

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### BE THOU FAITHFUL.

It is written! "Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 19.

Obscure the royal shepherd strung,  
His harp of solemn sound,  
Where Bethel's branches overhung  
His flocks that fed around.

Not less a king on Judah's heights,  
Than when her halls he trod,  
Nor more within the sacred courts  
A worshipper of God.

A dweller in the wilderness,  
And least from Jesse's board,  
But great in humble faithfulness,  
And chosen of the Lord.

His life he hazards for a lamb,  
That faithful deed alone  
By far outshines the diadem,  
He wore on Israel's throne.

His crown the king no longer wears,  
That deed is sparkling now;  
And brightens with the lapse of years,  
Upon the shepherd's brow.

Hast thou, meek servant of the Lord,  
Pure longings to be great?  
Be faithful to His written word  
Till death, in every state.

By the Medway.

## Religious.

### CHRISTIANITY AND FASHION.

We have long laughed at the follies of fashion. Is it not time to take a more serious look at it? to bring it to the judgment seat of Christianity? Fashion, conceived of as a series of changes for breaking up the dulness of a long continued uniformity, we have not a word against. The human mind craves variety, and God in nature has every where provided it. We are neither Quakers nor Arabs.

But it is a fair question whether fashion, not *per se*, not within conceivable limits, but in the actuality of the thing, as it obtains in society on both sides of the Atlantic, is not so far unchristian, although almost a speciality of Christendom, that Christian men and women, and the Christian pulpit, and the Christian press have some possible duty in the premises. The demands of fashion are absolute; are they such as can be safely yielded? They are so exorbitant that the money expended in the civilization and Christianization of the world is but a trifling sum beside it; are they such as to justify the cost? They are so reckless of health and life that the bloodiest wars do not equal them in their havoc; is there some grand resultant of far-reaching good that all this can be put up with? For ourselves we know of no worthy compensation.

But let us look a little closer. At its edict, the chest of every devotee must be compressed till the lungs fairly break down in their never-ceasing effort to consume the effete carbon of the system; the feet, whose warmth is a prime condition of health, must be exposed to the most fatal chill; mothers must send the tender children out into our terrible winters so thinly clad as to ensure the alternative, either of an early death by congestion, or an enfeebling of the vital powers for a lifetime; smiles and beauty must pass the wine cup to our noble sons just out from Christian homes, and not yet strong in individual self-mastery, and start them down the slopes of ruin; that portion of the twenty-four hours designed by God for recuperative repose must be largely consecrated to intensest and wasting excitement; the changes of style must occur, so often as to consume the earnings of one great class, cause another smaller class to sell their virtue for means to meet its cost, and exact of most a large proportion of their whole intellectual and moral life.

But it is not physiological, and intellectual, and moral laws alone that are thus set

at nought. Even the æsthetic is equally trifled with, at the merest whim. The principles of beauty are as fixed as those of morals or mathematics. And man was made for beauty as truly as for knowledge and virtue; woman was, especially—woman is poetry, man is prose. We could sacrifice much to beauty. The extra dollar expended here is far from wasted. But the goddess of fashion is not always a Grecian idol, whose perfection of grace might palliate our bowing in her temple; but full as often a South Sea Island divinity whose chief pride is in its hideousness. The universal ridicule of men may fairly stave off the imposition of the "Grecian bend;" but if it does not, our daughters and sisters, to say nothing of our less supple wives, have got to come to it and work their way through our streets like kangaroos or Du Chaillu's gorillas.

Now is this a department of morals that Christianity has nothing to do with? or does she stand powerless beside it, and mute because powerless? Does she admit its idolatrous devotees to its baptismal waters and to the Table of the Lord through sheer impotency to bring them into true allegiance to Him who said "My kingdom is not of this world," imitating the papal church, which found it easier to take in and baptize heathenism than convert its worshippers.

The spirit of fashion is antipodal to the spirit of Christ. It is the highest expression of worldliness. It is a Belial that has somehow forced itself into a seeming concord with Christ. One of its maxims is, "Better be out of the world than out of the fashion." It would hardly hesitate to add, "Better forego heaven hereafter than fashion here."

Again we ask, has not the church some utterance in the case? some principle to insist on? Is there not a line somewhere beyond which lies the broad area of transgression? May not the priest put his ear to the oracle and voice it to the people?

We commend the subject to our Young Men's Christian Associations. Let them at least discuss it.—W. & R.

### THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

JOHN STUART MILL AND JOHN BRIGHT.

Peter Bayne writes to our Boston contemporary the following just criticism on Mr. J. S. Mill and others, and the causes which led the British people recently to reject him:—

The new Parliament will present a different appearance from the last. The waspish Roebuck will no longer startle with his irritating buzz; the sonorous eloquence of Horsman will no more awaken the echoes; members will not again grin and chuckle over the jokes of Osborne; and cultivators of logic will no longer admire the political syllogisms of John Stuart Mill. It will, no doubt, be thought upon the continent a marvellous illustration of the dulness of John Bull that he has rejected from the number of his representative men the world-famous logician. But John has a kind of idea in his head in this instance, an idea with which I confess that I more than half sympathize. Mr. Bull thinks that representatives ought to represent. They ought not, within certain limits, to be different in quality from the men they represent. John Stuart Mill might be astonishingly philosophical, but the head family of the Bulls—*Bos longifrons*, the long-headed variety peculiar to the British islands—have never been specially philosophical. They have been religious; they have earnestly believed in God. Mr. Mill not only declined to state expressly whether he believed in God or not, but went out of his way to countenance and assist in his candidature Mr. Bradlaugh, one of the most offensive atheists that ever lived. Besides it must be allowed that Mr. Mill's statesmanship was rather thin, wire-drawn and crochety. We wanted him to tell us how India ought to be governed; we looked to him for massive principle and masculine idea; and he distinguished himself by fine theories about

minority votes, by arguments against the ballot that seemed more suited to the atmosphere of a West End club, and by a prodigious pother about votes for the ladies. As if those sweet politicians did not contrive to have votes enough without any special provision! Enough. Mr. Mill was not substantial enough as a member to meet the views of an English constituency.—This, however, let me seriously say respecting Mr. Mill, that he earned the profound respect of all candid minds during his occupancy of a seat in Parliament by the moral intrepidity, the vivid truthfulness, the clear and keen conscientiousness of his conduct.

Mr. Bayne also adds:

Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright are the most distinguished orators in the House of Commons, and Mr. Lowe, though not gifted with the technical qualities of oratory, is a master of nervous and vivid language and of commanding powers of mind.—Gladstone, Bright, and Lowe, standing side by side, may laugh all opposition to scorn in the House of Commons. Mr. Bright was offered a post in what are usually considered the higher ranks of the Cabinet, but he preferred the presidency of the Board of Trade, the business of which department he perfectly understands, to the more substantial honors of the Exchequer or the Foreign office. Earl Russel and Sir George Grey, two admirable men and faithful public servants, still true to the Liberal cause but belonging to the past rather than to the present, have gracefully remained outside the Cabinet. It was not to be recorded among the surprises of the nineteenth century that Earl Russel—the Lord John of the first Reform Bill—should sit in the same government with Mr. Bright. There can be no doubt that Mr. Bright's presence in the Cabinet will rouse the Tories to the fiercest opposition, and it will probably also alienate a few of the old Whigs. But the progress which Mr. Bright has made within the last few years in the good opinion of all parties is astonishing. His ability was always admitted, but, until lately, he was furiously assailed as a demagogue, incendiary, revolutionist and what not. This kind of thing has become almost entirely obsolete, and no one who does not wish himself to be classed either with very young or with very old politicians would now launch into vague denunciations of Mr. Bright. Something is, no doubt, due to the fact that his wisdom has become more mellow and serene as he has advanced in life, that the deep kindness of his nature has become more visible, that his total freedom from ambition has been better appreciated, and that the genial friendliness and large-hearted patriotism of his co-operation with the general body of the Liberals have spoken in his favor. Need I add that a British government of which Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright are the ruling spirits will cultivate a policy of justice, peace and conciliation towards all foreign powers, and most of all towards the United States of America?

The following interesting item respecting the Queen and John Bright is from the *Newcastle Chronicle*:

"We understand, on Mr. Gladstone mentioning to Her Majesty that he intended, with her permission, to offer a seat in the Cabinet to the Hon. member for Birmingham, the Queen was pleased to say it would afford her the greatest satisfaction if Mr. Bright should consent to serve the Crown—that she had read his speeches with great pleasure, and that she was under the greatest obligations to him for the many kind words he had spoken of her, especially for a speech he had made about two years ago at a great meeting in St. James's Hall. It will be remembered that Mr. Ayrton, at the meeting referred to, had cast some reproach upon Her Majesty for living so long in retirement, and neglecting what he termed 'her duties to society.' Mr. Bright warmly vindicated Her Majesty, and said the Queen, who had the human tenderness to nurture in her breast a noble sorrow was not a woman to be wanting in regard to affection for her people. When Mr. Bright went to Windsor to take the oaths of office

Her Majesty showed her delicate consideration for the great commoner in a very marked way. She sent Mr. Helps, the Clerk to the Privy Council, to assure Mr. Bright, if it was more agreeable to his feelings to omit the ceremony of kneeling or kissing hands, he was quite at liberty to do so. Mr. Bright availed himself of this considerate permission, and was very kindly and cordially received by Her Majesty, who took occasion in her most marked manner to express her gratification at meeting him."

### JESUS WILL CARRY ME.

In a Christian family near Amoy, China, a little boy, the youngest of three children, on asking his father to allow him to be baptized, was told that he was too young; that he might fall back if he made a profession when he was a little boy. To this he made the touching reply: "Jesus has promised to carry the lambs in His arms. As I am only a little boy, it will be easier for Jesus to carry me." This logic of the heart was too much for the father. He took him with him, and the dear one was, ere long, baptized. The whole family, of which this child is the youngest member—the father, mother, and three sons—are all members of the Mission church at Amoy.—*Miss. Inst.*

### FIRST STEP IN PRAYER.

He that makes one step up a stair, though he is not much nearer to the top of the house, yet has stepped from the ground, and is delivered from the foulness and dampness of that. So in the first step of prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Though a man be not established in heaven, yet he has stepped from the world and the miserable comforts thereof.—*Dr. Donne.*

### PAINTED CROSSES.

Some have borne crosses painted upon their backs. It is to be feared that many among ourselves take up crosses which sit just as lightly—things of ornament, passports to respectability, a cheap substitute, for a struggle we never made, and a crown we never strove for.

### THE REMEMBRANCE OF SIN IN HEAVEN.

There are few christians, we think, who have not sometimes found it difficult to solve the mystery of an unclouded memory of the past in heaven, without an unhappy thought, and even a blush of shame.

But we think there is a solution in the very relation of memory to conscience. The former can do no more than restore to the eye and repealed condemnation of conscience, that which was wrong. On earth conscious impurity and weakness make the recollection of sin painful, because conscience is not completely satisfied; its outcry against the sinner, even after pardon, distresses the heart which has not found rest in the "full assurance of faith;" and even then sometimes flings a shadow over it.

But in heaven conscience is perfectly at peace with God. No matter what memory presents to the representative of love in the breast, the sleepless presence has no tone of condemnation; but smiles only on the sanctified spirit, as if that redeemed, adoring worshipper had never sinned.

In this respect saved sinners are like unto the angels. Conscience, responsive to every touch of the Divine will, like a tuneful harp delights the soul with the melody of love regnant over all the movements of the immortal nature.

When Abraham said to the rich man in the parable, "Son, remember," he meant Let conscience take thy life-record now, and with no diverting scene or rival power, thunder on the perpetual knell of stern and bitter condemnation of a wasted existence and a thankless rejection of redeeming blood.

With the saints there is an exactly opposite experience. Conscience has nothing more to do with sin; and from no other