

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

### Count the Cost.

[Through the kindness of an esteemed friend we present the following lines by the well-known President of the Indiana University, which have not before been published.]

Many a tower will stand unfinished,  
Planned, begun, abandoned, lost—  
For the thoughtless, foolish builder,  
Fails to count the cost.

Many an army, proudly marshalled,  
Marches into helpless woe,  
For the boasting, reckless leader,  
Underrates his foe.

Many a vessel, richly freighted,  
Sinks beneath the whelming deep,  
For the watcher in the look-out,  
Heedless, falls asleep.

Many a life goes out in darkness,  
That might shine through endless  
day;  
For the soul bewitched by folly,  
Barters it away.

LEMUEL MOSS, D. D.

Christian Helper.

### To Whom shall We give Thanks.

A little boy had sought the pump,  
From whence the sparkling water burst,  
And drank with eager joy the draught,  
That kindly quenched his raging thirst;  
Then gracefully he touched his cap—  
"I thank you, Mr. Pump," he said,  
"For this nice drink you've given me."  
(This little boy had been well bred.)

Then said the pump: "My little man,  
You're welcome to what I have done;  
But I am not the one to thank—  
I only help the water run."  
"Oh, then," the little fellow said,  
(Polite he always meant to be),  
"Cold Water, please accept my thanks,  
You have been very kind to me."

"Ah," said Cold Water, "don't thank me;  
Far up the hillside lives the spring  
That sends me forth with generous hand  
To gladden every living thing."

"I'll thank the spring, then," said the boy,  
And gracefully he bowed his head.  
"Oh, don't thank me, my little man,"  
The spring with silvery accents said;

"Oh, don't thank me—for what am I  
Without the dew and summer rain?  
Without their aid I ne'er could quench  
Your thirst my little boy, again."

"Oh, well, then," said the little boy,  
"I'll gladly thank the rain and dew."  
"Pray, don't thank us—without the sun  
We could not fill one cup for you."

"Then Mr. Sun, ten thousand thanks  
For all that you have done for me."  
"Stop!" said the sun, with blushing  
face;

My little fellow, don't thank me;  
'Twas from the ocean's mighty stores  
I drew the draught I gave to thee."  
"O Ocean, thanks!" then said the boy.  
It echoed back, "Not unto me—"

"Not unto me, but unto Him  
Who formed the depths in which I lie;  
Go, give thy thanks, my little boy,  
To Him who will thy wants supply."

The boy took off his cap, and said,  
In tones so gentle and subdued,  
"O God, I thank thee for this gift;  
Thou art the giver of all good!"

## Religions.

### John Colby's Conversion.

The year before Mr. Webster died, in the autumn of 1851, I was spending a few weeks with him at his place in Franklin. One pleasant morning he said to me:

"I am going to take a drive up to Andover, and I want you to go with me."

Andover was about ten miles from his place in Franklin. He added: "We can start after breakfast, and it will take us an hour and a half or two hours to go. We shall only want to stay there an hour or so, and we will return in time for dinner."

"Now I will tell you the object of this trip to-day. I am going to see a man by the name of Colby. John

Colby is a brother-in-law of mine. He married my oldest half-sister, and was, of course, a good many years older than myself—as she was. I have not seen him for forty-five years, as nearly as I can recollect. My sister, his wife, has been dead many, many years and any interest I may have had in John Colby has all died out; but I have learned some particulars about his recent life that interest me very much, and I am going to see him. I will tell you something about him. When I was a lad at home, on the farm, John Colby was a smart, driving, trading, swearing yeoman, money-loving and money-getting. In that rather rude period, when there were not many distinctions in society, when one man was about as good as another, and when there were very few educated persons, he was considered a very smart active man. I remember him, however, with a sort of terror and shudder. He would pick me up when I was a little fellow, throw me astride of a horse, bare back, and send the horse to the brook. The horse would gallop, and I had to hold on to his mane to keep from being pitched into the river. Colby was a reckless, wild, harum-scarum, dare-devil sort of a fellow. Well, John Colby married my oldest half-sister. She was a religious good woman; but beaux were not plenty and John Colby was a fine-looking man. His personal habits were good enough, laying aside his recklessness; he was not a drinking man, he was as the world goes, a thrifty man. Any of the girls in town would of have married John Colby. After he married my sister, I went away to college, and lost sight of him. Finally, he went up to Andover and bought a farm; and the only recollection I have of him after that, is, that he was called, I think, the wickedest man in the neighborhood, so far as swearing and impiety went. I used to wonder how my sister could marry so profane a man. And still Colby was considered a good catch. I came home from college during vacation, and used to hear of him occasionally; but after a few years—perhaps five or six years—my sister died, and then all the interest that any of us had in John Colby pretty much ceased. I believe she left a child—I think a daughter—who grew up and was married, and also left a child.

"Now I will give you the reason why I am to-day going up to see this John Colby. I have been told by persons who know that, within a few years, he has become a convert to the Christian religion, and has become a constant, praying Christian. This has given me a very strong desire to have a personal interview with him, and hear with my own ears the account of his change. For humanly speaking, I should have said that his was about as hopeless a case for conversion as I could well conceive. He will not know me, and I shall not him; and I don't intend to make myself known."

We drove on, and reached the village—a little quiet place, one street running through it, a few houses scattered along here and there, with a country store, a tavern, and a post-office. As we drove into this quiet, peaceable little hamlet, at midday, with hardly a sign of life noticeable. Mr. Webster accosted a lad in the street, asked where John Colby lived.

"That is John Colby's house," said he, pointing to a very comfortable two-story house, with a green lawn running down to the road. We drove along towards it, and a little before we reached it, making our horse secure, we left the wagon and proceeded to the house on foot. Instead of steps leading to it there were little flagstones laid in front of the door, and you could pass right into the house without having to step up. The door was open. There was no occasion to knock, because, as we approached the door, the inmates of the room could see us. Sitting in the middle of that room was a striking figure, who proved to be John Colby. He sat facing the door, in a very comfortably furnished farm-house room, with a lit-

tle table, or what would perhaps be called a light-stand, before him. Upon it was a large, old-fashioned Scott's Family Bible, in very large print, and of course a heavy volume. It lay open, and he had evidently been reading it attentively. As we entered, he took off his spectacles and laid them upon the page of the book, and looked up at us as we approached. Mr. Webster in front. He was a man, I should think, over six feet in height, and he retained in a wonderful degree his erect and manly form, although he was eighty-five or six years old. His frame was that of a once powerful athletic man. His head was covered with very heavy, thick, bushy hair, and it was white as wool, which added very much to the picturesqueness of his appearance. As I looked in at the door, I thought I never saw a more striking figure. He straightened himself up, but said nothing until just as we appeared at the door, when he greeted us with:

"Walk in, gentlemen."  
He then spoke to his grandchild to give us some chairs. The meeting was a little awkward, and he looked very sharply at us, as much as to say: "You are here, but for what I don't know; make known your business. Mr. Webster's first salutation was: 'This is Mr. Colby, Mr. John Colby is it not?'"

"That is my name, sir," was the reply.

"I suppose you don't know me?" said Mr. Webster.

"No, sir, I don't know you; and I should like to know how you know me."

"I have seen you before, Mr. Colby," replied Mr. Webster.

"Seen me where?" said he; pray, when and where?"

"Have you no recollection of me?" asked Mr. Webster.

"No, sir, not the slightest," and he looked by Mr. Webster toward me, as if trying to remember if he had seen me. Mr. Webster remarked:

"I think you never saw this gentleman before; but you have seen me."

Colby put the question again, when and where?

"You married my oldest sister," replied Mr. Webster, calling her by name. (I think it was Susannah.)

"I married your oldest sister!" exclaimed Colby; "who are you?"

"I am 'little Dan,'" was the reply.

It certainly would be impossible to describe the expression of wonder, astonishment, and half-incredulity that came over Colby's face.

"You Daniel Webster," said he, and started to rise from his chair. As he did so, he stammered out some words of surprise. "Is it possible that this is the little black lad that used to ride the horse to water? Well, I cannot realize it!"

Mr. Webster approached him. They embraced each other and both wept.

"Is it possible," said Mr. Colby, when the embarrassment of the first shock of recognition was past, "that you have come up here to see me? Is this Daniel? Why, why," said he I cannot believe my senses. Now sit down. I am glad, oh, I am so glad to see you, Daniel! I never expected to see you again. I don't know what to say. I am so glad," he went on, "that my life has been spared so that I might see you. Why Daniel, I read about you, and hear about you in all ways; sometimes some members of the family come and tell us about you; and the newspapers tell us a great deal about you, too. Your name seems to be constantly in the newspapers. They say that you are a great man, that you are a famous man; and you can't tell how delighted I am when I hear such things. But, Daniel, the time is short—you won't stay here long—I want to ask you one important question. You may be a great man; are you a good man? Are you a Christian man? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the only question that is worth asking or answering. Are you a Christian? You know, Daniel, what I have been; I have been one of the wickedest of men. Your poor sister, who is now in heaven,

knows that. But the spirit of Christ and of Almighty God has come down and plucked me as a brand from the everlasting burning. I am here now, a monument to his grace. Oh, Daniel, I would not give what is contained within the covers of this book for all the honors that have been conferred upon men from the creation of the world until now. For what good would it do? It is all nothing, and less than nothing, if you are not a Christian, if you are not repentant. If you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity and truth, all your worldly honors will sink to utter nothingness. Are you a Christian? Do you love Christ? You have not answered me."

All this was said in the most earnest and even vehement manner.

"John Colby," replied Mr. Webster, "you have asked me a very important question, and one which should not be answered lightly. I intend to give you an answer, and one that is truthful, or I won't give you any. I hope that I am a Christian. I profess to be a Christian. But, while I say that, I wish to add—and I say it with shame and confusion of face—that I am not such a Christian as I wish I were. I have lived in the world, surrounded by its honours and its temptations; and I am afraid, John Colby, that I am not so good a Christian as I ought to be. I am afraid I have not your faith and your hopes; but still, I hope and trust that I am a Christian, and that the same grace has converted you, and made you an heir of salvation, will do the same for me. I trust it; and I also trust, John Colby—and it won't be long before our summons will come—that we shall meet in a better world, and meet those who have gone before us, whom we knew, and trusted in that same divine, free grace. It won't be long. You cannot tell, John Colby, how much delight it gave me to hear of your conversion. The hearing of that is what has led me here to-day. I came here to see with mine own eyes, and hear with my own ears the story from a man that I know and remember well. What a wicked man you used to be!"

"O, Daniel!" exclaimed John Colby, "you don't remember how wicked I was; how ungrateful I was; how unthankful I was! I never thought of God; I never cared for God; I was worse than the heathen. Living in a Christian land, with the light shining all around me, and the blessings of Sabbath teachings everywhere about me, I was worse than a heathen until I was arrested by the grace of Christ and made to see my sinfulness, and to hear the voice of my Saviour. Now I am only waiting to go home to him, and to meet your sainted sister, my poor wife. And I wish, Daniel, that you might be a prayerful Christian, and I trust you are, Daniel," he added, with deep earnestness of voice, "will you pray with me?"

We knelt down, and Mr. Webster offered a most touching and eloquent prayer. As soon as he had pronounced the "Amen," Mr. Colby followed in a most pathetic, stirring appeal to God. He prayed for the family, for me, and for everybody. Then we rose; and he seemed to feel a serene happiness in having thus joined his spirit with that of Mr. Webster in prayer.

"Now," said he, "what can we give you? I don't think we have anything that we can give you."

"Yes, you have," replied Mr. Webster; "you have something that is just what we want to eat."

"What is that?" asked Colby.

"It is some bread and milk," said Mr. Webster. "I want a bowl of bread and milk for myself and my friend."

Very soon the table was set, and a white cloth spread over it; some nice bread was set upon it, and some milk brought, and we sat down to the table and ate. Mr. Webster explained afterward:

"Didn't it taste good? Didn't it taste like old times?"

The brothers-in-law soon took an affectionate leave of each other, and we left. Mr. Webster could hardly restrain his tears. When we got into the wagon he began to moralize.

"I should like," said he, "to know what the enemies of religion would say to John Colby's conversion. There was a man as unlikely, humanly speaking, to become a Christian as any man I ever saw. He was reckless, heedless, impious; never attending church, never experienced the good influence of associating with religious people. And here he has been living on in that reckless way until he has got to be an old man; until a period of life when you naturally would not expect his habits to change; and yet he has been brought into the condition in which we have seen him to-day, a penitent, trusting, humble believer. Whatever people may say, nothing," added Mr. Webster, "can convince me that anything short of the grace of Almighty God could make such a change as I, with my own eyes, have witnessed in the life of John Colby."

When we got back to Franklin, in the evening, we met John Taylor, at the door. Mr. Webster called out to him: "Well, John Taylor, miracles happen in these latter days as well as in the days of old."

"What now, squire?" asked John Taylor.

"Why, John Colby has become a Christian. If that is not a miracle, what is?"

Joseph Cook.

At the Sunday School Parliament, Wellesley Island, last summer, the greatest event was Joseph Cook. Everybody wanted to see the man who could stir complacent, skeptical Boston to its very foundations and command to his hearing, week after week and month after month, the best thinkers and widest cultured of the land. If a full orbed orator should be compounded of elements both material and spiritual, here you have them. A great physical structure—just the fit dwelling place for that wonderful brain and heart. Why, the working of that vast machinery would ruin any ordinary frame. Power is written all over him. His hand seems strong enough to grasp the thunder-bolts of heaven, and gentle enough to toy with the frailest flower that bends to the zephyr. His voice as the roll of artillery, or soft as an infant's breath; his eye keen enough to penetrate away through the mists of science, and clouds of skepticism, into the clear sunlight of harmonious truth. He steps upon the platform not "with an air of consequence," but absorbed and calm. There he stands, the orator, fervid and impassioned; the logician, clear, precise, and subtle in his distinctions; the thinker rapid, vast in his range of subjects, and in rhetoric brilliant, but never allowing his marvellous fancy to obscure his intention.—for an intention he always has, well defined, and absorbing for the time every energy of his energetic being. We forgive him, yes, thank him for often ignoring the "circumscribed rules of elegant oratory," for forgetting the "graces of rhetoric" in his intense desire to give forceful expression to his theme. In fact, the gesture, is part of the man, and portion of the thought. Niagara does not run smooth as a milldam. The rush, the roar, and the plunge are part of it. We have one Niagara and one Joseph Cook. Boldly as Napoleon marched to Moscow, this hero of the platform meets the whole army of isms which are flooding the earth: atheism, materialism, Huxleyism, Darwinism, all the skepticisms. But unlike the "Emperor Nap," he never marches back. The enthusiastic Neapolitan said, "look on Naples and die." We would say "look on Joseph Cook and live."

Take a new grip of life. Breathe in a new inspiration for higher and better living. Take hold anew of the possibilities of life, which lie before us all. Let

The lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime.

For if we cannot all be great  
Things we may be great in small things,  
And departing, leave behind us  
Foot-prints on the sands of time.

—Christian Helper. M. A. C.