

Asking.

O Heavenly Father, Thou hast told
Of a gift more precious than pearls and
gold;
A gift that is free to every one,
Through Jesus Christ, the only Son,
For His sake, give it to me.

O give it to me, for Jesus said
That a father giveth his children bread,
And how much more Thou wilt surely give
The gift by which the dead shall live!
For Christ's sake give it to me.

I cannot see, and I want the sight;
I am in the dark and I want the light;
I want to pray, and I don't know how;
O give me Thy Holy Spirit now!
For Christ's sake give it to me.

Thou hast said it, I must believe
It is only "ask" and I shall receive;
If Thou said it, it must be true,
And there's nothing else for me to do!
For Christ's sake give it to me.

So I come and ask, because my need
Is very great and real indeed.
On the strength of Thy Word I come and
say
Oh, let Thy Word come true to-day!
For Christ's sake give it to me!

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

What Does "Born Again" Mean.

If anyone had visited a certain Lancashire town thirty years ago, and asked for "Owd Mike," they would have found that everybody knew him. Like many of the victims of intemperance, Mike was a warm hearted, genial, generous man, popular with all his drinking companions, and 'no man's enemy but his own.' At election times, after the official charring of the newly elected member had taken place, Mike was always chaired by the rowdies as the workingman's member.

Possessed of a strong constitution he bore the strain of his irregular and dissipated life for some time with apparent impunity, but at last drink and recklessness did their work, and Mike became a prematurely old man, glad to get a copper from any passer-by. For some years, by the aid of a grant from the parish, he contrived to eke out a wretched existence. He resided in a miserable cellar, into which a breath of fresh air never entered, and where a gleam of sunshine could never come.

One day he was visited by one of the district visitors, who, before leaving, read to him part of the third chapter of St. John's gospel. The words made a deep impression on him, especially the Saviour's declaration, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

When left to his miserable solitude, he crouched over the few cinders that told where the fire should have been, and kept repeating the solemn words. "Nicodemus" difficulty presented itself to the old man in various shapes.

"Born again," he said, "when I am near seventy! What can it mean?"

The question grew upon him as he kept muttering it, till it excluded every other thought. "Cannot even see the kingdom of God," he said; "then where shall I be? I know I am dying, and I must go somewhere; but I am not 'born again'—I cannot enter heaven, then I must be lost forever!"

Tears filled his eyes as he thought of the guilty past and glanced at the terrible future, and he groaned out, "Oh, that I knew what 'born again' meant!" He dwelt upon the question until it became unbearable, and he resolved, at all hazards, to seek the information he so greatly needed.

Leaving his cellar, he crawled to one of the cottonmills where he was well known, one of the proprietors of which was an active Christian. Entering the office, he inquired for that gentleman. Another of the partners, who had once been a Christian, but had given up his faith in Christianity and become a prominent secularist, heard the old man's voice and went to him. "Well, Mike," he said, "what do you want?" "Why," said the old man, with great earnestness, "I want to know what 'born again' means." "Oh," said the gentleman, putting his hand into his pocket and taking out a sixpence, "you want a drink! Take this and get it." "No," said the old man, pushing back the proffered money, "I don't want that. I'm a dying man, and if I'm not 'born again' I cannot see the kingdom of God, and I want to know what 'born again' means."

Affected by his earnestness he said to the clerk: "You had better call Mr. W——'s father." Mr. W——'s father was one of the best men whom Mike could have met—a devout Christian, preeminent for his common sense. He was soon in the office, and Mike told his tale and pressed his question. Seeing that life could not last many days he persuaded him to consent to go to the workhouse, and he at once took him there. On the road Mike resumed his question, and he in the simplest way told him God's own answer. After seeing him attended

to be left for the night. Sympathizing with his anxiety, he was early with him again, and from the joyous expression on his face, he saw at a glance that the Great Teacher had led him into the truth.

"Well, Mike," said he, "do you know what 'born again' means yet?" Raising himself in his bed, and with the smile of a little child on his face he said, "I don't know all that it means; but if hating sin and loving Christ is being 'born again,' then I am born again."

As he spoke he fell back into Mr. W——'s arms, another sinner of the great multitude washed and 'made white in the blood of the Lamb.'

Would that every reader had a clear view of the meaning of 'born again' as old Mike; there would be more peace and greater joy. Why should we hesitate about it? The teaching of God's Word is clear: "Every one that liveth is born of God."—*Joyful News.*

Wages Promised And Received.

"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." The duties of the mother were faithfully performed, and she doubtless received pay for it in the currency of Egypt at that time. But we must not limit the pay for that maternal and religious nursing that Moses had, merely to the pieces of silver given. What must have been to her, as a mother, a greater gratification, was the fact that she had nursed a son who became the law-giver of Israel and the leader of God's sacramental hosts through the wilderness to the promised land. It would seem, too, that he became the heir apparent to the throne of Egypt, for he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" when he grew up, and chose, rather, to cling to the people and religion of his mother. Thus did his life evince the correctness and thoroughness of his maternal training. Two things are suggested:

1. *A mother's opportunity.* She is divinely commissioned. "Take this child away and nurse it for me." How many mothers there are to whom these words of Pharaoh's daughter apply with wonderful force and appositeness, and to whom God would not be less faithful to his promise than the king's daughter was to hers. It is not given to many, it is true, to nurse the son of a king's daughter, or to occupy the position of Esther, Queen of Persia, or that of Victoria, Queen of England; but it is given to many a mother to exert an influence as hallowed and happy as either in the proper training of the little boy in her arms to-day. We know that some of the greatest men who have honored the Church and the world with their happy influence, owed it chiefly to maternal education. We owe much, as a nation, to Washington for his lovely character and his grand achievements, but perhaps we owe quite as much, if not more, to the mother of Washington. The late Ireneus Prime, of the New York Observer, a short time before he died wrote, "I thank God for opportunities for usefulness." So may every mother in the land be thankful, that has a child placed in her arms to nurse and train up for usefulness and immortality. Hers may not be a regal throne, with its gorgeous surroundings, such as some mothers have; it may be but the humble cottage, where silently fall, like the gentle dew of heaven, those moulding influences which in time will develop the noble Christian character of her offspring. Perhaps that mother's power for good, who is thus training her household, may be seen and felt from ocean to ocean and from pole to pole. Such we know has been a mother's power. We are all apt to undervalue the far-reaching results of a godly, praying mother's work. She has her wages paid in full for her fidelity to her trust. It is a delightful thought that there are many mothers who are faithfully and religiously training their children, unobserved by the world, but whose influence will widen out from them as centers to almost unlimited bounds. We would believe, too, that these mothers are increasing in number all the time in our Christian homes. To this most likely may be traced the reason why there are now more than 1,500 young men and women in our colleges and seminaries who are not only willing, but desirous, to be sent to distant lands as missionaries.

Thus it would seem that a mother is scarcely anything less than heaven's commissioned agent to scatter blessings in the world. Such were the mothers of Samuel J. Mills, Harriet Newell, the Judsons, the Wesleys, and a host of others.

2. *A mother's responsibility.* When the mother of Moses placed her babe in the ark and laid it "in the flags by the river's brink," it looked as though her responsibility had ended; but in receiving him back from the arms of the king's daughter with the royal commission, "Nurse this child for me," she as-

sumed an almost fearful responsibility. Opportunity and responsibility are closely connected. Indeed, the one follows the other. But little less, if any, is that of many a mother in our land to-day, than was hers with the Hebrew boy in her arms. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." It is to be feared that many mothers are not fully aware of the weighty obligation that rests upon them for the right training of their households. "As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined," is an old adage and a true one. This truth is corroborated by the lives of individuals and families. It is reiterated again and again on the pages of history, that much of the character of the men, and women too, who have occupied positions of great power for good or evil in the world, was formed in the nursery. So we are justified in believing that those who are to become prominent actors on the world's arena for good or evil are to-day the "olive-plants" around the home tables. Hence, any lack of fidelity here has a telling effect, and is deeply to be deplored, as it will be seen and felt in their lives.

Perchance these lines may come within the notice of some mother, anxious for her boy. O mother! Grand is thy opportunity and great is thy responsibility; but listen to the sweet encouraging words of promise, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."—*Journal and Messenger.*

Why are some Christians like the Wasp?

Some Christians, like the wasp, are largest at their birth, and gradually dwindle into much smaller compass as they progress. They come into spiritual life with a rushing mighty wind. They are zealous, heartily converted, they seek opportunities to work for the Master in season and out of season, and they bid fair to be a mighty help to the church, and the world. Then come dissensions among the brethren, and the one who was so big at his spiritual birth begins to shrink within his own selfishness because he cannot have his will gratified. Then comes in the deceitfulness of riches, and the cares of the world, to choke out the good seed sown, and the Christian who is largest at his birth ceases to develop or bring forth fruits of the Gospel until the Heavenly Father, in his tender mercy, delivers up such for the destruction of his flesh by the Evil One, to the saving of his soul, for got one that the Father hath given to the Son shall be lost. It is better to be largest at spiritual birth than not to be born of the spirit at all, but it is far better to be born a spiritual infant, and be fed upon the pure milk of the word, learning in humility unto the end, till Christ shall make us perfect by his grace unto the end of our Christian pilgrimage.

About Paying the Preacher.

Just as it is I can not tell that there are so many people who think, talk, and act as though a minister of the gospel of Christ should not be paid for his labors. They say that he has such an easy time, with nothing to do only to visit around among the people. Some say, "He is too lazy to work, and ought not to be paid. Let him go to work and earn his own living"—just as though he did not earn it. Such men are not a few, scattered over this wide world.

If such individuals were brought into trouble financially, and were about to lose their home by unfair means, they would not hesitate to pay some lawyer five or six hundred dollars for a few hours' pleading, to secure their rights and to save their home; and they never say once that he is lazy and ought to work for his living. But the poor pastor may plead at a throne of divine grace to the court of heaven in their behalf, that they may be saved and that an eternal inheritance may be secured unto them, and then they pay him only two or three dollars for a whole year's pleading.

If one of the family gets sick, they send for the family physician. He comes and administers unto his or her wants. But if they fear that the patient is going to die, they send immediately for the pastor. He comes with the word of God in his hands, and with words of love and comfort. Sometimes in tears, songs, and prayers does he plead for the saving of the soul. His visits are thus continued for days and weeks. But, alas! hush! he is still. There is silence in the bedchamber. The pastor and the family, almost breathless, stand around the bed of the dying, waiting, listening, and desiring in the last extremity of life to learn if all is well. At last the dying one, with a beam of glory in the countenance, looks up, and in a faint whisper says, "I am dying; but all is well." A few more heavings of the breast, then all is over. The battle is fought, the victory won. The soul of the depart-

ed is gone home at last. The pastor lingers awhile with the bereaved family to comfort them and to make necessary arrangements for the funeral and burial, preaches the funeral sermon, and all is over. But what about the expenses? Well, the undertaker must be paid fifteen or twenty dollars. The doctor's bill is seventy-five or one hundred dollars, and it must be paid if it takes the last cow. The poor pastor goes begging; perhaps he does not get thanks.

What would this world do without the ministers of the gospel of Christ? What say ye? They go forth sowing the seed of righteousness, teaching men and women the way of life and salvation. Truly the divine penman says that the workman is worthy of his hire. Many of our ministers have spent years in colleges and seminaries, and spent hundreds of dollars in the preparation to preach the gospel of Christ to a lost world. Now, should they not have a living salary, so they will not be paupers when they are old? I say to the people in general, Pay your pastors; for they are worthy.—*Telescope.*

A Woman's Autumn.

Oh mothers, do not fold the hands across your empty lap, and say at fifty, "The story is told." If home has been so all-absorbing that outside interests have fallen away from you, find the broken thread, or take up a new one, and you will find yourselves among the world's creators. The summer sunshine went with the children, but your autumn may be long and bright, with real "halcyon days" here and there. Your daughters, now young mothers, will feel that your example has given them a longer life-lease, and the world must needs acknowledge its errors. The promise for the "golden age" for women is fair, but its realization will never be reached until home training undergoes the needed reformation, and its girls and women secure a physical poise which shall give judgment and stability to all their undertakings. Upon the women of to-day devolves a mighty task, but, when filled with glory and honor, it teems with rich possibilities.—*Dr. Elizabeth Chapin.*

RANDOM READINGS.

The man of prayer may not always be happy, but he is more likely to be than any one else. The sources of infinite joy are never closed to him.—*United Presbyterian.*

A man never gets over the influence of an early Christian home. It holds him in an eternal grip. Though his parents may have been gone forty years, the tears of penitence and gladness that were wept at the family altar still glitter in his memory.—*Talmage.*

Youthful dissipation is due to lack of home training, dime novels and cigars being the kindling wood with which little boys' hearts are set on fire by the flames.—*Joseph Cook.*

Some men are human sponges that absorb all the good things of life they touch, but never give up anything unless they are squeezed so tight that they cannot help doing it.—*Rev. L. A. Banks.*

If it is menial to undertake anything you think beneath you for the sake of money, it is still more menial, having undertaken it not to do it as well as possible.—*George Macdonald.*

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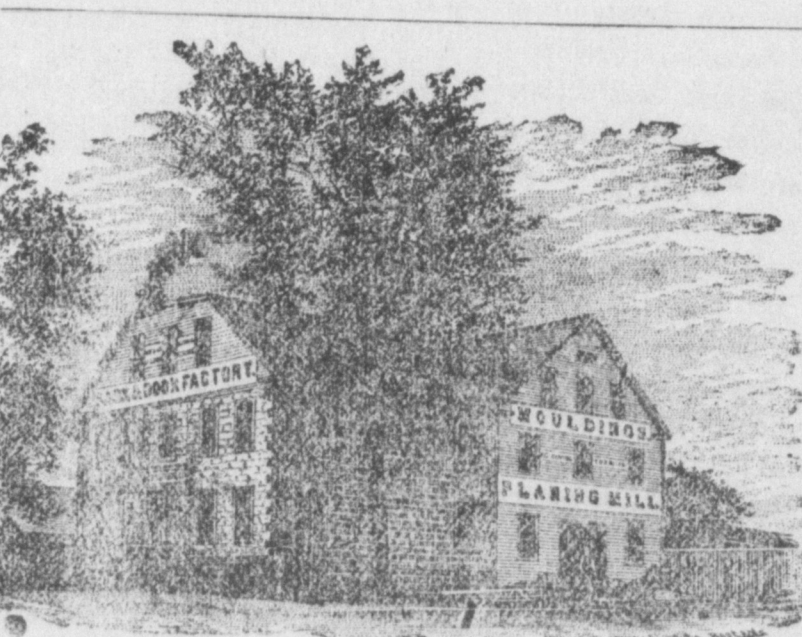
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1878.....	127,505.87	773,895.71	3,374,683.43
1880.....	141,402.81	911,132.93	3,831,478.14
1882.....	254,841.73	1,073,577.94	5,849,889.19
1884.....	278,378.65	1,274,397.24	6,844,404.04
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