

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### The Winter is past.

"The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come."

The winter is past! oh, the beautiful earth  
Smiles on its welcoming gladness to-day,  
And the sweet air is stirred with the music of mirth,  
And the laughter of childhood enjoying its play.

The winter is past! and God's wonderful wand  
Has awakened dead things to a newness of life;  
And wild flowers spring up as He walks through the land,  
And the anthems of praise rise instead of the strife.

The winter is past! and God's bountiful sun  
Kisses warmly all things as they grow in his sight  
Till the gladness instead of the sorrow is won,  
And the whole world is flooded with richness and light.

The winter is passed! Oh, ye who have sighed  
In darkness and winter, and scenes of decay,  
Come forth in the light of the spring to abide;  
Pass on in content to the brilliance of day.

The winter is past! but the glad summer time  
Is for work and endeavor, enjoyment and love;  
Oh, Christians, toil on, till the hours are sublime  
With noble work brought to the Father above.

The winter is past! and know in your tears,  
Oh, children of sorrow, that soon you shall be  
In the land where no winter may touch the fair years—  
Your land and your Father's—the home of the free.

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Pen Sketches.—No. 3.

#### CAUTIOUS PERSONS

Are generally *observing*, looking at the probable consequences of this, or that line of conduct. In some cautious persons may be found an element of *suspicion*, supposing something wrong about their fellow-men—often they are slow in making up their minds, and very tardy to commit themselves to any particular side. Some are cautious of their words, lest they should offend, this is not to be despised. Others are cautious of friendship making, lest they should be deceived, this is often necessary. Then there are those who are cautious in the bestowal of their charity, lest they should bestow on unworthy objects, for example—a gentleman saw a pious benevolent lady about to bestow charity upon a poor beggar—remarked it would be better to withhold it, supposing he was an unworthy object. The Christian lady well replied "It we must suppose anything—don't you think we had better suppose good things of our fellow-men, than bad ones," and followed up her remark by her benevolence. How many fallen ones now in the world would have occupied a better position if the lady's supposition had been acted upon instead of the cautious gentleman's.

Caution is no doubt a very desirable element in one's character, but when it is based on suspicion of the motives of others, and interwoven with a strong love of self and planning for self interest, then it ought to be struggled against and battled down.

Would that all my readers were cautious of offending God, dishonouring Christ, grieving the Holy Spirit and injuring the cause of truth and humanity.

JOHN.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Thoughts on Theology.

#### No. VII.

#### THE PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION.

#### Practice.

My Dear Sir,—

In the patriarchal theology we have the thoughts of those ancient men, as far as they are known, concerning God. Their conduct towards God was their *religion*. The one influenced the other.

Nothing can be more expressive than the

brief description of Enoch's piety;—he "walked with God." The same statement is made respecting Noah. What a world of meaning is conveyed in those words! What acknowledgement of God in all things! What holy delight in him! What heavenly communications—the uprisings of gratitude, and desire, and joy—the downpourings of blessing, in all its varied forms—all that is included in the phrase, "fellowship with God!"

We know nothing of the religious services of those days—that is, of their details; but it may be safely inferred from the brief notices we have that a sublime simplicity distinguished them all. Wherever a patriarch pitched his tent, "he builded an altar, and called on the name of the Lord." As the smoke of the sacrifice ascended, the solemn utterances of prayer and thanksgiving were heard, and the assembled families united in imploring God's favor, celebrating his bounties, and praising him with joyful lips, it may be also to the strains of primitive music, under the direction of the "Jubals" of that period.

The themes of the celebrations were peculiar to the times and circumstances. They glorified God in his works. His voice was heard in the thunder. His goodness and wisdom, displayed in the provision made for all creatures, and the marvellous adjustment of things to the purposes and ends of their being, called forth admiration and excited satisfying trust. Almighty power was contemplated, not merely as implying power to crush and destroy, but as offering refuge, strength, support and comfort to feeble and sorrowful souls. They regarded his justice with profound awe, for it had been fearfully manifested at the time of the deluge, and in the destruction of the cities on the plain; and when they bowed before the holy God, the "Judge of all the earth," they acknowledged that He always did right, however heavy the penal infliction might be. They loved also to hymn forth his faithfulness and truth.—Whatever deceit and treachery they might endure at the hands of their fellow-men, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob was unchangeable. With Him there was no "variableness or shadow of turning."

Their strong love was shown in the prompt obedience which they rendered to divine commands. They did not hesitate a moment. It was enough that God spake. Amid the scoffs and jeers of the ungodly multitudes that thronged around him and his workmen, Noah dragged the timber to the spot where the ark was to be built—framed it and fashioned it according to the instructions he had received—and made no secret of the use to which it was to be applied:—"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he;" Genesis vi. 22. A still more illustrious instance was that of the father of the faithful. When the mysterious and seemingly cruel order was given to "take his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there," there was neither doubt nor delay; "Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him;" Gen. xxii. 2, 3. When God reminded Jacob of his vow which he had forgotten, and charged him to go at once to Bethel and fulfil it, he did not falter, though there was reason to fear that the avengers of blood might pursue him, for the murders which his sons had perpetrated at Shechem. God called;—he must obey God;—it would be safe to obey. And it was; "the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob;" Gen. xxxv. 15.

Equally remarkable was their confidence in the divine administration. They "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief," though the thing was hard and the time appointed long. They could walk and work—and wait. They believed all God had said, and expected all he had promised, and looked for the accomplishment of his purposes. Their faith "laughed at impossibilities." No such word was found in the vocabularies of that age. If dispensations were dark, they held that God meant all for good, and would bring it to pass. How noble are

Job's words, "Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; but he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold;" Job xxiii. 8-10.

Family religion was practised and inculcated. God himself bore testimony to Abraham's care in this respect;—"I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment;"—Gen. xviii. 19. It was a touching incident in Job's life, when while his children were holding a family meeting, and indulging in the joyousness of such occasions, he feared that the festivities might become boisterous and profane, and "rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." Then he "sent and sacrificed them;" Job i. 5.

The father of the family was also the priest. The only exception was the case of "Melchizedek, king of Salem," who is described as "the priest of the most high God." It is an obscure passage in the history, defying all attempts to throw light upon it. Who Melchizedek was, and how it was that he became both king and priest, we do not know. But that it was so arranged by divine providence, in order to constitute Melchizedek a type of the Messiah, who would be "a priest upon his throne," is evident.

Notwithstanding all the care that was exercised, forms of idolatry began to creep in. In Job's country it was the worship of the sun and moon; but it was treated as "an iniquity to be punished by the judge;" Job xxxi. 26-28. Jacob's family was partially infected, and he found it necessary to exert his authority by requiring them to "put away the strange gods." He "hid them under the oak;" it would have been better if he had burned them. Gen. xxxv. 1-4.

Patriarchal morals were for the most part praiseworthy and pure. I say, "for the most part," because there were some exceptions, which will readily recur to readers of the book of Genesis. Job's passionate appeals to his friends in defence of his conduct, and his repeated protestations of innocence, have been read for ages with deep sympathy. The magnificent hospitality of those times was truly royal. The large-hearted benevolence of the patriarch of the land of Uz cannot be more fitly described than in his own words:—"When the car heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out." Job xxix. 11-16.

The knowledge of these men was imperfect, and it would not be difficult to point out their faults. But it is our duty to consider the time in which they lived. It was the morning twilight of the world.

Yet, though their religious views were necessarily very contracted, they were instructed by God himself in regard to several important truths. The institution of sacrifices taught the need of expiation for sin;—acceptance through faith, as we have already seen, was inculcated;—the translation of Enoch dimly shadowed forth the heavenly bliss;—while the call of Abram—the choice of Isaac—and afterwards of Jacob, illustrated the sovereignty of God in the bestowment of his mercy. See Rom. ix.

It is observable that several of these holy men were endued with the gift of prophecy. Noah—Gen. ix. 25-27; Abraham—Gen. xx. 7;—Isaac—Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, 39, 40;—Jacob—Gen. xlviii. 15-20; xlix.; Joseph—Gen. xli. 25-32; i. 25.

In my next I shall commence a review of the Mosaic Dispensation.

Yours truly,

J. M. CRAMP.

Acadia College, April 28, 1868.

### The Old Negro's Logic.

A clergyman asked an old servant his reasons for believing in the existence of a God. "Sir," says he, "I see one man get sick. The doctor comes to him, gives him medicine; the next day he is better; he gives him another dose; it does him good; he keeps on till he gets about his business. Another man gets sick like the first one; the doctor comes to see him; he gives him the same sort of medicine; it does him no good, he gets worse; gives him more, but he gets worse all the time till he dies. Now that man's time to die has come, and all the doctors in the world can't cure him.

"One year I work in the corn-field, plough deep, dig up grass, and make nothing but nubbins. Next year I work the same way; the rain and dew comes, and I make a good crop.

"I have been here going hard upon fifty years. Every day since I have been in this world I see the sun rise in the east and set in the west. The north star stands where it did the first time I ever saw it; the seven stars and Job's coffin keep on the same path in the sky, and never turn out. It ain't so with man's works. He makes clocks and watches; they may run well for a while, but they get out of fix and stand stock still. But the sun and moon and stars keep on the same way all the while. There is a power which makes one man die, and another get well; that sends the rain, and keeps everything in motion."

What a beautiful comment is here furnished by an unlettered African on the language of the Psalmist: "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."

### She saw the Doxology.

A little girl, ten years old, went up Mount Washington on horseback. She was then ten; if she is alive and lives till next summer, she will be twenty. The ladies and gentlemen of our party dismounted upon the rugged summit, where the only vegetation that Jared made an attempt to grow was a little stunted pale green moss, and gazed as though lifted up from the world into limitless space. Below, stretching outwards in all directions, lay a deep silver sea of clouds, amid which lightnings were seen to dart and writhe like gilded serpents, and from which the thunder came up to the ear peal after peal. We knew that down there rain was descending in a torrent while on us who were above the clouds, shone the sun in unobstructed and awful splendor. The eye wandered away like the dove from Noah's ark, that found no place to rest her foot.

"Well, Lucy," said her father, breaking the silence, "there is nothing to be seen, is there?"

The child caught her breath, lifted her clasped hands, and responded reverently—

"O papa, I see the Doxology!"

Yes, everywhere Nature speaks to us and says:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow"

### Inclement Sabbaths.

The Lord's day was the delight of Archbishop Leighton, as it is of all who know how to rejoice in the resurrection of Christ. It is said he would repair to God's house with a willing spirit, even when his body was infirm. One rainy Sabbath, when he was unwell, he persisted in attending church, and said, in excuse for his apparent rashness,—

"Were the weather fine I would stay at home; but since it is foul I must go, lest I be thought to countenance, by my example the irreligious practice of letting trivial hindrances keep us back from public worship."

The spirit which animated him may well be recommended to all believers who are ready for trivial reasons to absent themselves from public worship on the Lord's day.

CHARITY.—There is an old legend which says that Christ, the Man of Sorrows, is still a wanderer upon earth, and that every year He comes, an unknown mendicant, to the gates of some charitable institution, and tests