner demanded his surrender. The answer of Gov. Graham is that "the demand for the prisoner is in proper form and will be complied with whenever a similar demand for the surrender of Peter Johnson, Edward Smith and Isaac Gansy, heretofore charged with felony under the laws of Virginia, shall be complied with by the governor and other authorities of the State of New York."

It is further ordered to be certified to the Governor of New York that measures will be taken for the detention of said Croxey for six months from the time of his arrest—a period which is believed to be long enough to enable the authorities of the State of New York to determine upon their course.

**Additional.**—A few days later, the Legislature of Virginia passed resolutions disapproving of the course of the Governor, which caused him immediately to resign his office. In the debate which took place on the subject, it is added that great unanimity prevailed, and the importance of the subject was fully appreciated by the Legislature.

**Robinson the murderer of Sydam** has been pronounced guilty.

**Presbyterian Law Suit.**—This was not reached at the late session of the Supreme Court.

#### Foreign News.

**Twenty-two days later from Europe.** The steamship Caledonia arrived at Boston at eleven o'clock A. M. on Saturday, having left Liverpool on the 4th inst. It brings news as late as the 3d inst. from which we call the following as of general interest:

In London the excitement was intense, when the news respecting the arrest and imprisonment of McLeod was promulgated, and the funds slightly declined in consequence.

It was rumored in Paris at the latest dates that the French Cabinet was disposed to offer their mediation to arrange the McLeod dispute with the United States. As the news of the suspension of the Philadelphia Banks had just reached Liverpool, and is announced without comment in the papers of that city, it is impossible to judge of the effect it has produced.

The bills on Messrs. Morrison drawn by the U. S. Bank, have been accepted, and a portion of them subsequently discounted by the Bank of England.

Sir Will Colebrooke is to succeed Sir John Harvey, as Governor of New Brunswick, who has been recalled. The *Thames* Tonnage is now 1128 3/4 tons in length, and the excavation for the shafts has been made to the depth of 23 feet, leaving only about 5 1/2 feet more to be completed.

From China there is nothing of much consequence. The overland mail had not arrived when the steamer left. From Syria, Egypt and Turkey, the news still wears a pacific aspect. Mehmet Ali, unable to resist the Allied Powers, appears disposed to put the best face upon affairs, and to submit with the best possible grace to an unpleasant necessity.

The news, so far as it goes, is pacific. There is certainly, nothing that would seem at all to threaten the present amicable relations of the European Powers. In the house of commons, on Monday, Lord Palmerston, said that he saw nothing which, in his apprehension, was likely to lead to the disturbance of the pacific relations between France and England.

The Emperor of Russia has decreed that the importation of grain duty free, which was permitted by the ukase dated June 21, 1840, shall be authorized on the same basis during the year 1841.

Germany still continues her warlike preparations, and without any apparent cause.

The Circassians are stated to have gained several important successes over their oppressors. One of the strongest forts of the Russians had fallen into their hands. The contest is said to have been long and desperate, after a desperate resistance, the whole of the Russian garrison was put to the sword.

The Sublime Porte announced, on the 4th in a proclamation, the conclusion of the Egyptian question. The Sultan expressed to Masloun Bey his satisfaction at the manner in which he had conducted the negotiations with Mehmet Ali.

The whole Ottoman fleet had reached the Bay of Marmore, and on the 15th a portion of it set sail for Constantinople. The rest was to have followed in a day or two.

**Loss of the Governor Fenner.**—One of the most awful collisions that ever took place at sea, happened on the morning of Saturday, 20th ult., about two o'clock. The American ship Governor Fenner, Capt. Andrews, left Liverpool the preceding day, about noon, with a crew of seventeen men, and one hundred and six stowage passages, consisting of men, women and children, and when off Holyhead, she came in collision with the steamer Nottingham, striking her amid-ship, and reducing her to a complete wreck. Contrary, however, to what might be expected, the vessel striking sustained great injury than the one struck. The Nottingham, though greatly injured, continued to float, and ultimately arrived in port; but the Governor Fenner was so dreadfully shattered, that she began to sink immediately, and in less than five minutes went to the bottom, engulfing in the waves not less than one hundred and twenty-two souls, and leaving only a few survivors belonging to the ship, were Capt. Andrews and the mate, who were both on deck when the vessels struck. The mate saved his life by jumping from the fore-yard-arm on the deck of the Nottingham, and the Captain after failing to jump on board the Nottingham, was taken up by a boat from the latter vessel, which was hanging from her side, just as his own vessel was going down. The shrieks of the unhappy passengers, who were roused from their beds by the shock, were most appalling; but in less than five minutes the vessel went down, carrying with it every soul on board.

#### Hymenial.

**Married.** On the 7th inst. by the Rev. A. P. Freese, Mr. GOTTLIEB STEINMETZ, to Miss MARY ELIZABETH FROCK. On the 10th, by the same, Mr. LEVI FROCK, to Miss AMANDA CARROLL, all of Frederick county, Md. On the 10th inst. in Great Falls, Pa., by the Rev. J. Rehoboth, Mr. JAMES BRUMBACK, to Miss MARY KINDEL, all of this county.

On the same day, by the same, Mr. WILLIAM ANGLE, to Miss SUSAN BOYMAN, of Peters township Franklin Co. Pa.

#### Obituary.

**Deceased this life.** On the 16th ult. Mr. SAMUEL BAKER, one of the oldest members of the German Reformed Church of the London Convention, (Va.) to which he was attached for many years. As a Christian, he was devoted and consistent. As a citizen, he was peaceable and happy in such relations. As a father, he was a devoted and successful one. Full of years and Christian hopes, he went down to his grave with much of his usual vigor. He was 74 years of age. He was born in Great Falls, Pa., on the 14th of April, 1767. He was married to Mrs. SARAH BAKER, on the 14th of April, 1790. He was a member of the German Reformed Church of the London Convention, (Va.) to which he was attached for many years. He was a devoted and consistent Christian, and a peaceable and happy citizen. He was a devoted and successful father. He was 74 years of age. He was born in Great Falls, Pa., on the 14th of April, 1767. He was married to Mrs. SARAH BAKER, on the 14th of April, 1790. He was a member of the German Reformed Church of the London Convention, (Va.) to which he was attached for many years. He was a devoted and consistent Christian, and a peaceable and happy citizen. He was a devoted and successful father. He was 74 years of age. He was born in Great Falls, Pa., on the 14th of April, 1767. He was married to Mrs. SARAH BAKER, on the 14th of April, 1790. He was a member of the German Reformed Church of the London Convention, (Va.) to which he was attached for many years. He was a devoted and consistent Christian, and a peaceable and happy citizen. He was a devoted and successful father. He was 74 years of age. He was born in Great Falls, Pa., on the 14th of April, 1767. He was married to Mrs. SARAH BAKER, on the 14th of April, 1790. He was a member of the German Reformed Church of the London Convention, (Va.) to which he was attached for many years. He was a devoted and consistent Christian, and a peaceable and happy citizen. He was a devoted and successful father. He was 74 years of age. He was born in Great Falls, Pa., on the 14th of April, 1767. He was married to Mrs. SARAH BAKER, on the 14th of April, 1790. He was a member of the German Reformed Church of the London Convention, (Va

