

FOR THE MONTHLY RECORD.

"The Noble Army of Martyrs
Praise Thee."

A B E L.

GRIEVOUSLY the quiet meadows spread,
The south wind floated by,
And stately pain trees bent the head,
To list its melody.
Where rivers wandered cool and deep.
The gentle Abel kept his sheep,
Beneath the new-born sky.
Where Eden's light was changed and dim,
Reflected through the cherubim.

Without the gate, beyond the sword.
Whose circling blade of flame
Gleamed like the presence of the Lord,
As erst in wrath He came.
The humble patriarch reared his tent,
Beneath the exhaustless firmament;
Glorious, yet not the same
That held the light of Eden's skies,
And meekly offered sacrifice.

We know not how his soul was taught,
Whether by word or sign,
In vision, or through faith, was wrought
The miracle divine.
As thus from Adam's fall released,
He stood, the first accepted priest,
Before an altar's shrine,
And shadowed forth by pain and blood,
The offering of the Son of God.

He walked adown each fragrant field,
The flowers were young, like him,
He saw the fruit trees harvest yield,
From every blossomed limb;
But Eden's voices filled his ear,
And Eden's land was strangely dear,
Until his own grew dim,
And Faith presented to his eyes,
A better, purer Paradise.

Whose every street like jasper glows,
Whose every gate a gem.
Lifting in glory to enclose
The New Jerusalem.
Where angels and archangels dwell,
Around the King invisible,
Whose glorious diadem,
The brightness of that heaven above,
Reflects its light on earth by Love!

This land of promise, Abel saw,
His prophet lips were dumb,
For type, and testament, and law,
Were shadows yet to come.
He saw beyond the darkness—Light,
Shining above sin's awful night,
God's wrath, and death's dark sum,
From Him, the woman's promised seed.
Who yet should bruise the serpent's head.

He saw, and seeing thus, believed,
He knew, as he was known,
The blessing and the hope received,
God offers to His own.
In humble toil, in love and faith,
Untroubled by the fear of death,
He passed his days alone.
Joint heir with Him whose kindred hand
Filled the waste places of the land.

Whose envious heart, and sullen face
Rebelled at God's decree.
How in these fathers of our race,
Man's angel guides, we see.
The one, with holy thoughts and will,
Leading us onward, upward still,
At last, Oh, Lord! to Thee;
The other, filled with sin's dark gloom,
Urging us downward to our doom.

And Cain despised meek Abel's faith,
Despised his offering given.
Whose incense, like a fragrant breath,
Ascended up to heaven.
Cain brought his tribute from the field,
Its fruits an evil odour yield,
Their smoke is downward driven,
And thus the sacrifice was vain,
For hatred filled the heart of Cain.

And God accepts no evil gift,
Up from the smoking sod.
He dared, in bitterness to lift
His heart against his God.
Enraged, not humbled by the voice,
That justified Jehovah's choice,
He sought his brother's blood,
Till where the altar fires decay,
The righteous Abel murdered lay.

First fruit of sin—Death's goodliest prize.
Won from earth's harvest ground,
Faith's living triumph, first to rise,
Where endless life is found.
Till then, a higher, holier race
Had filled the Godhead's dwelling place,
And heard its trumpets sound,
But now in martyr robes arrayed,
One in the Father's image made.

A King, for earth was his by right,
A prophet of the Lord.
Who walked by faith, and not by sight,
Before the written word.
A priest, the first of all the race,
Who stood within the holy place,
And there an offering poured,
A martyr crowned, of all who stand,
Redeemed from death at God's right hand

Of all that noble army there,
He went the pioneer,
First of earth's mortal race, to share
The triumph bought so dear.
Even by the blood of God's dear Son,
Meek Abel stood not long alone,
Where saints their Saviour hear;
Soon from earth's land of death and sin,
God's ransomed children entered in.

And stood by martyred Abel's side,
Before His glorious throne,
Who now to us, as crucified,
Is fellow-sufferer known.
By faith, we see the living palms,
By faith, we hear the triumph psalms,
Borne down to meet our own;
Who still without the City's gate,
With yearning hearts for entrance wait

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