

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

"A day's march nearer home."

"Here in the body pent,
Absent from heaven I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
—A day's march nearer home."

Nearer home; Nearer home!
However dark and lonely
The path through which we roam.
This is a journey only;
And though we oft, affrighted,
Shrink back with sigh and moan,
Our camp-fires still are lighted
—A day's march nearer home."

Nearer home! Nearer home!
Oh, joy beyond expressing!
That over thorn and stone,
Our feet are homeward pressing;
For though we leave behind us
Some buds of Hope unblown,
The sunset still doth find us
—A day's march nearer home."

Nearer home! Nearer home!
O "many-mansioned" dwelling!
Beneath thy shining dome,
No tides of grief are swelling;
And toward thy fadeless glory
With eager haste we come,
Repeating earth's brief story,
—A day's march nearer home."

Nearer home! Nearer home!
Soon, through its open portals,
The ransomed hosts will come,
To welcome us immortals.
Then be the path before us
With wrecks or roses strewn,
Each night we'll sing in chorus,
—A day's march nearer home."

Selections.

Three more Saved!

The wreck of the ill-fated steamship, *Central America*, is yet fresh in the recollection of all. A few days after that startling event, which sent hundreds to a watery grave, and plunged the nation in grief, a pilot-boat was seen, on a fair, breezy morning, standing up the Bay of New York. With every sail set, and streamers flying, she leaped along the waters as if buoyant with some great joy; while the glad winds that swelled her canvas, and the sparkling waves that kissed her sides, and urged her on the way, seemed to laugh with conscious delight. As she drew nearer, an unusual excitement was visible on her deck; and her captain, running out to the extreme point of the bowsprit, and swinging his cap, appeared to be shouting something with intense earnestness and animation. At first, the distance prevented his being distinctly understood. But soon, as the vessel came farther into the harbour, the words, "Three more saved! Three more saved!" reached the highest listeners. They were caught up by the crews of the multitudinous ships that lay anchored around, and sailors sprang wildly into the rigging, and shouted, "Three more saved!" They were heard on the wharves; and the porter threw down his load, and the drayman stopped his noisy cart, and shouted "Three more saved!" The tidings ran along the street; and newsboys left off crying the last murder, and shouted, "Three more saved!" Busy salesmen dropped their goods, book-keepers their pens, bankers their discounts, tellers their gold, and merchants, hurrying on the stroke of the last hour of grace to pay their notes, paused in their headlong haste, and shouted, "Three more saved!" Louder and louder grew the cry. Faster and faster it spread—along the crowded piers of the Hudson and the East River—up by the graves of Trinity, the hotels of Broadway, the marble palaces of the Fifth Avenue—over the Heights of Brooklyn—across to Hoboken and Jersey City—away, beyond tower and pinnacle, beyond mansion and temple, beyond suburb and hamlet—till a million hearts pulsed with its thrill, and above all the sounds of the vast metropolis, mightier than all, hushing all, rose the great exultant shout, "Three more saved!"

What a striking conception does this fact give us of the rapture of angels at the recovery of the lost! If cold and selfish men will

thus stop short in the eager quest of gain or pleasure, to let the voice of humanity speak out, and to express their joy that three fellow-beings have been rescued from the ocean's depths, shall we deem it an incredible thing, that the holy and benevolent inhabitants of heaven should rejoice when a sinner repents, and is delivered from the abyss of hell?

Events, analogous to that which has been described, though unseen by mortal eye, and unheard by mortal ear, are constantly taking place in our world. Angel messengers—blest pilots from the haven of Eternal Peace—are ever visiting the earth on errands of mercy. They come, not to note the changes in secular affairs, the ebb and flow of temporal weal, the vicissitudes of politics, and the revolutions of states; but to watch the conflict of God's Spirit with impenitence and sin. Wherever that conflict is going on, thither they bend their flight, there they fix their steadfast gaze. No matter whether the individual in whose bosom it is waged be high or low, rich or poor. He may be a prince or a peasant, a Dives or a Lazarus, a lord in his hall, a beggar in his garret, a slave in his chains. Whoever he be, he has a soul, an immortal soul—a soul for which the Powers of Heaven and of Hell are battling—and that is enough. With absorbing interest they observe the struggle. While they look, kingdoms may arise and fall, statesmen win and lose, fortunes spring up and crumble, financial disaster stride through the nations, and gaunt famine scare the world. But they heed it not. A soul, a soul is in the crisis of its destiny; and that is infinitely more important, in their view, than any crisis of commerce or of empire. On that soul they fasten all their regards. They see it resisting. They see it wavering. They see it shaken and convulsed. They see it conquered. They see it fall prostrate before the cross. They see the tear of contrition drop from the eye. They hear the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," burst from the heaving breast. And then their golden wings rustle. Up, up toward heaven they mount with the joyful message, "One more saved!" Other celestial bands, returning from similar errands, join them on the way, and help to swell the shout, "One more saved!" Up, up goes the shining squadron—by stars and planets—beyond suns and systems—up, up to the great Capital of the Universe—ever chanting as it goes, "One more saved!" The watchers on the crystal battlements catch the news, and proclaim it to the listening throngs within. They publish it in turn. Angel tells it to angel, prophet to prophet, apostle to apostle, martyr to martyr, saint to saint. Choirs of harpers sing it to each other from the hill-tops of glory. On, on the tidings fly—over the flowery plains—along the banks of the River of Life—along the sapphire pavements—by the emerald palaces—through glittering ranks of Cherubim and Seraphim—up to the very Throne of Divinity itself—till all heaven echoes and throbs with the mighty anthem, "One more saved!" And thus "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

And there should be joy—joy deeper and more emphatic still on earth. The sinner who repents is our brother, allied to us by the bond of a common nature. We, like him, are guilty and condemned. The same spiritual change which he has felt we must feel, or be undone forever. The same Saviour who died for him died for us. To the same heaven to which he is going we may also go. And in the same hell which he has escaped, we must take up our everlasting abode, if we die impenitent. O, how strange it is that an event, which fills the glorified above with ravishing delight, should be unnoticed by men below, or be regarded with indifference and contempt! And stranger still is it, that they who profess to have repented themselves, should manifest so little interest in the repentance of their fellows, and put forth so few exertions to promote it. Christians! imitate the angels. Rejoice, as they rejoice, when a sinner is converted to God. Long, as they long, that multitudes may be brought to accept His salvation. And, in the strength of His grace, pray and labor for the coming of the day when both they and you shall lift up the song of thanksgiving over not merely one sinner, but a world of sinners, repentant, converted, saved.—*Examiner.*

Our Prayer Meeting.

We were troubled sadly in our church about our dull conference meetings. Our Friday evening meetings dragged on heavily, the very atmosphere of the room seeming to be laden with soporifics. Our pastor tried in vain to infuse some liveliness into them. After he had finished reading the Scriptures and had made a short address, we usually waited two or three minutes, when brother A. would slowly rise, as if to a disagreeable but necessary task, and make a prayer full of lamentations over the spiritual deadness of our Zion, the lukewarmness and the worldliness of the church, and the unfortunate condition of things generally. He through, there would follow another pause, when, at the solicitation of the pastor, Dea. B. would arise, and talk of the former times when Christians were full of zeal and rich in spirituality, and compare them with these latter days when the church was cold and dead, and then very lugubriously, and as if only half in earnest, would call upon the brethren to come up to the work of the Lord. Perhaps I myself would come next, getting up with a long face, and speaking with a solemn, stomatic voice, for a long time, maybe, to make up for the deficiency of soul and matter in what I said. And so we dragged on, really thinking that we were under the frown of heaven, and that the times were out of joint. The young people would not come to meetings, and often their elders would magnify slight colds and rheumatisms into sufficient causes for staying at home. What to do we did not know; but each one came to the conclusion that his brethren were to blame and that the reason he was lukewarm was that the others were so cold as to render it impossible to get up an enthusiasm. We were really hardly off.

At length there came to our town a Welshman, who set up a little shoe store and ran out a modest sign, intimating that John Wells was ready to make boots and shoes at low rates, and cobble old ones for the people of Slowtown. It was in December, and our prayer meeting on the Friday of the week of the new shoemaker's appearance promised to rival the Winter atmosphere in its chilling coldness. But twelve persons were present, and of that number who should make one but John Wells, a short, stubbed man, looking mightily in earnest. We went on in our usual way. Dea. B., brother A., brother C., all deplored in solemn accents the spiritual dearth of the times. In fact, the substance of the whole was a dissatisfied moan. I noticed that John Wells sat uneasily while the brethren were painting everything in such somber colors, and asserting that God had hidden His face from us. And just as I had finished my usual wail, up rose in haste the sturdy Welshman.

"Where am I?" he exclaimed quite excitedly and with the true Welsh accent. "Where am I? Is this a Christian meeting? Are these converted men? my brothers? and have they no faith? God's face behind a cloud? No, no, you're in the cloud! God is here, but, you won't look to see Him. God is waiting to help you, but you haven't faith enough to go to work and let Him help you. I'm a poor man, not one year knowing my Father, and yet I never asked Him without an answer, and you who have been with Him this many a year think He's behind the cloud and will not hear prayer! O, where's your faith?"

And John went on to tell how God had answered the prayers of such a sinner as he; how He had enabled him to bear affliction, how He had blessed his labors and surrounded his humble fireside with converted children. He denied that Zion was slumbering and told how God was answering prayer in many places, and read a touching letter from a sister in his native land, telling how glorious were the manifestations of Divine power in Wales.

As he went on his simple eloquence touched our hearts, and when he had finished one after another rose, some with tears, to confess their lack of faith and zeal, and instead of throwing the blame on others' shoulders each was emulous to bear it himself. We saw that the trouble was in our lack of faith, and we boldly asked for more and expected more than we had for years. And God was indeed among the two or three gathered in that little room in His name, and now for the first time in

many months, really aware of their strength, and prevailing power.

John Wells' faith had saved the church. His confident assurance of faith became infectious, and we all dared ask for mighty things, and anticipate the fulfilment of our prayers.

We talked much of the meeting during the week, and on Sunday our pastor stirred our hearts with a powerful sermon. Our next prayer meeting was a fuller one, and the spirit of the Lord seemed to be indeed among us. In the general desire for speaking and praying we had to cut ourselves off to short, pointed exhortations and brief prayers. So we went on, every week the meeting growing larger until the room was crowded, and we were no longer content with one meeting a week, but assembled every night for prayer. Many new voices were heard and we trust many souls have been born into life in that room now glorious with the evidences of the presence of the Spirit.

Seven converts are now waiting to put on their Lord in baptism, and many hearts are awakened. May the Lord still be with us, or rather may we still have faith to draw near Him and importune His presence and His blessing.—*SAMUEL in N. Y. Chronicle.*

The candor of Bible Representations.

THERE is a stern frankness which pervades the whole of the Bible. There is no design to flatter men into the reception of religion. But all the difficulties, crosses, and trials are stated and kept prominent, with that honesty which comports well with the dignity and holiness of the author of the Scriptures.

In human writings there is a tendency to keep back the dark shades of any subject, and render as brilliant as possible the bright side. If a friend delineate the character of a friend we have come to expect that his virtues will be overdrawn, and his defects covered as with a mantle of charity.

If an army is to be recruited with soldiers, we hear of the splendor of arms, and the glories of victory, and the rewards of service; but little or nothing is said of the privations of home—of the bleeding hearts of mothers, sisters and wives; nothing of the sufferings of hunger, or the fatigues of the march, or the corruptions of the camp;—and if the battle-field must be mentioned, it is done so as, if possible, to excite the ambition of the heart, rather than to set in honest light the horrors of the field of blood and of death. So with any enterprise; its importance and beneficial results are portrayed in glowing colors, while its difficulties and losses and crosses are kept comparatively out of sight.

But far from this do we find the writings of inspired men. They, it is true, have presented us with a most interesting collection of biography; characters of individuals and communities are there faithfully delineated. Their beauties and blemishes—their virtues and defects, are placed side by side. The gospel would persuade men to enlist themselves under the banner of the Prince of Peace; but in doing it, it exhorts them to count the cost, assuring them that it will require sacrifice; and if they are not cheerful to make that sacrifice, they had better not put their hand to the plow.

The Bible is full of enterprise. It presents schemes as vast as eternity—and riches as durable as the throne of God—and honors as splendid as the kings and the priests of the Most High enjoy, thus making every variety of appeal to the enthusiasm of the human soul. Yet it does not speak of its schemes of vastness, except it also as faithfully speaks of the difficulties of encompassing them; or, of its infinite riches which it has to bestow, except its poverty and crosses are faithfully shown or yet of its dazzling honors except it point to its struggles with every foe, even with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

How illustrative of these remarks is the language of our Saviour: "There is no man who hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."