

THE CHRISTIAN SUN.

IN ESSENTIALS, UNITY;

IN NON-ESSENTIALS, LIBERTY;

IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY.

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Poetry.

A TANGLED SKIN.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

Life is but a tangled skin,
Full of trouble, toil, and travail,
Knots that puzzle heart and brain,
We must study to unravel;
Slowly, slowly,
Bending lowly
O'er our task, and trusting wholly
Unto him, whose loving hand
Helps us smooth each twisted strand.

In our hands at early morn,
And at night when darkness lingers,
Still the distaff must be borne,
While the thread slips through our fingers,
Twisting, lightly,
Lightly, lightly,
Colors that shall gleam out brightly
When the fabrics feel the strain
Of misfortune grief and pain.

He who lack of skill or thought
Is in awkwardness betraying,
Will the lines of grace distort,
By the friction surely fraying
Thread so tender,
Fine and slender,
Stands accused as an offender,
And himself alone must blame
For the knots that cause him shame.

Some may wind a silken thread,
Soft and smooth and beautiful;
Other's flax may hold instead,
Or the coarse and shaggy wool;
But if ever,
Our endeavor
From the stains of sin to sever,
We may weave them bright and fair
In the robes that angels wear.

Life's a complex skein indeed,
Full of trouble, toil and travail,
More than human help we need
All its mazes to unravel.
Slowly, slowly,
Bending lowly,
O'er our task, and trusting wholly
In God's love, we patience gain
As we wind the tangled skein.

—Congregationist.

Selections.

CREAM OF THE PRESS.

—We should act with as much energy as those who expect everything for themselves; and we should pray with as much earnestness as those who expect everything from God.

—Hope, courage, good cheer, are what the world needs, and what Christianity brings. Let every one be sure that each day he gives the world a word and a deed of hope and good cheer. Let Christian joy commend Christianity to the sad and gloomy and discouraged, to the weary and heavy laden.

—To designate it by no other phrase or phrases, it is a great pity that many of our preachers are so boisterous in conducting the public services of the church. Some of them, many indeed, if they do not speak too long, they speak too loud. They needlessly wear out themselves long before it would be otherwise the case, and at the same time their sermons have far less influence for good than if delivered in the tones of serious and animated conversation. As a general thing, there is no necessity for speaking any louder than to be easily and distinctly heard. More than this is unpleasant to the hearer, and excites painful rather than pleasant emotion, and the good influence of the sermon is greatly marred if not entirely lost. In many, perhaps most, cases it is lost, and the preacher's labor is lost right where and when it might have been largely profitable.

—Many of our readers have doubtless heard of the famous travelling stones of Australia. Similar curiosities have recently been found in Nevada, which are described as almost perfectly round, the majority of them as large as a walnut, and of an iron nature. When distributed about upon the floor, table or other level surface, within two or three feet of each other, they immediately begin travelling toward a common centre, and lie there huddled up in a bunch like a lot of eggs in a nest. A single stone, removed to a distance of three and a half feet, upon being released, at once started off with wonderful and somewhat comical celerity to join its fellows; taken away four or five feet it remained motionless. They are found in a region that is comparatively level, and is nothing but bare rock. Scattered over this barren region are little basins, from a few feet to a rod in diameter; and it is in the bottom of these that the rolling stones are found. They are from the size of a pea to five or six inches in diameter. The cause of their rolling together is doubtless to be found in the material of which they are composed, which appears to be lodestone or magnetic iron ore.

FOR THE YOUNG—A CHILD'S FAITH.

Johnny Hall was a poor boy. His mother worked hard for their daily bread. "Please give me something to eat, for I am very hungry," he said to her one evening. His mother let the work that she was sewing fall upon her knees and drew Johnny towards her. As she kissed him the tears fell fast on his face, while she said:

"Johnny, my dear, I have not a penny in the world. There is not a morsel of bread in the house, and I cannot give you any supper to-night."

Johnny didn't cry when he heard this. He was but a little fellow, but he had learned the lesson of trust in God's promises. He had great faith in the sweet words of Jesus, when he said: "Whoever shall ask the Father in My name, He will do it."

"Never mind, mamma, I shall soon be asleep, and then I sha'n't feel hungry and cold. Poor mamma!" he said, as he threw his arms around her neck and kissed her many times to comfort her.

Then he knelt down by his mother's side, to say his prayers after her. They said "Our Father" till they came to the petition, "give us this day our daily bread." The way in which his mother said these words made Johnny's heart ache. He stopped and looked at her and repeated them with his eyes full of tears—"Give us this day our daily bread." When they got through he looked at his mother, and said:

"Now mother, don't be afraid. We shall never be hungry any more. God is our father. He has promised to hear us and I am sure He will."

Then he went to bed. Before midnight he woke up, while his mother was still at work, and asked if the bread had come yet. She said:

"No, but I am sure it will come."

In the morning, before Johnny was awake, a gentleman called, who wanted his mother to come to his house and take charge of his two motherless children. She agreed to go. He left some money with her. She then went out at once, to buy some things for breakfast. And when Johnny awoke, the bread was there, and all that he needed. Johnny is a man now; but he has never wanted bread from that day; and whenever he was afraid, since then, he has remembered God's promise and trusted in Him.

Let us remember these three Ps. the presence, the power, and the promises of God, and this will help us to learn the lesson of trust. And in all our times of danger and of trial, let us try to follow the example of David, when he said:

"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."—Richard Newton, D. D.

WHAT IS TROUBLE?

A company of Southern ladies were one day assembled in a lady's parlor, when the conversation chanced to turn on the subject of earthly affliction. Each had her story of peculiar trial and bereavement to relate, except one pale, sad looking woman, whose lustrous eye and dejected air showed that she was a prey to the deepest melancholy. Suddenly arousing herself, she said in a low voice:

"Not one of you know what trouble is."

"Will you please, Mrs. Grey?" said the kind voice of a lady who well knew her story, "tell the ladies what you call trouble?"

"I will, if you desire it," she replied, "for I have seen it. My parents possessed a competence, and my girlhood was surrounded by all the comforts of life. I seldom knew an ungratified wish, and was always gay and light hearted. I married at nineteen, one I loved more than all the world besides. Our home was retired, but the sunlight never fell on a lovelier one, or a happier household. Years rolled on peacefully. Five children sat around our table, and a curly head still nestled in my bosom. One night, about sundown, one of those black storms came on, which are so common to our Southern climate. For many hours the rain poured down incessantly. Morning dawned and still the elements raged. The whole Savannah seemed afloat. The little stream near our dwelling became a raging torrent. Before we were aware of it, our house was surrounded by water. I managed, with my babe, to reach a little elevated spot, on which a few wide-spreading trees were standing, whose dense foliage afforded some protection while my husband and sons strove to save what they could of our property. At last a fearful surge swept away my husband, and he never rose again. Ladies—no one ever loved a husband more, but that was not trouble.

"Presently my sons saw their danger, and the struggle for life became the only consideration. They were as brave, loving boys as ever blessed a mother's heart, and I watched their efforts to escape, with such agony as only mothers can feel. They were so far off I could not speak to them, but I could see them closing nearer to each other as their little island grew smaller and smaller.

The sullen river raged around the huge trees; dead branches, upturned trunks, wrecks of houses, drowning cattle, masses of rubbish all went floating past us. My boys waved their hands to me, and then pointed upward. I knew it was a farewell signal, and you, mothers, can imagine my anguish. I saw them all perish, and yet—that was not trouble.

"I hugged my babe close to my heart, and when the water rose to my feet, I climbed into the low branches of the tree, and so kept retiring before it, till an All-powerful hand staid the waves, that they should come no further. I was saved. All my worldly possessions swept away; all my earthly hopes blighted—yet that was not trouble.

"My baby was all I had left on earth. I labored night and day to support him and myself, and sought to train him in the right way; but as he grew older, evil companions won him away from home. He ceased to care for his mother's counsels; he would sneer at her entreaties and agonizing prayers. He left my humble roof that he might be unrestrained in the pursuit of evil, and at last, when heated by wine one night he took the life of a fellow being and ended his own upon the scaffold. My Heavenly Father had filled my cup of sorrow before, now it ran over. This was trouble, ladies, such as I hope His mercy will save you from ever experiencing."

There was not a dry eye among her listeners, and the warmest sympathy was expressed for the bereaved mother, whose sad history had taught them a useful lesson.—Er.

OUR MOMENTS KEPT FOR JESUS.

BY FRANCIS H. HAVERGAL.

When we take a wide sweep, we are apt to be vague. When we are aiming at generalities, we do not hit the practicalities. We forget that faithfulness to principle is only proved by faithfulness in detail. Has not this vagueness had something to do with the constant ineffectiveness of our feeble desire that our time should be devoted to God?

In things spiritual, the greater does not always include the less, but, paradoxically, the less more often includes the greater. So, in this case, time is entrusted to us to be traded with for our Lord. But we cannot grasp it as a whole. We instinctively break it up ere we can deal with it for any purpose. So, when a New Year comes round, we commit it with special earnestness to the Lord. But, as we do so, are we not conscious of a feeling that even a year is too much for us to deal with? And does not this feeling, that we are dealing with a larger thing than we can grasp, take away from the sense of reality? Thus we are brought to a more manageable measure; and, as the Sunday mornings or the Monday come round, we thankfully commit the opening week to Him, and the sense of help and rest is renewed and strengthened. But not even the six or seven days are close enough to our hand; even to-morrow exceeds our tiny grasp, and even to-morrow's grace is therefore not given to us. So we find the need of considering our lives as a matter of day by day, and that any more general committal and consecration of our time does not meet the case so truly. Here we have found much comfort and help, and if results have not been entirely satisfactory, they have, at least, been more so than before we reached this point of subdivision.

But if we have found help and blessing by going a certain distance in one direction, is it not probable we shall find more if we go farther in the same? And so, if we may commit the days to our Lord, why not the hours, and why not the moments? And may we not expect a fresh and special blessing in so doing?

We do not realize the importance of moments. Only let us consider these two sayings of God about them—"In a moment shall they die," and "We shall all be changed in a moment," and we shall think less lightly of them. Eternal issues may hang upon any one of them, but it has come and gone before we can ever think about it. Nothing seems less within the possibility of our own keeping, yet nothing is more inclusive of all other keeping. Therefore,

let us ask him to keep them for us.

Are they not the tiny joints in the harness through which the darts of temptation pierce us? Only give us time, we think, and we should not be overcome. Only give us time, and we could pray and resist, and the devil would flee from us! But he comes all in a moment; and in a moment—an unguarded, unkept one—we utter the hasty or exaggerated word, or think the un-Christ-like thought, or feel the un-Christ-like impatience or resentment.

But even if we have gone so far as to say, "Take my moments," have we gone the step farther, and really let him take them,—really entrusted them to him? [It is no good saying "Take," when we do not let go. How can another keep that which we are keeping hold of? So let us, with full trust in his power, first commit these slippery moments to him,—put them right into his hand,—and then we may trustfully and happily say: "Lord, keep them for me! Keep every one of the quick series as it arises. I cannot keep them for thee; do thou keep them for thyself!"

HOW HE WAS SAVED.

Emma Harriman relates the following incident in the *Christian Woman*: It was a warm spring evening. There was a smell of bursting bud and freshly springing grass in the air. The red sunset had not wholly faded from the west. The evening twilight was slowly setting down over the town, and the doves, perched on the jutting ledges and cornice of the old church, cooed gently every now and then, as some restless one of their family disturbed them. People were passing into the church, one by one. It was prayer meeting night.

A young man stood in front of the church, leaning against a tree which grew there. He was well dressed, and his face had a fine intellectual look, but it was pale and worn. He did not offer to enter nor to leave, but simply stood there, watching the people in a quiet, unobtrusive way, as if it had a sort of fascination for him.

Presently a little old woman came along. She was not fashionably dressed, and she was a little bent and quite old, but had a kindly look on her face. She noticed the young man; nearly every one had noticed him, but no one had spoken to him. She seemed to want to speak; for she hesitated an instant, and moved a step toward him. Then her courage seemed to fail her; she turned and entered the church. In an instant, she came out again.

"Good evening, young man," she said, going over to him, "won't you come into prayer meeting? We would be very glad to see you."

He raised his hat and answered her greeting courteously. "I should like to," he said, "but I am not fit to enter a church."

It was a little late, and the organ had begun to play while they were talking, and now the people began to sing.

The doors were open a little, and the words floated out to them on the still warm air.

The little woman raised her hand. "Listen," she said:

"Just as thou art, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

"I will go," he said, and followed her into the church. No one noticed them. She was a little old-fashioned body, and he was a stranger, and so, as she went to one pew and he to another, nobody thought about it.

The meeting went on, hymn and lesson and prayer, and then more hymns and prayers, and finally the opportunity was given for testimonies. One after one arose and spoke a few words, and suddenly, just as the meeting was about to close, in a hurried manner, as if he were afraid to trust himself a moment longer, the young man arose and began to speak: "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me." Everybody turned and looked at him. Such a clear, full voice as he had, and what an honest, manly face; he did not look like a great sinner.

"I have been walking in the way of the ungodly, and consenting when sinners enticed me. I knew better; I have a mother who is praying for me, and to-night, as I stood out in front of the church and saw you come in, I was thinking of her and wanting to come in, but I had not sufficient courage until one of the ladies invited me."

Everybody thought at once of rich Mrs. Dean, it must have been her who did it; she was always doing something kind and benevolent, and no one thought of it being the homely little old-fashioned woman, who was

watching him and drinking in every word.

"To-night, I am determined to start anew to follow my Saviour, and I want to say to you: Don't forget the young men; God only knows how we are tempted." And he followed out his determination, and to-day that church has no better member than he but his words ring yet in my ears: "Don't forget the young men; God only knows their temptation!"

SUNDAY BUMMERS.

The poor we have always with us, and whenever we will we may do them good. And the will do them good, in a spiritual and religious sense, at least, is very genuine and very abounding. The churches, as a rule, cherish no desire more sincere than that of preaching the gospel to the poor, without money and without price. We do not stop to inquire how much of the proselyting spirit may be connected with this desire, or what worthless motives may sophisticate it. Their wish to do good to the poor is genuine enough, and to do it at their own expense. If the poor could know how heartily they would be welcomed in houses of worship frequented mainly by the rich and the well-to-do, they would certainly lose their shyness, and learn a kinder feeling for those more fortunate than themselves. It is undoubtedly the business of the rich to provide religious privileges for the poor, and the duty of the poor to accept them. They may do this without loss of self-respect, and without the cultivation of the pauper spirit.

There is, however, a real difference between "God's poor" and man's poor.—There are great multitudes who, do what they will and what they can, must always be poor. Few and inefficient hands to labor, and many mouths to feed, sickness, misfortune—all the causes of adversity produce poverty which seems to be remediless; and those who are afflicted with such poverty may legitimately be called "God's poor." These are the involuntary poor, enveloped and embarrassed by circumstances which render it impossible for them to rise out of poverty. For these, the Christian man will do what he can, without pauperizing them, and he knows that there is no form of beneficence so little likely to do them harm as that of providing for their religious instruction and inspiration. He knows also that the rectification and elevation of habits which are the natural outcome of religious and spiritual influences, are ministers always to the poor man's temporal prosperity.

In contradistinction from these, there are those whom we may properly call "man's poor." They are people who spend upon themselves, out of an income not generous, perhaps, but competent, so much that they have nothing left with which to bear their portion of the burdens of society. They live well, they dress well, they maintain what they consider a respectable position in society; they go to the theatre whenever it may seem desirable; they spend upon themselves and their luxuries their entire income, and habitually steal their preaching. Many of these people are quite regular in their attendance upon the Sunday services of the church, but they never unite with it or assume a single responsibility connected with it. A little self-denial would give all these people the right to a pew, and save them from the meanness of appropriating that which honest people are obliged to pay for.—*Scribner's Monthly for December.*

TRYING TO PLEASE.—"What do the students think of Prof. A?" asked a gentleman of a recent graduate from one of the New England colleges, concerning a well known professor of recognized ability in his department.

"Oh! he's a pretty good man in his way," was the answer; "but the students didn't take to him very well, because he was so anxious to be popular. He always wanted to please the students in everything; and they saw that, and didn't think much of him for it. You know a man is never popular by trying to be. There is Prof. B.; now he doesn't care a pin what the students think of him. He just goes ahead and does what he thinks is right, without troubling himself about what other people think of him; and the students just like him for that."

There is true sense in that answer. Do right, and you will make more friends than in any other way.

There are men whose tongues might govern multitudes if they could govern their tongues.

Farm and Fireside.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT LIME.

Prof. Puryear, who has charge of the agricultural columns of the *Religious Herald*, and who is recognized as a skillful chemist, gives in a recent paper the following succinct suggestions on the uses and misuses of lime:

What are the uses of lime in agriculture?

(1) Lime is always one of the nine substances found in the ash of plants. The grasses and forest trees particularly take it up from the soil in great abundance. When lime is not present in the soil in sufficient abundance to meet this demand, it should be added.

(2) Lime is needed to hasten the decomposition of vegetable matter, and so make it available as plant food. If we wrap up a piece of lime in a cloth, in a short time the cloth is so decomposed that it will fall into shreds from its own weight. Tanners use lime in their vats to rot the hair from the hides. Now, lime behaves exactly in this way in the soil. The vegetable matter in the soil is useless until it decomposes, and lime hastens the process of decomposition.

(3) Lime is frequently necessary to correct acidity in the soil. Soils charged with vegetable acids are never productive. On such soils we put lime, which, combining with these acids, forms neutral salts of lime. A person takes a little lime water, for exactly the same reason, when he suffers from acidity of the stomach. When lands have been freshly drained, they are always acid. The excess of water, with which the land was saturated, had excluded the atmosphere, and so had prevented the complete decomposition of vegetable matter. This vegetable matter, if the air had not been excluded, would have been converted by atmospheric oxygen, into carbonic acid, ammonia, &c., but without oxygen its elements rearrange their selves, and form those injurious compounds, ulmic, humic and geic acids. When the soil is drained, the atmosphere strikes through and destroys these acids, but not entirely in a single season. The process, of necessity, is slow.—The soil to the depth of several feet, it may be, is sour, and it will be some time before the atmosphere can thoroughly permeate this soil and burn out these hurtful acids. Lime, then, comes to help the slow operation of natural causes. When it is spread upon the soil, it is carried downward by the rains, and combines with and neutralizes speedily and effectually these vegetable acids. We cannot possibly err, then, when we put lime on freshly-drained lands. In such lands there are not only free acids, but a large amount of organic matter, which has not been decomposed because of the exclusion of atmospheric oxygen. The application of lime to such soils corrects this acidity, and, by decomposing, renders immediately available this large amount of vegetable matter.

The ash of the grasses contains 22 per cent. of lime. Hence the practice of topdressing the grasses with gypsum, which is the sulphate of lime. Lime may be injuriously applied. If the soil contain but little vegetable matter, the application of lime, particularly heavy applications, will cause this vegetable matter to decompose too quickly. When the crop approaches maturity, it finds that its quantum of vegetable matter has already been decomposed and used up. The result will be conspicuously disastrous if the soil was not deficient in lime. The lime has supplied no want, but has only inflicted an injury.

(1) Lime is known as caustic or quick lime. This is the article as we obtain it from the kiln. Heat has expelled carbonic acid from the carbonate of lime, and caustic lime is the result.

(2) Hydrated or slaked lime. When we add to lumps of caustic lime about 25 per cent. of water, the lumps fall down into a perfectly dry powder, giving us slaked lime.

(3) Upon exposure to the atmosphere, this slaked lime loses its properties. It becomes the carbonate of lime, or mild lime,—the very compound chemically from which the lime was originally obtained. This mild lime, or carbonate of lime, has no caustic or disorganizing properties whatsoever. It may be asked, then, why we do not use lime in its natural state, namely, the carbonate of lime, if it gets into that condition when we spread it on the soil? We answer;

(1) Although lime goes back to carbonate of lime, it does not do so all at

once, and, in the process of returning to that condition, it decomposes vegetable matter, and so makes it plant food.

(2) The natural limestone rock—the carbonate—is very hard, and its reduction to a powder by mechanical means would be difficult and expensive. Now, when lime slakes in the air it falls down into a dry powder. No mechanical reduction, therefore, is necessary. It requires less expenditure of force to burn the limestone, and let the lime fall to powder of itself, than to reduce the natural rock by mechanical power.

Trees, like grasses, contain lime largely. The indication is to apply old mortar, or lime in any form, to fruit and shade trees, and this should be done in the fall.

HINTS FOR EMERGENCIES.

Persons who have fainted should be laid flat upon their backs let alone.

To stop bleeding from an ordinary wound, apply a wad of cob-web; or else a paste made of equal parts of flour and salt. If, however, the blood spurts out, it is evidence that an artery has been severed. If where it can possibly be done, tie a handkerchief loosely above it, put a stick under that, and then by turning the stick twist the handkerchief tightly until the flow is checked, and hold it there until the doctor comes; if this is impracticable, press, as hard as possible with the thumb, near the wound and above it.

If your clothes catch fire, with your own hands press your clothes above the flame closely, and at the same time lie down on the floor, and roll over and over as fast as you can. Any person about should seize a woolen shawl, blanket or carpet, whichever is in reach, and with it help to smother the fire, but by no means to wet anything thus used, as the steam will burn as badly as the fire; water may be thrown on, but not smothered on. I once knew an ignorant fellow to kill his little sister by first taking the blanket with which he wrapped her to the well to wet it. The delay and the steam she inhaled caused the death which might easily have been avoided by the use of a little common sense.—*The American Farmer.*

FACTS ABOUT FLOUR.

Flour is peculiarly sensitive to atmospheric influences, hence it should never be stored in a room with sour liquids, nor where onions or fish are kept, nor any article that taints the air of the room in which it is stored. Any small perceptible to the sense will be absorbed by flour. Avoid damp cellars or lofts where a free circulation of air cannot be obtained. Keep in a cool, dry, airy room, and not exposed to a freezing temperature nor to intense summer or to artificial heat for any length of time above 70 degrees Fahrenheit. It should not come in contact with grain or other substances that are liable to heat. Flour should be sifted and the particles thoroughly disintegrated, and then warmed before baking. The treatment improves the color and baking properties of the dough. The sponge should be prepared for the oven as soon as the yeast has performed its mission, otherwise fermentation sets in and acidity results.

THE COUNTRY'S NEED.—A contemporary wisely says: "What our country needs to-day more than the manufacturer, the merchant or the lawyer, is the farmer. It seems, however, next to impossible to get people to realize this fact, or to act on it when they do. In spite of the hard times young men continue to lounge around large cities, where there is no possible hope of employment, waiting for something to turn up, and utterly neglecting the opportunities that are presented in the country. The truth is, people now-a-days are too much afraid of hard work, and decidedly object to that sort of living which has to be earned by the sweat of the brow. They had much rather live by the sweat of somebody else's brow, if they can.

SHEEP.—*The Maine Farmer* says: "Five sheep will enrich one acre of old worn-out mowing land in three years so that it will produce one and one half tons of hay per acre for several years by a slight sprinkle of seeds each year sown in early spring. Five sheep will produce manure in winter to the value of \$10 giving them suitable bedding. Five sheep will get their living through summer on an acre of ground; the pasturing of the same would be \$8. Five sheep will raise five lambs worth \$15. Five sheep will shear twenty-five pounds of wool worth \$6."