



The
CHRISTIAN TREASURY

CONTAINING

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MINISTERS AND MEMBERS
OF
VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS



1876.

EDINBURGH:
JOHNSTONE, HUNTER, & CO.
LONDON: GROOMBRIDGE & SONS.

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MDCCCLXXVI.

LYING NEWSPAPERS.

IF an individual makes a false statement, one or twenty persons may be damaged; but a newspaper of large circulation, that wilfully makes a misstatement, in one day tells fifty thousand falsehoods. The most stupendous of all lies is a newspaper lie.

A bad newspaper scruples not at any slander. It may be that, to escape the grip of the law, the paragraphs will be nicely worded, so that the suspicion is thrown out and the damage done without any exposure or peril. Year by year, thousands of men are crushed by the ink-roller. An unscrupulous man in the editorial chair may smite as with the wing of a destroying angel. What to him is commercial integrity, or professional reputation, or woman's honour, or woman's sanctity? It seems as if he held in his hand a hose with which, while all the harpies of sin were working at the pumps, he splashed the waters of death upon the best interests of society. The express-train in England halts not to take in water, but between the tracks there is a trough, one fourth of a mile in length, filled with water; and the engine drops a hose that catches up the water as the train flies. So with bad newspapers that fly along the track of death, without pausing a moment, yet scooping up into themselves the pollution of society, and in the awful rush making the earth tremble. The most abandoned men of the city may go to the bad newspaper and get a slander inserted about the best man. If he cannot do it in any other way, he can by means of an anonymous communication. Now, a man who, to injure another, will write an anonymous letter, is, in the first place, a coward, and, in the second place, a villain. Many of these offensive anonymous letters you see in the bad newspapers have been found to be written in the editorial chair.

The bad newspaper stops not at any political outrage. It would arouse a revolution, and empty the hearts of a million brave men in the trenches, rather than not have its own circulation multiply. What to it are the hard-earned laurels of the soldier or the exalted reputation of the statesman? They would, if they dared, blow up the Capitol of the nation if they could only successfully carry off the frieze of one of the corridors. There are enough falsehoods told at any one of our autumnal elections to make the 'Father of Lies' disown his monstrous progeny. Now it is the Mayor, then the Governor, now the Secretary of State, and then the President, until the air is so full of misrepresentation that truth is hidden from the view, as beautiful landscapes by the clouds of summer insects blown up from the marshes.

The immoral newspaper stops not at an unclean advertisement. It is so much for

so many words, and in such a sheet it will cost no more to advertise the most impure book than the new edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. A book, such as no decent man would touch, was a few months ago advertised in a New York paper, and the getter-up of the book, passing down one of our streets, the other day, acknowledged to one of my friends that he had made 18,000 dollars out of the enterprise. In one column of a paper we sometimes see a grand ethical discussion, and in another the droppings of most accursed nastiness. Oh! you cannot, by all your religion in one column, atone for your abominations in another!

I am rejoiced that some of our papers have addressed those who have proposed to compensate them for bad use of their columns in the words of Peter to Simon Magus: 'Thy money perish with thee!' But I arraign the newspapers that give their columns to corrupt advertising for the nefarious work they are doing. The most polluted plays that ever oozed from the poisonous pen of leprous dramatists have won their deathful power through the medium of newspapers; the evil is stupendous!

O ye reckless souls! GET MONEY—though morality dies, and society is dishonoured, and God defied, and the doom of the destroyed opens before you—GET MONEY! Though the melted gold be poured upon your naked, blistered, and consuming soul—GET MONEY! GET MONEY! It will do you good when it begins to eat like a canker! It will solace the pillow of death, and soothe the pangs of an agonized eternity! Though in the game thou dost stake thy soul, and lose it for ever—*get money!*

The bad newspaper hesitates not to assault Christianity and its disciples. With what exhilaration it puts in capitals, that fill one-fourth of a column, the defalcation of some agent of a benevolent society! There is enough meat in such a carcass of reputation to gorge all the carrion-crows of an iniquitous printing-press. They put upon the back of the Church all the inconsistencies of hypocrites—as though a banker were responsible for all the counterfeits upon his institution. They jeer at religion; and lift up their voices until all the caverns of the lost resound with the howl of their derision. They forget that Christianity is the only hope for the world, and that but for its enlightenment they would now be like Hottentots, living in mud hovels, or like the Chinese, eating rats. What would you think of a wretch who, during a great storm, while the ship was being tossed to and fro on the angry waves, should climb up into the light-house, and blow out the light? And what do you think of these men, who, while all the Christian and the

glorious institutions of the world are being tossed and driven hither and thither, are trying to climb up and put out the only light of a lost world?

The bad newspaper stops not at publishing the most damaging and unclean story. The only question is: 'Will it pay?' And there are scores of men who, day by day, bring into the newspaper-offices manuscripts for publication which unite all that is pernicious; and before the ink is fairly dry, tens of thousands are devouring with avidity the impure issue.

Their sensibility deadened, their sense of right perverted, their purity of thought tarnished, their taste for plain life despoiled—the printing-press, with its iron foot, hath dashed their life out! While I speak, there are many people, with feet on the ottoman, and the gas turned on, looking down on the page, submerged, mind and soul, in the perusal of this God-forsaken periodical literature; and the Sabbath hours will be gone, and the last Church-psalm float into the skies, and the last Christian mother have put the hands of the little child under the coverlet for the night, before they will rise up, as the city clock strikes the hour of midnight, to go death-struck to their prayerless pillows. One of the proprietors of a great paper in this country gave his advice to a young man then about to start a paper: 'If you want to succeed,' said he, 'make your paper "trashy" intensely "trashy"—make it all "trash!"' Brilliant advice to a young man just entering business! It is very often that, as a paper purifies itself, its circulation decreases, and sometimes when a paper becomes positively religious, it becomes bankrupt, unless some benevolent and Christian men come up to sustain it by contributions of money and means. Not more than five or six religious newspapers in this country are self-supporting. The reason is, the country cannot stand so much religion. Hear it! Christian men and philanthropists!

Many papers that are most rapidly increasing to-day are unscrupulous. The facts are

momentous and appalling. And to-day I put young men and women, and Christian parents and guardians on the lock-out. This stuff cannot be handled without pollution. Away with it from parlour, and shop, and store! There is so much newspaper literature that is pure, and cheap, and elegant; shove back this leprosy from your door. Mark it well: A man is no better than the newspaper he habitually reads. You may think it a bold thing thus to arraign an unprincipled printing-press, but I know there are those here who will take my counsel, and in the discharge of my duty to God and His people, I defy all the hostilities of earth and hell!

I see before me many of the representatives of the secular and religious Press. I thank you, in the name of Christianity and civilisation, for the enlightenment of ignorance, the overthrow of iniquity, and the words you have uttered in the cause of God and your country. But I charge you, in the name of God, before whom you must account for the tremendous influence you hold in this country, to consecrate yourselves to higher endeavours. You are the men to fight back this invasion of corrupt literature. Lift up your right hand, and swear new allegiance to the cause of Philanthropy and Religion? And when at last, standing on the Plains of Judgment, you look out upon the unnumbered throngs over whom you have had influence, may it be found that you were among the mightiest energies that lifted men upon the exalted pathway that leads to the renown of heaven. Better than to have sat in an editorial chair, from which, with the finger of type, you decided the destinies of empires, but decided them wrong, that you had been some dungeoned exile, who, by light of window, iron-grated, on scraps of a New Testament leaf, picked up from the hearth, spelled out the story of Him who taketh away the sins of the world.

IN ETERNITY, DIVES IS THE BEGGAR!

—Talmage.

PRAY FOR THE STANDARD-BEARERS.

IT is sometimes the case that Christians forget to pray for those who really most need the help of their prayers. They look upon them as strong, and as needing no assistance. They think of their talents and abilities, of the works which they have done, and of the influence which they wield, and say, 'Surely they have no need of any help from such weak ones as I!'

But greatness is no guarantee of goodness. Strong men have strong passions; great men have great faults. The man who to-day seems adequate to every emergency, capable of meeting and confounding every foe, may, by the subtle influence of temptation, before another morning dawns, be smitten, wounded, and destroyed. The fight rages most fiercely where the banners wave above the fray; and those

who have been set forth in the providence of God, and by the call of His Church, to bear the standard in the fight of faith, of all persons, need the earnest, sympathetic, prayerful help of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Many have fallen, and many now are trembling on the verge of overthrow. Pressed down with burdens, afflicted in various ways, tempted, tried, flattered, and praised, unless God interpose it is a wonder that their lives are not an utter failure, and the hopes of those who love them wrecked in ruin and despair.

Let Christians remember the standard-bearers, those who lead the van, those who mould and guide the opinions of others, and who shape the sentiment which rules the hour. Let them be faithful to God in all they are called to do, and let us pray for them, that fulfilling all His will, they may be accepted in His sight at last.