

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES
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Poetry.

STEP BY STEP.

BY DR. J. G. HOLLAND.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.

I count these things to be grandly true,
That a noble deed was a step towards God—
Lifted the soul from the common sod
To a purer air and a broader view.

We rise by the things that are under our feet,
By what we have mastered of greed and grain
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the vanquished ill we hourly meet.

We hope, we resolve, we aspire, we trust,
When the morning calls to life and light,
But our hearts grow weary, and ere night
Our lives are trailing in sordid dust.

Wings for the angels, but feet for the men!
We must borrow the wings to find the way—
We may hope, and resolve, and aspire, and
pray,
But our feet must rise or we fall again.

Only in dreams is the ladder thrown
From the weary earth to the sapphire wall;
But the dreams depart, and the visions fall,
And the sleeper wakes on his pillar of stone.

Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.

Religious.

NOT WORTH A STRAW.

Perhaps a straw is not so worthless as you think. Let us see. Straws are the stems of wheat, rye, oats, and barley. In order to wave to and fro in the wind, and yet bear up the heads of grain, they must be both light and strong. Let us see how lightness is secured.

They are made hollow, you see, like quills; and yet not hollow through the whole length, for every now and then we find a knob or joint, which helps to brace up the sides and make them strong.

The straw, outside, is hard, and looks shiny, as if it had been polished. It is polished; and that keeps the weather and insects from damaging it, besides adding to its strength. Polish! but where does it get polish?

God gave these plants the power of drawing up through their roots this gummy sort of varnish from the earth. It is flint. There is nothing like it on the stem of the sweet pea or the currant bush, because they do not need it. But does it not show God's wisdom and knowledge in giving this power to one plant where it is needed, and withholding it from others where it is not needed?

LOOK AT THE PREACHER.

Yes, look at him while he is preaching.

1. Because he is speaking to you. He speaks to all that are present. You do not drop your head or avert your face when a friend or any man speaks to you in the street. Acknowledge by looking that you feel you are spoken to.

2. Because looking at him in a proper return so far as it goes, for his pains to interest you. He puts himself into communication with you, and your attentive gaze at him is obedience to his virtual solicitation that you be in communication with him. It is simple justice.

3. It is politeness too. You would call one rude and ill-mannered who would avert his face when you attempted to speak to him. Politeness in the social circle should go with you into the sanctuary.

4. It is kindness too. You can do the preacher service—perhaps a very great service. He is anxious to instruct, or profit you in some way. It will gratify him to notice your fixed gaze. It will cheer him.—*N. Y. Observer*

TREASURES IN HEAVEN.

We read of a philosopher, who passing through a mart filled with articles of taste and luxury, made himself quite happy with this simple, yet sage reflection: "How many things are here that I do not want!" Now this is just the reflection with which the earnest believer passes through the world. It is richly furnished with what is called good things. It has spots of honor and power, to tempt the restless aspirings of ambition of every grade. It has gold and gems, houses and lands, for the covetous and ostentatious. It has innumerable powers of taste and luxury, where self-indulgence may revel. But the Christian whose piety is deep-toned, and whose spiritual perceptions are clear, looks over the world, and exclaims: "How much there is that I do not want! I have what is far better. My treasure is in heaven."—*Dr. Tyng.*

WASHING JUDAS' FEET.

"But there is so little satisfaction in doing anything for her!" complained Mrs. Hyrst to her friend, in reference to a certain afflicted yet querulous member of their congregation.

"Why not do it for Christ then?" asked Mrs. Hearty, the person addressed.

"But I am not sure that this is work for Christ, Mrs. Zack, surely, does not seem to be one of his."

"I do not profess to judge in this matter," replied Mrs. Hearty. "Yet grant for a moment that she is not; still we are met by this grand precedent, Christ did for one far more unworthy, a greater act of condescension than you have ever done for Mrs. Zack."

"I do not just now perceive to what you refer," said Mrs. Hyrst.

"Washing the feet of Judas, replied her friend.

"Ah! was that so? I never thought of it before, and, had I been asked, would have replied that Judas was not present at that time."

"The thirteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel will convince you of the fact. I often pause in reading it to endeavour to picture that scene, and to draw from it the rich instruction it is calculated to convey. Christ, with all his exquisite susceptibilities, with his intense hatred of evil, especially evil under the guise of goodness, of treachery such as Judas'—what must have been his mental anguish in view of such base ingratitude! With feelings of love which we cannot fathom, he stooped before the ardent Peter, the gentle, affectionate John, and all the other faithful ones. But, if we cannot fathom such a love as this, how much less can we comprehend the love which actuated the divine Redeemer, as, in the form of a servant, he bowed before the traitor, and washed his feet, and wiped them with the towel with which he was girded!"

"Ah! this was humiliation," replied her friend. "He would make himself of no reputation; even laying aside his garments, and appearing just like a serving-man of those days, girt with a towel. Do you think of the act as he speaks of it at the time—'That ye should do as I have done unto you.' There is a deep significance in the fact that our Lord did not wait until Judas had gone out, but would wash his feet among the rest. It gives additional force to the words, 'That ye should do as I have done unto you.' But as I am fain to believe, also, that in this act was manifested a love which yearned to reach the heart of Judas; a love which would not leave a single means untried to bring back to repentance the guilty transgressor, if haply his heart might be touched by this marvelous manifestation. He surely had the opportunity to relent."

"Ah, yes!" replied her friend; "and, had Judas been passed by, it might have been said, 'Oh, if Christ had only washed his feet!' He surely must have relented under the power of such an act on the part of his Master, his injured Lord, who, Judas well knew, must have known his guilty

purpose; for he had already said, One of you shall betray me."—*Christian Banner.*

"MEN OF HOT HEARTS."

The earnestness of the adherents of error is enough to crimson our cheeks. It is not long since thirty young Jesuits (imitating the men of the solemn League and Covenant, nigh three centuries ago) opened a vein in their arms, and dipping their pens in their own blood, wrote a letter to their Superior, announcing their willingness to go wherever he was pleased to send them. Will not the true "Order of Jesus" send forth an increasing number of illustrations of kindred earnestness?

"We need men of hot hearts to tell of the love of Jesus," was the appeal sent home by some Chinese converts, the other day. This is what the Church needs—what the world needs—"Men of hot hearts."

"I would ye were hot," is the Master's cry.

If we are to succeed, we must be on fire about it. Dr. Arnot, of Edinburgh, tells of his being at a railway station one day, and wearied of waiting for the train to move, he asked one of the men what the trouble was. "Is there a want of water?"

"Plenty of water, sir," was the prompt reply, "but it's no' bilin'."

That's the trouble with the church today. There's abundance of machinery—the engine is all in order, the train is all made up, the men are at their posts—"there's plenty of water but it's no' bilin'." The great motive power is wanting. We need to heap on the fuel of sound doctrine; not shavings of sentiment which may make a big blaze only to go out as quick, but the solid logs of fundamental truth—TRUNKS, if you will.

But we need yet more the fire—to be baptized (overwhelmed) with the Holy Ghost as with fire.

"Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers;
Come shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that will kindle ours."

HOW LONG IT TAKES TO PREPARE A SERMON.

When Theodore L. Cuyler asked Dr. Skinner in the presence of a company who was the greatest preacher he had ever heard, the response was quick as thought: "Lyman Beecher, on the Government of God, was the most tremendous discourse I ever listened to." It was at the end of that sermon that Lyman Beecher was heard to answer, in response to an inquiry made as he descended the pulpit as to how long it took him to prepare that sermon—"About forty years, sir."

Here is the secret of "green old age" in ministers. Dr. Beecher considered that sermon a condensation of useful knowledge from undaunted study and research through a period of forty years. The sermons of most ministers contain but the result of the mental research of a few hours, or at most days. After that every "edition" of the sermon is but a stereotyped copy of the first. And while the thoughts and subject matter of the sermon continue the same, the fire of the eye, the emotion of the heart the zeal and impressiveness of the manner of delivery, waning with every revolving year the effect of the sermon must be proportionally diminished. When to this is added, that the progress of thought and feeling in almost every congregation is such that a very passable sermon delivered at any given time, will in a year more scarcely be endurable, even though it had lost nothing in any respect, it becomes strikingly apparent, why so many preachers after twenty or forty year's service are no longer wanted by the people.—*Rev. D. B. Byers.*

THE TEN YEARS.

"Just seventy to-day sir!" said a handsome old gentleman, as he piously drew himself up, "and as active as ever I was,

there are few men of my age can say that."

"Few, indeed," was the reply. "You have had a long life and ten years out of it to acquaint yourself with God and prepare for heaven. Did that ever strike you before?"

"No, it did not; please explain."

"Well, one-seventh of the time, every Sabbath day, makes ten years out of seventy; does it not? So you have had ten whole years of time given to care for your soul alone: what a responsibility to answer for!"

The old man seemed startled. He had lived to the world and for himself, and his own soul and his fellow creatures were the poorer for it; and now the accumulation of ten whole years of time to be specially inquired of as regarded his use of them for his soul's welfare, placed his Sabbath-days before him in a light he had never seen them in before.

"Good gracious!" he said: "you place the thing in an uncomfortable way. I hope I won't be judged in that manner. I have done my best, and wronged no one; and I hope God is too merciful to inquire closely. Who could stand it?" "Who, indeed, could stand before God?" was the earnest reply. "In his own right, not one; for all have sinned, and can be justified only through Jesus Christ, the well-beloved Son. O my friend! let me be faithful with you. Think how differently you could look back upon your seventy years if you had used them in his service, and were ready to say, 'Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me!' The ten years of Sabbaths would not then stand up in awful array to frighten you and judge you, and show you a life all poverty and barrenness."

"If I had but my life all to go over again," said the conscience-stricken old man, "I would live differently; but it is too late."

"No, indeed! Blessed be God, it is never too late while life lasts, to turn to the Lord and witness for him. Now, in your eleventh hour, go pray God that your seventieth birthday may be the beginning of a new life to you.—Though it be but to fling—to use the words of an old sailor—"the fag-end of a life in the face of the Redeemer," still be encouraged. He never casts out any who come to him; he says 'Who-soever'; and you may take him at his word.—*Christian Banner.*

PAT'S PLEA FOR THE BIBLE.

In a school in the west of Ireland, a few years ago, were two boys, about the same age, fifteen or sixteen. Their names were Pat F. and Philip O'F. There were many intelligent young people in the school, but Pat and Philip took the lead in most things and, indeed, visitors were often astonished at the remarkable readiness and appropriateness of their replies to the miscellaneous questions put to them. Philip has become a missionary of the Cross in Turkey. We do not know what has become of Pat, at that time by far the most promising boy in the school. But "the day will declare it."

We remember on one occasion, Mr. B., well known in that neighborhood, paid a visit to the school. He was desirous of trying at once the knowledge of Scripture possessed by the scholars and their power to apply it, to the solution of controverted points. Mr. B. assumed the language of an opponent of the general reading of the Word of God:

"Boys" said he, "what right have you to read the Bible?"

"Every right sir," said the boys, "for Christ said—John v, 39—'Search the Scriptures.'"

"All very well," said Mr. B., "to prove that big people may read—men and women who have come to years of maturity—but what has that to say to little fellows like you?"

"The Word of God is for little people too," said Pat, "for we read—2 Timothy, iii, 15—that Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures from a child."