

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

"A little while!" "What then?"

"A little while!" to keep the watch-fire burning,
Upon the hills of Faith!
Led by its light, with ear attentive turning
To what the Leader saith!

"What then?" to rise o'er every foe, victorious,
Upon the trampled plain;
To shout the freedman's anthem, crowned and glorious,
While angels swell the strain.

"A little while!" to walk through shades so dreary,
We cannot see the guide
Who marks the pathway for the pilgrim weary,
Though he is at his side.

"What then?" heaven's radiance to dissolve the haze,
Which wrap the balcyon bowers,
Through whose sweet shades rich streaming
glory blazes,
And bathes its wondrous flowers.

"A little while!" saint, desert wand'ers thirst
By fiery tempests chased,
To vainly follow phantom fountains, bursting
Upon an arid waste.

"What then?" to see the green palms quiver,
Where the blest Elms stand;
To bathe their warm frames in the crystal river
Exchanged for burning lands.

"A little while!" sweet, beatific visions chase
And then with wilder'd brain,
Those lakes and groves the hazy distance grace,
Find but the mirage vain.

"What then?" to part for aye with wild illusion,
O'ershadowed by that band,
Whose sceptred might permits no foes intrusion,
To its love-guarded band.

"A little while!" upon life's restless ocean
The quivering sail to spread!
Midst all its dangers and its wild commotion,
The onward course to tread.

"A little while!" to breast the surging billow,
To toss upon the deep,
When he who rules the storm, upon a pillow
May seem to be asleep.

"What then?" the Sovereign of the tempest
waking,
Will hush the wave to rest
And quenchless beacons on the bright shore
breaking,
Illumine their peaceful breast.

"A little while!" within the land of Pharaoh,
To dwell an humbled band;
"A little while!" to deeply drink of Marah,
And wander on its strand.

"What then?" a messenger will hasten, breaking
The heavy canker'd chain;
Then, at the fount of life, the parch'd tongue
slaking,
To never thirst again.

"A little while!" to find how cold and hollow
The empty praise of earth;
To watch, with tears the sateless grave-dopths
swallow,
Beauty and love and worth.

"What then?" to reach the balmy clime cele-
stial,
Beyond the grave-gloom and the ills terrestrial,
To find the loved all there.

"A little while!" to bear all things believing,
To tread the lonely glen,
To trust in Heaven, when the wrong soul is
grieving,
"A little while," "what then?"

A heaven-tuned harp, to tell the thrilling story;
A jewell'd crown and palm;
A rich, exceeding endless weight of glory;
A deep eternal calm.

Onslow, Sept. 18th.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

God's Precious Thoughts.

God is infinitely intelligent. He says:
"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so
are my thoughts higher than your thoughts."
Yet the Psalmist recorded a real experience

when he wrote: "How precious are they
thoughts to me, O God!" Though God's
thoughts are higher than ours, they may be
communicated to us, and in some degree we
may be brought into communion with his mind
and nature. He has spoken to us through
his Son, making known divine thoughts of
love by words, the life, and death of IMMANUEL;
and under the teachings of the SPIRIT
men have written the Scriptures, "which are
able to make us wise unto salvation." These
books are "the word of Christ." Spoken
by him, concerning him, sanctified by him, as
the oracles of God, they are designed to flash
out the revealings of his will, like the ancient
Urim and Thummim of the priestly breast-
plate.

The inspired originals reflect the divine
thought as perfectly as the thought can be
fitted to the capacity of the finite human
mind. The languages of men are in some
degree imperfect; but it is God's will that
his revelation be given in all languages, and
that the full power of each shall be used
for the expression of the divine ideas. The
faultless exact originals must be rendered
into other tongues by uninspired men; and
though a translation may fail to reach perfec-
tion, the best attainable should be given to
every people as early as possible. Even such
a translation may subsequently be capable of
great improvements. When changes incident
to the growth of a language have occurred,
and delicate distinctions of thought have
found a fitting embodiment, a more exact
transference of the divine idea is possible,
and a word that just fits the thought should
be used even if it involves the dropping out
of long cherished sounds.

If greater opportunities for understanding
the languages in which the word of God has
been preserved are now afforded, and there
are men whose Hebrew and Greek scholar-
ship, whose known ability in discerning and
expressing nice shades of their vernacular,
whose devotion and reverential zeal in the
work qualify them for it, these men should
be encouraged to give to their nation the most
transparent and accurate translation possible
to them.

The voice of scholars, both European and
American, responds to the feeling of many
students among the common people who find
a very imperfect expression of the mind of
the Spirit in many parts of King James's
version. There is an increasing craving for
revision of the common version. The present
time has many advantages for such a work.
Treasures accumulated from thorough ex-
plorations of the Holy Land, the richer ac-
quaintance with Oriental manners and cus-
toms—the discovery and transcription of
valuable manuscripts unknown to King
James's revisers—superior interpreters of the
Hebrew and Greek—these kindle the hope
that we shall soon read God's thoughts through
such a pure medium that they will appear to
us more precious than ever before. While
the subject has commanded much attention in
England, and isolated attempts have been
made in our own land with variable success,
there has just been issued a New Testament
which the best critics consider superior to any
in our tongue. Under the patronage of the
American Bible Union, eminent scholars,
whose names command respect throughout the
literary and theological world, have been
working assiduously for years, and now give
us this result of their careful, prayerful, ef-
ficient toil. The market has already absorbed
many thousands, and the publishers are
pressed with orders. There are abundant in-
dications that the work will be welcomed by
multitudes. Many will prefer it for constant
use. Others will place it by the side of the
cherished old "King James" for frequent re-
ference and comparison. If all can not ac-
cept every change; yet every thoughtful
mind will admit that there are many improve-
ments; and this desirable object will be ac-
complished, namely, a closer study of the
word, and a comparison of renderings that
can not fail to lead searchers after truth into
clearer perception and richer appreciation of
God's precious thoughts.

Importance of believing the Truth.

Dr. Phelps, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, thus
forcibly sets forth the importance of having
correct theological views:

The new birth, as represented in the Scrip-
tures, gives no support to the theory so natu-
ral to superficial thought, that belief as such,
is of little moment in religion: that God will
judge characters, and not creeds; that we
shall not be held responsible for obeying ano-
ther man's faith in preference to our own. On
the contrary, in regeneration character and
creed are indissolubly united. God's instru-
ment in effecting the change is truth. Fals-
hood finds no place there. Truth in carica-
ture finds none. The less a man believes in
truth, the more distant is he from the proba-
ble range of regenerating grace. The more
distorted a man's opinions are the more fearful
are his perils. The more negative his convic-
tions become, the more faint becomes all rea-
sonable hope that he will be saved. In terrific
consistency with this principle is the scriptural
representation of the most hopeless depth of
sin, as that of those to whom God sends de-
lusion, that they may believe a lie. God acts
in regeneration where truth can act, not else-
where. The mind that withholds itself from
truth is withholding itself from God.

There is reason to believe respecting many
constant listeners to the preaching of the
Gospel, that here is the exact point at which
lies the chief obstacle in their way to heaven.
They will not assent to certain truths; the
force of which is essential to draw them
within the range of God's regenerating de-
gree. They are repelled by one truth; they
are heedlessly confused by another; they are
uninterested in a third; perhaps in part per-
suaded of many, they are advancing consoli-
dation of character with hearty opinions
upon none. The Holy Spirit passed them by,
because they will not credit his truth. They
thrust the instrument of His grace from them,
and he leaves them in their sins. He does
not there His mighty works, because of their
unbelief. That is in reality a delicate
and perilous work which a man performs
when he adopts his religious opinions. In
that process often occurs the very crisis of his
destiny. At that point his experience may
be the contending forces for good and evil meet
in fearful equipage.

The Great Swiss Organ.

Rev. Dr. S. L. Prime, one of the editors of
the *New York Observer*, is now travelling in
Europe, and when in Freyburg, he went to
hear the famous organ. He says:

"As I looked up expectant, I thought, 'Oh,
it had only a soul!' And then, just then,
a breath of melody, so soft, so sweet, so soul-
like came along on the still air, it might have
been the first notes of the advent song of peace
that fell like this, by night, over Bethlehem.
This gentle stream of music rose and swelled
into a river of melody, that soon burst its
banks, and became a rushing torrent of sound,
mighty in its power, almost awful in its ex-
pression. This was but the prelude. Then
came the successive anthems, songs, and pas-
sages of masterpieces of the great composers,
some of them familiar, all of them exquisite
in their effect, to illustrate the wondrous
faculties of this uninspired, untainted me-
chanism; that was yet able to represent with
such fidelity, the deep and lofty, the softest,
and strongest emotions of the soul.

Now the imitation of the human voice was
so perfect, that it required an effort of the mind
to believe that a living being was not render-
ing those plaintive strains, in some distant
chambers of this vast hall: and now the
ring of bells broke musically on the ear, and
the far away toll of some solemn church bell,
added its voice to the harmony: the Alpine
horn, the flute, and other instruments were so
distinctly given, it was hard to comprehend
the truth, that in the midst of one grand per-
formance, on a single instrument, so many,
and so distinct and perfect imitations of oth-
ers could be introduced. Perhaps nothing
was more beautiful than the tinkling of water,
dropping into a fountain; yet when one effect
had been enjoyed, as if the most complete,
another soon succeeded, so delicate, and so
touching that it seemed as if the last were
more lovely than all which had been heard
before.

"It was quite impossible to speak of the clos-
ing performance without being suspected, by
those who have not heard it, of exaggeration.
And, indeed, so differently are we constituted,

(that some will be charmed with a picture or stat-
ue, ravished with eloquence of oratory or music,
and delighted with a landscape or waterfall,
while others, exposed to the same influences,
are as unmoved as the marble or instrument.
I know that I am not one of them, thanks to
him who made us to differ, and I know too,
that they who sat near me, when the last
movement of this organ was made, are not of
them. For when the strong wind began to
shake the walls of the old cathedral, the rain
to pour in torrents on the roof, the thunder
rolling in terrific majesty.

"Which as the footsteps of the dreadful God,
Marching upon the storm in vengeance seemed,"
we bowed our heads with such a sense of awe
and adoration, as could scarcely have been in-
creased if the war of elements had indeed
been bursting on us; and the voice of the Al-
mighty had suddenly filled his temple."

Purity.

The atmosphere is sometimes in such a pecu-
liar state that the spectator, on coast or shore,
looking abroad over the sea, cannot tell where
the water ends and the sky begins; and as
if some magician had raised them out of their
proper element and turned their sails into
wings, the ships seem floating in mid air.
But occasionally no line of separation is more
difficult to draw than that which lies between
what is right and what is wrong. Whether
such and such a business or amusement, pur-
suit or pleasure, is wrong, and one, therefore,
in which no Christian should engage, is a
question that, so far as the thing itself is con-
cerned, may be difficult to answer. But it is
not difficult to answer, so far as you are con-
cerned, if you doubt whether it is right.
The apostolic rule is, let every man be fully
persuaded in his own mind; and unless you
are so, then "what is not of faith is sin"—all
at least to you. Whatever others may feel
themselves at liberty to do if you are not
satisfied in your own mind and conscience
that the thing is right, that the pursuit, or
pleasure, or enjoyment, is lawful, it may be
right for others, but it is wrong for you to do
it. Hence the Word of God says: "He who
doubteth is damned in the common sense of
that terrible expression; not that he is
damned to hell, but that he is convicted,
condemned of wrong-doing, in doing that
which he is not sure is right."

In regard to the lawfulness of certain pur-
suits, pleasures, and amusements, it is impos-
sible to lay down any fixed and general rule;
but we may confidently say, that whatever is
found to unfit you for religious duties, or to
interfere with the performance of them; whatever
dissipates your mind, or cools the
fervor of your devotion; whatever indisposes
you to read your Bible, or engage in prayer;
whenever the thought of a bleeding Saviour,
or of a holy God, or of the hour of death, or
of the day of judgment, falls like a cold
shadow on your enjoyment; the pleasure
which you cannot thank God for, on which
you cannot ask His blessing, whose recollec-
tions will haunt a dying bed, and plant sharp
thorns in its uneasy pillow—these are not for
you. Never go where you cannot ask God
to go with you; never be found where you
would not like death to find you; never
indulge in any pleasure which will not bear
the morning's reflection. Keep yourself in-
spotted from the world; not from its spots
only, but even from its suspicions.—*Gutrie.*

Egypt at the Paris Exhibition.

A French paper states that one of the most
interesting collections at the Paris Exhibition
of next year (should the Emperor succeed in
maintaining peace) will be the Egyptian. The
writer goes on to say:
In the "park" or garden surrounding the
palace the Viceroy of Egypt is getting three
large buildings erected on the 4,800 square
metres allotted to his States. The first repre-
sents the house of a fallah, and will contain
a small room for artificial hatching, stables
for dromedaries and other domestic animals,
and lastly, an ethnological collection. At
the opposite corner of the Egyptian quadri-
lateral, an elegant iron kiosk, shaped like a
horseshoe, and built in the purest Arabian
style, will rise from a mass of oriental plants
and costly flowers. Here, on one side, Egypt