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### Contents of this Number.

<b>EDITORIAL.</b>	
Editorial Notes.....	1
Keep Christian Colleges Open.....	2
"Righteous Restorations" Insuring Future Peace of the world.....	2
The American "Red Cross" in the World War, How Rome Teaches History.....	3
<b>OUR BOOK TABLE.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.</b>	
Isaiah's Call to Heroic Service, Dr. E. P. Mickel, Ga..	8
<b>MID-WEEK PRAYER MEETING.</b>	
Watch and Pray, Dr. J. M. Vander Meulen, Ky..	8
<b>YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.</b>	
Little Things That Make a Man, Dr. Wm. M. Anderson, Texas..	9
<b>ARTICLES.</b>	
Musings Under the Maples.—The Peril of Christians Over-Using This Life, Dr. J. Addison Smith, Tenn..	4
The Renaissance and the Reformation, Dr. H. E. Dosker, Ky..	5
Some Famous Hymn Writers. George Matheson.....	5
Pressing Toward the Mark, Dr. W. H. Miley, Ga..	6
Making Christians on the Congo, B. S. Crane, Ga..	6
An Experiment in Prayer.....	6
A Handbook for the Churches in Time of War.....	6
The Cape Fear River. Dr. W. W. Moore, Va..	7
Why There Was No Dinner.....	7
Presbyterian Church, Paris, Ky., Founded in 1787.....	10
Awards in the Christian Stewardship Contest, Rev. R. L. Walkup, Miss..	11
"The Satanic Man," Dr. A. W. Pitzer, Va..	15
A Congress for Christian Efficiency.....	15
Bibles for West Point Military Academy.....	15
The Church and the Government, Dr. S. K. Winn, Va..	18
Read: Think: Pray: Act.....	18
Flags Of All Nations.....	18
<b>WOMAN'S AUXILIARY.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>VERSE.</b>	
O Love That Will Not Let Me Go.....	5
Just Two Kinds of People.....	6
For the Men at the Front. John Oxenham..	7
The Lost Day.....	17
Little Folks' Land..... Emily Henderson..	17
The Freckle-Faced Boy..... Meta O'Connor..	20
What Makes a Woman?.....	21
<b>RELIGIOUS NEWS.</b>	
Our Own Church.....	11, 12, 13, 14
<b>EDUCATIONAL.....</b>	
<b>HOME CIRCLE.</b>	
The Cyclone Pups.—Ann Elizabeth Woods..	16, 17
Our Little Ones.—Our Young Folks.—Letters.	17
Children's Hour.—A Live Rocking-Horse...	19
<b>STORY AND INCIDENT.</b>	
Stories From the Chinese.—Our Work Goes On.—Up-to-Date Silo.....	20, 21
<b>MARRIED AND DIED.....</b>	
<b>CURRENT EVENTS.....</b>	
	23, 24

### EDITORIAL NOTES.

The daily study of the Scriptures is one of the best means to develop the Christian life. Lack of the study of the Bible itself in the home and school is largely responsible for the failure of children to grasp the fundamental and essential truths of religion. Memorizing the Bible and the Catechisms of the Church should be an important feature of every Sunday school class and should be given large attention in every Christian home. Parents, Sunday school teachers and superintendents should give the Bible the important place that it deserves in the training of the child life.

Prayer is the greatest power that God has put into the hands of His people for the accomplishment of His work. The human heart is prone to neglect the use of this power and to depend upon its own strength and varied resources. In the awful calamity that now envelopes the world there is unprecedented need for prayer. Our General Assembly humbly petitioned President Woodrow Wilson to proclaim a national day of fasting and prayer. In the hearts of many Christians there is an earnest desire that such a day shall be observed throughout our land. The appointment of a special day, however, is not as essential as that the people shall be constantly in prayer. Every Christian should pray more earnestly and more constantly than ever before that God in His great wisdom and grace will shorten the days of this awful war.

The suggestion has been made by the "Great Commission Prayer League" that the first week in July should be set apart as a special period of national, or better still international, prayer and fasting, of self-humiliation, of confession and waiting upon and crying mightily unto God in view of the worldwide conditions today. The call is sent out unsigned by human names in order that the name of Jesus Christ alone may be supremely exalted. It is urged that this summer be such a summer of prayer as Christians have never known before. The people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, but a Greater than Jonah is in the midst of the world today. Will you yourself pray daily and weekly as never before for a world-wide revival and for God's Kingdom to come with power? The "Great Commission Prayer League" is located at 808 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois.

The second coming of Christ has been to many Christians a peculiarly obscure and perplexing doctrine. Theologians have been divided into several schools of thought with reference to it. There have been Pre-Millennialists and Post-Millennialists, as well as a school of thought that occupies a middle ground. An interesting discussion of this subject is found on page 8 in the "Mid-Week Prayer Meeting" department, in which Rev. John M. Vander Meulen, D. D., pastor of the Second Presbyterian church, Louisville, Kentucky, presents some very practical and helpful thoughts on this important subject. A proper understanding of the teaching of Christ on this subject will fill men with optimistic energy and inspiration rather than lead

them to assume an attitude of mere inactive useless "watchful waiting." More and more pastors are finding the "Mid-Week Prayer Meeting" department of the "Christian Observer" a help and inspiration in the prayer meeting service.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is able to make Christians even of those people who have not yet attained to the modern standards of civilization. The converts to Christianity on the Congo are unquestionably Christians of as true type as can be found in all the world. Attention is called to this fact in an article on page 6 of this issue in which an appeal is made for a revival of the study of the Standards of our Church and the Shorter Catechism. The study of these, together with a memorizing of portions of the Bible, are required of all candidates for admission to the Presbyterian Church in the Congo.

The Christian Stewardship Contest, inaugurated some months ago by the General Assembly's Campaign Committee on Stewardship, has been brought to a close, and announcement is made on page 11 of those who have received the awards for the best discussion of the subject of stewardship in the different sections. "Every one who participated in this contest," says Rev. R. L. Walkup, the superintendent, "deserves a prize." The greatest value of the contest undoubtedly lies in the fact that every one who participated in it has a clearer and more vital knowledge of the fundamental principles of Christian stewardship as laid down in the Word of God. Never in the history of the Christian Church has the subject of Christian Stewardship received such large attention as is given to it today.

The Presbyterian Church played an important part in the early history of the United States. No more courageous, unselfish and heroic men were numbered among the early settlers than those who brought with them the doctrines of Calvinism together with the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechisms. An intensely interesting sketch of one of the churches founded by these early settlers at Paris, Kentucky, in 1787, is found on page 10. One of the most notable features of the early history of this church was the custom of the session to select young men of piety and godly ability and educate them for the ministry. In one case they bought the time of a young man who had been apprenticed to learn a trade, and educated him for the Gospel ministry. Twenty-seven young men have gone out from this church to preach the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. If the sessions of churches today were eager to select young men and persuade them to enter the ministry, as did this early church, the ranks of the ministry of our Church would be recruited to full strength.

Never in the history of the world has a nation been called upon to float such an enormous loan as that which the American people are now absorbing in the "Liberty Loan Bonds" of the United States. The first issue of \$2,000,000,000 will soon be in the hands of the people. The appeal has been made to individuals to make some sacrifices in order to purchase one or more of the bonds. Many persons have been quick to act upon the sug-

The joy of resisting temptation is the highest joy men can feel. It is a moment when our little life here grows larger, and we feel ourselves lifted into a wider sphere; we have a sense of fellowship with higher beings, and are somehow conscious of their sympathy. All God's creation smiles upon us, and appears made for our joy.—A. B. Davidson.

For the Christian Observer.

# The Renaissance and the Reformation.

BY REV. HENRY E. DOSKER, D. D., LL. D.

What does the term mean? As the name indicates, it stands for a "re-birth" a revival of something well nigh lost; and that something, in its narrower sense, is the rediscovery of the Classics, in its wider sense, the revival of the human intellect, untrammelled and freed of all its shackles. It is also known as the "Renaissance," the "Revival of Letters" and "Humanism." Michelet tells us that "the Renaissance was the rediscovery of the world and of man, the Reformation was the rediscovery of the soul and of God." But Dr. Vedder says that "the Renaissance was the rediscovery of the individual," and justly so. For the corporate aspect of things, in the middle ages, had wholly swallowed up the individual. The State and the Church were all, the individual was nothing. The rediscovery of the value and the rights of the individual, soul, body and mind, then, seems to constitute the true value of the Renaissance. In the two preceding articles I have mentioned the brain-hunger of Europe, in the middle ages, which forms one of the outstanding preparatory movements in the dawn of the Reformation; in the present article we will scan it a little more closely.

## I. What Were the Underlying Causes of Humanism?

If Dr. Vedder's statement is correct, the answer is given. The souls of men were striving after liberty in every sphere. Among its remote causes I may mention the decline of Scholasticism. We all know what it stood for. It was a stupendous effort of the human mind firmly to establish the truth, by dialectic processes of reasoning. Aristotle, the father of dialectics, had almost been deified by the scholastics, philosophy became the handmaid of faith, and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) had sought to establish and prove the whole system of Catholic dogmatics by dialectic reasoning. Rome never went beyond Thomas. But, a century later, Nominalism, as taught by Occam, had seriously questioned the findings of Aquinas, and had made experience the basis of knowledge, rather than reason. Mysticism, long a Cinderella in the royal palace, now began to aspire to the queen's place. Such were the forces at work for the overthrow of the ancient bondage of the human mind.

## II. Beginnings of the Movement.

We would be wrong in deeming the middle ages wholly ignorant of the Classics. Charlemagne, Charles the Bald, Alfred the Great, the German Ottos and later on the Hohenstaufens were their promoters, however feebly it might be; and their study was advocated by scholars like Erigena, Gerbert, Barnard Sylvester, John of Salisbury, Roger Bacon and others. The Moorish scholars had never lost sight of them and the Italian republics, early in the period under consideration, had encouraged their acquaintance. And yet generally speaking they were lost. The Italian forerunners of the Renaissance were Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. The first in his marvelous "Divine Comedy," found his guide in Virgil and fearlessly condemned popes to hell, and, let us not forget, he died in 1321. In Petrarch the influence of antiquity is still more marked; whilst with Boccaccio the paganization of Christianity begins, which was so marked in the later Italian humanists.

The discovery of the art of printing scattered the new learning far and wide. By the year 1500 an inconceivable number of presses were at work in Germany and by that time nearly one hundred editions of the Vulgate were printed in Europe. In fifteen years nine new German universities sprang into being. Scholars from every European country met in the Italian councils to promote learning, the Church councils of Pisa, Constance and Basel did their part, the fall of Constantinople gave the final impetus, and the movement at last became irresistible.

## III. The Flower in Full Bloom.

Italy was the focus of the entire movement. The Latin nations have ever been impressionable, volatile and exuberant in temperament, and the Italians were swift to absorb the new trend of ideas. The leaders of the Italian Renaissance were contemporaries of the first leaders of the Reformation. Niccolò Machiavelli, the author of the celebrated "Il Principe," was the pioneer of modern statecraft, wholly separating it from morality. Pompanazzo, under the very shadow of the Vatican, on philosophical grounds, completely denied the immortality of the soul. A new and incomprehensible critical spirit voiced itself in Laurentius Valla, the father of the revival of pure Latin and also of the modern trend of historical criticism. On purely critical grounds he rejected the main pillar of the secular aspect of the papacy, in declaring the "Donatio Constantini" a fraud, together with the Arreopagite Writings and the "Correspondence between Christ and Abgar." Poggio, Boccadelli and Arretino outdid the lewdest of the classic poets in playing on the lowest passions. And yet they

were applauded to the echo, whilst Arretino was surnamed "Il Divino," received special pensions from crowned heads, like Francis I of France and Charles V of Spain, and Pope Leo X was his patron and unbounded admirer. Such were the plows, that tore up the Italian soil, which had been lying fallow for ages.

German Humanism bears a different aspect. The German mind is totally different from the unfamiliar face it reveals in the present world war. Fundamentally it is of a metaphysical and analytical cast, to which may be added that peculiar trait, which the German expresses in the untranslatable word, "Gemuetlichkeit."

The principal centers of the movement in Germany were the universities of Heidelberg, Erfurt, Gotha and Nuernberg. In the first named center of learning Agricola inculcated its principles, although the greatest attraction there was the fame of John Reuchlin, wonderful for his attainments both in the Greek and Hebrew languages. In fact he was the pioneer and father of the Christian study of Hebrew. At Erfurt, liberality of thought and expression held sway. Mutianus was a confirmed Deist and religious trifler, whilst both Rubianus and von Hutten are credited with the editorship of the "Letters of the Obscure Men." Nuernberg voiced its Humanism through such men as Mueller, the scientist; Pirkheimer, statesman, historian and litterateur and above all Albert Duerer, painter, engraver and author, who practically alone of all the Humanists who sided with the Reformation in its early stages, died as its friend and enthusiastic promoter.

England became acquainted with Humanism through John Colet, who powerfully antagonized the prevailing tendencies of Scholasticism at Oxford and advocated the study of the Scriptures. Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England, the friend and protege of Henry VIII and the author of that widely known book "Utopia," and finally the victim of the king's wrath when he thwarted him in the matter of his divorce from Catherine of Arragon, was the second great leader. To these may be added Erasmus of Holland, to whom I desire to devote the next article. These three were the tripod on which English Humanism rested.

In France we find Budaeus, widely celebrated in his day as a scientist and opponent of Scholasticism, and above all Faber Stapulensis, whose opinions so closely approached those of the reformers that he might be accounted one of them, had he ever tried to throw his weight in the scales of ecclesiastical and theological reform. In Spain the greatest leader of Humanism was the world-renowned Cardinal Ximenes (1436-1517), inquisitor, scholar, founder of the university of Alcala and above all author of "the Complutensian Polyglot Bible" of 1528, which appeared after his death and is the greatest monument of critical weight of the 16th century.

There was no country in Christian Europe in which the lamp of Humanism was not lighted; it seemed to be in the very air men breathed and radically prepared the human mind for the radical changes to be ushered in by the Reformation. Strange that all its leaders, almost to a man, assumed an inimical attitude to it when it appeared. A reform along merely Humanistic lines would have been a return to paganism. It still pursues its endless course through the ages. On the one side, outside of the Church, it exhibits the wonderful scientific progress of the modern times, absolutely free and untrammelled in its course, but alas mostly antagonistic to faith. On the other hand, within the Church, it gave rise to the Reformation and it created a free, scientific theology. But also, in its negative aspects, it exhibits the destructive rationalism and criticism of the later ages.

Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Kentucky, Louisville, Ky.

## Some Famous Hymn Writers

For the Christian Observer.

GEORGE MATHESON.

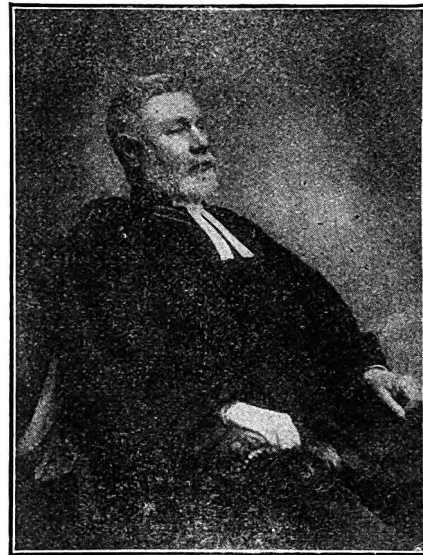
1842—1906.

Some of the greatest hymns seem to have been the result of a sudden inspiration, and have been composed instantly without previous study or thought. This was certainly the case with Mr. Matheson's great production, "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go." Writing of it, the author said: "It is the quickest composition I ever achieved. It was done in three minutes. It seemed to me at the time as if some one were dictating the thought to me, and also giving the expression. There was so little sense of effort that I had a feeling of passiveness. I was sitting alone in my study in a state of great mental depression caused by a real calamity.

The hymn was the voice of my depression. It was not made for any utilitarian purpose; it was wrung spontaneously from the heart."

The author, Rev. George Matheson, accomplished great things in spite of the handicap of blindness which came upon him in boyhood. Throughout his university course he was entirely dependent upon others, but he was fortunate in having two devoted sisters, who helped him wonderfully, even learning Latin, Greek and Hebrew that they might assist him in his studies.

After graduation he became minister of the Church of Scotland at Inellan, a seaport summer resort, where he remained for eighteen years. He was in the habit of committing his sermons to



Rev. George Matheson, D. D.

memory, and also the Scripture lessons. The open Bible was before him, and he seemed to be reading from it. During the sermon he looked straight at the audience, and many people who did not know him, had no idea that they had been hearing a blind preacher.

His memory was so good that after listening to two or three readings of the Scripture, or of his sermon, he could repeat it perfectly. One Sunday, however, after twelve years of this practice, when he was in the midst of an eloquent sermon, his memory suffered a complete collapse, the sermon passing entirely out of his mind. He was quite equal to the occasion, for after asking the congregation to sing a hymn, he gave out a new text and preached an excellent extempore sermon. From that time he rarely wrote his sermons.

Dr. Matheson's second pastorate was in Edinburgh at the large St. Bernard's Church, where he remained for thirteen years, attracting great crowds. During this time his membership grew to 1,703.

During all his ministerial work he was a diligent pastor, as well as a great preacher, making many pastoral calls, in which he was aided by a faithful sister who lived with him.

"He spent the concluding years of his life in literary labors, preaching only on special occasions, and passed away on August 28, 1906, after completing an amount of varied and distinguished work which would have taxed the resources of any man having complete vision."

Here is Dr. Matheson's great hymn:

O Love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain  
I cannot close my heart to Thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red,  
Life that shall endless be.

### SECRET PRAYER.

Jesus went into a mountain apart to pray. We wonder how a grand outward ministry can be sustained. The answer is simple. Every outward ministry that is massive, life-taxing in its fierce demands upon the minister, is sustained by mountain climbing, solitary communion with God, the nursing of old gentle Mother Nature, and soul-fellowship with the Father of all life. The inward man must be renewed day by day; we must deepen the soil if we would enrich the crop. If the Master