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POETRY.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Heavenly Guide.

BY MARIAN HARVEY.

Dear Saviour, give us now thy guiding hand!
The way is dark, and thorns and briars spring;
So fill the path we know not where to stand—
Our only safety simply to Thee clinging!

Thou knowst the way,—O let us enter in!
O leave us not to loneliness and fears!
We are but children, weak and prone to sin,
Our eyes are dim, we cannot see for tears!

Ye mourning ones lift up your weary head
And catch the radiance gleaming through the gate
Where Jesus stands, with loving hands outspread
And tender words,—“My children, stand and wait!”

Now harken! Can you hear the glad refrain,
Far echoing down the golden aisles of heaven?
“Come unto me and weep no more in vain,
O take the comfort now so freely given!”

Is it for us that sweetly gracious tone?
For us the, “Come ye blessed, enter in?”
For us at last the fair celestial home,
From sorrow free, and free from blight of sin!
April 24, 1876.

RELIGIOUS.

For the Christian Messenger.

Zeal in Christian Work.

“But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.”—GAL. IV. 18.

Paul was right. Zeal is good. And we will add that it is an essential element to success. Its importance in religious work cannot be over-estimated. An ignorant man, if zealous, can win more souls to Christ than a dozen learned men who lack zeal. How did John the Baptist stir up such a commotion among the Jews? Not by preaching gracefully, certainly; but by preaching zealously. He was rough, but he preached so earnestly that some began to think that he must be the Messiah. As we turn over page after page of the history of the Church of Christ, we see here and there the name of a man who did wonderful things in his time. We see such names as Luther, Knox, Whitefield, Wesley, Moody. Men who have caused the world to marvel, and we find that they have all been zealous, enthusiastic, intensely in earnest. The successful preacher is a man of zeal! The church which sheds forth a bright light, which is gathering strength all the time, is a zealous, working church! The Christian who is winning souls to the Lord has some zeal! Zeal is very, very necessary, but we are constrained to admit that there is a very great lack of it.

Knowledge is good and we do not under-rate its value, but when all learn that education cannot take the place of zeal we shall rejoice. Let us have knowledge and zeal if we possibly can, but by all means let us have the latter.

But let us look more closely at this text.

I. “It is good to be zealously affected always.” Not semi-occasionally, but always.

Zeal which is like a remittent fever is not the most desirable kind. During a religious awakening there are some who will draw out their rusty swords and for a little while flourish them grandly;—and then put them back again and do nothing more until another revival season. Now, when is zeal most needed? Is it when souls are pressing into the kingdom, or when

men are hardening their hearts? Is it when they see the danger and are fleeing from it, or when they are walking carelessly and unconsciously into the jaws of death?

Alas, when zeal is most needed, then it is most scarce. “Zealously affected always” saith Paul. In July as well as in January. In times of spiritual drought, as well as when showers of divine blessing are falling. And when the minister of your choice is absent as well as when he is present.

We have heard such remarks as this, “The minister was away to-night, and the prayer-meeting was, in consequence, very dull.” Ah? Paul was absent was he? And I suppose that the Lord was absent also? If the meeting was dull it was your own fault, and you ought to blush with shame when you say that the meeting was dull “because the minister wasn’t there.”

“It is good to be zealously affected always,” under all circumstances, in all seasons; therefore be always zealous.

II. Let us give prominence to another word in this verse.

“But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.” Not about but in a good thing. We have read of a general who hid in a flour mill while the battle was in progress and came down only when the fighting was ended. Probably he was anxious about the result, but he was not in the battle.

There are plenty who are ready to talk of reform in this thing and in that, but not many to start it. And there are plenty who talk well about religion, and tell of their interest in it, and desire to see souls saved, but who, we regret to say, are not zealously affected in the work.

Let it be distinctly understood that zeal about religion amounts to a very little; it is zeal in religion that contributes to the upbuilding of Zion. May the Lord increase the number of those who are zealously affected in a good thing.

But it is well to notice right here that the world does not like zeal in religion. If great efforts are being made to win souls to the Saviour, at once a hue and cry is raised about “excitement.” If a child falls into the river the world will allow us to get into a terrible excitement about that. It will allow the mother to go almost frantic, and, if she does not manifest a great deal of interest in the saving of her child will call her heartless; and if we do not put forth great exertions to save the child from drowning we will be called brutes and worse. But if that mother manifests great interest in the conversion of her child, and if we make great efforts to save its soul from eternal damnation, then the world sneers and accuses us of trying to “get up an excitement.”

And to the shame of Christians be it said that there are many who are positively afraid to be zealous, afraid to make earnest efforts, afraid to have extra work done, because the world will say that they are trying to get up an excitement. Festus charged Paul with being mad; did Paul say “well now rather than give the world a chance to say I am mad I will be a little more quiet?” Earnest Christians have been called *enthusiasts* and *fanatics* ever since Christianity was known, and we expect it. But what of that? Shall we therefore be silent and not try to awaken those who stand on the brink of destruction? No! A thousand times, No! “Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you!” Shall the sons of Light be guided by the prejudices of the children of darkness? Let all who are at ease in Zion answer. God approves of zeal in religion. Satan does not. Whose approbation shall we win?

Oh, for more zeal, more enthusiasm in every department of Christian labor! Let us seek to be “zealously affected always in every good thing.”

A little baby is an easy thing to love, but a big baby is a hard thing to love, says a veteran observer—especially if you have married her, or him.

Rites without Ritualism.

Some of our contemporaries pretend to see in the attitude of the Baptist denomination regarding the form and order of New Testament ordinances, a sad leaning towards Ritualism. They insinuate pretty broadly that our singular position springs from an overestimate of the form of Christianity, and from an underestimate of its spirit. If they are correct, we are, indeed in a very deplorable condition. We are, however, convinced that their solicitude for our spiritual welfare has misled them; for our churches have no confidence in “rites magical to sanctify.” We do not believe that baptism regenerates the soul or promotes its regeneration; because we find no trace of such a doctrine in the Bible, and because we are aware that hundreds and thousands have been sprinkled in infancy who never gave evidence in after life of having been “born again.” No more do we believe that the broadest latitude in the matter of the Lord’s Supper necessarily unifies Christendom; because we have no Scriptural warrant for such an opinion, and because there is apparently no more union between denominations who practice inter-communion than there is between them and ourselves. Were we to teach that a few drops of water were absolutely needed to wash away original sin, or were in any real sense conducive to a child’s spiritual welfare; or were we to proclaim that the openness of communion was certainly the efficacious cure of all religious dissensions, resulting in ecclesiastical unity and the destruction of sectarianism, we should undoubtedly be liable to the censure, and most assuredly we would pray to be delivered from the sin and folly of such Ritualistic nonsense.

Certainly, nothing like superstitious reverence for ordinances is countenanced by the Baptist denomination. We have no thaumaturgical doctrines or practices in our theology. We believe in the spiritual principle most profoundly, and advocate it most sincerely. The fundamental doctrine of our churches is that the soul can only be renewed by God’s gracious Spirit, and that no rite should be administered until there are evidences of this saving change. In accordance with this principle we recognize every Christian man, be he Romanist or Protestant, as fellow-heir with us “to the inheritance of the saints in light.” We further believe that organic churches should be constituted solely of those who have thus been renewed, and that the unconverted children of believers have no place at all in their membership.

That any one should be blind to the real genius of our denomination is the more singular from the fact that its influence has largely promoted the development of spirituality in other ecclesiastical bodies. A century ago all the great denominations held that baptism made a child a church member. Theoretically, the Presbyterians hold the idea still. Dr. Robinson, of Brown University, in a recent sermon, said that “one of the most eminent ministers of that denomination declared that a baptized person was entitled to all the privileges of the church, and that it was a grand impertinence to ask for other evidence of his regeneration.” To prove the influence of the Baptists in effecting the change which has come over the pedobaptist world in this matter, the doctor also cited the following case:

“A few years ago, when the German Reformed Church celebrated their tercentenary, they published with a new edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, an historical essay in which all their fellow-denominations were arraigned for abandoning the old principle that baptism admits a person to all the privileges of the church, and adopting the Baptist principle that evidence of personal regeneration should be required.”

In view of these facts, to employ the language of the Presbyterian brother just referred to is it not “a grand impertinence” even to insinuate that the Baptists are guilty of a leaning towards Ritualism?

The fact is, we simply maintain that the ordinances of the Lord’s house should be kept as they were delivered to us; and that, as no mystical efficacy inheres in them, they should neither be perverted in form nor be altered in order. We see no reason for tampering with them in any way, but regard a faithful adherence to them the surest safeguard against the dangers accruing from their undue exaltation.

Now, if this is Ritualism, we must plead guilty, and do not hesitate to say alike to friend or foe, “Make the most of it.”—*National Baptist.*

Christ the Purifier.

“He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.”—MALACHI III. 3.

Some ladies in Dublin, who met together from time to time at each others houses, to read the Scriptures and to make them the subjects of profitable conversation; when they came to the third chapter of Malachi, had some discussion over the 2nd and 3rd verses, respecting the method of purifying the precious metals, as none of the company knew anything about the process, one undertook to inquire of a silversmith, with whom she was acquainted, how it was effected, and, particularly, what was the business of the refiner himself. During the operation—without explaining her motive—she accordingly went to her friend, and asked him how the silver was cleared from any dross with which it might have been mixed. He promptly explained to her the manner of doing this. “But,” said the inquirer, “do you sit, sir, at the work?” “Oh, yes!” he replied, “for I must keep my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, since, if the silver remain too long under the intense heat, it is sure to be damaged.” She at once saw the beauty and propriety of the image employed. “He shall sit as a refiner of silver,” and the moral of the illustration was equally obvious. As the lady was returning with the information to her expecting companions, the silversmith called her back, and said that he had forgotten to mention one thing of importance, which was, that he only knew the exact instant when the purifying process was complete, by then seeing his own countenance in it. Again the spiritual meaning shone forth through the beautiful veil of the letter. When God sees his own image in his people, the work of sanctification is complete. It may be added that the metal continues in a state of agitation till all the impurities are thrown off, and then it becomes still; a circumstance which heightens the exquisite analogy in this case, for O how

Sweet to be passive in his hand,
And know no will but His.

The subject was embodied in the following stanzas at the urgent request of a friend, who, with her young family was about to leave her native country and settle in a distant part of the globe; but the writer’s mind had received the first ineffable impression of the similitude, and the inference in the year 1832, from the lips of another dear friend, when she was nearly in her last agony, who meekly applied it to herself and her afflictions, which had been long and excruciating, yet borne by her as pains can alone be borne, in God’s furnace.

“He shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier.”

He that from dross would win the precious ore,
Bends o’er the crucible an earnest eye,
The subtle, searching process to explore,
Lest the one brilliant moment should pass by,
When in the molten silver’s virgin mass
He meets his pictured face, as in a glass.

Thus, in God’s furnace are his people tried;
Thrice happy they who to the end endure,
But who the fiery trial may abide?
Who from the crucible come forth so pure,
That He whose eyes of flame looks through the whole,
May see his image perfect in the soul?

Not with an evanescent glimpse alone,
As in that mirror the refiner’s face;
But, stamp’d with heav’n’s broad signet,
There be shewn

Immanuel’s features, full of truth and grace;
And round that seal of love this motto be,
Not for a moment, but,—eternity!

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

A Fijian Sermon.

We copy the following from the Boston *Missionary Herald*—

SELF-SACRIFICING CONSECRATION OF FIJIANS.

Under the lead of Rev. George Brown, missionary in the Friendly Islands, the English Wesleyan Missionary Society have commenced a new mission to the Duke of York’s Island, New Britain, etc., east of New Guinea, to be carried on mainly by natives from the missions in Tonga and Fiji. Mr. Brown had selected his agents, six married men and three single men, from a large number of volunteers, when officials of the new English Government in Fiji thought it proper to interfere. The “*Illustrated Missionary News*” gives the following account of the proceedings:—

“Mr. Layard informed Mr. Brown that rumors having been circulated to the effect that the men were not volunteers, and that they were being kept in ignorance of the real facts of the case, they being now British subjects, the Government felt itself responsible to see that the whole matter was fully explained to them, before it could sanction their departure. He then, through an interpreter, addressed the teachers, telling them that they were British subjects, that no one had any right to compel them to go anywhere against their will, that they were free to go or stay, but that he was responsible for their safety. He explained to them fully the dangers they were going to incur, said that the people were cannibals, the climate very unhealthy, food scarce, etc., and that they would often be left for months together without European help or protection.

“Ameriro, one of the teachers, then stood up, and with deep feeling said that they knew all these things, the missionaries having explained the matter to them. “We have fully considered this matter in our hearts,” he added; “no one has pressed us in any way; we have given ourselves up to do this work: if we die—we die; if we live—we live.” Mr. Layard then read accounts to them from the Sydney “*Morning Herald*” of the suffering endured by the London Missionary Society’s teachers, of the death of some of them and their wives. But this also failed to move them. They then signed a paper which distinctly set forth all the perils of the undertaking, and stated that they engaged in it of their own free will and hearty desire, to spread the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ among the heathen inhabitants of those islands. Mr. Layard said afterwards, to a gentleman in Fiji, that it was really grand to hear those men talk.”

The Wesleyan Missionary Notices for February indicates that the mission is fairly commenced, and that so far everything is hopeful. Mr. Brown’s reception, and that of the teachers, had been most gracious by all the chiefs visited. Mr. Brown reports a

FIJIAN MISSIONARY SERMON.

Delivered on board the *John Wesley* by one of the native missionaries, as the vessel lay becalmed in the Solomon’s group of islands, in August, 1875:

“Elimatama, one of the Fijian teachers, conducted the first part of the service, and preached from Rom. xv. 20, 21. After a brief introduction, he treated his subject under three divisions. He first spoke of St. Paul’s way, dwelling particularly on the fact that it was a way marked out for him by God—not a path of his own choosing, not an appointment given by men, but that God called him to his work, and told him what to do, and how to do it; that his path or work was that of preaching the Gospel. He then drew an analogy between our present circumstances and those in which the Apostle was placed, saying, ‘We also are like St. Paul in these respects.