

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger

"LOOK UP."

BY THE REV. TIMOTHY HARLEY.

A sailor boy, high up the mast,
Looked downward from the giddy height;
And growing dizzy as he cast
His eyes on deck, was filled with fright;
The captain cried, "All danger's past,
If to the top you turn your sight!"

Look up!"

So as we scale the steep which lead
To heav'n, 'the eye on a bill';
How oft these accents thence proceed,
And with delight our spirits fill,

"Look up!"

This motto cheered the Israelites,
As through the waste they took their way;
In darkened days, in darker nights,
The cloud and pillar seemed to say,

"Look up!"

The leaves of truth the lesson teach
That help in God alone is found;
The Gospel we rejoice to preach,
Is vocal with the joyful sound,

"Look up!"

Sinner! dost thou desire to find
Redemption for thy captive soul,
Or balm to heal thy wounded mind?
Then on the Lord thy burden roll,

"Look up!"

Christian! by Satan sorely tried,
Do vile temptations vex thy heart?
Thou hast His sympathy whose side
Was pierced with every deadly dart,

"Look up!"

Poor sinner! who has each morn to cry,
"Give me this day my daily bread,"
To him direct thy downcast eye,
Who had not where to lay his head!

"Look up!"

Afflicted sinner! thy pain is great,
The billows toss thy feeble bark;
But soon the waters shall abate,
And thou shalt rest thy weary ark!

"Look up!"

Deceived believer! has thy loss
Crushed all thy joy? there's One above
Who'll help thee bear thy heavy cross,
And fill the vacuum with his love!

"Look up!"

Devoted sinner! with zeal toil on,
Thou'rt soon to lay thy sickle down;
Soldier! the victory now is won,
And shortly thou shalt wear the crown!

"Look up!"

Aged believer! to the last,
On Jesus' arm for succor lean;
Whene'er thy sky is overcast,
Raise thy dim eyes from things torene,—

"Look up!"

Dying believer! on life's brink,
About to navigate the sea
Of endless bliss, should nature shrink
In death the last extremity,—

"Look up!"

Religious.

WITHIN ARM'S LENGTH OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

There are two men in the new Testament about whom I would like to know more; I wish some one could tell me what became of them. One of them was the amiable young ruler who "went away sorrowful," when the Master told him that the way to heaven started from a cross. The other is that gentlemanly Scribe who inquired of Jesus "Which is the first commandment of all?" And when the Saviour saw how discreetly he spoke, He said to him, "thou art not far from the kingdom of God." I would like to know whether this Scribe took the one decisive step and stepped inside the gate, or whether he finally perished outside, in his sins.

This half-converted lawyer is a representative man. There are scores like him in every congregation. They are almost Christian: they are within arm's length of

Christ. They ought to know it and feel it—both as an encouragement and a warning. It is a legitimate encouragement to tell such persons that they are nigh unto the kingdom of God; and yet they ought to understand what a hideous and horrible thing it will be for them to slide into hell from beside the very gateway of glory!

There is a tremendous difference between a regenerate and an unregenerate soul. One is for Christ and the other is against Him. One is in the ark; the other, out. But an unconverted man may be very near conversion. Bartimeus was as stone-blind on the morning of the day when Jesus passed through Jericho, as ever before; but he was nigh unto seeing, when the footstep of his Saviour fell on his quick ear.

It is not nearness in time that we refer to now, so much as nearness in feelings, situation, and opportunity. Every impenitent person who attends each Sabbath on the ministry of the Word is nearer becoming a Christian than if he squandered the day in sinful pleasures or in sleep. He is where the shots of truth are flying; the stray arrow may at any moment "stick fast" in his conscience. He is surrounded by the presence and prayers of God's people. I always have hope of the conversion of any man, however hardened, who will sit down squarely before an evangelical pulpit (in which Christ is lifted up) every Sunday, and keep his ears open to the truth. My unconverted friend! Christ comes very near you every Sabbath, when you cross the threshold of the sanctuary. The cross is lifted in full view. The band of disciples sit all around you. God's grace has converted those who sit beside you—perhaps your dearest of kin. The breeze of heavenly influence has seemed to fan you as it passed so very close to your heart. The simple clutch of the decision "Lord! I believe!" would have landed you in the kingdom of God long ago. If at the last you sink into perdition, it will be an awfully harrowing thought that you dwelt so long close beside a truth-speaking pulpit close beside the mercy seat and the cross of Jesus. When God locked the door of the ark, and shut Noah in, there must have been some of his neighbors within a bow-shot of the entrance. The thickness of that door finally made all the difference; but Noah was on the inside of it, and they were without—amid the devouring deluge!

A man may be near to the kingdom of God also, in the attitude of his mind. He may not be what he ought to be. There are gradations in guilt. The unforgiven sinner may not be an heir of heaven and yet be much nearer to being a Christian than he ever was before. Let us thank God for every step which the unconverted may take in the right direction. Mr. A—was reeling drunk in the street a month ago; but last Sunday he was at Church, sad-eyed and sober. Will any one deny that he is nearer the kingdom of God than he was thirty days since? On next Sunday he may go home, pricked to the heart, with conviction of sin. Never let us "despise the day of small things." Nicodemus's first step was to go to that inquiry-meeting with Jesus "by night;" his last one was to walk among the mourners, at Christ's burial in the garden. The change seems to have been as gradual with him as it was sudden with Saul.

God forbid that we should preach morality as a ground of hope for salvation!—And yet it is better to be moral than immoral—better to be honest than knavish—better to be chaste than impure—better to be reverent than profane—better to have a few stains on the character and as few sins and bad habits to forsake as possible. We ministers are in danger of doing mischief when we strike random hits at a "mere morality." It is a most admirable thing—as far as it goes. It is the obedience to the "second table of the law." It is often a first step in the direction of becoming a Christian. And the man who lives a decent honest life, and listens to God's word every Sabbath with a candid ear, and a tender conscience, is vastly more near to the king-

dom of God than the open scoffer, or the reckless Sabbath breaker, or the hardened libertine. Having come so far as to be scrupulously moral, we have a good hope that he will not consent to stop there and to perish there. For one, I never make light of any sincere attempt to lead a strictly moral life. I am quite sure if my Master were to meet a moral, well-behaved sinner who reads these lines He would say to you, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." But stop! Would He say, "Thou art already in the kingdom of God." Would He say, "Thou art one of my disciples?" No! He would say to you—yes! to you—honest, kind, sober, truthful, benevolent, respectable as you are—He would say "Except ye repent ye shall likewise perish; except ye be converted, ye cannot see the kingdom of God."

For to be near a place is not to be in it. Lot's wife was near Zoar, but she perished. The scribe was "near the kingdom of God," but I fear that he showed no sorrow for sin, and exercised no faith in Jesus. If he did not quit sin, and follow Christ, he was never saved. I very much fear that the man perished after all. If Jesus should descend into hell, He would find millions there to whom He might truly say, "Ye were once not far from the kingdom of heaven." That not far, ruined them! Perhaps, my unconverted friend, it will yet ruin you. You may literally be picked up at last, dead at the very gate of heaven! You may die with the bright rays of Calvary's cross shining on the corpse of your lost soul! Your being so near now, make you presumptuous! you may be within arm's length of Jesus, and yet drop, before you grasp the "hope set before you!" I implore you then decide ere you lay down this paper—I will be, with God's help a Christian!

"Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot—
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

—Zion's Herald.

THE POCKET-NERVE.

This is a nervous age. People talk incessantly about their nerves. Hale old gentlemen and ladies tell us that the existence of nerves is quite new to them. For their part, they do not care to know that they have such things; that they are proofs positive of the degeneracy of the race, and that it would be far better if mankind, and especially the female part, were now as profoundly ignorant of the nervous system as they once were of the circulation of the blood. We suppose, however, this talk of the aged is akin to much which venerable lips pronounce.—People have always had nerves, and have always been liable to nervousness. Those strange, delicate fibres, whether of the body or the mind, which are the instruments of sensation, have from the first served their part in the physical and mental organism, and now, as ever, simply vibrate to the touch of pain or pleasure, and so remain the innocent occasions of our misery or happiness. Happy is he who is so free from pain as not to know he has nerves! For certainly, where one moves in constant enjoyment, in the full glow of health, he seldom pauses to advert to their possession.

We have assumed the existence of certain susceptibilities in the mind which correspond to nerves in the body, and are pleased to speak of the susceptibility to the influence of money as the pocket-nerve. Of its existence, none of us can doubt.—This one thing is sure: whatever other nerve is dull, the pocket-nerve is not. Touch it, and a thrill darts to the very centre of the soul. Men who are supposed to be of very phlegmatic temperament—and, judging from the slowness of their movements in a moral and religious direction, correctly so—are all astir the instant this susceptibility is menaced. Here and there is an individual of such sensitive physique as that changes in the atmospheric air are

felt even before they take place—as some men can know whether an east wind is blowing before they get out of bed in the morning; but the pocket-nerve seems so delicately sensitive and so universally active, that it will infallibly indicate the condition of the public sentiment on any subject whatever, whether of patriotism, politics, business, or religion. These great passions ebb and flow as the pocket-nerve feels; as the stocks go up or down, as the bulls or bears prevail.

A man rises and breakfasts; his radiant face sheds gladness upon his household, and is all smiles and good wishes for wife, and children, and servants; his nerves are in good order, pocket nerve and all; the previous day has been a successful one, and he has slept, eaten, and drunk well. He sallies forth upon the new day; he meets with oppositions; nothing daunted, he pushes forward, saying philosophically to himself, "Competition is the life of trade, and no man should be pushed aside by trifles;" instinct with courage, he plies his wits in new and old methods, but he is unsuccessful; losses follow, the pocket-nerve not only suffers a few twinges, but is rudely shocked, and now the whole mental and moral system is thrown out of order, and all sorts of aches ensue. This man returns to his home utterly blue, down-hearted, crestfallen, his face enveloped in frowns and clouds; and if, as he sits down to his evening repast, he has any word for the family, it is only to vent his bitterness.—Moody, taciturn, and peevish, wife and children are forgotten in the selfish absorption of his personal disappointment.

Some Christians there are, too, who are very religious while this nerve is undisturbed. They move along very smoothly, can talk understandingly, even eloquently, of Christian experience, of a free and full salvation, of the speedy conquest of the world by the gospel; but the moment money is mentioned, they at once collapse, their tongues falter, and their spirits are dried up. As the need of a little money is descanted upon, however briefly and moderately, they grow increasingly fidgety, wriggle on their seats as though they were nervous, and hardly capable of enduring close confinement. The air has suddenly become almost suffocating, and the services of the sanctuary tedious. The efforts to get a little help from such persons for benevolent objects, when made privately, would be amusing were they not inconvenient, and did they not excite in us a strange feeling of pity and sadness. You fancy you have come upon your game at unawares; that you have taken the foe at advantage, and have your man. Your case has been managed adroitly. Beginning on the farthest possible direction from the point of attack; talking of all subjects of the remotest interest to the one in hand, you have gradually and stealthily come upon him; but a veteran at defence, long accustomed to parry attacks on the pocket, the morbid nerve has pre-empted your purpose, and when your real object is disclosed, his masked batteries are uncovered, and you are discomfited.

THE DIGNITY OF SERVING.

What a wondrous word is that of our glorious Lord, "The Son of man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister!" At once it changes service into honor, and invests the servant with a dignity which kings might envy. Now it is enough for the servant that he be as his Master, and the disciple as his Lord. If Christ was glad to minister to them whom the Father had given him to the extent of laying down his life as a ransom for them, his disciples must see that their honor is in imitating this humility. Diotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence, cannot find it, because he looks not for it at the feet of Jesus, where alone it can be found. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; but he that exalteth himself shall be abased."

Now is it not strange that this lesson, which belongs to the elementary teachings of the Christian's great directory, is among the very last which disciples of Jesus are