

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Something for Jesus.

Saviour! thy dying love
Thou gavest me;
Nor should I aught withhold.
Dear Lord from Thee,
My soul would humbly bow,
My heart fulfil thy vow,
Some off'ring bring Thee now,
Something for Thee.

O'er the blest mercy-seat,
Pleading for me,
My feeble faith looks up,
Jesus, to Thee,
Help me the cross to bear,
Thy wondrous love declare,
Some song, to raise, or prayer,
Something for Thee.

Give me a faithful heart—
Likeness to Thee.
That each departing day
Henceforth may see
Some work of love begun,
Some deed of kindness done,
Some sinful wanderer won—
Something for Thee.

• May be sung to the air of "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Religious.

Harvesting.

THE PROPER TIME FOR FAITH.

Everybody is glad in the harvest time. It is such a time of blessing; so many hearts are lifted up in thankfulness to the God who has given his sun and shower in their time, and brought the fruits of the earth to perfection. Rich and poor, many alike join in the song, "The eyes of all wait upon Thee, Thou givest them their meat in due season."

Of course there are cares, and sorrows, and anxieties, even in the harvest time—our burdens are as heavy as we can bear them, without any reference to the time of the year. And sometimes there is an increase of trouble when we least expect it.

It had been a fine summer, and the harvest of 18—drew near. The farmers were in good spirits, every one expected to do well, and have filled barns; and the poor man looked forward to his cheap loaf with very great satisfaction.

Stephen Smith was a farmer in a small way. He had had many a struggle to maintain his farm and keep his wife and children in comfort. It had been uphill work with him for many years, but now that the crops were in such condition and the harvest bade fair to be better than the average, he was looking up and rejoicing.

"We will begin to-morrow," he said one night, to his men, "we have fine weather, and will lose no time, no one can tell how soon a change may come."

They did begin on the morrow, and Farmer Smith had his corn about half out when the weather became wet, and thoroughly unsettled. Day after day there were either showers, or continuous rains; day after day he looked at the weather glass and rode over his field with a very sad and woe-begone countenance. The sheaves were soaking, the ground sodden beneath them, and still the rain kept steadily on.

"I have given up hope now," he said to his wife one day; "where is the use of hoping when nothing comes but disappointment?"

"Do not give up praying, Stephen," said she.

"Well, and what good will that do? Every day since we sowed that corn, I have prayed that it might be a good harvest and that I might be enabled to pay every man his due. You don't know how I have looked forward to this, how I have watched and trusted, and prayed—aye and I believed as well."

"But now is the time for faith," Stephen thought over this last remark when next he rode among his corn, and he was forced to acknowledge the truth of it. It was no great trial of faith, when the sun shone and all went well, but now—

Smith was a christian man, and strove to do the right. He prayed once more, and this time it was "Lord, give me faith to trust Thee."

And that prayer was answered. "It will be all right somehow," he said to himself when the mornings were wet and the evenings foggy. "It will be all made up to us, wife," and she was sure of it, though her own heart was heavy, and her smile very forced sometimes.

Well, the weather changed at last, and the corn was gathered in, and it was found that after all it did not seem to be at all injured. Smith had never before such corn as he took to the market that year, he had never realized such good prices, had never felt his heart so turned to the Father of all good.

The Bible Solution.

The idea of humanity is one of the most beautiful and one of the truest ideas of our time, because in its genuine form it is a Christian idea, although some have often and greatly wrested it from its Christian foundation, and have misused and perverted it. But in its proper scope the idea of humanity is co-extensive with the unity of the human race. All men are brothers. It is the violation of this consciousness, the violation of man's dignity, which so shocks us in the slavery of the negro race, and which urged, for example, an Alexander von Humboldt to exert himself against it to his life's end. The same principle of our nature, transferred from social to international relations, gives to noble minds such a passion for the idea of universal peace, for the fraternization of nations, and causes war, the mutual slaughter of nations, to appear, not in its consequences only, but in its very nature, as something horrible, and that ought not to be. And though peace congresses, and schemes of that nature may be only chimeras now, yet a new age of the world will come, when men shall change their swords into ploughshares.

The contrast between this ideal of the unity of our race and the present reality is a painful one to contemplate. Humanity has been split into a variety of nations, each one of which forms an exclusive whole by itself; they understand each other neither externally nor internally, neither in language nor religion. Nay, for the most part, each nation despises all others in comparison with itself as barbarian, and treats them as enemies, and considers itself alone as the middle kingdom. The egotism which we regard in individuals as the root of sin, is found among nations, in general, more sharply defined than in single instances. This fact agrees as little with the notion of a true humanity in the one case as in the other; it is something abnormal, but at the same time humiliating, it is guilt, but at the same time punishment. The great majority of the nations stand upon a step of existence so low that it hardly deserves to be called human. And who has not felt it to be like a curse resting upon the most cultivated nations, to find when he has been with "strangers," and was conscious of an inward harmony with them, that he could only imperfectly at best communicate his thoughts and feelings? Humanity at present fails to give scope and activity to the common life, instead of being a living organism, putting the parts into joyous sympathy with each other, it consists of disrupted members.

If we are really in earnest about these thoughts, as we should be where the question concerns what ought to be, and what is, we must infer that there was some original transgression of our race by which its organism became rent and divided. We are led, then, to interrogate history, to ask the old tradition if it knows of any such event in the infancy of mankind. Here Genesis presents to us the tower of Babel as the solution of the riddle. It shows us, in the case of Noah and his descendants, that the Creator's design at the beginning was, that men should unfold an organic unity of life though separated locally from each other; but the entire race conspired

together to thwart this purpose. Instead of seeking an inner unity in God, they sought an outer one in a visible, colossal work of their own hands, and, in consequence of this, God, by confounding their language, caused the dispersion and disruption of mankind to take the place of the diffusion without division, which should have been their destiny. In tearing themselves away from God, in the heaven-daring act of the building of the tower, they lost also themselves. Only in God, who, as the ground of life, is also the bond of life to all creatures, could they be one and duly manifold, according to their true nature. In tearing asunder the bond of unity with God, they tore asunder likewise the bond of unity which links the members with one another; for which reason, on the other hand, the reconciliation of men with God is their reconciliation with one another. There was now strictly no mankind any longer, but only nations, which God left to go their own way. But every falling away from God is, at the same time, a falling under the dominion of the world and its princes. So it is here. The nations, left to themselves, came under the controlling influence of the powers of nature, of climate, soil, and other physical elements, to which they could no longer offer a sufficiently strong countervailing energy from within. Out of this fact are to be explained the great diversities of races; the circumstance that only a small part of mankind, relatively, attain to historical importance, namely, the nations that dwell in the temperate zones, while the hot and cold regions hinder so much the development of the inhabitants that they are degraded to a half-brutish existence; and finally all the separations and exclusive limitations, egotisms and hostilities of nations, of which we have spoken above.—Dr. Hackett, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*.

The four precious things of the Apostle Peter.

I. "Precious Blood." (1 Pet. i: 19)

Precious, because he who shed it is the mighty God and the sinless man; because infinite love was in it; because without it sin could never be forgiven, lost sinners never saved, and God never reconciled. Precious, because every soul sprinkled with it shall be eternally safe from the glittering sword of God's vengeance. Of its preciousness the white-robed multitude will ever sing before the throne of God.

II. "Precious Jesus." (1 Pet. ii: 7)

Precious, because he is the brightness of the Father's glory; because he is "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh;" because all the majesty of Divinity, all the tenderness of perfect humanity, meet in him; because in his person and in his work there is exact suitability to meet the need of ruined souls and trusting saints. He is the "one pearl of great price,"—the "chiefest among ten thousand,"—the "altogether lovely" One. His holiness, his power, his love, his grace—precious, his living, his dying, his interceding, his second coming—are precious. So exceeding precious is he to believing hearts, that to all eternity they will gaze upon it, and tell it out, and yet leave its depth unfathomed.

III. "Precious Faith." (2 Pet. i: 1)

Precious, because it is the hand that clings to a precious Christ—the eye that gazes upon him through the mists and vapors that darken this vale of tears. Precious, because it draws the soul into communion with its risen Head. Precious, because it rests upon the sure foundation of the truth of a covenant-keeping God. Precious, because it looks "not at the things which are seen," often so troublous and so dark; but "at the things which are not seen,"—the "fulness of joy," which is at God's "right hand for evermore."

IV. "Precious Promises." (2 Pet. i: 4)

Precious, because they are very many, and their clusters are very sweet. Pardon for the guilty, strength for the weak, comfort for the mourner,—yes, every good and perfect gift that hungry, weary, thirsty souls can need are wrapped up in these "precious promises." They shine forth through the Word, as brilliant stars shine out at midnight. They rejoice the heart as fair flowers charm the weary wanderer over a desert way.

Precious, because they are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." The believer's heritage of promise in all its rich unfailing abundance can never be forfeited.

The world's gems tarnish; earth's fairest flowers droop and die; but these precious things of the apostle, possessed by the soul, make it rich and joyful for ever.—*British Herald*.

The House of God.

A meeting house comes to have life, a biography of its own. It enters so much into the life of successive generations of worshippers, it is so invested with their feeling, it so invests itself in their desire and reverence, Sabbaths have dropped into it such precious deposits, that its dead wood becomes vital and redolent with spiritual qualities. Its beginnings, its improvements, its decays, take all the interest of a human history from the uses it serves, and the spiritual facts, it represents,—from the purposes it embodies, and the persons whose religious life it nourishes. Like a person, it gathers character, influence, associations, history, even love, as it does spiritual offspring with years. It stands a venerable witness of the changes and fortunes of society, to whose stability and better life it has been a minister. It is born of the religious spirit of a people and lives out of their deepest life; it draws their frequent feet to its doors; it is the great minister to their moral wants and education; it becomes involved with their history, and is part even of their material civilization. It is the house of the soul, the meeting-place of the finite and infinite, "the gate of heaven." It is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. It is dedicated to Christ and his holy, ever coming, everlasting kingdom. And so by all that goes into it, and all that comes out of it; by what we give and what we take; because so much of our best affections are invested in it; because it is built, not in the earth, but really in the imperishable needs of our spiritual nature, in the eternal laws of our moral and immortal life; because it stands in the world for God, for his truth, for righteousness, for a world to come, because it has a voice and speaks from God to men, and back from men to God; by all the privileges and ministry it is; by the light and comfort and benefit there is in it; by all the part it has in our Christian faith, and through that, in our better hours and our nobler life; by all it has cost from beginning to end, as well as by all it has accomplished, by all the influence it has had on the life going on around it, as well as by the life, the religion, the church which has grown up within it, does the history of a meeting-house take into itself an interest corresponding.—*Dr. Caldwell*.

Was Milton a Baptist?

John Milton was born Dec. 1608, and received a thorough education at Christ's College, Cambridge. He was early distinguished as a linguist. At the age of 15, he wrote his translation from the Hebrew of the 114th and 136th Psalms; and before he was 19, composed various elegies and other poems, in Latin verse, which were highly applauded. Of his fame as a poet, in subsequent years, we need not speak. During the turbulent period of the civil wars, and Cromwell's protectorate, his muse was silent, and his writings were in favor of republicanism, and the freedom of the press, and against Episcopacy. In 1649, he became "Secretary for Foreign Tongues," being a fluent writer, not only in Latin, but in French and Italian. On the restoration of the monarchy, he retired to private life and literary pursuits, and published *Paradise Lost*, the *History of England*, a Latin work on Logic, and a book against Popery, entitled *The True Religion*. His great work on *Christian Doctrine* was published after his death, which occurred November, 1674.

The question, often asked, "Was Milton a Baptist?" seems to be set at rest by the Rev. S. Manning, in the introduction to a work, published in London, a few years ago, entitled "Selections from the prose writings of John Milton," from which we extract what follows: It had always been thought, from various