

Religious Intelligence.

THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH CHRIST.—Peter

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WHOLE No. 2481

RENEWALS NOW.

Renewals should be coming in fast now. In no way can the friends of the INTELLIGENCER so well show their interest as by quick renewals of their subscriptions. Will they kindly let us hear from them at once?

NOTES AND GLEANINGS

The strongest sentiment of the Turk is his reverence for his mother. He always stands in her presence until invited to sit down, a compliment he pays to no one else.

Paris possesses eighty thousand trees in the streets and public places. There are 26,000 plane trees, 17,000 chestnut trees, and 5,000 elms, the remainder consisting of sycamores, maples, lindens, etc.

One of the queerest corners of the earth is Chatham Island, off the coast of Ecuador. The island bounds in cats. Every one of them is black. They live in the crevices of the lava, near the coast, and get a living by catching fish and crabs, instead of rats.

So many are regretting this war. "I have found it quite affecting to read the lament of the whiskey exporters. Listen:—'The dreary lengths to which the war is being drawn out is proving very irritating to those houses who are ready to make shipments there at the earliest opportunity.' What is Lord Roberts thinking about?"

The codfish plays a very important part in the world's commerce. Twenty-five years ago the annual catch by the vessels of the United States was 75,000,000 pounds; now it is about 150,000,000 pounds. The combined catch of cod by all the fisheries of the world is estimated at 500,000,000 pounds annually, most of which is exported to tropical countries after having been hardened.

A marriage law is to be presented to the Wisconsin Legislature, providing that a board of medical examiners be organized and maintained by the State, to the end that no license shall be granted to persons contemplating marriage, unless they shall have received from the board a certificate setting forth that they are free from insanity, consumption and tainted blood.

The city of Helena, Mont., which is located on Last Chance Gulch, was one time a rich placer mine, and the time mining men say that there still remains under the city more gold than was ever taken out. Last week gold was discovered on one of the main streets in considerable quantities, below the surface of the street, and a resident panned several buckets of earth from an opening in the street, in the presence of two or three hundred people, and several dollars' worth of gold was secured.

In Sweden the government is waging a strong and serious fight against drunkenness. Not content with passing severe police laws and carrying them out vigorously, it attacks every relapsed drunkard and locks him up in a house of correction, where he is thoroughly dosed with alcohol, it being mixed into every portion of his food and drink, until he is so utterly disgusted with the taste of it that he cannot bear the smell of wine or whiskey for a long time. It is claimed for this original and drastic cure that it is permanent in nine cases out of ten.

The ice habit is making rapid progress in Great Britain largely owing to the calls of Americans. Day after day all first class establishments lay out upon the table in small ice and guests pick out as much as they desire with ice tongs. Though few saloons and restaurants have refrigerators, many private houses are now provided with them. The consumption of ice would be much greater if regular companies distributed it, but the business is now largely in the hands of fishmongers. The yearly consumption of ice in England is 450,000 tons and in London 160,000 tons. Much of the ice is brought from Norway and a considerable quantity is manufactured.

BACK TO CHRIST.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

In these days we often hear the slogan sounded—"Back to Christ!" Whatever may be the peculiar meaning or the purpose of some who utter it, there is a happy appropriateness in these words at the Christmas season. They point us back through the ages to that wondrous scene in Bethlehem when the shepherds, coming to that lowly stable beneath the crowded inn, discovered "a babe lying in a manger." That that infant, wrapped in its swaddling clothes, is the actual incarnate Son of God manifested in human form is a mystery that at first sight overwhelms us. We cannot fathom it or explain it; nor is it necessary that we should. I cannot fathom or explain just how that tree before my window has been growing during this last summer; but I accept the fact of its growth. So with the unfathomable marvel of the incarnation. With the modus of it, or the how it took place, we are not required to have any faith at all; simply are we to believe the revealed truth that the infant Jesus was the eternal Son of God who had become man and continued to be God and man in two distinct natures, but in one personage! From Bethlehem on to the Ascension-mountain he claims divinity; and every word, every step, every act confirms the claim. After nineteen centuries the unanimous verdict of Christendom only echoes the testimony of that century before the cross, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

As we go back to that wonderful scene at Bethlehem we discover that a name is given to the divine child. He is called Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins." They call him Saviour. That sacred, precious name carries us as with a bound from Bethlehem to Calvary—from the manger to the cross. That the newly born babe was yet to be an infinitely wise teacher, and an infinitely compassionate healer, and an infinitely perfect example to us all was not enough; he must be a Redeemer from the dominion and the doom of sin, or else the supreme purpose of the incarnation fails. Mark how that fearful word "sins" flashes and flames out over that Bethlehem manger! It reveals the terrible fact of human guilt and wandering from God, and it forecasts terrible retribution. That pulpit and that Sabbath school commit a fatal mistake when they belittle that word "sin"; it is a mistake that lies at the bottom of a vast deal of shallow and delusive preaching. If sin is not utterly damnable, why should the Son of God shed his blood on the cross to save us from its clutch and its condemnation?

Observe, too, how close alongside of that ghastly word "sin" beams out that glorious word "save"! We seem to be hearing already the sweet bells of redeeming love ringing over that manger in which the infant Jesus slumbers. The "faithful saying" starts, then and there which Paul afterwards shouted at the top of his voice, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is the real message for the times. From the days of Luther on to the days of the Wesleys, and from their day on to the days of Spurgeon, that pulpit has had most of the power from on high which rang out the most clearly the glorious evangel of the atonement. Tear that vital doctrine out of Christianity, and you reduce it to an excellent system of morality, but nothing more. Even Bethlehem's manger never would have existed if there were to be no cross of Calvary.

I am well aware that some who employ this formula, "Back to Christ!" intend by it to minimize—and in some cases to disparage—the teachings of the inspired apostles. They fasten upon those utterances of our Master which we called "the Sermon on the Mount" as the condensed creed and constitution of Christianity. Have these good people never read a certain remarkable conversation which our Lord had with a Jewish ruler who came to him by night as a searcher after truth? That evening the divine Teacher dropped his plummet into the deep things—the great truths that reach unto eternity. He told Nicodemus about sin and its consequences. He told him about the redeeming love

of God in the atonement—the Son of Man to be lifted up as Moses lifted aloft the brazen serpent. He told him the indispensable necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. He pressed upon him the vital duty of faith as essential to salvation. He revealed to him the glories of "eternal life," and showed him the road to heaven. A wonderful "inquiry-meeting" was that, and the fruit of it appeared when Nicodemus brought his sweet spices to be wrapped with the crucified body of his Lord.

Now all these core-truths make up the warp and woof of the inspired teachings of Paul and Peter and John. Instead of being a Pauline and Petrine and Johannine theology, they are simply Jesus Christ's theology; for these apostles were Christ's spokesmen. He had promised them, "I am with you always," and that his Spirit would guide them into all truth. "Back to Christ" ought to mean nothing less than a return to everything which our adorable Master taught us, both by his own tongue and by his divinely inspired representatives and witnesses.

Seldom has a Christmas Day dawned upon us when there was more need to turn our eyes and thoughts Christward. Early in this year an international conference was held to promote the principle of righteous arbitration instead of an appeal to the sword. But the year closes with wars in which two or three Christian nations are engaged, and the music of Christmas bells mingles with the thunders of artillery. Every lover of humanity is praying that the century may close with a new advent of the Prince of Peace.

There has been over our land for some time past a lamentable dearth of revivals. Business thrives, wealth increases, our country is becoming enormously rich; but the vital business of winning souls to Christ has somewhat slackened. Pastors and people are raising the practical question, What shall we do? The answer would seem to be in three words—Back to Christ! Jesus in our homes, not only on a Christmas day, but every day, would revive household piety, establish family altars, sweeten the fire-side, counteract the rage for fashion and frivolities, and bring our children into Christ's fold. Jesus Christ in the conscience of his rich followers would check the mania for wealth, and teach them how to use money for the benefit of God's poor, and ignorant, and suffering, and benighted children. Back to Bethlehem's manger among the poor! Back to Calvary's cross to save sinners!

The great want in the Church, and in society and in civil life, in the pulpit and pew and everywhere else, is Jesus Christ. The gift that includes all gifts, the blessing that enwraps all blessings, is a present Saviour working in us as a conqueror of sin, and as a converting power, as a refiner, as a comforter, and as a quickener of the dead to life. A personal Jesus preached awakens sinners. A personal Jesus accepted means salvation. A personal Jesus obeyed is sanctification. A personal Jesus followed is a life of brotherly kindness and philanthropy. A personal Jesus reigning in the heart is the fulness of joy and power. The bells of Bethlehem ring one note, and the Christmas carols are all calling aloud—"Back to Christ! Back to Christ!"

RAX ME THAT BIBLE.

Mr. Augustus C. Thompson, in his work on Foreign Missions, relates the following incident:

In the year 1796 the subject of missions was before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. After an elaborate speech from an opponent of missions to the heathen, the venerable Erskine arose and said: "Moderator, rax me that Bible." Taking the Book, he read passages setting forth the missionary labors of the apostle Paul. A more impressive argument could not have been produced. In all discussions on the subject every disputant may well say, "Rax me that Bible."

This incident, with its delightful smack of Scotch pith and point, may well serve as the starter for a few meditations at this Christmas-tide.

Our final appeal upon many a point must be made to the Bible. On the subject of missions Erskine was right

and his argument was valid. Given its rightful place, the New Testament is a creator of missions. Since it came forth from the dead languages of Greece and Rome and from the monasteries of the Middle Ages, and since it escaped the fires of the Roman Catholic Inquisition, it has been the mightiest of reforming and inspiring agencies, along with the Holy Spirit operating with it upon the mind of our modern world. It is true that Luther did not dream of missions to the heathen as we see them, though he was a student and translator of the Bible. But Luther had his mighty German warfare to wage against an army of Papal wrongs, and the battle was quite enough for one of the greatest and stoutest of our race. Luther was virtually a foreign missionary in his own land. But the fact that he and his co-reformers, such as Huss and Wycliffe and Bunyan and Wesley, did not find in the Bible they so dearly loved a commission to the heathen world, means simply that the whole radiance of Biblical teaching did not break suddenly through their gloom. Four centuries from the time of Luther, however, we see all that he saw in the Bible, and much more.

To-day we can not look upon the Bible with German eyes, or English eyes, or American eyes, but we must see it with human, brotherly, world-gazing eyes. We know that its light is heavenly, and that, like the sun and stars, it must illumine every land. From its anthem of the angels at the birth of the Saviour to its pictured throne of "the Lamb that was slain," it holds a universal language of love and tone of authority, and it refuses any limits to its influence, except as the east is bounded by the west and the north by the south. It is the world's book. Its translation into hundreds of tongues, its multiplication by millions of copies almost monthly, prove it so. From its rich teachings have grown the choicest fruits of our Western civilization, and in its pages there is the promise of a regenerated Eastern world. "Rax me that Bible," cried Luther, and there came modern Germany. "Rax me that Bible," cried Wycliffe and Tindale, and there came Great Britain, and Canada, and Australia, and the United States. "Rax me that Bible," cried William Carey, and there came modern missions.

We have questions yet to settle, and our appeal must be to the Bible. There are questions of government and of industry and of temperance and of Christian union, and they must be solved, and their solutions must be Biblical ones. It was so with slavery. "Rax me that Bible," cried a mighty pulpit, and slavery was doomed. So likewise the Bible is the antidote for rum and Romanism. The more of that book we put into the veins of our civilization the hotter its blood will get against the iniquitous Papal power and the murderous liquor traffic.

It seems strange that precisely when the Bible is doing its mightiest work in the world, abolishing slavery, weakening tyranny, dispelling superstition, creating a vast body of Protestantism, molding nations, framing governments, civilizing barbarism, Christianizing paganism, and working its Christ spirit into the warp and woof of all that comes from our vast loom of life, certain men claiming to be friends of the Bible should be virtually discrediting its authority before the people. The whole fanfare of a bevy of school-boys criticizing a Corliss engine while its mighty wheel sweeps round and round, driving the pulleys and bands and lathes and levers of its vast factory. The boys may decide that the invention was not inspired, but that doesn't hurt the engine. It will do no harm to the Bible to throw false theories at it. Truth will do it good. A literature that enshrines such a character as that of Christ is immortal and invaluable.

Spite of all that men may say there stands the Christ, himself his best defense, gathering up this literature around him as the ancient kings robed themselves in purple and crowned themselves with gold. The Bethlehem Babe is the real author of the matchless Book; and so long as he lives in the world's best thoughts and purest

love, the stories that the publican and the beloved disciple and the beloved physician told about him can not die. "Rax me that Bible!" I need it as a friend and brother and husband and father; I need it as a citizen and patriot and philanthropist; I need it gazing outwardly and inwardly and upwardly; I need it in faith and hope and action; there is no book so good to live by and no other at all to die by, nor any that so immortalizes man and endears him to the heart of God. "Rax me that Bible."—Chris. Stand-ard.

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.

"Rise up ye women that are at ease. Isaiah 32: 9.

[All contributions for this column should be addressed to Mrs. Jos. McLeod, Fredericton.]

CASTE IN INDIA.

[The following is the paper read by Miss Vince, at a meeting of the Woodstock Society, and mentioned in Mrs. Slipp's letter last week.]

Caste is a distinct hereditary order or class of people among the Hindoos, the members of which are of the same rank, profession or occupation.

The religious law of Brahma recognizes four leading castes which are again subdivided. The four castes are:—

- (1). The Brahmains, or priests.
- (2). The Kshatriya, or soldier caste.
- (3). The Vaisya, or commercial caste.

(4). The Sudra, or tillers of the soil. Not till 600 B. C., do we find the caste definitions realized as facts. Then the god Brahma assigned the duties to the different castes. The Brahmains were given the duties of reading the Vedas, of teaching, of sacrificing, of giving alms if they be rich, and if indigent of receiving gifts.

The duties of the Kshatriya are "to defend the people, to give alms, to sacrifice, to read the Vedas, to shun the allurements of sensual gratification." The duties of the Vaisya are "to keep herds of cattle, to bestow largesses, to sacrifice, to read the scripture, to carry on trade, to lend at interest, and to cultivate land." These three castes wear the sacred thread. The one duty of a Sudra is "to serve the before-mentioned classes, without depreciating their worth. The Brahman, as the highest caste, is entitled to the whole universe, he may eat no flesh but that of victims, and he has his peculiar clothes. He may even seize the goods of a Sudra, which he gains by labor, beyond a certain amount. In contrast, the Sudra has to serve the other castes and, even when emancipated, cannot be anything but a Sudra. He may not learn the Vedas and in sacrifice has to omit the sacred texts. A Sudra for slandering a Brahman is whipped; the other castes pay fines.

In ordinary salutation, a Brahman is asked whether his devotion has prospered; a Kshatriya whether he has suffered from his wounds; a Vaisya, whether his health is secure; a Sudra, whether he is in good health. In administering oaths, a Brahman is asked to swear by his veracity; a Kshatriya, by his weapon, house or elephant; a Vaisya, by his kine, grain or goods; and a Sudra, by all the most frightful penalties of perjury.

The castes are also distinguished by their modes of marriage. Those peculiar to the Brahman seem to be—1st., Brahma, when a daughter, clothed only with a single robe, is given to a man learned in the Veda, whom her father has invited and respectfully receives; 2nd., Devas or Daiva, when a daughter, in gay attire, is given, when the sacrifice is already begun, to the officiating priest. The primitive marriage forms of Rachassa, when a maiden is seized by force from home, while she weeps and calls for help, is said to be appropriate to Kshatriyas. As to the two lower castes the service of Asura is open, in which the bridegroom, having given as much wealth as he can afford to the father and paternal kinsman and to the damsel herself, takes her voluntarily as his bride. A Kshatriya woman on her

marriage with a Brahman must hold an arrow in her hand; a Vaisya marrying one of the sacerdotal or military classes must hold a whip; a Sudra woman marrying one of the upper castes must hold the skirt of a mantle.

THE MISSIONARIES NOT TO BLAME.

It is no longer pardonable to speak of the missionaries as the cause of the outbreak in China. Every one now knows better. They are foreigners, and so are not loved, but the mad passion against foreign devils has been of political and commercial origin. It has been the business of the missionaries to make friends, not enemies; to avoid, not create, difficulties; to ally, and not stir up, prejudices. It is not they who have disturbed cemeteries by their railroads; who have aroused the dragon underground by their excavations from mines; who have destroyed towns and seized ports. They have been purely men of peace, and they have gained multitudes of converts. These converts have proved their sincerity with their lives, and the names of a multitude of Chinese martyrs will long honour the Chinese church.

The humiliation of the empress and her court is complete. They are now exiles in that very province of Shansi where the American Board's missionaries were all slaughtered by their orders, and are trying to flee further on into Shensi. Against them their own subjects are now in rebellion, and for their return to power they are dependent on the forbearance of the nations whose envoys they tried to kill, and whose citizens they slew by the score.

THE FAMOUS ASPHALT LAKE.

Asphalt is being dug out of the famous tar lake of Trinidad—the most notable existing source of the material in the world—at the rate of eighty thousand tons per annum. There are still four and a half million tons in sight, but at this rate the supply could not last long, were it not that the lake of bitumen referred to is receiving a constant accretion from the bowels of the earth. This accretion is reckoned as amounting to about twenty thousand tons yearly, and would suffice to restore the lake to its original condition if it were allowed to remain undisturbed for a few years.

This wonderful lake of pitch has an area of one hundred and fourteen acres, and recent soundings made in the middle of it have shown its depth to be one hundred and thirty-five feet in that part. Near the center it is semi-liquid and bubbling, but elsewhere it is so hard a surface that a man on horseback can ride over it without danger of breaking through the crust. Scattered over its surface are a number of small islands which have no proper roots in the earth, so to speak, but are composed merely of accumulations of soil, though trees of considerable size grow on some of them. These islands are not stationary, but are carried slowly from place to place by the movements of the lake. Now and then one of them is entirely engulfed, —The Saturday Evening Post.

THE QUEEN.—An enthusiastic Englishman writes that: "Queen Victoria is now sovereign over a continent, 1,000 peninsulas, 500 promontories, 1,000 lakes, 2,000 rivers, and 10,000 islands. She waves her hand and 900,000 warriors march to battle to conquer or die. She bends her head and at the signal 1000 ships of war and 100,000 sailors perform her bidding on the ocean. She walks upon the earth and 420,000,000 human beings feel the least pressure of her foot."

AMONG EXCHANGES.

MIGHT BE BETTER. He who says "I am perfect," however perfect he may be, might be more so.—Free Baptist.

"POWER." Power from on high is to be desired and sought by every preacher, but he who wastes all his time on trifles throughout the week, and then on Sunday morning goes on his knees in his pulpit and lustily roars and screams for "power" may succeed in "raising a noise," but the power that edifies Christians and converts sinners is not in that way.—The Telescope.

WILL HE? We do not ask whether or not the coming Christian will use tobacco, but we do ask will the coming gentleman smoke on the street and the chaver eddle the pavement?—United Presby-rian.