

OUR NATIONAL HERITAGE.

Some Bible Hints.

There is no surer test of a nation—us of a man—than its outlet of expenditure. Is it chiefly for battlements or for schools? (v. 2.)

Whoever is the ruler of this nation, we are not safe unless the Over-ruler is God. (v. 4.)

There is no height of national glory more lofty than God's thoughts, and the nation that comes nearest to them will come nearest to supremacy. (v. 5.)

There is no national prosperity except as the nation does God's will (v. 13)—a fact that is very often strangely neglected in legislative halls.

Suggestive Thoughts.

If ours is a great nation, it is great in spite of the nation. No one ever dreamed of thinking that the nation constitutes one jot toward the greatness of anything.

There is no greatness of our nation in any direction—an arm, in goodness, in learning, in arms—that is not threatened by the nation.

No patriot is more useful than the home missionary, and no taxes are more truly contributions to our national welfare than our gifts to the home-mission treasury.

You are actually owner of your share of the possessions of your city and of your country, and you should be in active control of it.

A Few Illustrations.

"The Man without a Country," in Hale's story, was an exile on the ocean; but many a careless citizen on land is practically a man without a country.

To reserve one's patriotism for war times is like cultivating a farm only in winter.

A will must be verified in a probate court, and our right to our national heritage must be proved by service.

A careless voter is like a soldier firing with his eyes shut.

To Think About.

How much time do I devote to my country's interests?

How often do I pray for my country? Do I know my country's history?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Statesman, yet friend to truth! Of soul sincere,

In action faithful, and in honor clear!
Who broke no promise, served no private end,

Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.—Pope.

They love their land, because it is their own,

And scorn to give aught other reason why.—Halleck.

A nation's character is the sum of its splendid deed; they constitute the nation's inheritance.—Henry Clay.

One flag, one land, one heart, one hand,

One nation evermore!—O. W. Holmes.

FOR DAILY READING.

M., June 19.—The glorious gospel, 2 Cor. 5:17-21.

T., June 20.—A goodly land, Deut. 6:10-13.

W., June 21.—A godly ancestry, Heb. 11:32-40.

T., June 21.—Free institutions, Ex. 21:2-6.

F., June 23.—Righteous laws, Deut. 5:12-21.

S., June 24.—The stranger among us, Lev. 19:33-37.

Sun., June 25.—Topic—Our national heritage, Isa. 55:1-13. (Home missions. This may also be used as a temperance topic.)

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England, at their meeting in London, passed a vote of sympathy with the United Free Church of Scotland in its present position.

As a matter of fact, time cannot be redeemed. When once it has passed, no power is able to recall it. The water that has gone over the wheel will grand never again. But there is a sense in which the redemption of time is not an impossibility. The past may become a valuable contributor to the present, while yet remaining distinct from it. There is a discussion ever going on between the ages to which we ought to listen. Day after day speech unto day and the oldest is the wisest. Last year is wiser today than it was twelve months ago. Then it lay as a newly born child in the arms of its father; now rich in memories it yields up its sceptre to another. Experience is the most effective of teachers, but most of us are dull learners. One must learn for himself. No child ever learned that fire burns from the blisters upon another's fingers. It must form a personal acquaintance with the flame. Unfortunately wisdom so often comes too late. But experience turns no backward pages. All her lessons apply to the future. That which failed yesterday will do no better today. Such is the conclusion of experience, and just there comes in our protest. The whirlwind to which our fathers sowed will produce a different harvest from what it did before. So we reason and so we sail.

We all become more and more reminiscent as the years pass. Old men dream and young men see visions. The actualities of other days reproduce themselves in shadows. It is natural to regret, but why squalor we? Our own personal life is marked by mistakes. No one knows this any better than we. Under other circumstances we would do better things, but those circumstances come too late. Blot out the memory of recent years and we would stammer just where we did then. It is natural to feel that a second probation would be more successful, but of this we have no assurance. Better far turn philosopher and be thankful that the occasions for regret are no greater. The future is susceptible of redemption; we purchase it in advance. But to do this we must begin now. The old Hebrew notion that there is no present was a liability. The present—why, we have nothing else. The past has gone never to be recalled, while the future is yet untried. The present is accessible. It is the one we can just passing.

We are all entitled to a limited number of mistakes. The child that never red never walked. It is the mistake repeated for which there is least excuse. The best redemption of time is not to lose it twice in the same place. There will be frosts the coming year, but the ice will be no sadder than it was last. The same old opportunities for shame and failure will be repeated. Things do not materially vary, we only see them at a different angle. Jesus made time redemption possible. He alone of all men transacted regret into a virtue. Time is the one weakness who will appear either for or against us in judgment. How we treat him will shape the character of His testimony. Those who serve Him best, best serve themselves and others.—The Westminster, Philadelphia.

Love thyself last. The world shall be made better by thee, if this brief motto be thy creed. Go, follow it in spirit and in letter. This is the true religion all men need.

If you will, you can rise. No power in society, no hardship in your condition can depress you, keep you down in knowledge, power, virtue, influence, but by your own consent.

Thought, emotion, life is at its best and fullest when it takes the form of living for others, as the Gospel of Christ bids us live.

Wherever souls are being tried and ripened, in whatever commonplace and homely ways—there God is hewing out the pillars for his temple.—Phillips Brooks.

CHRISTLIKENESS: A MEDITATION.

Christians are not like Christ now. It is needless to say so of those who merely make a profession. It is needless to say so of the rank and file. But it is true also of the saints. However beautiful their souls may have become, they were not like Christ while they were with us here. None of them achieved the perfect likeness in thought and will and character to the goodness of Jesus Christ. The highest saint on earth is no saint compared with the saints who are gazing as spirits may gaze on the face of the eternal Christ. It is, nevertheless, a wonderful day for the world, and a precious revelation when a saint comes forth into view. There are saints who live and die in obscurity, and whose loveliness we recognize in a measure after they have passed:

"We cannot say that one hath died

Who went to live so unespied."

There are others, like St. Francis, who was called to live in the world as Jesus Christ lived on earth, and who was not disobedient. He had no property of any kind, no house, no church. Poverty set him free for a more full and literal obedience. For a home, caves and huts in the wood easily sufficed. Deserted chapels, with the bare necessities of service, were enough for the disciples of him who prayed on the mountain side. He was happy in the love of God and nature and men, and in the surrender which the love of Christ inspired. The conscience-stricken world understood of a sudden that here there was a force which might revolutionize life. It was possible, they thought, in the Italy of the twelfth century, to live the life of Jesus Christ. The movement was not continued on the lines of its founder. The life of evangelical poverty was condemned by the Church as ideal and Utopian. Churches were built and endowed at the time when St. Francis was being canonized, but the power of the simple-hearted, mystical follower of the letter of the Gospel still survives, still rebukes, still calls forward and upward, still teaches Christians that they are not like Christ now. Nor was St. Francis like Christ. However much he resembled him, we can see that in many of his thoughts and purposes he had departed from the Gospel rule. But his life teaches us that if Christians were more like Christ, the slow, hesitating chequered history of the Church, and its mingled experience of weal and woe would be wholly different.

We do not see Christ as he is. Our vision, however true, is the vision of a Christ who is shrouded. He is veiled in a mist. Still the wonder escapes us. Even when we see plainest, we see very partially. There are those who are willing to pay homage to Christ as the sympathetic human leader of the poor. There are others who see him as the crown and the ideal of humanity. There are those who rejoice in the thought of his reign and his return. There are others to whom he is dearest in Gethsemane, on Calvary—the blood-red Son of God. But to see him as he is, is to see the whole Christ, to see him not only as Victim, but as King. We must see him as Victim—see the shame and humiliation and agony inexpressible that fell on his beloved head. But we must see more. We must know the triumph as the fifth century poet did, who came in sight of the Cross and beheld it transfigured into a Tree of glory and the Conqueror's bed of rest.

"Bend thy boughs, thou Tree of glory;
Thy too rigid sinews bend.

For a while the ancient rigor

Which thy birth bestowed suspend,
And the limbs of heaven's high Monarch
Gently on thine arms extend."

—The British Weekly.

Gentle words are to the heart what snowflakes are to the earth; they are sure to enter it some time, if there be only abundance of them.