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## Poetry.

### Songs in the Night.

"Where is God my maker who giveth songs in the night."

Written after hearing a sermon by Professor Richards, in the Olivet Baptist Church, Montreal, from the above text.

BY MRS. F. MUIR.

Life hath its rough and lonely ways,  
When in the deepening gloom,  
The sunny earth is darkened o'er  
With shadows from the tomb:  
Then, through the ages, soft and clear,  
With solemn sweet refrain,  
These "songs of night" in tender tones  
Refresh our hearts again.

"Deep calleth unto deep," says one,  
Thy waves and billows all  
Go over my defenceless head,  
While angry waters call.  
Yet, in the day-time God will still  
His loving kindness show,  
And in the night His song shall cheer,  
When hope and trust are low.

Behold a dark and gloomy cell  
Within whose inner wall,  
Two of God's heroes wait and watch:  
The twilight shadows fall.  
'Tis midnight now, they join in prayer,  
Then praise the God of light,  
And through the prison all may hear  
Their glorious "song of night."

Listen again, for later years  
Have heard another strain,  
The martyred saints on distant hills  
Have sung through smoke and flame.  
Oh! precious hope whose mighty power,  
Puts doubt and fear to flight,  
Death's darkest shadow is illumed  
With these sweet songs of night.

And yet, when days of suffering come,  
We dread the gloomy way,  
And watch the Jordan from afar,  
With shudder and dismay,  
The waves seem high, they dash and break  
With never-ceasing roar,  
While stormy surf, with heavy mist  
Hides Canaan's better shore.

Yet often as the waters part,  
A Heavenly form appears,  
The billows, firm beneath His tread,  
Awake no anxious fears—  
Then, Death where is thy victory?  
Triumph song of night!  
Beloved lips have caught the strain,  
Departing from our sight.

In that fair land, the glorious home  
Where "many mansions" wait  
The coming of His hidden ones,  
Beyond the pearl-gate,  
Where tears, and weariness, are changed  
To joy and perfect peace,  
There night is ended, but the songs  
Of heaven shall never cease.

Montreal, Feb. 15th, 1880.

## Religious.

### For the Christian Messenger. Conformity to the World.

A PAPER READ AT THE KINGS CO., BAPTIST MINISTERS CONFERENCE, HELD AT TREMONT, AYLESFORD, BY REV. DR. TUPPER, AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CONFERENCE.

Among the numerous evils that retard the interests of vital godliness, the conformity of professors of religion to the world, occupies a prominent place. Hence it is obviously necessary and important that all who name the name of Christ should strictly obey the inspired injunction, "Be not conformed to this world." (Rom. xii. 2.) Of course believers are not hereby prohibited from holding such friendly intercourse with the unregenerate as may tend to draw them to Christ; but they are forbidden to unite with them in such practices and pursuits as are not consistent with ardent devotion to the service of God. Of these a few may be briefly noticed.

1. *Eagerness to acquire wealth.* Idleness is condemned, and diligence approved, in the Scriptures. If a man obtain property by honest means, and devote a good share of it to objects of benevolence, his course is evidently commendable; but the treasuring up of riches for one's own gratification is disapproved by Christ. (Matt. vi. 19, 21; Luke xii. 15, 21.) Fervent desire for riches often prompts to dishonesty. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." (Prov. xxviii. 20.) So the Apostle Paul says, "They that will be (rich) shall fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in de-

struction and perdition." (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17, 19.)

Believers, should, therefore, heartily adopt the prayer of Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches;" if prospered, give liberally, if not, be content, and thankful for what is received, and contribute cheerfully according to their ability.

2. *Seeking worldly honor.* This was manifestly a most fatal hindrance in the way of many of the Jews with reference to receiving the Lord Jesus when he was personally on earth. So we are informed that when many of the chief rulers were rationally convinced that He was the Messiah, "they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John xii. 42, 43; v. 44.) It is a known and lamentable fact, that when professedly pious men are raised to situations of eminence, or are ardently seeking them, in many instances they become worldly, and their spiritual interests suffer greatly. So we see in the case of David, that when he was in a lowly condition, and when persecuted, and hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, he was very devout, and his conscience tender; but after his elevation to a throne, while walking upon his house-top, his eye was caught by temptation, and he was drawn far from the paths of rectitude. Undeniably it is in all respects, "Better to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud." (Prov. xvi. 19.) Let believers, therefore, strictly obey the apostolic injunction, "Be clothed with humility." (1 Peter v. 5.)

3. *Carnal amusements.* In these the unregenerate are accustomed to seek pleasure. With many, card-playing and dancing are favorite diversions. Some endeavor to maintain, that the former, when not connected with gambling, is an innocent pastime. But is it innocent to squander away precious time, which is graciously afforded us for useful purposes? It is, moreover, well known that those who regard themselves as having obtained adroitness in this practice, generally proceed to play for money. By this means many have been ruined for time and eternity. Having lost heavily by it, they have become reckless, and committed murder or suicide.

Some attempt to justify dancing from the mention of it in the Scriptures. But these refer either to a religious dance, (Ps. xxx. 11, cl. 4; 2 Sam. vi. 14.) or a carnal one; and the latter with evident disapproval. (Ex. xxxii. 19; Job xxi. 11, 14; Mark vi. 22, 24.) It has been justly remarked that in the Bible there is no reference to such a practice as prevails in our day, in what men and women unite in a way manifestly adapted to excite to levity and the neglect of piety. The advocates of dancing sometimes allege that it is a healthful exercise. But the fact is—undeniable, that, while profitable labor is conducive to health, (Eccles. v. 12.) by dancing—usually carried to excess—multitudes bring on themselves innumerable diseases, and hurry themselves prematurely to the grave. Another decisive reason why this practice should be discontinued by all who profess allegiance to Christ, is, that it is, an open avowal of attachment to the world, in opposition to Him. The Apostle James says, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever, therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James iv. 4.)

So likewise attendance at a *theatre*, a *circus*, *horse race*, *boat race*, &c., is utterly inconsistent with a profession of piety. *Gambling*, in all its various phases, being unlawful and immoral, should be discontinued by all who make any pretences either to piety or morality. Surely no Christian can imagine that his indulgence in any of the practices disapproved in this section will be for the glory of Him who has enjoined by his servant, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.)

4. *Unprofitable reading.* It is evi-

dently unwise and improper to peruse infidel, or semi-infidel books. Though the proofs of the truth of Christianity are plain and decisive, yet plausible objections may be urged against the inspiration of the Bible, or against important truths clearly revealed in it. Many persons are not prepared to meet and obviate these objections. Some writers who admit the truth of the Bible, ingeniously labor to evade the obvious import of those portions of it which plainly teach, that the finally impenitent will be miserable for ever. (Matt. xxv. 41, 46; Mark ix. 43, 46.) It is evidently the part of prudence to apply to reading, as well as to hearing the caution of Solomon, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." (Prov. xix. 27.) Moreover all works that either openly or covertly condemn experimental and vital piety, should be carefully avoided.

The tendency also of novels, as well as plays, is generally injurious. The writer does not intend to condemn parables, allegories, or even fables, provided they are known to be such. But the influence of novel-reading in general, is manifestly prejudicial to the spiritual welfare of those who practice it. It naturally tends to diminish interest in the sober verities of real life; and to divert attention from the all-important concerns of eternity. Those addicted to it in many instances become infatuated, and run so into the *faery* region of imagination that their influence for real good is destroyed. By it the important distinction between truth and falsehood is obliterated; and general infidelity is fostered. By this means also useful and instructive reading is neglected. Besides the sacred Scriptures—imparting knowledge of infinite value—and sound religious books, there is a vast range of interesting and useful reading as reliable history, geography, astronomy, philosophy, &c., the perusal and study of which, increases one's stock of beneficial knowledge, which the perusal of works of fiction does not.

5. *"Foolish talking and jesting."* These, which are expressly forbidden in the Word of God. (Eph. v. 4.) are lamentably prevalent among many people who are professedly religious; and they are exceedingly injurious. The wise man has told us, by Divine inspiration, "In all labor there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury." (Prov. xiv. 23.) This teaches us that, while productive labor, which is usually conducive to health, is profitable, vain discourse, by which invaluable time is wasted, tends to reduce people to poverty. It renders professors of religion spiritually unfaithful, unhappy in themselves, and injurious to others. Hence the apostle admonishes believers, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." (Eph. iv. 29.) As the tongue, may be very usefully employed, (Prov. x. 20, 21.) so, if not duly restrained, it is liable to do a vast amount of harm. Such is often the effect of a silly joke. It is, therefore, very needful to adopt the prudent resolution of our Psalmist, "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." (Psalm xxxix. 1.)

The writer remembers that in the early part of this century, when he saw professedly pious people meeting together, he usually heard them conversing on religious subjects; but if it is to be deplored, that in many instances there is now a change much for the worse. With reference to this subject, as well as many others, a reform is evidently much needed.

Having thus noticed a few cases in which conformity to the world by those who are nominally the servants of Christ, does much injury, in conclusion two or three motives to reform may be added.

1. *The honor of God.* Jesus enjoins upon His disciples, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." So the

Apostle Paul says, "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God, in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." With reference to "unbelievers," it is enjoined, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." (Matt. v. 16; 1 Cor. vi. 20; 2 Cor. vi. 14-18.) While, therefore, "The name of God is blasphemed through" the conformity to the world, of those who profess to be His people (Rom. ii. 24.) it is glorified by their strict obedience to Him. (John xv. 8.)

2. *The welfare of believers.* While worldly conformity grieves the Holy Spirit, and deprives believers of Divine consolation, their transformation into the likeness of Christ, by the renewing of their mind, tends to strengthen their hope in him, and to increase their joy in the Lord. So He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray to the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter. (John xiv. 15, 16; Rom. xii. 2; xv. 14.)

3. *The salvation of lost sinners.* It is enjoined upon those that have hope in Christ, to "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without;" and to "Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life;" and the Apostle adds, to enforce the admonition, "that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." (Col. iv. 5; Phil. ii. 15, 17.) His language plainly implies, that he regarded the success of his labors as intimately connected with the Christian deportment and zealous co-operation of the disciples of Christ in general. God usually performs His gracious work by the means of His people. (Isa. lxvi. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 58.) It is written, "They that win many to righteousness shall shine as stars for ever and ever." (Dani. xii. 3.) Even the conversion of a single sinner is a matter of infinite importance; and it will undoubtedly be a bright gem in the crown of glory bestowed on the individual by whose influence and efforts it is effected. (James v. 19, 20.)

On the other hand, conformity to the world by professors of religion, tends to harden the unconverted in unbelief and iniquity, to their everlasting ruin. How can any one that expects to dwell with Christ in endless glory, endure the thought of being thus accessory to effecting the endless misery of his or her fellow creatures and friends! Surely, all who entertain the hope of future blessedness, should duly regard the apostolic admonition, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." (Phil. v. 15)

Tremont, March 2, 1880.

### The Eloquence of Robert Hall.

In the February number of the *Sunday at Home* a writer affords some pleasant reminiscences of our great preacher, Robert Hall. We remember, he says, to have heard a departed friend tell how, when a boy, he was taken by his father, one still summer evening, across the Northamptonshire fields—I believe it was to the little village town of Thrapstone—to hear Robert Hall. It was one of those old village chapels, with the square galleries, the place was crowded with plain farmer folk, and a sprinkling of intelligent ministers and gentry from the neighborhood. The minister came in, a simple, heavy, but still impressive-looking man, one whose presence compelled you to look at him. In due course he announced his text, "The end of all things is at hand; be sober, and watch," etc. Quite unlike Chalmers, his voice was not shattering, but thin and weak. There was no action at all, or only a kind of nervous twitching of the fingers; more especially as the hand moved and rested upon the lower part of the back, where the speaker was suffering almost incessant pain. As he went on beneath the deepening evening shades falling through the windows of the old chapel, his voice first chained, then charmed and fascinated his hearers one after another; the whole place seemed as if beneath a great spell. As

he talked about "the end," the spell upon the people seemed to begin to work itself out into an awful, fearful restlessness; first one, then another, rose from their seats, and stood stretching forward with a kind of fright and wonder. Still there was no action, only the following on of that thin voice, with a marvellous witchery of apt and melodious words, but through them, "the end of all things" sounded like some warning bell. More people rose, stretching forward. Many of those who rose first, as if they felt some strange power upon them, they knew not what, got up and stood upon their seats until, when the great master ceased, closing his passionate and pathetic accents, the whole audience was upon its feet, intensely alive with interest, as if each one had heard in the distance the presages and preludes of the coming end, and felt that it was time to prepare. My friend used to speak of that never-forgotten moment, that summer evening in the old chapel as one of the most memorable of his life.

### THE STUDENTS IN RUSSIA.

A remarkable document comes from St. Petersburg via the Berlin correspondent of the *Times*. It is a translation of a single sheet, closely printed on both sides, issued through the underground or secret press of Russia, and privately circulated in St. Petersburg and the other University towns. It is a protest from the students of the real schools against the statements which have appeared in the Russian press that "the youth of Russia do not care to learn." To these "studious young men" the expression has always appeared to be, not only simply absurd, but a thoroughly odious and malicious piece of irony. They do not stop here. Such a document would be nothing if it were not political. Hence they charge the Government with "killing all education," and ask the public to help them by petition and protest in every legal way, that the people may become convinced of the inutility of their petitions and protests. They have a far different remedy. "It is time, Russian people, to take your fate from the hands of the Tartars. We young men cannot make peace with the existing order of things." Yet the educational evils under which they groan would appear to be capable of adjustment with far less violent remedies than these. The worst is that the Government "has given base coin instead of real gold," by introducing into the middle schools the classical system—to stifle thought and reason! Their demands do not sound extreme to English ears. "We ought," say they, "to be learning the exact sciences, and not listening for ever to the philosophers and sophists of the past. We demand free education gratis; a wider development of female instruction; full liberty for the activity of private persons and societies in the field of popular education. We demand that in the middle schools physical exercise should be introduced; that the doors of the higher schools should be thrown open to all comers, and that all those entering without certificates, upon successfully passing the preliminary and final examinations, should receive the same rights as those possessed of such certificates." Where, then, the hardship so loudly bewailed? The moderation of the demand exhibits the extent of the denial. It is evident that the repressive character of despotic Russian Government is the cause of all the irritation and restlessness which find vent in revolutionary projects and threats of destruction and anarchy.

Cowardice asks, "Is it safe?" Expediency asks, "Is it politic?" Vanity asks, "Is it popular?" But Conscience asks, "Is it right?"—Punshon.

Good-nature, like a bee, collects honey from every herb. Ill-nature, like a spider, sucks poison from the sweetest flower.

To change and to do better are two different things.