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THE CHRISTIAN TREASURY

A FAMILY MISCELLANY

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THERE IS NOTHING.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.



O the eye of the messenger-boy whom Elijah sent up to the brow of Mount Carmel, not the semblance of cloud was visible in the clear sky. He came back six times to the prophet, and reported 'there is nothing.' But the prophet's faith had discerned the coming showers; for hours before he had said to Ahab, 'Get thee up, eat and drink; there is a sound of abundance of rain.' So hath God rich blessings in store for the fervent prayer of faith. Often to the eye of a pastor, a consistory, or a Sabbath-school teacher there may be no external indications that a rain of the Holy Spirit's influences is at hand. Faith's office is to realise the distress of a drought, to use earnest efforts for souls, and then expect the blessing. The most powerful revivals I have ever witnessed in the churches under my charge (two of them in dear old Market Street Dutch Church) came as happy surprises. Human foresight detected nothing; faith worked and waited and watched for the coming rain. Blessed is the pastor and the church who walk by faith and not by sight. The deadly sins are doubt and discouragement.

2. 'There is nothing.' This is often the utterance of pious poverty as it looks into the empty purse or scanty larder. A grey-haired missionary of Christ, whose worldly effects amounted to not much more than a few parchments and an old travelling cloak, made out his inventory one day thus: 'Having *nothing*.' But when he remembered what inward treasures of peace and joy and strength he possessed, and what a glorious inheritance awaited him, he added—'yet possessing all things.' Poor in purse, he was making this whole world rich. A true Christian's assets are often unseen; but they are solid and eternal. It is a reproach to a true child of God to make such an ado over pecuniary reverses and losses, while his real soul wealth is untouched. 'What are you doing here to-day?' said a pastor to an aged invalid in a

dreary and leaky old cabin. 'I am sitting under *His* shadow with great delight, and His fruit is sweet to my taste,' was the cheerful answer. Here is a hint for Christians who groan over the loss of a dividend or the failure of a crop, as if they were ruined. Blessed are they who live by faith and not by sight.

3. 'There is nothing.' This is often the worthless excuse of human blindness when God summons us to a difficult duty, or to some enterprise of work for Him. When five thousand hungry people were collected on the eastern banks of Galilee Jesus said to His disciples, 'Give ye them to eat.' Oh, but Master, we have nothing to give them; there are only five little barley loaves and a brace of small fishes. Tell the multitude to sit down is the simple command; and within an hour they are all fed, and there are a dozen hampers of broken victuals left over. This is the way that George Muller has been feeding and educating thousands of orphans at 'Ashley Down,' England, and distributing Bibles to the destitute. He lays hold of God's work and then trusts God to raise up friends and supplies to keep it going. So Moody assembles the multitudes, when no visible agency stands behind him; he opens the Word and preaches Christ, and the unseen Power from on high descends and brings the wonderful results. Let no one say, 'I have nothing,' when he or she has God behind them. The history of nearly all missions and enterprises of benevolence and all revivals proves that out of the most insignificant beginnings grow the most substantial returns of blessing. Blessed are they who begin by faith and not by sight! I can point to a prosperous church that commenced in the warm heart of a single female Sabbath-school teacher.

4. 'There is nothing.' Ah, does not the bereaved mother's broken heart frequently utter this sad cry when she enters the deserted chamber from which a beloved child has been carried away to the churchyard. Nothing left! The empty bed, the silent room, the vanished face—all make her heart ache with anguish. Is there nothing left, do you say? Why, you

have *everything* secured to you, if that precious son or daughter belongs to Jesus. He is able to *keep* that which is committed to Him. So far from being 'lost,' that husband or that child—if they are Christ's—are actually *saved*. Pray don't allow yourself to use such a misleading and God-dishonouring word as *lost*. You have a new treasure in heaven. Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. Though there is nothing of visible flesh and blood for you to kiss or caress any longer, yet there is a living, rejoicing and glorified spirit waiting for you beyond the veil. Blessed are they who weep—if it be in faith, and not demanding sight.

5. Once more—'there is nothing.' So may those who gather around the dying bed of a believer feel; for they see no departing soul; they behold no waiting angel of God to convey it to its eternal home. They hear no audible voice from that other world. Nobody has come back with any information about

heaven, or even to declare that there is any heaven. To the eye of sense there is nothing—absolutely nothing—except a poor sufferer breathing away his last breath.

'Nothing before—nothing behind,
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void—and find
The Rock beneath.'

Behind the veil that hides the unseen things lies heaven. We might well address that departing spirit with these glorious words of farewell—'Ye are now come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, and unto an innumerable company of angels and to the spirits of the just made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant?' The blind mortal eye sees nothing. Faith sees *all things* laid up for those who die in Jesus. Blessed, thrice blessed, are they who take the last step into eternity by faith, and not by sight!—*The Christian Intelligencer*.

'KAI ESMEN'—(AND WE ARE).

BY THE REV. GEO. F. PENTECOST.



At the close of the first verse of 1 John iii.—'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God'—our revisers have supplied the two Greek words which stand at the head of this article, and translated them, 'and we are.' These words appear, indeed, in the next verse; but their use in the first verse makes the statement of the Apostle there much more emphatic, and, indeed, qualifies the statement that we are 'called the children of God,' into an intensity of meaning that must be very precious to every believer, and goes a long way toward giving us a fuller and richer exegesis of the passage.

To be called the children of God is an unspeakable grace: but that does not tell the whole story of what is involved in our adoption. There have been children not born into a family who have been adopted and henceforth called the children of the parents who have adopted them; and yet their standing has been different even in outward things from that of the children *born* into the family. There are many grades or degrees of adoption into earthly families, all of which are gracious and carry privilege and favour with them; but the very highest degree that any earthly love or power can give must, in the nature of the case, come short of what is granted when God takes a sinner into His family. Moses 'was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,' and doubtless every privilege and

honour that she could bestow upon him was given; and yet Moses was not a *real* son. It could not be said that Moses 'was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *and he was*'; for that last statement would have carried with it the thought that he not only sustained that outward and formal relation of a son to her, but that he was her son in very essence. Now the Apostle undoubtedly intended to say that the marvel of God's love was seen, not in that we are *called* His sons, but that *we are*, in point of fact, His sons. And this is the glory of the Christian's adoption, that he is not a son outwardly, but characteristically and by an inward birth of the Spirit. Dean Alford, in his critical commentary, says these words were added 'to serve the purpose of bringing out the reality of the *state* conferred with the title, in spite of any non-recognition of it by the unbelieving world.' This 'is of the highest possible significance, because we bear not the name only, but the essence,' of sonship. In his commentary on John i. 12—'to them, gave He power to become the sons of God'—he says, and truly, that this expression involves far more than mere privilege, even 'the whole generation and process of our life in the Spirit.' That is, 'to them gave He the birth of the Spirit from above,' of which our Lord told Nicodemus, insisting that every man must have it before he could see or enter into the Kingdom of God. This is the very essence of Christianity in a believer, that he has ceased to be a *natural* man and has become a *spiritual* man. He is no longer a