

book itself, which is the record of a truly apostolic life. Thank God, grace knows no distinction of race, degree, or sex. The great lesson of the book is that there is no joy on earth like that to be found in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. No reader will rise from the perusal of its pages without feeling that he has been brought into contact with a truly holy life. To young Christians we feel sure it will prove of real service as showing how the life in Christ has been lived amid great difficulty.—'The Christian.'

Francis Key, Author of 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'

(P. H. C., in the 'Episcopal Recorder.')

Francis Key was born in Frederick County, Maryland, in 1780. Highly endowed by nature, he enjoyed such advantages of education as the time afforded, and became an able member of the legal profession and a brilliant member of the social circles of Baltimore and Washington. The 'Star Spangled Banner,' our national ode, is by no means the only product of his mind which remains to attest that he possessed the gift of poetry in no common degree. With all those brilliant qualities which command the admiration of the world, Mr. Key was not known as a Christian; he was, indeed, considered as skeptical on the subject of religion.

It was when he was touching the period usually called 'middle life' that he one day entered the office of a friend in serious mood. 'I have just been assured,' he said presently, 'by my physician, that I have a mortal disease, and that I cannot live more than a year' (I think that was the limit). 'Seeing that I must so soon depart from this life, it seems best to inquire into the truth of the Christian religion, for you know I have not heretofore given it much attention. You know all about it. Will you kindly advise me what books I should read on the subject?'

'I advise you,' promptly answered his friend, 'to read the Bible.'

'You mistake me,' replied Mr. Key. 'I wish to see evidences of the truth of the Divine origin of the Bible.'

'I understand,' rejoined his companion, 'and I advise you to read the Bible. I have long observed that those who reject that Book are ignorant of it, although they may have run through its pages at some time more than once. I consider that the Bible carries within itself stronger evidences of its genuineness than any outside testimony can possibly give it.'

Mr. Key was silent. The latter suggestion perhaps striking his conscience, he acquiesced. 'Where shall I begin? At the New Testament?'

'No; begin at Genesis and go regularly through.'

Mr. A. ascertained that Mr. Key was pursuing his advice, and calling at his office one day to learn what progress he was making, found him pacing the floor in such abstracted mood that he received only a casual salutation. He seated himself and waited; presently he spoke: 'May I ask what great problem is engrossing you so completely just now?'

'Oh, certainly. I have been studying the commandments, and I was trying to find out where Moses got them. He did not get them from Egypt, nor from Babylon,

nor from any other nation, for they had them not to give. It is quite impossible that he could have conceived them himself. I am persuaded—I believe that he received them from God.'

Then he went on to point out the wisdom, the excellency, the suitableness of these laws with a force and acuteness of perception peculiar to one of his analytical constitution of mind.

Long before he came to the narrative of the Babe at Bethlehem, with which, of course, he was familiar, he had doubtless traced that wonderful series of prophecy which runs through the book, growing ever clearer in minute description as the centuries advance, pointing always to one who should come, the Messiah, the Desired of all nations, until it reaches its culmination and fulfilment at Bethlehem—a series of prophecies which no mortal ingenuity could have forged, and which can be accounted for only by the declaration of St. Peter: 'Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

Mr. Key came out from that study a converted man: 'old things had passed away; all things had become new.'

Francis Key did not die within the short period his physician had predicted—God had work for him here, and he lived. The remainder of his life was a striking testimony to the power of the Gospel in the consecration of the natural endowments and his acquired accomplishments to the service and honor of God. His muse, which has hitherto been charmed with earthy subjects, now soared to a theme loftier even than patriotism, and if many cherish his memory as the author of the 'Star Spangled Banner,' many others revere him for the heart-strung hymns with which he enriched our sacred literature. I subjoin a part of one of these because it illustrates so clearly the evangelical character of his piety:

Praise, my soul, the God who sought thee,
Watched wanderer far away;
Found thee lost, and kindly brought thee
From the paths of death away.
Praise, with love's devoutest feeling,
Him who saw thy guilty-born fear,
And the light of hope revealing,
Bade the blood-stained cross appear.

Many years after Mr. Key's death, a letter was published in the 'Southern Churchman,' written by an Admiral of the navy to Mr. Key. It was interesting, but its contents have vanished entirely from my mind, with the exception of one clause, which, in connection with the foregoing incidents, could not be forgotten. It was to this effect: 'I think I have never told you how deeply indebted I am to your mother; whatever has been best and most useful in my life has been due, under God, to her influence. You may remember that I passed a vacation with you at your home, and that while there it was your mother's custom to have some private talk with us each day. She made it very pleasant and instructive: it was chiefly religious instruction. I had never received such instruction, and it made a deep and permanent impression. It awakened new thoughts and aspirations in my mind. I wanted to serve God in my life. When I got my first ship, I called my men together for daily worship as the best means I could see for their welfare, and have continued that

practice through my service, with profit to myself and I trust to others.'

Such was the burden of that paragraph. I am not at all sure of the words; but is it not like the lifting of a curtain for a moment through which one gets a glance of God's methods in his providences? If the prayers and efforts of that mother in behalf of her son had seemed unavailing for many years, they had fallen on the tender heart of the young stranger, turning him to the true life, who was to fill a place of wide influence, and who can estimate the results of such an influence over the successive companies of men who came under his control, as well as over his brother officers, during his career? 'My Word shall not return unto Me void.'

And then there was the fulness of joy at the return of the prodigal.

When is the Time to Die?

OLD POEM.

'I asked the glad and happy child
Whose hands were filled with flowers,
Whose silvery laugh rang free and wild
Among the time-wreathed bowers;
I crossed her sunny path and cried:
When is the time to die?
Not yet, not yet! the child replied,
And swiftly bounded by.

'I asked the maiden; back she threw
The tresses of her hair;
Grief's traces o'er her cheeks, I knew,
Like pearls they glittered there.
A flush passed o'er her lily brow,
I heard her spirit sigh:
Not now, she cried. O no, not now,
Youth is no time to die.

'I asked the mother as she pressed
Her first-born in her arms,
As gently on her tender breast
She hushed her babe's alarms;
In quivering tones her accents came,
Her eyes were dim with tears:
My boy his mother's life must claim
For many, many years.

'I questioned one in manhood's prime,
Of proud and fearless air;
His brow was furrowed not by time,
Nor dimmed by woe and care;
In angry accents he replied,
And flashed with scorn his eye,
Talk not to me of death, he cried,
For only age should die.

'I questioned one for whom the tomb
Had long been all prepared,
For death, who wither's dying fire
This man of years had spared,
Once more his nature's dying fire
Flashed high, and thus he cried:
"Life! only life, is my desire!"
Then gasped, and groaned, and died.

'I asked the Christian: "Answer thou
When is the hour of death?"
A holy calm was on his brow,
And peaceful was his breath,
And sweetly o'er his features stole
A smile so bright divine;
He spoke the language of his soul:
"My Master's time, is mine."'

What must Jesus Christ think of his Bride, the Church, carrying on a political flirtation with the saloon keeper, the seducer and destroyer of his children?—'Ram's Horn.'