

THOUGHTS
FOR
HEART AND LIFE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE contents of this work have already appeared in three small volumes, under the titles of "Heart Life," "Heart Thoughts," and "Heart Culture ;" but as the editions of the two latter have been exhausted, it has been thought desirable to reprint the whole in one volume.

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HEART-LIFE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
HEART-KEEPING	I
AM I ALIVE?	5
BUILDING ON THE ROCK	9
THE "ROCK OF AGES"	14
JOINING THE LORD JESUS.	20
WANTED—MORE CALEBS	24
THE NIGHT-BELL OF PRAYER	30
TRUE PRAYERS NEVER LOST.	35
SPIRITUAL DYSPEPTICS	40
LOVABLE CHRISTIANS	45
"JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL"	49
SITTING DOWN WITH JESUS	55
CHRIST WITHIN	60
OVER THE LINE	64
A SHOT AT THE DECANTER	69
A TEACHER IN GOD'S SCHOOL	75
HYMNS OF THE CROSS.	79
MORNING-CLOUD RELIGION	84

	PAGE
THE RE-CONVERTED MAN	89
THE SPICES IN GOD'S GARDEN	94
MAKING THE IRON SWIM	99
THE JOY OF SAVING THE LOST.	104
HYMNS OF HEAVEN.	110
A TOTAL ECLIPSE	115
CHRIST THE LIGHT TO A HIGHER LIFE	120
THE COST OF SERVING CHRIST	125
FULL ASSURANCE	129
HYMNS OF THE HEART	134



HEART-LIFE.

HEART-KEEPING.

“**K**EEP thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life.” As good “house-keeping” is essential to domestic comfort, so good heart-keeping is essential to healthful and happy piety.

The word of God represents the human heart as a *dwelling*. The unconverted heart is a habitation of the Evil one, with his brood of unholy thoughts and sinful tastes and passions. When Jesus Christ first enters this dwelling-place of the Evil one, he finds it fearfully filthy and out of order. The first work of the Divine Spirit is to cleanse the house. Every room must be entered and purified. Into the stately and sumptuous drawing-room where Pride held court, the lowly Saviour enters, and expels the occupant. From the walls of Sensuality's chamber many wanton pictures have to be taken down. The deserted and cobwebbed closet of Conscience is entered by the key of Truth, and is thrown open to the daylight.

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Memory is another apartment of the mind which the Holy Spirit renews for a higher and holier use. Ranged on its shelves he finds the stores which were brought in through the five doorways of the senses. Much of this accumulation is but rubbish. Christ does not destroy this faculty; He simply makes it henceforth a granary of truth. A sanctified memory is the soul's store-room. We pity the man with whom this is but an empty garret or a confused lumber-room, heaped up with accumulated things, so hopelessly mingled that its owner can never lay hands on what he needs at the moment. With a devout believer the memory is a cabinet of curiosities of God's love. In no apartment does Jesus abide oftener than in this; here the alabaster-box of gratitude is broken, and the room is filled with the sweet odour of the ointment.

There is also a chamber of Taste, from whose window the lover of beauty looks out on magnificent landscapes; and at midnight up into the star-studded vaults of Heaven. There is a lofty watch-tower where holy Vigilance keeps guard to espy the approaches of the enemy. Woe unto the Christian when the sentinel falls asleep on the tower! Over the doorway to this turret the Spirit has written, "Watch unto prayer!" "Blessed is he whom his Lord when He cometh shall find watching." From this tower Faith often looks out through the spyglass of the promises, and catches bright glimpses of the celestial city which lies at the end of the way.

“For glimpses such as these
My willing soul will bear
All that in darkest hours it sees
Of toil and pain and care.”

We must not overlook one room in a converted heart, though it be ever so small or ever so secluded. It is the secret “closet” where faith holds sweet fellowship with God. It is fragrant with the presence of Jesus. Here stands the mercy-seat. To this inner sanctum Faith keeps a golden key, inscribed, “Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; pray without ceasing.” Over the door she readeth the inviting words : “Enter into this closet, ‘and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.’” On the walls are inscriptions written in moments of devout intercourse with God, when the meditations of Him were like the droppings of the honeycomb.

This is Faith’s stronghold ; here she equips herself for the daily conflict. Silence in that closet of prayer bespeaks death throughout all the house. When that door is suffered to rust on its hinges and that chamber is deserted, then the heart-house is soon retaken by Satan, and evil spirits come in and dwell there.

To keep this house with all diligence is the primal duty of every one who bears the name of Christ. The object of this little volume is to offer a few counsels for the right keeping of the heart and the right conduct of the Christian life. Some of these

brief chapters have been written out of our own personal experience; and some have been gathered during many years of observation of the experiences of others. How to keep Jesus in the inner heart, and how to glorify Jesus in the outer life, is the two-fold secret of spiritual success and of final salvation.



AM I ALIVE ?

Tis not a sufficient answer to this question for any Christian to say, "I was once converted." Thousands were born ten years ago who are now in their coffins. There is a great difference between being "made alive" and *keeping* alive afterwards. Far too many professors base their hope of being Christians, not on what they now are, but on some experience during a revival season in days gone by.

Genuine conversion brings a man into a new state towards God. Old things have passed away ; he is a new creature. But he must constantly encounter a strong under-current, running like a mill-race, towards the old state of corruption. No renewed heart will "keep sweet" without a great deal of salting with divine grace. No converted man will *stay* converted unless he takes care of himself, and the Master takes care of him. What is conversion? It is the turning of the heart to God ; and unless that heart holds fast on God, and God holds fast to him, he will soon fall into vain confidence, apathy, pride, self-indulgence, or any sin that "doth so easily beset" him. How long do you think that Paul would have been *Paul* if the power of God had not kept him, through faith? "Not I," exclaims the modest old hero—"not I, but Christ

that liveth in me." "I live by faith on the Son of God." Again he exclaims, "*So fight* I, not as one that *strike*th out into the *air*; but I keep my body under." He uses a phrase drawn from the boxer's contests, and the literal translation of it is, "I bruise my body—lest I myself should be a reprobate." Paul had such a terrible dread lest his evil propensities should get the better of him, that he constantly beats down with steady and sturdy blows the unruly appetites and passions. If such was the necessity laid upon the great apostle, who of us has a right to grow foolhardy and self-confident? The moment a Christian begins to feel, "What do I care? let others be afraid—not I;" the moment a Christian feels *so*, he is as near to a disgraceful fall as boastful Peter was in Pilate's hall.

But granting that you were once made alive, kind reader, *are you alive* to-day? If so, how shall you keep alive?

First of all comes *prayer*, the daily and hourly intercourse of the soul with God. Prayer is just as vital to my spiritual life as water is to the "monthly rose" whose leaves are now dripping from the refreshing of the pitcher. Prayer is the conduit-pipe between my soul and heaven. It is the *outlet* upwards for gratitude and yearning desires for blessings; it is the *inlet* through which the supplies of grace pour downwards into the heart. When the channel is allowed to freeze up, I am in the same condition with the housekeeper who inquires, "I wonder why the

water does not *run* to-day?" The plumber is sent for, and he soon explains the difficulty. "Your pipes are frozen up; the connection with the reservoir is stopped." Alas for the Christian who has broken his connection with Christ!

Prayer may be also likened to a telegraph with Heaven. Our messages go up with the lightning speed of thought. The mercies asked for often flow down to us with the promptness and velocity of a divine love. Sometimes the blessing sought is ours at once. Sometimes the answer is delayed. Then we can only do our duty and *wait*. Sometimes the reply comes in the sudden shock of an unexpected trial; it comes like a death-message over the wires! But it is all right. God knows what answer to send. I must take what my Father chooses to give. If I put myself into connection with God, I am only responsible for *this* end of the celestial telegraph: not for the end that lies in the infinite bosom of love. I must receive just what God sends. "Thy will be done." But trying messages are not so dreadful as to have the telegraph of prayer utterly out of order through long disuse, and the soul cut off from Jesus. Friend, is thy connection with the Divine Hearer and Giver broken off? Then to your knees! to your knees!

"Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give:
Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray they live."

But with prayer the Master also coupled *watchfulness*. "I say unto you all, watch!" Never yet have I seen the Christian whose heart would not "bear watching." The oversight must be close, constant, and wakeful. If you were set to keep a canary-bird on the open palm of your hand, you would understand what is meant by "keeping the heart with all diligence." You must not take off the spiritual eye for one instant. Have the arm of resolution ever ready to seize it the very first moment that it attempts to fly off into sin.

"Wherefore I say unto you all, watch!" Watch the stealthy approaches of the tempter. Watch for old habits of sin that will steal back again though they have been driven off a hundred times "from the premises." Watch over your soul's nurseries in which the thoughts are cradled. Watch over an unruly tongue. Watch for opportunities to do good. Let the one side of your religion be ever at the feet of Jesus in humble devotion; let the other side of your piety be ever abounding in the work of the Lord. In these days we hear much about the "higher life." The best prescription that we know of for attaining it is to use our knees for prayer, our eyes for watchfulness, our purses for liberal giving, our tongues for confessing Jesus, and both our hands in hard work to do Christ's will, and to pull sinners out of the everlasting fires.



BUILDING ON THE ROCK.

DIG deep, and lay your foundation well, is our earnest advice to every awakened soul. Almost every revival brings into the Church more or less of what may be called "shaky professors." Their religious life is frail, ill-built, tottering, and liable to come down in the first stiff gale of temptation. The simple reason is, that there was no underlying godliness based on Jesus Christ. When you see a huge crack in the third-storey room of a tall mansion, you may at once suppose that there is something wrong in the *foundation*. So with a religious profession that is not bottomed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Sooner or later the crack appears in the daily life ; or else the flimsy structure leans over from the perpendicular "like a bowing wall and a tottering fence." Even if it manage to hold itself up until the dying hour, the tremendous surge of death tumbles the whole edifice of presumption and falsehood into utter, irretrievable ruin. When the last storm descends, and the floods beat upon it, it falls ; and "great will be the fall of it," for eternity can bring no repair of the wreck.

Christ, in his searching Sermon on the Mount, spoke of two classes of builders. The one built on the sand, and the other built on the rock. When

the hour of trial came upon both alike, the quicksand upset the one, and the rock-bed upheld the other. The one stood because it had a *foundation*; the other fell for want of one. Now, just here is the vital point with every anxious seeker after salvation; for it will be a terrible thing for you to find out at last that you have been building on the sand!

In building for eternity there is but one sure foundation. God is rich in resources, but he has provided only one plan of salvation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST." What is meant by this? We believe it means, that when sinful man had no righteousness of his own to stand upon, Christ "becomes to him righteousness." When he has no strength, Jesus offers to put His infinite arm beneath him. When the sinful soul has no inward principle to base a godly life upon, Jesus implants one through regeneration. When he has no pattern to live by, Jesus furnishes a perfect model. And when any penitent man sincerely embraces Christ Jesus as his Saviour, rests on His atonement for pardon, looks to Jesus for guidance, leans on Jesus for support, and is united to Jesus in heart and in daily life, then may he be said to have built on Jesus as his spiritual foundation. When a man thus embraces Christ, he has a *rock-bed* infinite and immovable beneath him. If you ask such a man why he expects to be saved, his simple answer is, "Christ died for me, and His blood cleanseth from all sin." If you ask him the ground

of his assurance, he answers with Paul, "I *know* whom I have believed." If you inquire of him whence he derives strength for the strain of daily life, its wrenching trials, its wrestling temptations, and its toils, he can humbly testify that down in the depths of his soul there is an underlying grace which Christ doth furnish. This work of Christ for him and within him is his foundation. It underlies his religion, just as the granite underlies the heaven-kissing hills. If you take away the divine Jesus from this man, you take away his faith, his hope, his peace, his strength, his character, his all.

Now, my friend, here is a Rock for your soul—the Rock of Ages. If you build on anything else—on your prayers or your professions, on your morality or your philanthropy, on your ceremonies or your church-membership—you are building on the sand. Morality is a very beautiful part of a Christian's superstructure, but it is not a *foundation*. "Other foundation," remember, "no man *can* lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." We have seen some melancholy crashes in the moral career of men; we have heard some terrible *falls* in dying chambers. They were the down-tumbings of a false hope that was bottomed on the sand. When the floods came and the winds smote on it, it fell, and great was the fall thereof!

But when a penitent soul has committed itself to Jesus, and the new heart, the new principle, and the new purpose, have come to it through conversion, then on this sure foundation what a beautiful and effective

life may be built ! A well-built life is just the laying up of one grace and good deed upon another ; of faith, and patience, and temperance, and benevolence, and courage, and self-denial, and brotherly love. It is growing in grace. It is the sacred architecture of the Holy Spirit. "Ye are God's building."


A well-built Christian is harmonious in all his parts. He is not a jumble of opposites and inconsistencies—to-day devout and to-morrow frivolous, to-day liberal and to-morrow stingy, to-day fluent in prayer and to-morrow fluent in falsehoods. He does not keep the fourth commandment on Sunday and break the eighth commandment by cunning frauds on Monday. His philanthropy does not outrun his conscientiousness, nor do his spiritual fervours outrun his inward faith and self-denials. Some professed Christians are as unfinished as the cathedral at Cologne, where vast towers have risen no higher than mere stumps, and where ugly wooden cranes conceal an exquisite Gothic tracery. Do not expect to reach absolute Christian perfection ; but that is no reason why you should settle down content with a wilful and wretched imperfection.

As we close, we point you to the Rock of Ages—Christ Jesus. You never can be saved but through Him. Every hour is worse than lost that you spend away from Christ. There is a dying-bed spreading for you somewhere, my friend ; there is a shroud somewhere weaving. There is a storm coming that will strain and try your spiritual hope to the utmost.

See to it that you are well founded. The way to avoid the sand is to strike for the rock. Dig deep, and lay your foundation well. He that heareth the voice of Christ, and *doeth His will*, he is the wise man who buildeth his house upon the rock. Steadily the structure rises, stone on stone. Sometimes in tears and trials the builder buildeth; sometimes through storms of persecution and reproach. But he builds for eternity. And it shall be of such as he that the celestial chant shall yet be heard: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that *kept* the commandments of God, and the FAITH OF JESUS."



THE ROCK OF AGES.

HE southern coast of England has been the birthplace of the grandest hymns in our language. Within that belt of land, sacred to devout poesy, Charles Wesley caught the inspiration of many of his hymns, and there, we believe, he composed that delicious love lay of the heart,

“Jesu, lover of my soul.”

On the shores of Hampshire mused and sang good Isaac Watts ; and in the same county, modest Anne Steele breathed forth her tender songs of consolation. In old Kent lived Edward Perronett, who struck that thrilling note,

“All hail the power of Jesu’s name.”

In beautiful Devonshire, the Rev. Henry F. Lyte chanted his last sweet melody,

“Abide with me ; fast falls the eventide.”

A few miles from him dwelt Charlotte Elliot, the sister of a clergyman ; she went about doing good ; but the grandest work God ever put into her hands was to write,

“Just as I am, without one plea.”

Devonshire is certainly honoured above all the shires

of Britain, for on that poetic soil Augustus Toplady gave birth to the most glorious hymn of modern times, the *Rock of Ages*. The "Dies Iræ" is the king of mediæval hymns; but of modern songs of Zion, the "Rock of Ages" wears the crown.

It is a curious fact that the spiritual birthplace of the heart which fashioned this hymn was *a barn!* Augustus Toplady was the son of a British officer. After Major Toplady's death his widow took the lad Augustus on a visit to Ireland. While at Codymain, the boy of sixteen found his way into a barn, where an earnest but uneducated layman was preaching on the text, "Ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The homespun preacher "buildded better than he knew," for his sermon converted the soul which gave to the Church of God the *Rock of Ages*. Let no man feel that he is doing a small thing when he is proclaiming Jesus and the great salvation even to peasants in a cow-house or to sailors on the docks. Probably that obscure Irish preacher has overheard ten thousand echoes of his sermon in the heavenly world.

Toplady was ordained to the ministry in 1762, and began to preach on the banks of the Otter. His career was a short one, for he died at the age of thirty-eight. He lived fast and worked fiercely. James Hamilton says of him, that "like a racehorse, all nerve and fire, his life was on tiptoe, and his delight was to get over the ground." He composed in hot haste. Certainly some of his sharp contro-

versial papers were thrown off as from a furnace, for they scorched terribly.

Even when he wrote his magnificent masterpiece, the "Rock of Ages," he could not resist the temptation to give a sly thrust at those who he insisted were believers in "Perfectionism." So he entitled his hymn when he printed it, "A living and dying prayer of the *holiest believer* in the world." This was as much as if he had said: "The most sanctified soul in the world must come down on his knees, and confess, 'nothing in my hands I bring,' and '*vile* I to this fountain fly.'"

Glorious child of song! he has gone where the strife of tongues has ceased and controversies are forever hushed. Perhaps he and Wesley have sung each other's hymns in glory, and been puzzled to find out which of the two was the "Calvinist." As we Presbyterians sing with tears of joy,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

so our Methodist brethren have cheered many a love-feast by pouring forth the inspiring strain,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!"

Toplady's hymn is as universally popular as the sunshine or the vernal flowers. It has been translated into almost every tongue. Dr. Pomeroy went into a church in Constantinople, where a company of Armenians were singing a hymn which so moved them that the tears were trickling down their cheeks.

He inquired what they were singing? A man present translated the words, and lo! they were the dear old lines of Rock of Ages! When Prince Albert of England was dying, his lips feebly murmured the sweet words of Toplady's hymn. And so it came about that the dying *prince* laid hold of those precious thoughts which had their original root in the rude discourse of an obscure layman in an Irish barn! Truly, the religion of Jesus abaseth the proud and exalteth the lowly. Kings and beggars must go down into the dust alike, where the blood of the atoning Lamb is streaming.

We do not dare to attempt the critical analysis of Toplady's wonderful hymn. Just as soon would we pull a rose to pieces to find out where the delicious odour was lurking. The hymn itself is absolute *perfection*. Of all its lines the two finest are those which are carved on a monument in Greenwood, beneath a figure of faith kneeling before a cross:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

No device in all Greenwood is more impressive; and no words can express more beautifully the entire empty-handedness with which a poor, weak, sinful soul comes to grasp the Divine Redeemer as its last and only hope. The essence of the gospel is in this matchless couplet. It has wrought itself into ten thousand prayers for pardon; it has been the condensed "confession of faith" for ten thousand penitents.

Two slight changes have been made in Toplady's hymn. The word "tracts" has been superseded by "worlds" in the last verse. In the same verse the author also wrote,—

"When my *eye-strings* break in death."

Perhaps he had learned the medical fact, that at the moment of dissolution, a delicate tendon near the eye sometimes breaks, and causes a flow of tears. But the allusion was more anatomical than poetic, and the word "heart-strings" is substituted in our common version.

This glorious hymn yet waits for a *tune* worthy of it. The one in ordinary use is by no means of the highest order. Some master of music ought to compose an "air" which shall describe the majestic onward and upward movement of the thought to its sublime climax. The whole hymn is a fervent *outcry* of a broken heart to Jesus. It begins in plaintive confession,—

"Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's commands."

Then the suppliant owns that he is naked, empty-handed and helpless and foul, and calls out imploringly—

"*Wash me, Saviour, or I die!*"

Then his bursting heart begins to yearn and stretch onward. It reaches on to the dread hour when the heart-strings are snapping at the touch of death. It

sweeps out into eternity ; it soars to the judgment seat. It beholds the great white throne ! And casting itself down before that throne, it pours forth its last piercing but triumphant cry,—

“ Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee !”



JOINING THE LORD JESUS.



JOINING the church is one thing, but joining the Lord Jesus is quite another thing; and only those who have done the second have any clear right to do the first. The main cause of inconsistency and failure in the life of too many professors of religion, is that they make a formal union with the Church without any heart-union to Christ. Almost their solitary act of loyalty was their uniting themselves to the Church. From that time onward their Divine Master had no more of them than their idle name on the roll of His followers. They enlisted; they entered their names on the record, and straight-way are heard of no more. They made no tie to anything but an organized body of professed Christians; they did not knit their souls to the Saviour.

“But am I not to join the Church?” inquires some one who is indulging a hope of pardon and of the new birth. Yes, friend, join the Church, provided that you have already joined Jesus. If you unite yourself to nothing stronger than to a company of frail, fallible fellow-creatures, and expect them to tow you along by the power of their fellowship and prayers, then you have but a poor chance of reaching the “desired haven.” But genuine conversion unites your heart in clinging faith to the Friend of sinners.

When you take the step of confessing this faith before men, you literally and truly *join the Lord*. You join your weakness to His strength; you join your ignorance to His wisdom, your unworthiness to His merits, your frailty to His enduring might, and your poverty to His boundless wealth. The fair peasant-girl who married an emperor of Russia became a sharer of his palace and his crown. When you wed your heart and hand to Jesus, you become a sharer in His kingdom and crown, a joint heir with Christ! The joint heir has the promise of the Father's love, of the indwelling of the Spirit, of the peace of God, of pleasures for evermore, and of the society of all the just made perfect throughout eternity! "Where I am, there shall ye be also."

What a glorious thought this is! What a different conception it is from that of merely "joining a Church" of fellow-creatures. You really join Christ. Your heart joins His heart. Your life is knit by hidden links to His; because He lives, ye shall live also. Your destiny is bound to His; and ye shall be *kept by the power of God*, through faith, unto salvation. If you have a real faith, however feeble, *confess it*. If you have renounced sin and self, and come to Jesus, then "join yourself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten."

Many who have a secret faith in Christ hold back too long from a public confession. Waiting to become stronger, they only grow weaker. They are like the timid child who should try to learn to walk

without ever getting on its feet. For fear of a tumble they lie still. On the whole, I rather like the venture of Simon Peter out of the fishing-boat to walk to Jesus on the waves; for, though he began to sink, he also began to pray. He found that sinking times were praying times; and when we learn that, we know where to reinforce our own weakness by laying hold on the infinite strength. But for a true convert to confess Christ is really not a walking on the water. He has under him the solid rock of God's promises.

"How soon should I join the Church?" The best answer we can give to this question is, just as soon as your heart has joined the Saviour. Not one moment before that. When God gives conversion He demands confession. Make the most of your early love. If your heart goes out to Jesus in loving trust, then stand up for Him and *with* Him, and joining your hand to His, take the blessed vows of spiritual wedlock. The whole drift of the Bible is in favour of prompt approach to Christ, prompt trust in Christ, prompt confession of Christ, and prompt obedience to His every call to duty. The teaching of the Word is, "Whatsoever HE saith to you, *do it.*" But the devil's version reads, "Whatsoever He saith to you, *delay it.*"


Our pastoral observation has convinced us that people sometimes commit two great mistakes. The saddest mistake is committed by those who join a Church without joining Christ. This solemn mockery of professing a faith that is not really possessed, has

cost many a one the most indescribable misery and mischief. May God in His mercy keep you from such a false step ; it may be a fatal one.

The other mistake is that of delaying the acknowledgment and open confession of that blessed Saviour, who, when He gave us Himself, demands that *we give ourselves to Him*. Have you given your heart to Jesus? Then give Him your hand in a public and perpetual covenant, that shall never be forgotten.



WANTED—MORE CALEBS.

“HO is Caleb? I never heard of him.” That is quite possible; for in the Bible gallery of characters there are some modest people whose presence we only discover as blind men find out rose-bushes—by their *fragrance*. Dorcas probably made no sensation in Joppa; but when Dorcas’ fingers grew quiet under the grave-clothes, Joppa found out what they had lost, and the poor women came in and preached her funeral sermon in warm tear-drops on her silent face. To this same class belong Ezra, the scribe; and Hannah, the praying mother; and Andrew, who believed in personal effort; and Onesiphorus, who was not ashamed of Paul’s chain. CALEB stands in this catalogue—a type of thorough-going servants of God, who do a great deal with but little noise, who stand meekly and steadily at their posts of duty, who never shirk their share of toil or danger, who do not attract much attention until they are *gone!* Then how we miss them in the church, in society, in the Sunday-school! How the family or the neighbourhood suffer for the want of them! How hard it is to get along without them!

Caleb’s whole biography is condensed into a few bright sentences. He was the chieftain of a clan in

Israel, was selected as one of the deputation to go down and spy out the land of Canaan ; he came back, helping to carry the luscious load of Eshcol grapes, and made a strong report in favour of the immediate occupation of the land ; and when the panic-stricken people clamoured for retreat on account of "the giants there," Caleb came to the front and made a ringing speech, in the face of poltroons who stood with stones in their hands to batter him to the ground. God's verdict on the man's steadfast heroism was in these brief words : "My servant Caleb will I bring into the land, who hath *followed me faithfully.*" In another passage it reads, "He hath followed me *wholly.*" In still another it is written, "He hath followed me *fully.*" God was as good as His word. While the cowards and the rebels all perished in the wilderness, stout, steady old Caleb lived to own the beautiful acres on the hills of Hebron, and in full view of the verdant vale of Eshcol. When the long march and the bloody war were over, he tasted of the grapes of victory—even as our Lincoln did for a few brief hours before his martyrdom.

Caleb is the man most needed in our Churches in these latter days. He is the type-man for thorough-going fidelity. He followed the Lord fully. What we want to make Churches vigorous and successful is, not bustle, but business ; not parade and puffery, but patience, prayer, and persevering work. We want the full following of Christ with the whole heart, for

the whole time, and for the whole life campaign. Christ started His Church on the principle of entire consecration. Over the doorway He wrote, "Who-soever would follow me, *let him leave all!*" Again He said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And again He said, "He that is not for me is against me." It was thorough-going discipleship or nothing. "Sell all that thou hast and *follow me*" frightened the poor selfish young ruler back to his farm and to his fate. Christ would have no half-hearted disciples. He sifted His followers, and out of the whole number there remained eleven men and a few faithful women to lay the foundation of His Church on the eve of Pentecost.

To follow Jesus fully requires a whole-hearted conversion at the start. Half-way converts make half-way Christians. Some men's boughs hang over on the Church side of the wall, but their *roots* are on the world's side. Such bear nothing but leaves. "Many lay false and bastard foundations," said quaint old Rutherford; "and they get Christ for as good as half nothing, and never had a sick night of sorrow for sin. *This maketh loose work.*" True enough; and, unless the conversion is radical and thorough, unless the submission of the soul to Christ is without compromise and conditions, there will be half-heartedness and halting to the last. Caleb, we are told, "had *another* spirit within him."

But there is prodigious power in singleness of love for Jesus—in the doing "just one thing," and that is

to live solely for the Master. A man of very moderate talents and endowments becomes a leading mind as soon as Christ gets complete hold of him. I can point to more than one plain, modest, moderately-educated Christian who has attained to a great *propelling* power in the Church simply from the momentum of his godliness. He follows Jesus so heartily, so projectively, that he carries others along with him by his sheer momentum. And that is not brain-power, or purse-power mainly, but *heart-power*.

So it comes about that thorough godliness outstrips genius in the pulpit. Thorough-going piety is the *first* requisite for the church officer, for the Sunday-school teacher, for the leadership of a class, of a meeting, or of any movement. Thorough-going piety never commutes with the Master for half-fare; never whimpers, "I pray Thee, *have me excused*;" never interprets the Bible in the lax and latitudinarian sense; and when there is a doubt on any point, gives God and not himself the benefit of it. Such a Christian "loves duty, even in all the wholesome severities of it." If his religion has ever a necessary pain or a pinch in it, he bears it without flinching. He never imitates Peter Pindar's pilgrim, who, having been commanded to make a long journey with peas in his shoes, took the sly precaution to boil his peas before he started. Thousands are quite willing to go heavenward with us, provided they have a choice seat in the cushioned car; but commend me to the Calebs who, discerning the land afar off by faith, are ready

for a life-time march to reach it, over rough roads and with stony pillows for a bivouac.

I have to consider those the best members in my Church who are quite as good in ordinary times as they are amid the fervours of a revival. When the Church is all aglow, and its meetings are magnetic with enthusiasm, how easy it is to catch fire, to sing, to shout hosanna, and to go into raptures on the mount. It is a luxury to be a Christian then. But when the fervour is gone, and the crowd is gone, and the flesh is weak or weary, and the very air of the room numbs the spirit, then to keep aglow, and to kindle others also, requires the living fire of Christ Jesus in the soul. It was easy for Caleb to exercise faith while he was picking Eshcol's grapes, and feasting on the fresh figs; but to keep up his faith amid an army of poltroons, and to hold out for nigh forty years in the desert, demanded and developed the most resolute pluck and principle. A revival brings great glory to the Lord, but it also brings great disgrace upon the Church, for it reveals so painfully the indolence and worldliness of those who never lift a finger for Christ at any other time. Revivals fill the Church; seasons of dulness and declension winnow the Church. We pastors never love our Calebs so well as we do in those dry, dreary spells of comparative drought; for they work right along, without any need of external excitements. They are the *salt* that never loses its savour.


If seasons of spiritual declension sift our Churches,

so do times of swimming worldly prosperity. Then we find out how many Calebs there are who can keep lowly in heart while their income is running up from ten thousand to a hundred thousand. When silly *furores* and fashions rage, the chaff in our churches always goes with the gale ; but steadfast, solid Caleb never has but one fashion, and that is to follow Christ. His first rule always is, to please God, which trieth the heart, rather than man.

We have said enough to indicate who the Calebs are. They are the sinew of the Church. Blessed is the pastor "who has his quiver full of them!" To those who inquire, "How shall my Church be developed?" we answer: *Ask God* for more Calebs, and *use such Calebs as you have*. Remember, too, that a hundred half-Christians do not make a single whole one. Every addition made to the weight of our own personal Christianity adds to the weight and momentum of the Church of Christ.



THE NIGHT-BELL OF PRAYER.

“ULL the night-bell.” This is the inscription we often see written on the doorpost of the shop in which medicines are sold. Some of us have had our experiences with night-bells when sudden illness has overtaken some member of our households, or when the sick have rapidly grown worse. How have we hurried through the silent streets, when only here and there a light glimmered from some chamber window! How eagerly have we pulled the night-bell at our physician’s door; and then, with prescription in hand, have sounded the alarm at the place where the remedy was to be procured. Those of us who have had these lonely midnight walks, and have given the summons for quick relief, know the meaning of that Bible-text, “Arise! cry out *in the night!*”

Seasons of trouble and distress are often spoken of in God’s word, under the simile of *night*. The word vividly pictures those times when the skies are darkened, and the lights that gladden the soul have gone out, and it is not easy to find one’s way. Enemies may be stealing on us in the darkness. Apprehensions gather like fancied spectres, to make us uneasy or afraid. If prosperity be likened to the noonday, the seasons of perplexity or distress may be likened to

the "night." Perhaps some of the readers of this paragraph may be in a gloomy night-season of poverty, or bereavement, or of spiritual doubt and depression. Each heart knoweth its own bitterness. Friend, arise, and pull the night-bell of prayer! God your Father says to you, "Call upon me in the time of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Centuries ago it was said of certain people, "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses."

There are different kinds of prayer. There is the calm communion of the soul with God. There is the affectionate converse of the believer with Him, in which faith feeds on the promises, and recounts its mercies, and finds its meditations to be sweet. Then, too, there is the sharp, piercing cry of anguish, or the earnest appeal of importunity, which will not let God go without an immediate response. Christ described the beseeching eagerness of this style of prayer, when He told His disciples about a certain housekeeper who went to a friend's house at midnight, and clamoured for the loan of three loaves of bread to feed unexpected guests, until, "because of his *importunity*," he got all the bread that he needed. There are many varieties of night-calls for relief, from the sudden cry of our little ones in their cribs, to the shout for "Help!" in the street, or the eager call under the physician's window. These are all types of the prayer which you are to pour out into the ear of God in seasons of difficulty, or distress, or danger.

“ If pains afflict, or wrongs oppress,
If cares distract, or fears dismay,
If guilt deject, if sin distress,
The remedy 's before thee—*pray.*”

“This is all a very pretty theory,” some of you may say; “and it has a very pious sound. But please to tell me what actual and positive *good* it can do me. Does it really move God? Does it really bring relief?” Such cavils are as common as breathing. The devil can suggest them in a hundred forms; and it is astonishing how much readier some people are to believe the father of lies, than to believe their Father in heaven.

Does the prayer of faith really move God? To this we can only reply, that God Himself tells us that it does actually produce that state of things in which it is right and in accordance with His will to bestow the asked-for blessing. God tells us that He loves to be asked, and is the rewarder of them who diligently seek Him. He tells us that the fervent effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much. He bids us ask, and we shall receive. His word abounds in narratives of the actual bestowal of things which His children have besought Him to give them. When His needy or suffering ones have pulled the night-bell of prayer with strong faith, He has relieved them of their distress, or removed evils they suffered from, or else given to them supernatural grace to bear their burdens. On his bed of anguish Hezekiah rang this night-bell, and God heard it, and spared his life. In

his dungeon at Jerusalem Peter cried unto the Lord, and a whole prayer-meeting cried at the same time for his deliverance, and God sent His angel and brought the apostle out of the prison. Answered prayers cover the field of providential history as flowers cover Western prairies. Answered prayers hover around the communion-tables of our churches in seasons of revival, as we have seen great flocks of birds descend into a meadow. Answered prayers have made the pulpits of Payson, and Burns, and Spurgeon, powerful. Answered prayers have visited sick-rooms like angels, to restore to life ; or, if infinite wisdom had appointed to the sick to die, the sting of death has been turned to the song of victory. "I cannot get on without three hours a day of prayer now," said Martin Luther in the thick of his great fight with the man of sin. Are you wiser than Luther ?

Some people pull the bell of prayer, and then run away without stopping for the answer. Sometimes they grow discouraged, and mistake a delay for a total denial. Sometimes the thing asked for is not actually bestowed, but in lieu of it our all-wise Father grants us something far better. He does not spare our sick darling's life, but He takes the little one home to heaven, and draws our poor hearts up with it unto Himself. God answers prayers according to His own wisdom and love, and not according to our short-sightedness. But I no more believe that God leaves a right prayer, offered in the right spirit, to pass unnoticed, than I believe that He will let

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the whole summer pass over without a drop of rain or dew.

In securing answers to our requests, we must co-operate with the Lord. Some people ask Him to do their work. "Father," said a little boy, after he had heard him pray fervently for *the poor* at family worship—"father, I wish I had your corn-crib." "Why, my son?" "Because then I would answer your prayer." I have heard professing Christians pray for the conversion of their children, while they were taking them night after night into scenes of folly and dissipation. We may make fools of ourselves, but the Almighty will never let us implicate Him in our foolishness. God is not mocked; whatsoever we sow, we shall also reap. *Neither does God ever mock us.*

Then, my friend, if you will only "arise and cry in the night," you may be sure that your Father will hear the bell. He will send the right answer; and if it is not best that He lift off your load, He will give you grace to carry it. Pull the bell with a strong hand! You'll never doubt that God is a prayer-answerer when you get to heaven. There is no night there! He who has often arisen in the night of trouble and sorrow here to ring the bell of prayer, with a trembling hand, will then stand in the morning light of glory on the sea of glass like unto pure gold.



TRUE PRAYERS NEVER LOST.

IT is hard to believe that the fervent prayer of the righteous man is ever lost. The answer may be long delayed. It may come in a manner wholly unlooked for. The return of the prayer may be such that it may not be recognized by the devout soul who uttered it. But it is not lost.

1. For example, there are some prayers which we cannot expect to see answered immediately. I was at a monthly prayer-meeting last evening, where God's people were pleading with Him for the conversion of the world. None of that praying company had any expectation of living to see the day when the last heathen nation should surrender to the victorious Jesus. Yet their petitions will never be forgotten. Those pleading disciples will yet behold the glorious fulfilment of their desires from the battlements of heaven. In our own experience we have seen many a prayer manifestly answered long after the saint who breathed it into the ear of the Saviour has gone to lay his weary head on that Saviour's breast.

A dying mother commits her beloved boy to a covenant-keeping God. She has often borne that child in the arms of faith to the mercy-seat. He has been the child of many prayers; and in the feeble utterances of her passing spirit another and a last

petition is breathed forth that Christ would have mercy on his soul. Years roll away. The sod has grown green, and the rank grass has long waved over that mother's tomb. In some distant land—mayhap hundreds of miles from that spot—a full-grown man, who has long been ripening in sin, is seen bowed in prayer. He is crying out of an agonized heart, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* Behold, he prayeth, and *his* prayer is the answer of the fervent petitions which his dying mother uttered many long years before. Her requests were recorded in God's book of remembrance; and but for them we know not that the prayer of that penitent son would have ever ascended there. Let praying fathers and mothers never grow faint of heart. Let desponding churches, long unvisited by revival blessings, only close up their ranks more compactly about the mercy-seat, and besiege heaven with new importunity. For above the dark cloud of their discouragement is written, as in the clear upper sky, "He that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

2. Other prayers are answered at the time of their utterance, but in a way so unlooked for that he who offered them is inclined to think that the very opposite of what he asked for has befallen him. One individual prays, for instance, that he may be enabled to glorify God. Ere he is aware, some tremendous calamity comes crashing down upon him, prostrating him to the dust. His fortune is swept away; or his

schemes of promotion are blasted. A favourite child is missed from the cradle or the fireside. His hopes are withered like grass. God has answered his prayer, but He answered it, as the psalmist says, "by terrible things." From under the overwhelming pressure of affliction he flees to Jesus, his Divine Comforter, and oh, how his love is kindled by the contact! How his latent faith is called forth! How he glorifies God in the furnace of trial which is purging away the dross of selfishness and worldliness, and making his pure gold shine with tenfold brightness!

We once saw an earnest inquirer who was praying most importunately for faith in Christ, and for peace to his troubled soul. But while he prayed a cloud of darkness gathered across his horizon. And against that cloud, which hung like a funeral pall before his vision, played the sharp lightnings of the Almighty's wrath. The thunders of God's law roared against him. Instead of peace came only the sword. Instead of the calm he sought came the fearful tempest; and under the stress of its terrors, the poor baffled soul betakes himself to the "covert" which Christ has raised on Calvary. There he finds the peace he so earnestly prayed for. There the long-sought confidence in Jesus pours its fulness through the soul. His prayer was answered—first by terrible things, but at last by the very blessings which he desired. And without that storm the true calm would have never come. Had the sinner not been led to that frightful view of his own guilt and condemnation,

he might never have gone to Christ, and thus could not have known true abiding peace. As he looks back over the dark valley of sorrow through which the Divine hand has wondrously led him, and sees that no other way would so surely bring him to the cross, he feels a renewed assurance that no true prayer is ever lost; he now *knows* that he that asketh aright will always receive, and he that seeketh will surely find. His experience is worth all that it cost him.


3. Once more, let us remark that the petitions of believers are often answered according to their *intention*, and not according to the strict letter of the request. The utterer of the prayer sought only the glory of God; but, in his ignorance, asked for wrong things. God hears and answers him; but the blessing granted is something very *different* from what the believer expected. The case of Paul is a beautiful illustration of this. He is sorely afflicted by a "thorn in the flesh." What the precise nature of the affliction was, we know not. Perhaps it was a severe malady; perhaps a besetting sin; perhaps a mortifying deformity of body or of character. He beseeches God in three earnest petitions that this "thorn" might depart from him. His prayers are heard. They are answered. But, instead of the removal of the thorn comes the cheering assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Lord does not take away the trial, but gives him all that is needed to make it endurable; thus the Divine glory and Paul's spiritual well-being

were more certainly advanced than if the prayer had been answered strictly according to its letter.

The prayer was not lost. That God hears every sincere prayer, who can doubt? The sceptic must seal his vision, lest, coming to the light, he shall be persuaded against himself. He must mutilate or destroy the shining record of God's providential dealings with the children of faith. He must erase from the Bible the animating narrative of Jacob's midnight struggle, the thrilling scenes of Elijah's wrestlings at Carmel and at Zarephath, the "evening oblations" of Daniel, and the angelic deliverance of Peter from the prison cell. He must destroy many a leaf from the Christian's diary, on which devout gratitude has written, "This day I learned anew that my heavenly Father hears and answers prayer." He must give the lie to omniscient Love, which has uttered in the ear of all the needy, sorrowing, guilty household of humanity, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."



SPIRITUAL DYSPEPTICS.

HERE is a class of weak-handed and feeble-kneed professors in Christ's Church who are self-made invalids. Their spiritual debility is the direct result of their own sins and shortcomings. In their case, as in the physical hygiene, disease is the inevitable punishment of transgression against the laws of health.

Is not the inebriate's bloated and poisoned frame the immediate legacy of his bottle? Is not a shattered nervous system the tormenting bequest which a high-pressure career of sensuality leaves to the transgressor? The indolence which never earns its daily bread cannot earn the appetite to enjoy it; the gluttony which gorges the stomach is but fattening an early banquet for the worms. *Dyspepsia is only God's appointed health officer, stationed at the gateway of excess,* to warn off all who approach it, and to punish those who will persist in entering the forbidden ground. In like manner spiritual disease is the inevitable result of committed sin, or of neglect of religious duty. It requires no profound skill to detect the cause of Mr. A——'s dyspepsia, or Deacon B——'s spiritual palsy, or of poor Mr. C——'s leprosy. How can a Christian be healthy who never works? How can a man's faith be strong who never enters his closet? How can a

man's benevolence be warm who never gives? A want of appetite for giving always brings on a lean visage in the church; but I do like to hear my neighbour M—— pray at the monthly prayer-meeting, for the fluency of devotion is quickened by his fluency of purse. He *dares* to ask God's help in the salvation of sinners, for he is doing his own utmost too. And I have known one resolute, sagacious, Christ-loving woman to do in the mission-school what Florence Nightingale did in the hospitals of Scutari; that is, teach the nurses how to cure, as well as the sick how to recover.

If this brief paragraph falls under the eye of any spiritual dyspeptic, let us offer to him two or three familiar counsels. My friend, your disease and debility are your own fault, not your misfortune. It is not a "visitation of God," but a visitation of the devil that has laid you on your back, and made you well-nigh useless in the Church, in the Sabbath-school, and in every enterprise of Christian charity. Having brought on your own malady, you must be your own restorer, by the help of the Divine Physician. You are not only useless to your pastor, but uncomfortable to yourself. You must get well. Let us tell you how.

1. You need a wholesome diet. Instead of the surfeit of daily newspapers and political journals, or the spiced stimulants of fiction, give your hungry soul the *bread of life*. Your moral powers are weak for want of nourishment. There has been a starvation of *Bible*-

truth, of sound experimental works, of inspiring religious biography, of "books that are books." Nothing will give sinew and bone to your piety like the thorough reading and thorough digestion of the Bible. All the giants in the history of the church have been large and hungry feeders on the Bible.

2. You want exercise. God has given you powers and faculties and affections to serve Him with. But for want of use, those limbs of the soul are as powerless as the bodily limbs of a fever patient who has not left his couch for a fortnight. Never will you recover your appetite for the word and the ordinances, never will the flush of spiritual joy mantle your countenance, until you have laid hold of hard, self-denying work. Nothing will impart such earnestness to your prayers as to spend an hour before them by the bedside of the sick, or in close conversation with an inquirer for salvation; nothing will excite a better appetite for a Sabbath sermon than a morning spent in *business-like* devotion to your Sabbath-school class; and a little uphill work in behalf of some discouraging movement of reform, will harden your muscle amazingly. Oberlin, Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry never knew the meaning of "dyspepsia." You are dying from confinement and indolence. There is but one cure for spiritual laziness, and that is—work; but one cure for selfishness, and that is—sacrifice; but one cure for timidity, and that is to plunge into a disagreeable duty before the shiver has time to come on. Some Christians are

paralysed for life by the monomania of fear. They remind us of an invalid who was afflicted by the delusion that he was made of pipe-clay, and if violently struck against any object, he should snap into fragments! He was only cured by a friend who drove him into a meadow and managed to upset the vehicle in the right place. The poor monomaniac shrieked frightfully as the carriage went over; but he rose from the ground sound in *mind* as well as in body. Would it not be well for those who have trembled for years at the bare thought of a prayer in public to force themselves into an utterance? They will be amazed to find how one resolute trial, in the strength of God, will break the tyrannous spell for ever. Try! my friend! Lay hold of any dreaded or disagreeable duty, and try. God never leaves His child to fail when in the path of obedience; for if the Christian does not succeed in pleasing himself by the method of his performance, he yet pleases God by the sincerity of his good endeavours. And the very attempt to discharge duty will give you strength. When the duty is fairly achieved, the sense of *having done it*, will send an exquisite thrill of satisfaction through the soul, and will be a source of one of the purest joys that you can know this side of heaven. I question whether we ever realise a sweeter delight than when we stand beside some heaven-directed undertaking fairly accomplished, or some painful task nobly wrought out; some trying testimony manfully borne, or some bitter persecution fairly weathered out into the repose and

sunshine of victory. Such joys the half-hearted, cowardly, dyspeptic Christian never experiences. The "weak hand" plucks no such chaplet. The "feeble knees" reach no such goal of triumph. They are awarded only to the vigorous of spiritual sinew, to the Bible-reader, and the Bible-worker too! Dyspeptic brother! we commend to you the double remedy—*Bible-diet* and *Bible-duty*. If these do not restore you, we fear your case is past all medication.



LOVABLE CHRISTIANS.

PAUL paints the portrait of the true Christian in the eighth verse of the closing chapter of his letter to the Philippians. Here it is. The portrait is one that he might have written his own name under when it was done :

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, *whatsoever things are lovely*, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

In the former part of the verse, Paul paints the strong features of the Christian—his truthfulness, his honesty, and his uncompromising sense of right. These are such deep lines as Michael Angelo painted in his figure of Moses and of the stern heroes of the prophetic era.

But, just as a great artist, having delineated the piercing eye, the majestic brow, and the leonine mouth of his hero, throws in the soft touches that give a womanly sweetness to the visage, so Paul completes his portrait by presenting loveliness and *admirableness* as the crowning attractions of the Christian character. “Whatsoever things are *lovely*,” he says, “and whatsoever things are of good report.” This is the only

place in the New Testament in which this word "lovely" is to be found. It literally signifies what is *dear* to any one. It is that quality in the Christian character that engages the affections of all who come into its presence. The phrase "things of good report" also occurs in this passage alone. It means that which excites admiration and wins approbation. The two expressions together, signify, in plain English, "*be lovable*; let your life win the hearts of all around you."

It was well that the apostle put in this finishing stroke. It was well to remind the most conscientious Christian that he should strive to render his religion attractive to others. For not every good man's piety is lovable. Some men's religion has too much acidity to taste well. Others sour their religion with an intense censoriousness. Their conversation is enough to set every one's teeth on edge. After an hour's talk with them, you think the worst of even the best men you know. They are crabbed Christians. Everybody respects them, but nobody loves them. We once had a venerable and most godly-minded officer in our church, who never did a wrong act, to my knowledge; and yet he never did a pleasant one either. There was a deal of good solid "meat" in him, but no one liked to prick his fingers in coming at it. So the rugged old man was left to go on his way to heaven, working and praying and scolding as he went; but even the children in the street were almost afraid to speak to him. A drop or two of the *Apostle John* in

his composition would have made him a glorious specimen of a Christian. He has become *mellow*, by this time, in the sunny atmosphere of heaven.

There is, also, a sanctimonious set face, which some people wear, that is anything but attractive. We once dealt with such a man in business; and we always counted carefully the change he gave back after a purchase. We did it instinctively; for we had an uncomfortable suspicion that his manner of look and speech was a *mask* to hide from the world a designing nature. Perhaps we did him injustice; but the fault was his own in wearing so repulsive a sanctimoniousness.

A lovable Christian is one who hits the golden mean between easy, good-natured laxity of conscience on the one hand, and stern, ungenial moroseness on the other. He is sound, and yet ripe, sweet and mellow. He never incurs contempt by yielding to men's sinful prejudices, nor does he incur the antipathy of others by doing right in a hateful, surly, or bigoted — way.

Did our blessed Saviour ever fall into either of these extremes for a moment? Was not His the sinless, incorruptible majesty that awed His followers, while His gentle benignity inspired their enthusiastic love? If Jesus were now on earth, we can imagine that the poorest people would not be afraid to approach Him. Were He to enter a modern mission-school, as He once entered a synagogue, how the ragged youngsters would draw to Him! If He visited

our houses, how welcome He would make Himself at our firesides, and how our children would love to climb on His lap and kiss that sweet, pensive, benignant face! There is nothing derogatory to His Divine dignity in this. Christ Jesus *drew* to Him poor, suffering women, and outcast publicans, and sinners that had a sore heartache, and troops of little children who rejoiced to receive His benediction or to sing hosannas in His praise.

Now, what Christ was every Christian should strive to be. He is our model, not only in spotless holiness, but in *winsomeness* of character also. Let us learn of Him. Let us learn from Him how to combine the most rigid sense of justice, purity and integrity with the lovable attractions of a sunny face, a kind word, an unselfish courtesy, and a genuine sympathy for even the most hardened sinners. The worst men may scoff at Bible-religion, but at heart honour the consistent Christian who wears the beauty of holiness in his character and conduct. *A living, lovable Christian* is the most powerful argument for the Gospel. No infidel ever yet refuted that.

Study Christ, then. Love Christ; get your heart saturated with Him. Follow Christ. His example and His grace can turn deformity and sullenness and sin into the sweet comeliness of "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report." He that winneth souls is wise. But if you would win sinners to the Saviour, you must make your religion *winsome*.

“JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL.”



ABOUT the time that Isaac Watts was writing his earliest hymns at Southampton, in southern England, two brothers were born in the little town of Epworth, who were destined to be better known over the world than any other two men whom Britain produced in that half-century. While their godly mother (Susanna) was dying, she said to her weeping household, “My children, as soon as my spirit is released, sing a song of praise to God.” Among the group who joined in this song of triumph with faltering voices, were JOHN, the founder of Methodism, and CHARLES, its sweet singer. John was *system*; but Charles was *song*. John was the Bezaleel who laid the foundations, and hewed out the pillars of the new tabernacle; but Charles was the Asaph who filled it with melody. Methodism was builded rapidly; but the walls never would have gone up so fast had they not been *built to music*.

Charles Wesley was a born poet. Like Toplady, he was all nerve and fire and enthusiasm. God gave him a musical ear, intense emotions, ardent affections, and a glowing piety that never grew cold. He ate, drank, slept, and dreamed nothing but *hymns*! He must have been the ready writer of at least four thousand. One day, while on his itinerancy, his pony stumbled

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and threw him off. The only record he makes of the accident in his diary is this : " My companions thought I had broken my neck ; but my leg only was bruised, my hand sprained, and my head stunned, which *spoiled my making hymns* until—next day!" Truly a man must have been possessed with a master-passion, who could have written a sentence like that.

Wesley found his inspirations "on every hedge." He threw off hymns as Spurgeon throws off sermons. For example, when he was preaching to a crowd of rude stonemasons and quarrymen at Portland, he turned his appeal into metre, and improvised a hymn, in which occur the vigorous lines :

" Come, O Thou all-victorious Lord,
Thy power to us make known ;
Strike with the hammer of Thy word,
And *break* these *hearts* of stone !"

Standing, once, on the dizzy promontory of Land's End, and looking down into the boiling waves on each side of the cliff, he broke out into these solemn and thrilling words :

" Lo ! on a narrow neck of land,
'Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,
Yet how insensible !"

For every scene and circumstance of life, for prayer-meetings, for watch-nights, for love-feasts, and for dying hours and funerals, he had a holy, impassioned lay. But, like Watts, Cowper, and Toplady, he had his *masterpiece*. The Lord of glory bestowed on

Charles Wesley the high honor of composing the finest heart-hymn in the English tongue. If the greatest hymn of the cross is "Rock of Ages," and the greatest hymn of providence is Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way," and the grandest battle-hymn is Martin Luther's "God is our refuge," then it may be said, also, that the queen of all the lays of holy love is that immortal song :

"Jesus, lover of my soul !
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high !"

Whatever may be said of Wesley's doctrine of perfect holiness, there is not much doubt that he "attained unto perfection" when he wrote this hymn. It is happily married, also, to two exquisite tunes, "Refuge" and "Martyn" ;—both of which are worthy of the alliance. The first of these tunes is a gem.

The one central, all-pervading idea of this matchless hymn is the soul's yearning for its Saviour. The figures of speech vary, but not the thought. In one line we see a storm-tossed voyager crying out for shelter until the tempest is over. In another line we see a timid, tearful child nestling in its mother's arms, with the words faltering on its tongue :—

"Let me to Thy bosom fly !"
"Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

Two lines of the hymn have been breathed fervently and often out of bleeding hearts. When we

were once in the valley of the death-shade, with one beautiful child in its new-made grave, and the other threatened with fatal disease, there was no prayer which we uttered oftener than this :—

“ Leave, ah ! leave me not alone ;
Still support and comfort me.”

We do not doubt that tens of thousands of other bereaved and wounded hearts have cried this piercing cry, out of the depths :—

“ Still support and comfort me ! ”

The whole hymn is at once a confession and a prayer. It is a *prayer in metre*. And no man is prepared to sing these words aright unless his soul is filled with deepest and most earnest longings after the Lord Jesus. What an awful blasphemy it is for a set of mere trifling amateurs in a choir to *perform* this holy prayer merely as a feat of musical skill. What college boy would *dare* to commit the Lord's Prayer, or one of his pastor's public petitions to memory, and then speak it as a mere piece of declamation on the stage? Yet we do not see any difference between *declaiming* a prayer, and the heartless mockery of *performing*, for musical effect, such words as :—

“ Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life is past ! ”

Or that self-surrender for the dying hour :—

“ Oh, receive my soul at last ! ”

Words like these are too infinitely solemn for the

mummeries of frivolous lips in the concert-room or the organ-loft. When a congregation sing such a hymn as “Jesus, lover of *my* soul,” each one should feel as if he were uttering a fervent personal prayer to the Son of God.

The history of Charles Wesley’s incomparable hymn would fill a volume. Millions have sung it, and will be singing it when the millennial morn breaks. A coasting vessel once went on the rocks in a gale in the British Channel. The captain and crew took to the boats and were lost. They might have been saved if they had remained on board; for a huge wave carried the vessel up among the rocks, where the ebbing tide left her high and dry. In the captain’s cabin a hymn-book was found lying on his table. It was opened at a particular page, and the pencil still lay in it which had marked the favourite lines of the stout sailor, who was just about going into the jaws of death. While the hurricane was howling outside, the captain had drawn his pencil beside these glorious words of cheer :—

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high !
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past ;
Safe into the haven guide ;
Oh ! receive my soul at last ! ”

Blessed death-song! Thousands of God’s redeemed

ones have shouted it forth as the "haven" of rest opened its celestial glories to their view. If we could choose the manner of our departure, we would wish to die singing :—

"Other refuge have I none ;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee !
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone ;
Still support and comfort me :
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring ;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing !"



SITTING DOWN WITH JESUS.

THOSE who would feed their souls, must often sit down with Jesus. In the upper chamber at Jerusalem, the disciples sat with their Master at the board as He blessed the bread, and brake it, and gave it unto them. Not for bodily nourishment, but for the feeding of the soul, and the in-bringing of spiritual strength and comfort, did Jesus give this bread unto them. Herein lies one precious significance of the sacramental supper—it is the nourishment of a Christian's faith and love, through a "partaking of Christ's broken body," which becomes to him the very bread of life.

But not only on one day of especial service must the believer feed his soul; he must be *constantly* coming out from the world's empty table of mockeries, and sit down in quiet heart-communion with the Redeemer. Don't you remember the scene at the miraculous feeding of the five thousand on the cliff above Lake Gennesareth? There was the hungry multitude. The anxious disciples worry the Master with such questions as, "Whence have we bread, for so many?" "Shall we go into the villages and buy?"

"No!" replies the omnipotent Jesus; "command the multitude to *sit down.*" They do so, in long

lines, upon the verdant grass. He takes the five loaves and two fishes out of the rustic lad's basket, and begins to distribute. The meagre provision grows, and grows, and grows, until not only are all the thousands abundantly fed, but there is a surplus of broken food to fill a dozen baskets!

There is something akin to this in our spiritual experiences.

1. We often worry, like the disciples, about the best means of feeding our own souls, or of bringing the Gospel-bread to needy souls around us. We invent new methods; we try all manner of devices; we get up "attractions" in the sanctuary and the Sabbath-school; we go into all sorts of "villages to buy." Oh! if we would only sit down with Jesus, and accept what He bestows, with His rich blessing on it! Oh! if congregations would only sit and receive the Gospel of life from their own Shepherd, and *pray* over it, and *practice* it! If teachers would only aim more to keep their classes sitting quietly at the feet of Jesus, to take in His truth, and to think about it! And if all of us would only make more of our seasons of devotion, more of digesting the truth, more of self study, more of meditation and communion with Christ, and more of listening to the still small voice of the Spirit, we should be far more healthy and vigorous Christians.

The most industrious farmer must go in occasionally from the plough, or the hot harvest-field, to sit down at his table, and nourish his weary frame. When an

army corps comes in sight of the enemy, after hours of hard marching, they must sit down awhile by the camp-fire and replenish their wasted strength by food and drink, before they are able to make the impetuous charge, and to drag the heavy guns into the thunder-storm of battle. So every Christian toiler must needs recruit his spiritual strength, by sitting down often with Jesus, to meditate, to pray, and to come into close communion with the Master. Christ himself had His *Olivet* of retirement. His disciples spent many an hour in quiet converse with Him on the lake-side, or under the olive-trees, listening to His voice, and drinking in the inspirations of His presence and His grace. The healthiest Christian, and the one best fitted for hard service, is he who feeds most on Christ. Not only at the sacramental table, but every day does he partake of this "Bread of Life." To him the loving Saviour is continually saying, "If ye *abide in Me*, and I in you, ye shall bear much fruit."

2. In the second place, let us remember that, in order to be *instructed*, we must sit down much with Jesus. The transcendent truth of the new birth was revealed to Nicodemus, when he sat as an inquirer at the Saviour's feet. The woman of Sychar found the "well" of salvation only by waiting to be taught by the Great Teacher, when she went only to fill her "water-pot," and came back with an enlightened and refreshed and converted heart.

In every church there are *Marthas* who are intensely busy in religious activities, and who achieve many

happy results. But the *Martha* side of the Christian character is only one side. The best disciple cannot be always pushing through the round of excitement and zealous activity. There must be a *Mary* side of character also ; and the most zealous worker needs to have instruction, prayer, reflection, and heart-converse with God, or else he will become noisy, superficial, and shallow. Like *Mary*, he must sit down with *Jesus*, and gain deep views of his Saviour and of himself. If he would fill his soul, he must come often to the fountain-head of wisdom and of grace.

Oh ! busy *Marthas*, in your round of teaching, visiting, working, planning, and almsgiving, go often to recruit your strength and to learn your duty by taking *Mary's* lowly place at the feet of your loving Lord. Let us ever bear in mind that the most effective preachers and philanthropists have been those who waited humbly and hungrily for the guidance and grace which the Lord *Jesus* gave them. As examples of this fact, let me point you to the apostles, and to *Augustine*, *Luther*, *Pascal*, *Calvin*, the *Wesleys*, *Wilberforce*, *Payson*, *William Allen* the Quaker philanthropist, *Bunyan* the wondrous allegorist, *Martyn* the self-denying missionary, and *Edwards* the majestic man of thought. All these master-spirits drew their inspiration from a daily communion with their divine Lord.

3. Finally, let us also remember that in our hours of *sorrow* the one place for consolation is at the feet

of Jesus. On that bosom the beloved disciple leaned. There is also room for us. Where the afflicted sisters of Bethany sat we may sit down too, and hear the heavenly voice say, "I am the resurrection and the life." How sweetly fall the promises from His lips : "Lo! I am with you always. My peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled ; I go to prepare a place for you ; that where I am ye may be also."

Then let our perpetual invitation be, Lord ! *abide with us* : for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent !



CHRIST WITHIN.



CHRIST does not offer to be simply an occasional shower of blessings to the faithful believer. He promises to be a *living well*. "The water that I give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The deepest and the most urgent wants of the heart He promises to satisfy.

In true conversion Christ enters the soul. This is the very essence and touchstone of conversion. With Him comes light ; with Him comes love ; with Him comes peace. The radical change of heart in conversion is just as truly a supernatural work as was the resurrection of Lazarus from the cave in Bethany. Christ, then, enters the soul, not as a transient visitor, but as an abiding guest. While He abides there He gives perennial life and beauty and strength to the believer. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Yet not I," said the happy, hale-hearted apostle, "but Christ *that liveth in me.*" And that was the reason why Paul remained a Christian (a Christ's-man) long after the first excitement of the scene at Damascus had passed away. A *well* was opened in Paul's heart that day, and its deep, cool, living waters never ran dry.

Men could always predict how Paul would act in

any emergency, because the principle that ruled him was always the same. "The love of *Christ* constraineth me." "For me, to live is *Christ*." The only reason why any good man continues to be a good man is that the well-spring in his soul never runs dry. Reckless, slave-hunting John Newton ceases to swear and scoff, and begins to pray. Twenty years later, John Newton is still praying, still preaching, still overflowing in beneficence among the haunts of busy London; and solely because the Lord Jesus dwelt in him, a source of holy affections, and an inspirer of noble and godly actions. On Sunday he preached to rich bankers and titled ladies. On a week-day evening he would sit on a three-legged stool, in his blue sailor jacket, and open up his rich experiences and wise counsels to the poorest who came to visit him." "I was a wild beast on the coast of Africa once," he used to say; "but the Lord Jesus caught me and tamed me, and now people come to see me as they would go to look at the lions in the Tower." What people came to see and to hear and to love in the sturdy sailor-preacher was the *Christ who dwelt* within John Newton.

Here is the secret of Christian perseverance. Wesleyans and Calvinists alike agree in this, that a true Christian holds out for no other reason than that Christ holds out. The Fountain-head of all holy affections and all generous deeds and all heroic, self-denying endurances, is down deep in the man's heart; because Christ lives, he lives also. You can no more

exhaust the graces of a John Wesley, or an Oberlin, or a Chalmers, than you can pump the Thames dry at London Bridge. What a transcendent idea that is in Paul's prayer for his brethren : That ye might be *filled with all the fulness of God!*" When, therefore, we meet with a man or woman who almost never disappoints us ; who is always "abounding" in the work of the Lord ; who serves God on every day as well as the Sunday ; who is more anxious to be right than to be rich ; and who can ask God's blessing on the bitterest cup ; when we meet such a one, we know that down in the clefts of the soul is Christ, the well-spring.

In a thousand ways will the inward fountain of Christian principle make itself visible. We see it in the merchant who gives Christ the key of his safe, and never soils it with a single dirty shilling. We see it in the statesman who cares more to win God's smile on his conscience than a re-election to office. We recognize it in the minister who is more greedy for souls than for salary. We see it in the young man who would rather endure a comrade's laugh than his Saviour's frown ; in the maiden who obeys Christ sooner than fashion. I sometimes detect this well-spring of cheerful piety in the patient mother, whose daily walk with God is a fount of holy influence amid her household. I know of poor men's dwellings in which grows a plant of contentment that is an exotic rarely found in marble mansions. Its leaves are green and glossy : it is *fed from the Well.*

In dying chambers we have often heard this spiritual fountain playing, and its murmur was as musical as the tinkle of a brook

“ In the leafy month of June.”

Perfect love had cast out fear. Peace reigned
Joys sparkled in the sunlight of God's countenance.
There was a well there which death could not dry—
the “ well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Bonar, the sweet singer of Scotland, has rhymed this thought into beautiful metre :

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say :
‘ Behold, I freely give
The living water ; thirsty one !
Stoop down and drink, and live.’
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream.
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.”



OVER THE LINE.

NEVER was there a time when it would be more appropriate to carve on the very walls of the sanctuary, and for every Christian to grave "on the palms of his hands," this Divine admonition: "Be not conformed to this world." "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God."

No snare is so subtle, constant, and perilous to the follower of Christ as conformity to the world. Nothing sooner saps his spirituality; nothing hinders a revival in the Church more effectually. Conformity implies resemblance. And when a professed Christian begins to look like a worldling and live like a worldling, how dwelleth the love of Christ in him? For there is a complete and irreconcilable *antagonism* between what the Bible calls "the world" and the service of Christ.

The chief end of a Christian's life is to glorify God. Is this the chief end of life with the people of the world? Ask any one of them, and He will answer, "No! I live to enjoy myself in promoting my interests, in gratifying my tastes, and in taking my comfort. I want to get all I can, and to get the most out of it." He "looks only at those things which are seen and temporal." God is ignored entirely, the soul is

ignored, eternity is forgotten. The pleasures most relished are the pleasures of sin, for God is not in any one of them. The worldling commonly delights most in what a consistent Christian finds to be forbidden fruit on forbidden ground. That forbidden fruit is *poison* to the Christian.

Bear in mind that every *pure* pleasure which an unconverted heart can enjoy, such as the joys of home and of friendship, the love of letters or art, the sight of beauty, or the delight of relieving sorrow—all these the Christian can have and enjoy likewise. They are not sinful, and the child of God can partake of them with a clear conscience. But just where a Bible-conscience tells him to *stop*, the license of the world begins. The Word of God draws a dividing line. *Over that line* lies the path of self-indulgence. Over that line lies self-pampering, frivolity, slavery to fashion. Over that line God is ignored and often defied! Christ is wounded there and crucified afresh. Over that line the follower of Jesus has no business to go. It was over such a "stile" that Bunyan's pilgrim looked wistfully, for the path was soft and skirted with flowers; but when he stepped over, he soon found himself in the dungeons of Giant Despair.

Over the line which separates pure piety from the world, the Christian, if he goes at all, must go as a participant in the pleasures of the world, or as a protestant against them. If he goes to partake, he offends Christ; if he goes to protest, he offends his ill-chosen associates. Christian! if you ever attend a

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convivial party, a ball room assembly, a theatre, or a gaming company, do you go as a partaker in the sport, or to make your protest against such amusements? If you go for the first object, you offend your Lord; if for the second, you offend your company. They do not want you there. We are quite sure that no bevy of merry-makers would be the happier over their cups, or their cards, or their cotillons, if all the elders and deacons of our Church were to come in suddenly among them. Brethren, "the world" don't want you in their giddy and godless pleasures, unless you are willing to go all lengths with them. And if you walk *one mile* with them over the line, they will "compel you to go with them *twain*." If your conscience yields the "coat," they will soon rob you of your "cloak also."

Vanity Fair would have welcomed Christian and Faithful to their jovial town if the pilgrims had only been willing to doff their Puritan dress and "take a hand" with them in all their revelries. But because the godly men refused to be conformed to the fashions and follies of Vanity Fair, one of them was soon sent to the prison and the other to the stake.

Where does the dividing line run between true religion and the world? We answer, that it runs just where God's Word puts it; and a conscience which is enlightened by the Word and by prayer does not commonly fail to discover it. Where God is honoured is the right side; where God is dishonoured, or even ignored, is the wrong side. Where Christ would be

likely to go if He were on earth, is the right side ; but where a Christian would be ashamed to have his Master find him, there he ought never to find himself. Wherever a Christian can go, and conscientiously ask God's blessing on what he is doing, there let that Christian go. He is not likely to wander over the line while walking by this rule. And when a church-member can enter a play-house, or go into a dancing-room, and honestly ask God's blessing on the amusements, and come away a better Christian for it, then let him go—*but not before*. When a Christian invokes the Divine blessing on the bottle which he puts to his neighbour's lips, he had better look sharply whether there is not a "serpent" and a "stinging adder" in the sparkling liquor.

Without going into further illustrations, we come to this fundamental principle, that whatever of work or of recreation a Christian engages in to promote the health of his body or soul, and in which he can glorify Christ, lies on the safe side of the dividing line. The moment he crosses it to become the "friend of the world," he becomes the "enemy of God."

But should not every good man be a "friend of the world"? Was not the divine Jesus a friend of the world when He so loved it that He gave Himself for its redemption? Did not Paul love the world when he endured hardship, humiliations, and martyrdom to lead sinners to the cross? Ah! yes—very true; but what the Redeemer and His apostle were after was not sinners' *sins*, but sinners' *souls*. And they sought

to save the world, not by conformity to it, but by transforming it to a higher and holier idea of life.

Nor is it by going over to the world that we can save the worldling. If we are to impress the world, we must live above the world ; if we would save sinners, we must, in the same sense that Jesus was, be "separate from sinners." The moment we go *over the line* to "curry favour" with the votaries of sin, we never reach them, and only run the risk of ruining ourselves. Would to God that, in trying to draw the world into conformity to Christ, we did not allow the world to drag us down into conformity with itself !



A SHOT AT THE DECANTER.

THERE is a current story that a Quaker once discovered a thief in his house ; and taking down his grandfather's old fowling-piece, he quietly said, " Friend, thee had better get out of the way, for I intend to fire this gun *right where thee stands.*" With the same considerate spirit we warn certain good people, that they had better take the decanter off their table, for we intend to aim a Bible-truth right where that decanter stands. It is in the wrong place. It has no more business to be there at all than the thief had to be in the honest Quaker's house. We are not surprised to find a decanter of alcoholic poison on the counter of a dram-shop, whose keeper is " licensed " to sell death by measure. But we are surprised to find it on the table or the sideboard of one who professes to be guided by the spirit and teachings of God's Word. That bottle stands right in the range of the following inspired utterance of St. Paul: " It is good neither to eat flesh, *nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.*" This text must either go out of the Christian's Bible, or the bottle go off the Christian's table. The text will not move, and the bottle must.

The passage itself is so clear that it can hardly admit of a cavil or a doubt. It teaches the lofty and

benevolent principle that abstinence from things that are necessarily hurtful to others, is a Christian expediency that has the *grip* of a moral duty.

This sounds, at first, like a very radical doctrine; but so conservative an expounder as Professor Hodge, of Princeton, has defined the text as teaching that some things which are not always wrong *per se* are to be given up for the sake of others. He says that the legal liberty of a good man is never to be exercised where moral evil will inevitably flow from it. We are never to put stumbling-blocks in the way of others. Good men are bound to sacrifice anything and everything that is counter to the glory of God, and destructive of the best interests of humanity.

It would be easy to prove unanswerably that alcoholic beverages are injurious to those who use them. The famous athlete, *Tom Sayers*, was once asked by a gentleman: "Well, Thomas, I suppose that when you are training, you use plenty of beefsteaks, and London porter, and pale ale?"

The boxer replied: "In my time I have drunk more than was good for me; but when I have *business* to do, there's nothing *like water* and the dumb-bells." After retiring from "business," he took to drink, and died a sot. Cold water made him a Samson: alcohol laid him in his grave. As a matter of personal health and long life, "it is good not to drink wine"; as an example to others, *total abstinence is a Christian virtue.*

The inherent wrong of using intoxicating drinks is twofold :

1. It exposes to danger the man who tampers with it; for no man was ever positively *assured* by his Creator that he could play with the "adder" that lies coiled in a winecup without being stung by it.

2. It puts a stumbling-block in the way of him whom we are commanded to love as ourselves.

We lay down, then, the proposition, that no man has a *moral right* to do anything the influence of which is certainly and inevitably hurtful to his neighbour. I have a legal right to do many things which, as a Christian, I cannot do. I have a legal right to attend a theatre. No policeman stands at the door to exclude me, or dares to eject me while my conduct is orderly and becoming. But I have no moral right to go there; not merely because I may see and hear much that may soil my memory for days and months, but because that whole garnished and glittering establishment, with its sensuous attractions, is to many a young person the yawning maelstrom of perdition. The dollar which I gave at the box office is my contribution towards sustaining an establishment whose dark foundations rest on the murdered souls of thousands of my fellow-men. Their blood stains its walls, and from that "pit" they have gone down to another pit where no sounds of mirth ever come. Now, I ask, what right have I to enter a place where the tragedies that are played off before me by painted women and dissolute men are as nothing to the tragedies of lost souls that are enacted in some parts of that house every night? What right have I to

give my money and my presence to sustain that moral slaughter-house, and by walking into the theatre myself, to aid in decoying others to follow me?

Now, on the same principle (not of self-preservation merely, but of avoiding what is dangerous to others) what right have I to sustain those fountain-heads of death from which the drink-poison is sold? What right have I to advocate their licence, to patronise the traffic, or even in any way to abet the whole *system of drinking* alcoholic stimulants at home or abroad? If a glass of wine on my table will entrap some young man, or some one who is inclined to stimulants into dissipation, then am I thoughtlessly setting a trap for his life. I am his tempter. I give the usage my sanction, and to him the direct inducement to partake of the bottled demon that sparkles so seductively before him. If the contents of that sparkling glass make my brother to stumble, he stumbles over me. If he goes away from my table and commits some outrage under the effects of that stimulant, I am, to a certain degree, guilty of that outrage. I have a partnership in every blow he strikes, or in every oath he may utter, or in every bitter wound he may inflict on the hearts of those he loves, while under the spell of my glass of "Cognac" or "Burgundy." I gave him the incentive to do what otherwise he might have left undone. The man who puts the bottle to his neighbour's lips is accountable for what comes from those lips under the influence of the dram, and is accountable, too, for every outrage

that the maddened victim of the cup may perpetrate during his temporary insanity.

In this view of the question, is it too much to ask of every professed Christian, and every lover of his kind, that they will wholly abstain from everything that can intoxicate? For the sake of your children, do it; for the sake of a brother, a husband, a friend; for the sake of those who will plead your example; for the sake of frail tempted ones who cannot say, *No!* for your fellow-traveller's sake to God's bar and to the eternal world, *touch not* the bottled devil under whose shining scales damnation hides its adder-sting!

It is old-fashioned total abstinence that we are pleading for. We ask it, as Paul did, for the sake of those who "stumble." Oh those stumblers! those stumblers! We dare not speak of them. It would touch many of us too tenderly. It would reveal too many wrecks—wrecks that angels have wept over. It would open tombs whose charitable green turf hides out of sight what many a survivor would love to have forgotten. It would recall to me many a college friend who went down at mid-day into blackness of darkness.

And to-day I see this social curse coming back into our houses, into our streets, into our daily usages of life, with redoubled power. Would that every parent were a "prohibitory law" to his family! Would that every pulpit and every platform would thunder forth the old warning cry: "Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, for at

the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder!" At the *last!* at the LAST! But oh! who can tell when that "last" shall ever end? When will the victim's last groan be heard? When will the last horror seize upon his wretched soul? .



A TEACHER IN GOD'S SCHOOL.



OD keeps a school for His children here on earth; and one of His best teachers is named *Disappointment*. He is a rough teacher; severe in tone and harsh in his handling, sometimes, but his tuition is worth all it costs us. We do not pretend to be a very apt learner, but many of our best lessons through life have been taught us by that same stern old schoolmaster, *Disappointment*.

One lesson we learned was, not to be selfish, or imagine that this world was all made for us. If it had been, the sun would have shone just when *our* hay needed tedding, and the rains would have fallen only when *our* garden thirsted for water. But we found that God ordered things to please Himself, and not us. And when our schemes were broken up, and our journey spoiled by the storm, the stern schoolmaster said, "The world was not made for you alone. Do not be selfish. Your loss is another's gain. The rain that spoils your hay makes your neighbour's corn grow the faster. The fall in wheat that cuts down your profits will help the poor widow in yonder cottage to buy bread for her hungry little mouths, next winter. The working Christian that removed from your church, and almost broke your heart, will make

some other pastor's vineyard glad. Your loss is another man's gain. Don't be selfish."

On a grand scale, sometimes, this lesson is taught. When a certain ambitious self-seeker once clutched at the dominion of all Europe, stern Disappointment met him in his path of invasion, flung a Russian snow-storm in his face, and out of the tiny snow-flakes wove a white shroud to wrap the flower of French chivalry. The lesson that the proud usurper would not learn at Aspern and Eylau was taught him in the agonies of Borodino, and in ghastly blood-prints on the frozen banks of the Beresina. His successor, the third Napoleon, has also been taught, lately, the same lesson: "All Europe does not belong to you." So, too, have we, in the defeat of our humbler plans of self-seeking, been made to hear the sharp teacher say, "Do not be selfish. God did not make this world just for you. Other people have rights as well as yourself." This lesson was worth all it cost us.

A *second* lesson which disappointment has taught us is, that our losses are not only gains, sometimes, to others, but are very often the richest gains to ourselves. In our short-sighted ignorance, we had "devised a way," and set our hearts upon it. Had we been allowed to pursue it, we must have been led by it to ruin. The railway train we were disappointed in not reaching was dashed into fragments down an embankment; the steamer that we were too late for was burned to a wreck. At the moment we scolded bitterly; but, by and-by, we found out that God could

not have sent a more fatal judgment upon us than simply to have let us *have our own way*. That seemed right unto us, but the end thereof was death.

A hundred illustrations of this truth occur to us. A "first honour" in college has turned more than one young man's head; the disappointment of losing it has goaded on another to higher distinctions than he had lost. More than one covetous merchant has been so thwarted in his enterprises for money-making that he has been enraged with mortification. But his heavenly Father knew the dangers of success to him, and saved him from sorer sorrows. A young lawyer, heart-broken by the early death of the sweet girl he loved, turns away for solace to sacred studies and doing good. He becomes a successful winner of souls in Christ's ministry. The pecuniary crash of 1857 threw thousands into bankruptcy; but many a man was made richer in the priceless treasure of a Christian hope.

A dark door did Disappointment open that year, but it led thousands into the pathway to heaven. A dark doorway, too, did Death open to my friend B—and his young wife, when their child went from them so suddenly; but their hearts went after the departed lamb up to the Divine Shepherd. The death of their darling was the means of their souls' conversion. During our twenty-five years' ministry we have known more souls converted or especially sanctified through the loss of little children than from any other providential discipline.

The record-book of every Christian's life has some pages in it which were written at the bidding of that severe teacher, Disappointment. Tears may have blotted and blurred the page—at the time. But as we turn over to that page now, and read it in the light of experience, we can write beneath it: "Thank God for those losses! they were my everlasting gain. Thank God for those bereavements! they have saved my soul from being bereaved of heaven. All things work together *for good* to them that love God; to them who are the called according to His purpose."

My friend, if you and I ever reach our Father's house, we shall look back and see that the sharp-voiced, rough-visaged teacher, Disappointment, was one of the best guides to train us for it. He gave us hard lessons. He often used the rod. He often led us into thorny paths. He sometimes stripped off a load of luxuries; but that only made us travel the freer and the faster on our heavenward way. He sometimes led us down into the valley of the death-shadow; but never did the promises read so sweetly as when spelled out by the eye of faith in that very valley. Nowhere did he lead us so often, or teach us such sacred lessons, as at the cross of Christ. Dear, old, rough-handed teacher! We will build a monument to thee yet, and crown it with garlands, and inscribe on it: *Blessed be the memory of* DISAPPOINTMENT.

HYMNS OF THE CROSS.



F all the hymns of the cross, the "Rock of Ages" may well be styled the masterpiece. Perhaps the second place should be given to those grand lines of Isaac Watts which we once heard Mr. Spurgeon read in tones as sonorous as a trumpet—

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.”

Close beside Watts' glorious hymn belong those tender strains which Cowper sung in one of his inspired hours of joy, when the cloud of melancholy lifted from his soul—

“There is a fountain filled with blood.”

This hymn is saturated with grateful love for the “dear dying Lamb.” Its author glories only in the Cross of Christ, and lifts with trembling hand his crown of adoration, and places it above the crown of thorns on Jesus' brow. Although Cowper was immeasurably the greatest living poet then in Britain, he confesses that his is but a “poor lisping, stammering tongue” to sing the song of redeeming love. He promises to himself “a nobler, sweeter song” when he

gets his well-tuned harp in the grand oratorio of heaven.

To these three hymns of redemption which sprang from the devout souls of Toplady, Watts, and Cowper, America has contributed a *fourth* which is worthy to stand in this matchless quartette. It is, by far, the most precious contribution which American genius has yet made to the hymnology of the Christian church. The author of it was a native of "Little Compton" in little Rhode Island—and was graduated from old Yale in 1830. Immediately after leaving college he came to New York, and spent a few hours each day in teaching young ladies in a school which stood in the then fashionable quarter of Fulton Street, behind St. Paul's church. In December of that year (1830)—just forty years ago, he sat down one day in his room, and wrote in his pocket memorandum-book four simple verses, which he says "were born of my own soul," and were not written to be seen by another human eye. He wrote them rapidly, and with his eyes swimming in tears. The first verse reads thus:

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine !
Now hear me while I pray :
Take all my guilt away ;
Oh let me from this day
Be wholly Thine !"

He put the memorandum-book into his pocket, and

carried it there for two whole years—little dreaming that he was carrying about with him his own passport to immortality. One day Dr. Lowell Mason met him in the streets of Boston, and asked him to furnish some hymns for the volume of “Spiritual Songs” which he (Dr. Mason) and Dr. Thomas Hastings were about to publish. The young college graduate drew from his pocket the lines—

“My faith looks up to Thee.”

Dr. Mason went home, and catching a similar inspiration to that of the author of the lines, composed for them that beautiful tune of “Olivet,” to which the hymn is wedded unto this day. Dr. Mason met the author a few days afterwards, and said to him prophetically, “Mr. Palmer, you may live many years, and do many good things, but I think that you will be best known to posterity as the author of this hymn.” The prediction is fulfilled. The man who sang this sweet song of Calvary is still living, and has composed many tender and beautiful poems and discourses; but his devout mind *flowered out in one matchless lily* whose rich odours have filled the courts of our God with fragrance.

How many a penitent, while reading or singing that hymn, has looked up to Calvary’s cross and found peace in believing! In how many a prayer-meeting has it been sung through tears of holy gratitude! To how many a sick chamber and dying bed has it come like a strain from that heavenly land which was already

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in full view ! The poetry of the hymn is as perfect as its theology. In its structure it closely resembles the "Rock of Ages." It begins in penitence ; it ends in praise. It begins in heart-broken sorrow, and concludes with the most glorious assurance of hope.

In the first verse the suppliant is represented as bowing before the crucified Saviour, and looking up to Him, and to Him only. He sees none but Jesus. His cry is,—

" Take all my guilt away ! "

His aspiration is,—

" Oh, let me, from this day,
Be wholly Thine. "

Before that cross the praying soul obtains strength, and a pure, warm, and changeless love for his Redeemer. He is filled with a "living fire." He is the new man in Christ Jesus.

But as he looks forward, he foresees a "dark maze" of trial before him, overhung with clouds of grief that lower black and terrible, and sometimes weep great showers of tears. Surrounded with these discouraging clouds of confusion and temptation he shouts out like one lost in the dark,—

" Be *Thou* my guide !
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tear away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside ! "

Before him lies still one more valley darker than any

passed before. It is that vale in which "ends life's transient dream." Through it rolls death's cold and sullen stream! He already imagines himself in the swellings of Jordan. And as the floods go over him, he lifts his last victorious voice of sublime trust,—

"Blest Saviour! then in love
Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul!"

Such is the grandest of American hymns. Is it not the grandest of this century? And if our readers wish to know and to thank its modest author, they have but to go into the "Bible House" in New York, and take by the hand our genial and beloved friend DR. RAY PALMER.



MORNING-CLOUD RELIGION.



HAVE stood in a Swiss valley at the time of sunrise, and seen the mountain-peak above me crowned with a beautiful white coronal. As the first sunlight strikes it, the cloud of morning incense is tipped with rosy fire. One moment it is fleecy white. Then it is glowing pink—then burnished gold like the robe of the seraphim. Then—*gone for ever!* Before we could call out our companions to behold the beautiful spectacle, the glory-cloud was dissolved into empty air, and the icy mountain-top stood out sharp and bare against the eastern sky.

Turning from the rocky peaks of jasper towards the valley about us, lo! the grass is a floor of diamonds. The dewdrops are all as jewels. On the hedges hang the necklaces of pearl—over the fields are sown the living sapphires. We go in reluctantly to our morning meal; we come out again, and where is the jewellery? Gone for ever in the hot rays of the conquering sun. The mountain-top is bare; the earth is dry. The “morning cloud and the early dew” are both among the things that were. Opening our Bible and turning to the book of Hosea, we find these very words employed to describe a certain sort of showy but short-lived religion (Hos. vi. 4).

As nearly every Church may contain more or less

members whose religion is no more real and abiding than the vapour on the mountain-top, it is worth while to inquire the causes and the cure of transient piety. May we not find in one or all of the three following reasons the answer to this inquiry?

1. The convicted soul, in its first awakening, was not brought to a genuine loathing and abandonment of known sin. In other words, there was no *Bible-repentance*. The impressions of many awakened persons are merely terror. They feel the danger of sin, but not its abominable filthiness. They quake at the sight of God as a punisher, but do not quake at their own guiltiness. They see that there is a hell that follows *after* their sins, but do not see that there is a hell too *in* their sins. Of course such persons do not abandon sin thoroughly, or seek after a radical change of heart. And without "grief and *hatred* of sin" there can be no Bible-repentance. A religion that began in a mere fit of terror is likely to end as it began. For a man who has not abandoned his favourite sins, his petted and his profitable sins, cannot claim to be a genuine, enduring Christian.

2. The awakened soul, when troubled by legal terrors, did not betake itself to Christ. Consciously diseased, it compounded quack remedies for itself. Christ was not sought after, believed on, and heartily embraced. There was no love of Jesus awakened as a master-passion with the man. Had the soul reached Christ, it had been safe. Believers hold to the cross, *because the cross holds them.*

3. A third cause of the morning-cloud religion is the attempt to live on promises instead of performances. The man trusts in resolutions, and never reaches actual downright doing of duty. He means to be—hopes to be—promises to be actively obedient to Christ, but never does one deed or makes one sacrifice for Him. On the day when he joins the Church, he is fluent in promises for his future life. He will serve God to-morrow. The morrow comes and goes, and sees not one stroke of thorough service done, not one sin crucified, not a single labour of charity undertaken. Before a week has rolled by, the man's religion has begun to *evaporate*, and in a year there is nothing left of him but a name on the Church register.

How many a brilliant beginning have we seen that so soon ended in nothingness! For a brief time the "cloud" was beautiful. As it hung in prominence before our eyes, the rays of hope painted it with a ruddy glow. Christian friends hailed it as a cloud of promise. Praying souls, who had longed for just such appearances of piety in the man, grew thankful that their prayers were receiving a fulfilment.

But presently it grew thinner. It began to scatter into looseness; then into emptiness. It was not a shower-cloud of spiritual blessings, like the life of an Obelin, a Raikes, a Haldane, a Whitefield, or a Harlan Page; but only vapour! beautiful vapour, or a little time, and then vanishing away!

In every Church there may be just such professors.

They are not backsliders, for they never had any genuine grace to lapse from. Are they hypocrites? Perhaps not; for that is a harsh word as generally understood, implying cold-blooded deception and falsehood. These unhappy persons never *intended* to deceive others; they were simply deceived in themselves. They entered the Church from an entirely mistaken view of their own condition. Perhaps they were the subjects—or rather the victims—of a spurious religious excitement; or, under the foolish persuasion of injudicious friends, were hurried into Church engagements. Their vows are no longer regarded. Their professions no longer deceive. A galling yoke of bondage is their church-membership now, when it ought to be the symbol and the seal of a happy wedded union to Jesus Christ.

What is the duty of such persons? To leave the Church at once? I do not think so. Shall they abandon the table of the Lord? I think not. Let them rather seek anew the Lord of the table. Let them go now to Christ with genuine contrition for their sins, and honest acknowledgment of their sad mistake. Wiser from the bitter experience of their own failures, let them begin afresh and *begin aright*. We never knew a false professor saved by leaving the Church. But we have known of scores who were saved in it by timely repentance and faith in Christ. Candid reader! if you have a false hope, throw it away and seek a better.

So shall your "goodness" be not merely a morning vapour, but a cloud of blessings through life's long useful day, and at sunset it shall burn with the golden glories reflected from the better world.



THE RE-CONVERTED MAN.

ON a certain evening in the olden times, a man of resolute look was sitting by the fire, amid a group of talkers, in a high-priest's hall. During that day his Master had startled him by saying to him: "*When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*" Was he not already a converted man? Was he not already a disciple of Jesus? The remark was well calculated to surprise, and to give him pain.

Perhaps revolving the startling words in his mind, the man sits by the fire—waiting to be "sifted." Satan, the sifter, sees him there, and steals in to sift him. He comes through the lips of an impertinent serving-maid. "Thou wast also with Jesus of Galilee," sneers the garrulous girl. What an opportunity for the boastful Peter to stand up for Jesus! With craven tone, the lie sticking in his throat, he stammers out, "I know not what thou sayest." He goes out into the porch, and again the sifter sifts him. How the wheat is running away, and leaving the empty chaff!

In the porch another maid is loitering, who no sooner sees him than she sets the rabble upon him by exclaiming, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." The mob take up the jeer, and cry out: "Surely thou also art one of them; thy *brogue* be-

wrayeth thee." This is too much for the poor, irritated, hounded disciple—the man who chafed so under a taunt—and, with swaggering oath, he flings back the jeer, "I know not the man."

Ah, Peter, methinks thou needest a conversion now! What shall keep thee from going clear over to the ranks of the persecutors of that Man of Sorrows in the judgment hall? Stop. Judge him not too harshly. The difference between a bent tree and a broken tree is, that one springs back to its place when the pressure is removed, but the other never rises from the dust. Peter's is a bent faith, not a broken; for no sooner does the cock-crow smite upon his ear than in a moment his cowed and brow-beaten loyalty to his Master leaps up and asserts its presence in an honest outgush of blinding tears. Out into the solitudes of the garden he goeth, not to hide his sin with the rope of the suicide, but to be RE-CONVERTED; to turn back again, with genuine contrition, to that Saviour whom he had wronged and denied; to do once more his first works, and give afresh his heart to Jesus. And from that garden, whose deep shadows made a fit "closet" for his secret outbreak of penitential grief, the weeping man comes out a humbler, wiser, better, and braver man than he had ever been before. That baptism of tears was a needed baptism for his high apostleship. Better fitted to sympathize with the tempted; better fitted to warn the presumptuous; better calculated to deal tenderly with the erring, and every way better able to "strengthen

the brethren" must the disciple have been for his melancholy lapse, and for his merciful re-conversion.

But what is re-conversion? It is certainly not regeneration. The Bible gives no hint of a second, or a third, or a fourth new birth of the soul. We recognize no such thing in our spiritual experience. Re-conversion is not the awakening of a sinner for the second time.

It is simply the return to God and to duty of a backsliding believer. Peter's religious character was not wholly swept from him in that sad, shameful hour of his denial of the Redeemer. Nor does any true Christian lose his faith entirely during his seasons of spiritual declension. He is not a happy man, nor a healthy man, nor a heaven-honoured man; but he is alive. As the benumbed Alpine traveller, who has foundered among the swirling snow-drifts, soon "comes to" again when laid before the fire of the St. Bernard Hospice, so a frozen backslider may thaw out and recover under the warmth of Christ's restoring grace. It is a terrible experiment to try; a terrible risk to run. Let no man tempt God's love by trying the perilous step. Peter would probably have ended just where Judas ended, had not one been a true Christian and the other an impostor. Christ prayed for Peter that his "faith might not fail" utterly; and but for that timely intercession he could not have come forth from that garden a re-converted man.

The process through which Peter passed during his

recovery was partially similar to the process of his first conversion. There must have been repentance deep and sincere. There must have been faith in Jesus exercised anew. The sorrows of his contrition, too, were aggravated by the recollection of his first state of grace, and of his late disgraceful fall. Now, as conversion is made up of repentance, faith, and new obedience to God, so Peter's recovery was, in every sense, a re-conversion. It was a turning unto God, and differed from a first conversion in only two things; namely, the point set out from was a different point, and the distance travelled over was vastly less.

Who the reader of this paragraph may be, we do not know; but he must be a remarkable Christian if he never needed a re-conversion. Every act of disloyalty to Christ, every disgraceful lapse into sin, should call forth Peter's tears and Peter's penitence. Even without looking back for some specific flagrant offence against Christian consistency, it will do you no harm, my professing friend, to "repent and do first works" afresh. If you have grown cold in heart and indolent in duty, if prayer is a penance, and the Lord's table an irksome formality, then you need a new conversion. If, after a searching scrutiny, you are not satisfied with your present hope, *give it up*. By all means give it up, and seek a better. Nothing would sooner bring a genuine revival into our churches than for lukewarm, inconsistent members to come forward by platoons and abandon the worthless hope of bygone days, and, with thorough repentance, to dig down

deep and lay anew their foundation on the Lord Jesus Christ. Multitudes of church members, we fear, are barely living on the memory of the religious experiences of ten or twenty years ago. John Wesley would call such a state a falling away from grace. John Owen would call it a spiritual declension. But both would agree in the remedy needed, and both would agree in the exhortation with which we close: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, *and repent, and do the first works!*"



THE SPICES IN GOD'S GARDEN.



THE true believer's heart is the "King's garden." It is described in the Canticles as a "garden enclosed." The Orientals were accustomed to fence in their gardens with hedges of prickly shrubs. Sometimes a stone wall was built, as in the case of the hallowed enclosure around Gethsemane. Outside the garden was often a barren waste. So is the believer's heart kept apart from a world lying in wickedness. "Come out, and be ye separate," saith the Lord Almighty.

What are the products of this heart garden? The singer of Solomon's Song tells us that they are "pleasant fruits, with all trees of frankincense, and myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief spices." These spices are the *graces* of a Christian's soul. As spices were not native to the Oriental garden, but were planted there, and required careful cultivation, so the fragrant graces of Christian character are not natural to the human heart. They do not spring spontaneously in any man before conversion. They are the blessed and beautiful results of regeneration. What a vast deal of watching and watering do they require! What constant need there is of that remarkable prayer, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; *blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.*"

Look at the meaning of this prayer a moment. Its root is found in the fact that, as delicious odours may lie *latent* in a spice-tree, so *graces* may lie unexercised and undeveloped in a Christian's heart. There is many a plant of profession ; but from the cumberer of the ground there breathes forth no fragrance of holy affections or of godly deeds.

As long as any member of Christ's church lives a hollow life of mere profession ; as long as he aims to please himself and not his Saviour ; as long as he is grasping, and self-seeking, and self-indulgent, and covetous, and a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God ; so long the professed cinnamon bush is not a whit better than the Canada thistle. A church full of such professors, whether they swear by the Westminster Confession or by the Thirty-nine Articles, is only a batch of weeds.

But even in genuine Christians there are latent *graces* which require to be drawn forth. And this prayer is for the coming of a "north wind," and of a "south wind," that the fragrance of a soul's spices may *flow out*. Anything rather than a scentless, formal, fruitless religion.

Let the *north* wind come, even though it be a cutting wind of conviction ! Christians need to be convicted of sin as much as impenitent sinners. Peter was under conviction of sin when he went out into the garden to weep bitterly. Perhaps the Apostle Paul felt a terrible uprising of the "old Adam" when he wrote that tearful seventh chapter to the Romans.

Dr. Beecher once told me that one of the most tremendous seasons of awakening he ever knew was in a theological seminary. The "north wind" of the Spirit's power was so keenly felt that students for the ministry gave up their "hopes," cried for mercy, and dug down deeper for better foundations to rest on! The most powerful revivals in Churches are those which bring professing Christians to repentance and tears, and to the cutting off of "right-hand" sins. Awake! O north wind of conviction, and blow upon our dull, odourless hearts, that the spices of penitence may flow out.

Sometimes God sends severe blasts of *trial* upon His children to develop their graces. Just as torches burn most brightly when swung violently to and fro; just as the juniper plant smells sweetest when flung into the flames; so the richest qualities of a Christian often come out under the north wind of suffering and adversity. Bruised hearts often emit the fragrance that God loveth to smell. Almost every true believer's experience contains the record of trials which were sent for the purpose of *shaking* the *spice-tree*.

"Who bears a cross prays oft and well;
Bruised herbs send forth the sweetest smell;
Were plants ne'er tossed by stormy wind,
The fragrant spices who would find?"

Trials are of no profit unless improved. We need the Spirit's work at no time more than in our hours of trial. A graceless heart is none the better after affliction. The same wind blows on the thistle-bush and

on the spice-tree ; but it is only *one* of them which gives out rich odours. Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou *south* ; blow upon my heart, that the perfumes of sweet graces may flow out !

There are *two* winds mentioned in this beautiful prayer. God may send either or both, as seemeth Him good. He may send the north wind of conviction, to bring us to repentance ; or He may send the south wind of love, to melt us into gratitude and holy joy. If we often require the sharp blasts of trial to develop our graces, do we not also need the warm south breezes of His mercy ? Do we not need the new sense of Christ's presence in our hearts and the joys of the Holy Ghost ? Do we not need to be melted, yea, to be *overpowered* by the love of Jesus ? When I look into my own scanty little heart-garden, when I go into the prayer-meetings of my flock, and when I think how feeble are the spiritual influences we are shedding out upon the world, I am ready to cry out, "Awake, O north wind of the convicting Spirit ; come, O south wind of melting, subduing love, and blow upon these odourless plants !"

Every genuine revival of religion has a Divine side and a human side. Every such revival is the gift of God ; yet it is also the work of free agents—the quickened activity of good men and women. When the winds blow upon the cinnamon-bushes, it is *from the bushes themselves* that the odours flow out. The softest of zephyrs cannot draw fragrance from a pig-weed. Faith is the gift of God ; but it is also your

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act and mine. Love is kindled by contact with Christ; but we must come up close to Him. The Holy Spirit may waft odours from a true Christian life; but the *Christian must do the living*. Dead trees yield no spices. What was the secret of the success and tremendous power of the apostolic Church? *Every tree was a bearing tree*. Paul in his pulpit, Lydia in her cloth-store, Dorcas with her needle, John amid his flock at Ephesus—each and all were “always abounding in the work of the Lord.”


Brethren! how shall our spiritual gardens attain to such beauty and fragrance? There are three pithy answers.

Let each one look well to the tillage of his own or her own heart. The measure of a Christian's power is the measure of that Christian's *piety*. Grace must be *in* the soul before it can come out of the soul.

Be the Christian *everywhere* and *always*. When Jacob came into his father's presence, the odour of the barley-ground and the vineyard was in his garments. It was the “smell of the field which God had blessed.” So, wherever we go, let us carry the Spirit of Christ within us. Then the spices will flow out.

Let us cry fervently and frequently and importunately for the breath of the Holy Spirit. With one voice let us cry, “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon our garden!” Then shall there be a shaking down of fruit from the branches, and the outflow of sweet spices shall fill and perfume the atmosphere in which we dwell.

MAKING THE IRON SWIM.

“ LAS, master, for it was borrowed !” exclaimed one of the sons of the prophets beside the river Jordan, when his axe-head flew off and sunk in the turbid stream. And Elisha said to him, “Where fell it ?” The young student showed him the spot. Whereupon the man of God broke off a stick and cast it into the stream, and lo ! “*the iron did swim !*” The student put forth his hand and took it up, and went on with his work to hew down timber for a “Log College,” to be occupied by the sons of the prophets.

Here was a direct interposition of the Divine power. The honour of a company of good men was at stake ; a loss had been met with ; God repaired the loss in a miraculous manner. God, who is the author of all law in nature, *acted directly* on that bit of iron, and made it rise up from the bottom of the stream. It was just such a special display of the Divine power as that which sent the ravens to feed the famished prophet Elijah, and at another time made a poor widow’s barrel of meal and cruse of oil hold out.

These were very unlikely things to happen ; but God constantly does unlikely things to reward the faith of His children. Elisha’s heavenly Father is our Father. He is the Father of every faithful minister

of the word, of every toiling missionary, of every true philanthropist who is struggling to turn the darkness into day, of every working Christian, and of every poor widow or orphan in His huge earthly household. He still fills poverty's empty cruse. He still makes the iron swim!

Yonder, at Ashley Down, lives George Müller, the noble, godly-minded superintendent of the famous "Orphan Houses," which shelter and educate hundreds of poor children every year. George Müller began that vast work of love in simple faith. He goes on with his labour of love, and *prays*. God puts it into the hearts of liberal men to send him money, and Müller has already received and expended over two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Faith does its duty, and God *makes the iron swim*.

Sometimes the Lord transmutes the hardest outbreaks of human wrath into instruments of mercy. That royal scoffer, Charles II., locked up John Bunyan in Bedford jail for twelve years. That padlock kept Bunyan there, shut up with his Bible, until he wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress"—and that iron is swimming yet.

There is a prodigious leverage for our faith in the glorious doctrine of God's providential love. It enables us to remove mountains out of our way. It stimulates us to persevering effort in the face of every obstacle. A godly mother, for example, dedicates her only son to the gospel ministry. But how to educate him with a widow's scanty purse is a puzzling

question. It seems a hard dilemma. But at the critical time the will of a deceased relative is opened, and a *legacy* for the widow's son is found in the will. The lad is sent to college, and he lives to-day to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a vast audience. So the widow's God made the iron swim!

How well I remember the difficulties which beset my path, when I came over to Brooklyn ten years ago, to undertake the building of a new church edifice on the sound principle of a large house and low pews. We had but a feeble band of helpers, and many predicted failure. When the building began, Sumter's flag fell, and with it fell apparently all hope of prosecuting our undertaking to success. But we went forward. Poor and godly women did their own house-work to save a few dollars for the church. From unexpected quarters came aid—for "the people had a mind to work"—and *the iron did swim*.

These are not miracles exactly; but the God who floated the prophet's axe at the Jordan yet lives, and He still loves to reward faith and to answer prayer. There is a rich encouragement in this truth for all who are earnestly labouring for the conversion of souls. An unconverted heart is often like to the young prophet's axe-head—it is heavy and hard, and tending downward. But the Spirit of God can make the iron move. Know this, ye disheartened parents, who almost despair of ever seeing your ungodly children come to Jesus. Be not weary in your efforts to bring

them to the Saviour. Make your religion attractive to them. Pray for them without ceasing.

Ye praying wives, whom every communion Sabbath separates from your impenitent husbands, do not give up. God can make the iron swim. A loving wife, who spent a whole Sabbath lately in most pleading petitions for her husband's soul, was joyfully surprised on Monday morning to see the man upon his knees.

A long-suffering wife of a sad inebriate has just been into my study to tell me that her husband came home lately *sober and penitent*. For dark, weary months she has been praying for his reform, hoping against hope. It actually looks now as if the poor slave of the bottle would be saved; but I confess that I never expected to see that stubborn piece of metal float. With God all things are possible.

During a period of revival in a certain town, a woman of devoted piety persuaded her sceptical husband to go with her once to church. He came home enraged. "I will never go again," said he; "that sermon against infidelity was aimed at me." She saw that the shots were striking him in a sore spot. So she prayed the more fervently.

One evening the wife said kindly to him, "I want you, my dear, to grant me one little request. Will you go with me to-night to the meeting? He answered gruffly, "I will go with you *to the door*." "Very well," she replied, cheerfully; "that will do." He accompanies her to the door; he stays outside while she goes in to pour out her soul to God in importunate,

believing prayer for that iron heart. Presently the door opens. A man walks in, and going to her seat sits down beside her. He listens quietly. The wife walks home with him, all the time talking secretly to God.

The next evening, after tea, the husband rises, and says, "Wife, isn't it about time for *us* to go to church?" It is too early; but she snatches her bonnet and shawl, and hastens off with him to the house of God. A happy evening is it to her long-tried spirit, for the stubborn sceptic bows at the feet of Jesus. He comes home to set up a family altar. Faith wins its precious victory, and the love of Jesus *makes the iron swim!*



THE JOY OF SAVING THE LOST.

TN Mr. George Kennan's fascinating "Tent-Life in Siberia" is a very thrilling account of a search made by the author for a party of his lost countrymen on the Anadyr river. After a journey by dog-sledge for two hundred miles over drifted snow, they reach the spot where they conjecture the missing Americans to be buried away under the snow. Mr. Kennan and his companion are well-nigh perishing themselves from cold which has sunk the mercury to *fifty* degrees below zero! The feet of their poor dogs spot the white snow with blood at every step. One of the two brave explorers has already sunk exhausted on his sledge, and is fast falling into the sleep of death. Suddenly, at midnight, Mr. Kennan hears a faint, long-drawn halloo across the wintry waste. It comes from one of his "Chookchee," who has gone on in advance. He hurries to the spot, all the blood in his veins throbbing at his heart. As he comes up he discovers the Chookchee standing by a small black pipe projecting from a snowbank. The lost wanderers must be under it. "Thank God! thank God!" I repeated to myself *softly*," says the heroic writer; "and as I climbed upon the snowdrift, and shouted down the pipe, 'Halloo the house!' I heard a startled voice under

my feet reply, 'Who's there?' As I entered the snow-cellar and seized hold of my long-lost friends, my overstrained nerves gave way, and in ten minutes I could hardly raise my hand to my lips."

Reading the above thrilling scene in my friend Kennan's book, I found the tears stealing down my own cheeks in sympathy with the brave fellows who had perilled their lives in order to rescue their lost friends from death by cold and starvation. After concluding the narrative, which had almost the sweet "lineament of a gospel book," I opened my Bible, and read this parable which Jesus spake :

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go *after that which is lost* until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing."

With this vivid scene of the Siberian search fresh in my mind, I read this exquisite parable with a new delight. I seemed to see our Divine Shepherd starting off after the lost sheep. He knows the thickets or the quagmires into which the silly truant must have strayed. He may hear its bleatings afar off. He goes until he finds it. He does not *beat* it for straggling; but pulling it out of the mire, or drawing it from the tangled thicket, He *layeth it on His shoulders*—the clean carrying the unclean, the holy carrying the unholy. Beautiful picture of Jesus, the Sin-bearer! Every saved soul has been upon Christ's shoulders. When He "bore our sins"

and "carried our sorrows," then was the befouled yet precious load upon Jesus' shoulder. Yes, and He bids us "cast our *cares*" upon Him too. The whole load He takes up joyfully.

Say what we may about free agency, or about the activity of the soul in regeneration, it is equally true that not a solitary sheep would ever have entered the fold of God if the Divine Shepherd had not come to seek and to save the lost. He came after each one. For Jesus "tasted death for every man"—for the *individual*, and not for the vague mass of undistinguishable humanity. That "*one* sheep" was lost was enough to start the loving Shepherd on His search. What an argument is this to labour for the conversion of *one soul*!

It has often been said as a cavil by students of astronomy, If this globe of ours is only a mere speck in the starry universe, amid millions of suns and planets, why should the Son of God single out *this* diminutive globe as the theatre of His incarnation and sufferings? why did He stoop to such a little world as ours? In reply to this cavil, Dr. Chalmers prepared and preached his magnificent "Astronomical Discourses." But we think that this exquisite parable throws a hint of suggestive light on this problem. For, though we do not know that our Saviour *never* went on an errand of redemption to any other planet, we *do* know that He came to this one of ours. We do not know that He went to stupendous Jupiter, or to belted Saturn, or to far-away Neptune.

He did not go perhaps to the planet that was biggest in size, but to the one that was *basest in sin*. He came not "to the largest world, but to *the lost world*." Ah! He may have left the "ninety and nine" glorious and gigantic orbs which never wandered, and sought out the single one in which lay a race of sinners lost in misery and guilt!

There is one stroke in the parable which we must not lose sight of. It is that which depicts the exquisite *joy of the Rescuer*. When the shepherd "findeth the sheep, he layeth it on his shoulders *rejoicing*." He is glad, for the sake of the restored sheep, but still more for his own. It was "for the joy set before Him that He endured the cross and despised the shame." Into that sublime joy how many elements may enter! There must have been in my Saviour's heart a holy ecstasy of love which pleased itself in doing good—in saving me when lost—in enduring suffering and sacrifice for my salvation. This sublime love of the Sin-bearer makes even the crown of thorns flash as a diadem of splendours on the Redeemer's bleeding brow. Here was the Divine luxury of doing good.

It is a sweet thought too that Jesus would have *missed* me if I had never been sought and brought back. As the shepherd in the story *left* the ninety and nine to hunt for the single straggler, so I may gladly hope that Jesus *wanted* me in heaven, or else He would not have come so far or endured so much to save me. If I were left without Him, there would

have been one more soul in hell. But if He were left without me, there would be one soul the less to sing His praise in heaven. He would have had one the less to present to His Father "with exceeding joy."

For observe that the sweet parable says nothing about the delight of the sheep in being found; it only depicts the exceeding joy of the *shepherd in finding* the wanderer. He calls his neighbours together to share his gladness. "Likewise there is joy in the *presence* of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The common and inaccurate rendering of this text confines the joy to the angels only, as if it read "*among* the angels." Just as well say that the "neighbours" felt the thrill of gladness over the recovered sheep, and not the shepherd himself.

The transcendent joy in heaven over a saved soul is not confined to the angel-bands. It is only witnessed by them, and partially shared by them. It is "in their *presence*" that the celestial rapture breaks forth. But the *supreme joy is in the bosom of the enthroned Redeemer!* His was the sorrow, when He was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." His is the joy, when He presents even one repentant sinner before the "presence of His glory." He sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

O beloved Saviour! when we behold Thee on Thy throne, the Shepherd amid His ransomed flock, Thy victories complete, the last wandering sheep brought home, the last recovered jewel glittering in Thy crown; then we will confess that the triumph was

worthy of the toil, and the ransom of Thy glorified Church was worthy of all the bitter agonies of Him who came to *seek and to save the lost!* “Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever !”



HYMNS OF HEAVEN.



FINE hymn is the consummate flower of doctrine : I had rather be the author of "Rock of ages,"—that crown jewel of sacred minstrelsy,—than of either of President Edwards's masterly treatises. Charles Wesley did more for Christ when he sang,—

"Jesus, lover of my soul !"

than if he had written fifty volumes of sound theology. A mere talk *about* that exquisite hymn, a few evenings ago, was blessed to the soul of one believer who had been under a cloud of despondency for months. The hymn itself would be enough to make Wesley's and Calvin's spirits embrace each other before the throne of their Redeemer, and weep that they had ever had a controversy while in the flesh.

It is natural that the theme of many of the richest hymns of the Church should be the *Joys of Heaven*. When Bunyan's pilgrim was asked in the House Beautiful how he secured for himself "golden hours" in which he forgot his troubles, he answered: "When I think of what I saw at the cross, that will do it; when I look into the roll which I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when my thoughts *wax warm about whither I am going*, that will do it." The sweet

thoughts of his expected home in glory drove away the devils of doubt and despondency—as they have driven them from many a tried Christian spirit ever since.

The earliest of the hymns of heaven is the old Latin composition, "*Urbs beata Jerusalem*," which had its roots in the meditations of that giant of the fifth century, Augustine of Hippo. This is the groundwork of all the numerous *Jerusalem*-hymns of latter ages. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, a prisoner was shut up in the dreary old Tower of London, and to him, as to the captive in Bedford jail, was vouchsafed a bright vision of the "better country." He composed a hymn in twenty-six stanzas, a manuscript copy of which is still preserved in the British Museum. It is entitled "A Song by F. B. P. to the tune of Diana." The first verse is,—

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?"

The closing verses are in that most rapturous strain of longing for that celestial paradise, where "the trees for evermore bear fruit," and "where evermore the angels sit, and evermore do sing." The name of this prisoner of Jesus Christ is lost in oblivion. A few years afterward, old David Dickson, of Scotland, altered the first line of the "Song of F. B. P." to the quaint and tender words, "Oh! mother dear, Jerusalem," and he also added to it six and thirty verses

of his own. About the beginning of this century there appeared (from an unknown source) a beautiful variation of the hymn in six verses. This is the one which is found in all our collections of church music under the well-known name of "Jerusalem, my happy home."

A Presbyterian clergyman in New Orleans once called to visit a young Scotchman who was lying very low, and talked to him about his soul. The young stranger gave him but little attention. During one of his visits the minister began to hum over to himself the lines, "Jerusalem, my happy home, name ever dear to me!" The youth burst into tears, and exclaimed, "I used to hear my dear mother sing those words when I was a child." His heart melted under a strain that seemed to come back to him as from his cradle; and the heart thus softened, *received* the "faithful saying" with penitence and joy. I am persuaded that we ministers make too little use of the *Gospel in metre* as a means of awakening and conversion. A hymn often goes many fathoms deeper than a sermon.

Among the ancient hymns of heaven we must not overlook that noble lyric composed by old Bernard of Cluny. Its opening verse is,—

"Jerusalem the golden!
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest!"

The whole hymn reads like one of holy Ruther-

ford's "Letters" turned into rhyme. It is rich in Scriptural imagery, without degenerating into the coarser sensuous language which disfigures some of the pious doggerel in our Sabbath-school music books. In fact some of these descriptions of heaven would answer about as well for Mohammed's Paradise. They give children the idea that the glorified spirits on high are enjoying a sort of celestial *picnic* with no end of good things to eat, and of angels to sing to them under the green bowers.

In my own childhood I got a very different conception of the holy habitation of the redeemed, when I heard that glorious hymn of Isaac Watts :

"There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

As the inspired singer of this lay looked across Southampton Water to the verdant banks of the Isle of Wight, he caught a beautiful image of death as a "narrow sea" dividing the heavenly land from ours. He imagines the lovely island across the water to be a type of that land, and writes—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between."

Of many another hymn of heaven I wish I had time and space to write this morning. In our days several fine additions have been made to this celestial hymnology. Among them are "Rest for the Weary,"

and Dr. Muhlenberg's "I would not live away," and those lines of Miss Cary, commencing,

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er."

That popular hymn, "Shining shore," is wedded to a noble tune, but the poetry itself is rather a clumsy piece of joiner-work.

For one of the grandest songs of the better land we are indebted to a member of that many-sided household of genius, the Beechers. When the Rev. Charles Beecher was in Switzerland he caught a sudden inspiration while gazing at the glittering peak of Mont Blanc with its coronal of ice. He dashed off a few verses, which were set to music by Mr. Zundel, and the tune took its name from the mountain which inspired the hymn. No piece is a greater favourite with my own people than this ; its first lines are,

"We are on our journey home—
Where Christ our Lord is gone."

Let me quote, in closing, two of the ringing stanzas of this heaven-song :

"Oh ! glory shining far,
From the never-setting sun !
Oh, trembling morning-star !
Our journey's almost done
To the New Jerusalem.

Our hearts are breaking now,
Those mansions fair to see :
O Lord ! thy heavens bow
And raise us up with Thee
To the New Jerusalem."

A TOTAL ECLIPSE—AND ITS SPIRITUAL LESSONS.

AUGUSTA, ILLINOIS, August 9, 1869.



ONE of the most sublime and awe-inspiring sights I ever witnessed—and yet one of the most difficult to describe—was the total eclipse of the sun, as we beheld it here on Saturday afternoon. Others will tell the story scientifically, let me jot down a few impressions of a scene that affected me as it did the children that stood beside me. Augusta—a thrifty village of this abounding region—was almost under the centre of the total obscuration. “You could not have a better place to see it,” said the astronomer of Princeton College to me a week ago. And not to see the eclipse in its *totality* is about equal to being half-married or half-converted.

At four o'clock we stood in the door-yard of my friend, with smoked glass in hand ; and, as one of us was watching the blazing sun, he exclaimed, “There she comes !” When a boy, I had read of this very eclipse, and of the moment it should begin. It *did* begin at the precise second predicted forty years ago ! Such is the punctuality of the truth-keeping God. And will He not be equally faithful in keeping His spiritual promises? “Wherefore dost thou doubt?”

The shadow came over the sun *gradually*—even as I have seen the shadow of a growing sin creep over a bright Christian character. The landscape around us began to look yellowish and ghastly. The grass seemed to be getting sick. Over the trees played a weird, lurid light, and every leaf hung perfectly motionless. “Oh! see how queer those flowers look! And those currant-bushes! It looks as if nature was *getting the jaundice!*” An odd thought; and yet I do not know of any other idea that would more truly describe Nature’s ghastly hue.

“See who’ll catch the first star,” said one of our group. The shadow deepened. The devouring moon pushed on, until the helpless sun was nearly smothered. “There—look! look! See—see—it is *almost* gone!” Only a minute more, and it is total! “Yonder is a star!” exclaimed one of our company. It was *Regulus*, blazing away close by the bed of the dying sun. (But *Venus* had been shining for full five minutes, without our discovering her golden locks.) “Only a few seconds more.” But, ah! what a transformation do those few seconds work! Even as in a human history, the deed of a moment suffices to darken a destiny for life; and, still worse, it flings its total eclipse over eternity!

“TOTAL!” we all exclaimed together. In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, came down an awful shadow, as of a black wing, filling the whole heavens. It was ineffably frightful. Coleridge’s lines flashed into my mind in a moment.

“ The sun’s rim dips ; the stars rush out ;
With one stride comes the dark. ”

To the north the horizon was dyed with a rich orange hue. But above us and around us the air seemed to be filled with fine black particles. It was so dark that I could not recognise a countenance a hundred yards off ; and yet it was not the darkness of an ordinary evening. It was the darkness of death ! Above a group of trees, before us a flock of birds flew wildly to and fro, as if panic-stricken. A couple of cows went lowing past the gate—the only sound in the awful stillness. Just over the fence, a half-dozen chickens had composed themselves to roost in a cherry-tree. A dozen stars were twinkling in various parts of the heavens. The air was chill as midnight.

The best description I can give of the sun when in total obscuration is that it looked as if a circular shield of sheet-iron had been riveted over it ; and just at the lower edge glittered a bright, rosy clasp or nut, as if it was the *head of the screw* which attached the black shield to the sun. All around that shield flashed out the white rays of the *corona*. This corona had a shimmering, shivering brightness, and was fearfully and wonderfully beautiful. Its edges were not smooth but scalloped ; and from every point small beads of light seemed to float off into the sky.

The mighty pall of darkness hung over us for *almost three minutes !* During that time every one in our group had a death-like hue. So might have looked the face of the universe to the apostle John in some of

his apocalyptic visions. At two minutes after five, as we stood gazing at the black orb, with its magnificent corona, a sudden flash of golden light burst forth from the northern limb. It was the most thrilling instant I ever knew, and the most splendid spectacle I ever witnessed. As if God said, "*Let there be light!*" a sheaf of dazzling rays burst forth in a twinkling! The whole sky lightened instantaneously. Methought that the "sons of God" must have seen something like this when on Creation's morn the first flood of radiance broke on black chaos at the almighty Voice. He spake, and it was done! "THOU makest darkness, and *it is night!*" "THOU coverest thyself *with light* as with a garment!"

And so, as we watched the blessed light burst forth, and, swift as an archangel, wing its bright way through the whole heavens and over all the earth, it was to us the most perfect of all images of the ineffable Lord Jesus: the Christ of Calvary breaking in on the midnight of a world lying in wickedness! Christ's sweet gracious word chasing away the darkness of doubt and unbelief from a depraved heart! Christ's overpowering love turning the night of impenitence into a rosy morn of faith and joy! Christ the comforter scattering the gloom which shrouds the chamber of sorrow! All these visions of our divine Lord were borne to us on wings of that *first excelling sunlight*. We saw the Sun of righteousness with healing in His beams. We saw, as if pictured on the sky, that glorious miracle of grace when "old things become new" and spiritual death is

turned into spiritual life ; and in that wondrous transformation "the Lamb is the Light thereof." Henceforth I shall never point a poor sinner to the Saviour without recalling the delicious thrill of last Saturday's sunburst. And so on my own failing vision in the dying hour—when this world goes under eclipse—may the first glimpse of heaven break in ecstasy, and the *Lamb be the Light thereof for ever !*



CHRIST THE LIGHT TO A HIGHER LIFE.

THE many writers who have sought to set “the gates ajar” have not been able to add to our positive knowledge of the heavenly state. Some have conjectured it to be only a glorified condition of happy souls ; others have pictured it as a *place*—a stupendous city of splendours, filled with everything that delighteth. Some of these latter writers have made it but little in advance of the Mussulman’s Paradise.

But there is one thing we *know* about heaven : God has revealed it to us. We know what is the supreme attraction and the crowning glory of the celestial world : *Christ is the Light thereof.* “ I saw,” said the inspired disciple John, “ that the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to lighten it ; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.” This is the essential blessedness of the Christian’s everlasting home. Christ is enthroned there. Christ reveals Himself there. Christ instructs His ransomed ones until they “ know even as they are known ; ” and oh, how many mysteries He will make plain ! Christ will lead His followers to living fountains of waters. This will be the consummate glory of that city whose maker and builder is God. Christ’s presence will be heaven’s effulgence ; His love our bright ecstasy ;

and "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

If this be so, then the chief characteristic of a Christian's life in heaven *ought to be* the characteristic of his life on earth. Heaven is "begun below" to a real follower of Jesus. The celestial world casts its sweet smell afar off to the pilgrim who is approaching its pearly gates. And the one grand feature that makes a Christian's life on earth resemble his life in heaven is "the Lamb is the Light thereof."

Christ is the light thereof in every system of spiritual truth, in every triumph of converting grace, in every comfort under trial, in every wise reform and work of philanthropy, in every closet of devotion, in every consistent and godly life. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all true religion. It begins with Him just as surely as the day begins with the rising of the sun. Your new birth, my brother, took place at the cross of Jesus. In that hour of conversion Christ was the light thereof. The new song that was put into your mouth was,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly!"

What is true of the beginning of your Christian life is true ever afterwards. There is not an actual grace that is not copied after Him, not a holy emotion which is not inspired by Him, not a victory over sin but is won in His strength, and you do not take a single step toward a higher life unless Christ be "the Light thereof."

When you get overburdened with a load of anxiety or discouragement, you probably betake yourself to prayer. But the devil mocks you and makes sport of you. "How absurd," jeers Satan, "that your prayer should have any effect on God!" Your closet seems to be as black as midnight. You are overhung with a pall of discouragement. All at once the idea strikes you, "I have an advocate in heaven; Jesus Christ ever liveth to intercede for me. He has said, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you." You grasp hold of the love of the Intercessor as a drowning man clutches the rope. You seize on His love for you, and on His love for those who lie upon your hearts. Faith sees with new eyes. Your dark closet of prayer brightens in a moment. "The *Lamb is the Light thereof.*" You rise from your knees strengthened, and go on your way rejoicing.

One day there arises a perplexing question of duty. You know not what to do. Self-interest counsels one course. Perhaps friends advise the same thing. They tell you "it will *pay*," or it will promote you. You are half inclined to decide for it. But conscience whispers, What will Christ say? What would He have you do? What will please Him? Then your *better* self, your converted judgment and affections, spring up, and demand of you that you take the path which shall most honour your Christianity, even though it be up the steepest cliffs and through briars that tear the garments of your pride. But as you tread the rugged furlongs, up the hills and through the thickets,

you find the blessed Jesus your companion on the road, and His smile is "the light thereof."

I do not believe that there is a doubtful question in morals or in practice on which the life and the teachings of the divine Saviour do not shed sufficient light. If Christ is wholly *in your heart*, and rules that heart, you will decide rightly. You will engage in the right callings. You will find the right fields of labour. You will seek out and enjoy the right kinds of recreation. If Christ has full possession of a man's soul, he will have no lustings after the indecencies of the licentious stage, or the revelries of the ball-room, or the reckless gambling operations of stock-boards or "the street," or for any pleasure or pursuit into which he cannot take Christ with him.

This glorious presence of Jesus with His own can brighten the darkest hours of trial. I used to visit an aged blind woman, whose sightless eyeballs rolled in vain to find the day. She could not see the sweet grandchildren who read to her God's Word. But hers was one of the sunniest rooms in Brooklyn. "The Lamb was the Light thereof."

I have gone into a nursery where a mother was wringing her hands over the crib in which her treasure lay—smitten with the touch that turned its cheek to snow. "For this child *I prayed*," exclaims the agonized mother. "Thy prayer is heard," replies Jesus the Comforter; "this child *I will keep for thee*. Forbid it not to come to me. It was mine before it was thine. *Follow me*, and thou shalt find thy

treasures in heaven." And so the shaft of heaven's glory seems to fall on the silent crib, and the child is no longer dead, but sleeping!

Ah, my fellow-Christian! you will find, when you reach the dark valley yourself, that "in the even time it shall be light." Christ's countenance will gild the waters of death with glory. It is a "*shining shore*," because the Son of God is "the Light thereof." And there shall be no night there! Neither shall there be any more pain, or sorrow, or crying; for the former things have passed away.

Then "faint not: for the miles to heaven are few and short. There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom; but there is room for yours among the rest."



THE COST OF SERVING CHRIST.

ALL the most valuable things are dearly won. Scientific discoveries lie at the summit of a hill which no man reaches without hard climbing. A nation's liberty costs treasure, toil, and blood. It is paid in widows' tears and consecrated graves. What so precious as a soul's redemption? Yet by one price only could it be secured—the "blood of the LAMB, without blemish or spot."

When Christ offered the rewards and enforced the duty of discipleship, He put in the careful injunction to "count the *cost*." The man who would not bear a cross for me, and follow me, "is not worthy to be my disciple." Let me remind you, my friend, what you must reckon upon if you attain that pearl above price, a Christian character. Count the cost. What is it?

1. Count on a fearful stubbornness in your own heart. It is by nature at enmity with God. Paul had to give battle without quarter to the "old man" of sin unto the last. So must you. Every sin-insurrection must be met with vigilance and prayer.

2. There are many unwelcome truths in the Word of God for you to swallow. The Bible is sent to save you, not to please you. It has no mercy on a sinner's sins, but it has unbounded mercy for a sinner's soul.

When an ungodly man takes the vivid lamp of Bible-truths down into the dark vaults of a depraved heart, it makes terrible exposures. But the sooner they come the better. Sooner find out your sin by that light than by the lightning-flash of God's wrath at the judgment-seat. God will not compromise with you. Count the cost of submission. He demands the whole heart; but He offers in return a whole heaven.

3. If you expect to follow Christ, you must deny your selfishness, and take up every cross that Christ appoints. Count the cost! The simple, inexorable rule is: Give up nothing that is innocent and right; but *give up everything that is wrong*. You now love to have your own way. You must consent gladly to let God have His way. You have favourite pleasures that are sinful. Find a higher pleasure in abandoning them. Count the cost of loving God more than you love money. Count the cost of offending some of your friends. Christ is a better Friend than they. Count the cost of quitting "profitable" sins. Count the cost of some sneers, of a great many hard knocks, and still more hard work. Count the cost of a noble, prayerful, unselfish, godly life. It will cost dearly, but, thank God, *it pays!*

When you get to be a Christian you will find that the clearer and stronger you are, the happier will be your conscience. But the better you are, the more dearly you will pay for it. Study in your Bible what it cost Paul to become all he was. Does he begrudge

now one single self-mortification, one crushing of his selfish lusts, one stripe of persecution's lash? Not he! He gloried in every tribulation that burnished his piety, and brought honour to his Redeemer's name. The best part of a Christian's character is that which costs the heaviest price. Patience, for example, is a beautiful trait; but it is not oftenest worn by those who walk life's sunny side in silver slippers. It is the product of dark nights of adversity and of many a cross-bearing up the mount of suffering. The "*trial of your faith worketh patience.*" The bruised flower emits most fragrance; and a bruised Christian puts forth the sweetest odours of humility and heavenly-mindedness.

4. Let me offer to you four brief encouragements. I drop them as diamonds in your pathway to the Cross. Here they are:—

Firstly. The service of Christ pays a magnificent percentage of *usefulness*. A working Christian never can be wretched. He gathers his sheaves as he goes.

Secondly. A man is always happy *when he is right*. He is happy in doing right, happy in feeling that he has done right, and happy in the approval of his Master's heavenly smile. Impenitent friend! you have never felt *this!*

Thirdly. God will sustain you, if you try to serve Him. His grace is sufficient for you.

Finally. There is a heaven at the end of every faithful Christian's journey.

“ Our knowledge of that life is small ;
The eye of faith is dim ;
But 't is enough that Christ is there,
And we shall be like Him.”

My friend, are you ready to follow Jesus? Count the cost. But I warn you tenderly that, if it costs much to be a Christian, it will cost infinitely *more* to live and die a sinner! Religion costs self-denial; sin costs self-destruction!

To be a temperate man costs self-restraint. To be a tippler costs a ruined purse, a ruined character, a ruined soul. The sensualist pays for going to perdition by living in a sty. The swearer must *pay* for his oaths, and the Sabbath-breaker for his guilty contempt of God's law.

To lead a life of impenitence costs a dying bed of remorse. Count the cost. To go up to the judgment-seat without Christ will cost you an eternity of despair. Count the cost. Sit down and make the honest reckoning. Put into one scale, life; into the other, death. Put into one scale, heaven; into the other, hell! Weigh them well! Weigh for eternity! And, while you sit weighing anxiously, Christ whispers into your ear the thrilling question: “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his SOUL?”



FULL ASSURANCE.

FAITH is the milk, and assurance is the cream that rises on it. If you have milk, you are pretty certain to have cream, unless the milk be the watery London mixture." So said Mr. Spurgeon in one of his racy discourses; and it is not often that a sanctified wit teaches as much sound theology.

There are two kinds or shades of assurance—one of faith, and one which the apostle calls the "full assurance of hope." Faith is the soul's trusting itself to Jesus Christ. Not an intellectual act merely, but a spiritual exercise of confiding trust. But assurance is the full confidence of a believer in his own safety; that, being united to Christ, he is delivered from the "law of sin and death," and is for ever safe. John Wesley obtained this state of peaceful confidence when, after reading Luther's exposition of a part of the book of Romans, and while he was walking in Aldersgate Street, he felt his heart strangely warmed within him. He says that assurance was given him that Jesus had taken away his sins and saved him from the law of sin and death. The Holy Spirit *bore witness* with his spirit that he was a child of God.

Many shallow and absurd views are often held

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in regard to the "witness of the Spirit." Some imaginative people declare that this "witness" has come to them in a vision, or by a voice from heaven, or in some extraordinary and sudden manner. But this is not the usual or normal experience of most sensible Christians. They obtain the witness of the Spirit by comparing the Holy Spirit's description of the true Christian in God's Word with their own character and experience. God's word tells them what it is to be a follower of Christ, and sets forth the necessary traits and characteristics of the new life in Jesus. They compare themselves with the Divine Word; and, if they find that the Holy Spirit's description of the true Christian *corresponds* with the Holy Spirit's work on their own hearts and lives, they know at once that they have their "witness" within themselves.

Each work of the Spirit testifies to the other. If we take a gold eagle to the mint, and compare it with the die, we see that they exactly correspond. The same stars and head of Liberty and inscriptions are on the die and on the coin. So a child of God opens his inspired Bible and reads: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus shall be saved." He says to himself: "I know that I do give up all other reliance, and trust Jesus only." He reads in his Bible: "My peace I give unto you." Looking into his own heart, he finds that peace. Again, he reads that if any man will be Christ's disciple, he must take up his cross and follow Him. Such crosses he knows that he has taken up more than once. "To them that believe

Christ is precious." The believer by actual experience so finds Jesus, and is as certainly *conscious* that he loves his Saviour as he is that he loves his own mother or the child that plays by his side. Thus the Christian goes on, and compares his own state with the required condition of discipleship in God's Word; and, if he finds a good degree of resemblance, then he has an assurance that he is Christ's. There is an *agreement* between what the Holy Spirit has written on the Bible page and what that same Holy Spirit has written on his heart. And thus the Spirit beareth witness to his spirit that he is a child of God. This is one meaning, and a most vitally important meaning of that oft-quoted phrase: "The witness of the Spirit."

If the gold coin does not correspond with the die in the United States' mint, we at once pronounce it a counterfeit. So the man who finds no clear resemblance in his own heart and conduct to the standard of Christianity in God's Word must confess that he is none of Christ's. His public profession is a counterfeit. Cream does not rise on water. Without the life of faith there can be no genuine "assurance of hope." Men never gather grapes from thistles.

A healthy Christian ought to have a comfortable assurance. He has a right to look for it. Good milk ought to raise cream. The reason why some truly good people do not enjoy more clear and comforting assurance is that they perpetually nurse


their doubts and starve their faith. They never make a strong grasp of the divine promises. They are chronic doubters. "Other people may be saved, *but not I.*" If the life-boat rocks in the storm, they constantly "cry out for fear," and declare that they are going to the bottom. If such desponding doubters will not exercise faith, they must blame no one but themselves. God will not build another boat, or order perpetual calm weather just to suit their timorous unbelief.

Other people are the prey of their bodily feelings. To-day they feel well, their business prospers, and they are jubilant on the mountain-top. To-morrow their digestion is bad, their nerves are shaky, bad news comes, and at once their spiritual barometer falls again. They are all "in the dumps." Call upon them to pray, and their prayer is like a captive's groan in his dungeon. Nervous Christians and dyspeptic Christians need a threefold supply of grace. It is as much their duty to pray against and fight against these periodic ague-fits of despondency as it is the duty of a man with strong sensual passions to battle against his lusts for liquor or libidinousness. An increase of faith, a victory over "fleshly" influences and external distractions, will bring abiding peace. These come from prayer and godly living. These come from a closer union to Christ. As farmers bury their winter apples so deep in the ground that they are beneath the frosts of January, so a Christian ought to put his faith and his love

of Jesus so deep in his heart that they shall not be frozen by every external influence of bodily distemper or adversities of condition. Perfect love keeps out fear.

Finally, let us remind our brethren in Christ that full assurance is both a *right* and a *duty*. It is a perpetual joy; for, if our Lord has given us a title to heaven, why should not we enjoy it? Why should a Christian go limping and whining along the upward road to his Father's home in glory? Paul had a mighty assurance, founded on a mighty faith. He *knew* whom he had believed. He exhorts his brethren to use "*diligence to the full assurance of hope.*" The Greek word *πληροφορία* means a full lading. If applied to a tree, it signifies an abundant crop of fruit, that weighs down the branches. If applied to a vessel, it signifies a ship crammed with her cargo. But the tree must be in good soil, and be well cultivated. So a follower of Christ must be *rooted* in Christ, and abide in Christ, and be watered by the Spirit, and grow in grace, if he would attain to the *πληροφορία*, the full assurance of hope unto the end. We must *receive Christ*; for "to as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God." As we have seen a ship lie alongside of a grain elevator until the golden grain filled the hold, so must a believer keep his soul close beside the infinite Jesus, that he may be *filled* from the Divine fulness until he attains the "FULL ASSURANCE of hope unto the end."

HYMNS OF THE HEART.

 O the richest and sweetest of all modern hymns of the heart we have paid our tribute of affection. The name of its author—Charles Wesley—should be exceeding dear to every lover of Jesus. To him belongs the glory of having written not only *more* hymns than any other man, but also of composing one sacred song which takes rank next to the “Dies Iræ” and the “Rock of Ages.”

Since his day several new and beautiful contributions have been made to that class of hymns, which may be called *Songs of the Soul*. Like many of David's most precious psalms, they are the musical outflow of a deep inward experience. Let us now bind a fresh chaplet around the modest brow of the authoress of one of these heart-songs.

Her name appears in most of the lately-published collections, yet few know anything about her. She was born at Cambridge, England, in February, 1805. Her father, Mr. Benjamin Flower, was the editor of a weekly paper. Her mother was a woman of fine gifts and culture. Their youngest daughter, Sarah F. Flower, was worthy of her name. For “Sarah” signifies a *princess*, and sweeter fragrance has rarely exhaled from any *flower* in the garden of the Lord.

This gifted girl married Mr. William B. Adams, an English civil engineer of superior abilities. She was of frail constitution, and, amid many bodily sufferings, she kept her pen at work upon various poetical productions. One of these was a religious drama. Another was a volume for children, entitled, "The Flock at the Fountain." At what time she caught the inspiration to compose that one immortal hymn which is now sung around the globe, we have never learned. Probably it was some season of peculiar trial, when the bruised spirit emitted the odours of a child-like submission to a chastening Father. It must have oozed from a bleeding heart. As in the case of Toplady and Charlotte Elliott and Ray Palmer, the singer little dreamed that her song would be *heard through the ages*.

Her hymn first appeared in a volume of sacred lyrics, published by a Mr. Fox, in England, about the year 1841. The authoress did not live to catch the echoes of the fame it was to bring, for she died in 1849, at the age of forty-four. She was buried near Harlow, in Essex, and for several years her name was known to but few beyond the circle of loving friends who read it on her monument.

Presently the hymn began to work its way into various collections of songs for worship. It crossed to America. It was heard with delight in our prayer-meetings. It was married to the noble tune of "Bethany," and everybody caught the glorious strain. In noonday gatherings for prayer it soon became

so familiar that if any one "struck up" the hymn, the whole audience joined in and sang it from memory. Last year, Professors Smith, Hitchcock, and Park, as they wound their way down the foot-hills of Mount Lebanon, came in sight of a group of fifty Syrian students, standing in a line, singing in full chorus. They were the students of the new "College of Beirut," at Abieh, and they were singing *in Arabic* to the air of "Bethany." As the Professors drew nearer, they caught the sublime words :

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee ;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me :
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,—
Nearer to Thee."

"I am not much given to the weeping mood," said Prof. Hitchcock, when describing the thrilling scene, "but when we rode through the ranks of those Syrian youths, I confess that my eyes were a little *damp*." If it be permitted to the departed people of God to witness the transactions of earth, we may imagine with what rapture the glorified spirit of Sarah Flower Adams overheard her heart-song thus chanted in the land of sacred story.

As a literary production, the hymn is not faultless. Nor is it quite faultless in its adaptation to Christian worship, for the name of Jesus is not in any of its rich stanzas. But as a poetical version of

Jacob's dream at Bethel, and as the devout aspiration of a soul chanting to God its triumphant *song in the night*, these lines have no peer in our modern hymnology. The authoress did not need to write another syllable than this one hymn of the wounded heart. This alone will carry the name of Sarah Adams into the minstrelsy of the millennium.

Has her hymn any equal of its kind in our time? Perhaps not; but two others stand very close to it. One of them is the Rev. Hugh Stowell's "Mercy-seat," beginning with the words:

"From every stormy wind that blows."

The other is the production of Rev. Henry F. Lyte, a native of Kelso, Scotland, afterwards the home of that grand singer of holy songs, Horatius Bonar. Mr. Lyte entered the English-Episcopal Church, and became the rector of Brixham, in Southern England, that *poetic belt* sacred to the lyres of Watts, Steele, Toplady, and Wesley. There he wrote that hymn (so often attributed to a "Miss Grant") commencing:

"Jesus, I my cross have taken."

His health failed, and in 1847 he was obliged to sail for Nice, where he soon fell asleep in Jesus. The last sabbath that he spent with his flock was the day of communion. Towards evening he handed to a friend a manuscript containing eight exquisite verses. They proved to be his own death-song of holy faith. Life's brief day was ebbing swiftly to its close. The lay he sang is the most pathetic in our modern hymn-

nology. Let any reader open to it, and his eyes will fill with tears as he reads :

“ Abide with me, fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens : Lord, with me abide !
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day ;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away ;
Change and decay in all around I see ;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word ;
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord—
Familiar, condescending, patient, free—
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea ;
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus abide with me.

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee !
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour ;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power ?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be ?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless ;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness ;
Where is death's sting ? Where, grave, thy victory ?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me !

Hold there Thy cross before my closing eye,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:
In life, and death, O Lord, abide with me."

But we must draw these reveries with the hymn-writers, and these counsels for the heart-life, to a close. As a labour of love have we written. We trust that the labour has not been in vain in the Lord. We close with those glorious lines of good old Bishop Ken, which have been sung oftener than any other four lines in the English language :

" Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
PRAISE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST."



HEART THOUGHTS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE GREAT CHOICE	1
THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN	7
PAYING THE FARE	13
THE RICH SOUL.	18
WHO KINDLED THE FIRE?	34
WEDDED FOR HEAVEN	40
GREAT EXPECTATIONS—FROM GOD	46
THE BITTER WATERS SWEETENED	52
WHERE IS YOUR PLACE?	57
CHRIST A SERVANT.	62
THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS	68
DIGGING FOR WATER	72
THE SHEPHERD'S SLING	78
HEBER AND HIS HYMN	91
NOTHING BUT LEAVES.	96
BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT	102
HYMNS OF OUR OWN LAND	108
THE SUCCESSFUL PASTOR.	116
A SONG OF PEACE	122

HEART-THOUGHTS.

THE GREAT CHOICE.

ALLOW me the privilege of addressing a few plain, affectionate words to one who is yet without a hope in Christ. I address you, my friend, as the possessor of an immortal soul. In the language in which Moses addressed Israel before he went up to his mountain death-bed, "I set before you life and death: *choose life!*" Every one has the power of choice. God made you a free moral agent. The very fact that you are now reading these lines proves that you have the power of choice. Every Christian in the world *is* a Christian simply because he accepted Christ when He was offered. Every impenitent sinner is yet one because he *chooses to be*. There is no decree of the Almighty which forbids your having eternal life, if you desire to secure it. Perhaps you cavil at "God's *decrees.*" Just look at *this* one: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." Or at this one: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of

the wicked." Or at this one : " Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." God's immutable decrees, in fact, secure salvation to every penitent believer and follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Joshua submitted the great alternative, " *Choose ye this day whom ye will serve,*" he addressed his auditors as free agents. When Christ said to Andrew and James and John, " *Follow me,*" He talked to them as rational beings, who had the power of choice. If they could not "follow" Him, why did He ask them? When Simon Peter stood up before the mass-meeting in Jerusalem, and exclaimed, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost," he addressed them as free agents; and three thousand of them accepted the Divine Saviour.

If you ask me what is meant in the Bible by "*life,*" I would answer : It is the favour of God ; it is the pardon of your sins ; it is the sustaining strength to do right ; it is a union of heart to Jesus ; it is a Divine support in the last hour, and everlasting holiness and joy beyond the grave. "*Death*" is the opposite of life : it is the absence of life. Spiritual death is the unbroken dominion of sin in this world, and the unending punishment of sin in the world to come. In this world the God of mercy says to every one,

“I set before you life and death : *choose life.*” In the next world, the Divine and all-righteous Judge will say to those who choose life, “Come, ye blessed of my Father ; inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” To those who choose death He will say, “Depart, ye cursed !” and they “shall go away into everlasting punishment.”

But you may say, “I do *not* choose death. It is impossible that any sane person should deliberately choose to be eternally wretched, when he might be eternally happy.” This seems very plausible, and there is a sense in which it is true. Men do *not* commonly select wretchedness and ruin as the end of their voluntary endeavours. They do not set success and happiness on the one hand and ruin on the other, and then calmly choose to be ruined. Yet it is equally true that men are continually selecting and pursuing courses that inevitably *lead to ruin.*

Here is a young man setting out in life. Of course his preference is to become rich and prosperous. But he chooses also to lead a career of indolence and thriftlessness, which inevitably brings him to poverty, and keeps him there. His poverty is the fruit of his own conduct. Again, no man voluntarily chooses the disgrace and disease and horrors of drunkenness. But thousands, alas ! *do choose* to tamper with the

wine-glass and the brandy-bottle, and their own free choice brings them surely to the drunkard's self-damnation. Did that poor girl who gave her heart and hand to the showy vagabond who stole her affections choose to become a wretched wife? Yet she did choose to marry him; she did it in spite of reason and conscience, and dearly does she pay the consequences of her choice.

In the same manner, my impenitent friend, when you decide to reject the knocking Saviour from your heart, you do choose to risk the awful consequences. When you choose to live on in sin, to follow the devices and desires of your own lusts, and to grieve the Holy Spirit of love, you deliberately choose everlasting death. You choose the road that leads to death. If you are lost, it will be your own fault. It will not be your heavenly Father's fault: He says to you, "Choose life!" It will not be the loving Saviour's fault: He says to you, "Look unto me, and live!" It is not the fault of that patient Spirit of truth, who is now pleading with you to renounce sin and accept the atonement offered to you in the gospel.

It is a delightful thought that your encouragements to seek life are so abundant. The word of God overflows with encouragements. You may grow dis-

couraged in seeking wealth, or health, or office, or great literary attainments; but no living man or woman need despair of gaining salvation. If you seek it in time, and seek it rightly, it is yours. The only time you are sure of is the *present*; and the only way is, through penitence and faith in the crucified Jesus. Eternal life is now within your reach. It does not depend on intellect, or wealth, or social patronage, or on the will of another. It depends on your own willingness to accept the Saviour, and by Divine help to serve Him faithfully. God will not hinder you, and Satan cannot hinder you, if you are in earnest. The only being who can destroy you is your own self. God is love; and God sets before you life and death, and says to you with infinite tenderness, "Choose life! Give me thy heart!"

"There for thee the Saviour stands,
Shows His wounds, and spreads His hands;
Christ is love,—this know and feel!
Jesus weeps, and loves thee still."

Not long since, a friend came into my study in deep distress of mind: she had been awakened by hearing me preach from the words, "Choose life." She wished to know what she should do. I said, "You have been opposing God all your life. You

have shut Christ from your heart. He seeks admission. Let Him in. Give yourself all up to Him. Choose life." I prayed with her, and besought her to yield herself to Jesus while we were on our knees. After rising up, I handed to her Newman Hall's blessed little book, "*Come to Jesus.*" She laid it down, and modestly said, "I want now to pray too." We knelt once more together ; and in sweet, artless language she just poured out her whole soul in penitent petition, and gave herself up to Jesus. She rose with brightened countenance, and said, "I feel more peaceful now." She had made the GREAT CHOICE ; she had given her heart to God ; and on the next Sabbath she stood up and made a public profession of her faith in the Redeemer. My friend, you can make the same choice. It is only a moment's work, when you are in earnest. God offers you His help. I have set before you life and death. Before you lay down this book determine to CHOOSE LIFE.



THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.



OW hard it is for physicians to undeceive a consumptive patient! It is so painful that the office is seldom done. The victim of that flattering disease—which so often selects the fairest for its prey—tells us every day that she is better, and “will soon be out again.” The hectic flush which she mistakes for returning health is only a cunning mask behind which death steals in to strike the doomed one to the heart. Such is the deceitfulness of disease.

We could to-day summon ten thousand slaves of the stimulating cup, and not one of them would acknowledge that he intends to become a drunkard. The fatal symptoms of their sin are all too legible in the flushed face, the unsteady gait, and the tipsy talk; and yet they stoutly insist that they “never take more than is good for them,” and that they “know just when to stop.” This is Satan’s catechism, which every tippler learns. Such is the deceitfulness of evil habit.

Now, just as the victims of consumption or of cancer deceive themselves, just as the inebriate tries

to conceal from himself the fatal serpent in his social glass, so do all impenitent persons deceive themselves as to the nature and enormity of their sins. They regard all sin against God as a light thing. Dishonesty in trade, falsehood, adultery, theft, treason, they understand perfectly to be exceedingly injurious to their victims and to society. But while they are keenly alive to every trespass against commercial integrity or social order, they utterly belittle all *heart-sin* against a holy God. They regard it as a trifle; and secretly a vast majority of impenitent sinners hold that a future hell is an improbability. I once heard a learned judge say that the idea of future punishment was "a ghost story, only fit to frighten weak-minded women." What his infidel lips expressed coarsely, millions who are *not* "infidels" believe in their inmost hearts. Their "hearts are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" as to the very essence of sin, and as to the extent of their own guiltiness.

We do not exaggerate the importance of a right estimate of sin. This is a vital point in the soul's salvation: it is more than a technic of theology. The nature of sin and its inherent ill-desert is a precise point where the rejectors of future punishment diverge from the path of truth. Only admit that sin is an infinite offence against Jehovah, and their error

perishes in a moment, under the direct threatenings of God's word. It is at this point that Socinians leave us,—and leave their Bibles too. They assume that sin is a light and venial thing that may be pardoned without an atonement; and then they discover no need of a Divine Redeemer to “make a propitiation” for the sinner. When a man is thoroughly convicted of his own guiltiness before God, he is seldom disturbed with any Socinian doubts as to the *necessity* of grasping Christ Jesus as his only Saviour. Sin appears to him so abominable an outrage against the holy and loving God, that he can understand why a Redeemer is indispensable, and why he should accept the all-sufficient One whom the gospel offers. In fact, this matter of estimating sin rightly, lies at the dividing-spot between truth and error, with myriads of persons. This is the starting-point toward Calvary and heaven; or it is the “stumbling-point,” whence they precipitate themselves downward toward perdition.

After all, *what is sin?* It is a transgression of the law of God, and it proceeds from the heart. It lies not only in evil performances, but in evil purposes. If sin is committed against God, what does God Himself say about it? He pronounces it in His word to be “exceeding sinful,”—“the abominable thing

that He hates." He compares it to a loathsome leprosy. He declares that the "wages of sin is *death*." He declares that even the "evil thoughts" which proceed from the heart "defile a man," and that nothing that defileth shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many passages in God's word flash red with holy wrath against sin as the stupendous crime against the government of Jehovah.

Human history is the record of what sin has wrought from Eden to this hour. Sin gives birth to every real sorrow. Sin mingles every cup of temptation. Sin breeds every war. Sin blanches every corpse. Sin digs every grave. Sin weaves every shroud. Sin kindles the fires of future torment. As Chalmers has nervously phrased it, "The waste and the havoc of centuries that are gone, and the waste and havoc of centuries yet to come, all reverberate in one awful voice, 'Death hath passed upon all men, for *that all have sinned*.'"

The crowning evidence of the exceeding enormity of sin is seen on Calvary. What reared the cross? What wove the crown of thorns? What mingled the bitter cup which the suffering Jesus prayed "might pass from Him"? What slew the Lamb of God? Heaven, earth, and hell all answer *Sin*. On that background of infinite love—the love of Him who

died for sinners—human guilt stands out with a midnight malignity of blackness !

Impenitent friend ! come up to Calvary, and see yourself in the light of that wonderful scene ! See what sin is doing there, what your sin deserves, and what Jesus bore there for you, the sinner. Confess there what you cannot deny, that you are rejecting Him who shed His blood for you. Confess that you are making a mock at sin, and treating it as a trifle. Confess that you are among Christ's crucifiers. And then pretend, if you dare, that you are not guilty. If those "who despise Moses' law perish, of how much sorer punishment will you be thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing ?"

That men who are guilty of such a crime against the loving Jesus should esteem it a small and venial matter, is the strongest proof of the "deceitfulness of sin." Other arguments cluster about it ; but we have no space to cite them. We might remind you of the thousand false promises sin makes, but never keeps. It promises happiness, and pays in remorse. It smiles and smiles, and "murders while it smiles." It whispers, "Ye shall *not* surely die," but its wages are death everlasting.

We have read of a singular tree that forcibly illustrates the deceitfulness of sin. It is called the *Judas-tree*. The blossoms appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson. The flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects, and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal opiate, and drops dead from among the crimson flowers to the earth! Beneath this enticing tree the earth is strewed with the victims of its fatal fascinations. That fatal plant that attracts only to destroy is a vivid emblem of the deceitfulness and deadliness of sin. For the poison of sin's bewitching flowers there is but *one remedy*. It is found in the "leaves of the tree of life," that groweth on Mount Calvary.



PAYING THE FARE.

THAT was an expensive voyage which Jonah made when he "fled from the presence of the Lord" and ran away to Tarshish. He found a ship just ready to sail, and he "*paid the fare thereof.*" But he paid dearly. How much money he paid we do not know; but it was a dead loss, for he never got to Tarshish. He paid away his credit as a servant of the Lord. He made a hard draft on his *conscience*, and that is always a dear bargain for any man. Nothing hurts us like the hurts we give to our conscience.

After Jonah's sinful voyage began, the second part, and the hardest part, of the bill came in. For the Almighty sent after him the policeman of a mighty *gale*, which caught hold of the vessel and well-nigh shivered it into wreck. Poor Jonah had not paid his fare to the bottom of the sea; but there is no help for him. The frightened crew pitched him out into the deep, and but for God's interposing mercy he might have been devoured by the sharks instead of being preserved by that "great fish" which was sent to transport him safely to the dry land. A dear voyage that!

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The prophet who ran away from God lost his money, lost his time, lost his credit, lost the approval of his conscience and of his God, and would have lost his life but for a miraculous interposition. All this was the "fare" which one man paid for *sinning*.

But many of our readers may be committing the same terrible mistake. For no path seems to most people so easy and pleasant to travel, as the path of sinful inclination. It is what the Bible calls "walking in the way of a man's *own heart*, and in the sight of his *own eyes*." One man, for example, is entirely absorbed in making money. When this becomes a greedy appetite, the money-lover must pay for it with daily anxiety and worry, and he runs the fearful risk of being eaten up with covetousness. A greed for wealth grows with years. When the rich miser of New York tottered out into the street at fourscore, and a friend asked him how he felt, the feeble old miser replied eagerly, "I feel better to-day : *stocks are up*." Ah! what a *fare* that old millionaire had to pay for travelling farther and faster than others on the road to wealth ! It shrivelled up his very soul. Gold may be a useful servant, but it is a cruel master. It is not easy to own *it* without its owning us. Where one man makes it a rich blessing to others, thousands make it the ruin of their souls. Love of money drew

Lot to the fertile valley of Sodom, and he "paid the fare thereof" in the destruction of his family. Love of money made Gehazi a knave: he "paid the fare" in an incurable leprosy. Love of money was one of two sins for which Judas paid with the suicide's rope, and everlasting infamy. No man can make money safely and wisely, unless he holds his earnings as a trust from God. What would it profit you to win the wealth of an empire, if you should pay for it the price of your undying soul? "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Into no road do young persons press more eagerly than the road to sensual indulgence. No turnpike is more travelled, and none exacts a more terrible "toll." He who travels it must "pay the fare" thereof. The licentious man pays it in shame and self-loathing, in remorse and "rottenness of the bones." No young maiden can take these hot coals into her bosom without being fearfully burned. The beautiful but ill-fated girl from New Jersey, whose tragical end once awakened such a universal thrill of horror, may have taken only one false step at first. But how far that led! It requires but *one step* to go down Niagara. She paid dearly for yielding to temptation; for the end of it was death. Hundreds of young men are pressing in every night to houses of wanton pleasure, bent only

on enjoyment. But over the door of every house of infamy the finger of inspiration has written, "This house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

All along the seductive pathways of self-indulgence God places His toll-gates of retribution. I sometimes pass in the streets a wretched man who often needs the help of a policeman to convey him to his desolated home. He was once rich and respected. Poor victim of the bottle, he is "paying the toll" on the devil's turnpike. The heartless dramsellers, who furnish him the poison for guilty gain, will have to pay *theirs* when they reach the judgment-bar of God!

We cannot stop to recount all the penalties which men and women have to pay for sinning. The costliest thing in the world is *sin*. It costs purity of conscience, and costs the favour of God. It will cost at the last the loss of heaven. The sin of grieving the Holy Ghost has cost many a one everlasting perdition.

"Show me the better way,—show me the safe way," exclaim some of my readers who are alarmed at their own course of sin, and who really desire to live a better life. "Show me the way, and tell me what is *the fare thereof*." Friend, salvation is *free* on God's side ;

but on *your* side it must be won by repentance and faith. As far as Christ's precious atonement is concerned,


“Nothing, either great or small,
Remains for you to do ;
Jesus died, and paid it all—
All the debt you owe !”

But the road to heaven, which the crucified Jesus has opened to you, can only be entered by your abandoning your sins, and following Him in faith and self-denial. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “Except a man take up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot be His disciple.” Friend, this “fare” you must “pay” to enter heaven. Are you willing?



THE RICH SOUL.

“Rich toward God.”—*Luke xii. 21.*

“HAT is he worth?” Used in its full significance, this would be the most pregnant, the most just, and the most comprehensive question that could be propounded in regard to any immortal being. When asked in the ordinary way, it simply means, How large are his estates? how much gold has he in his bank-vaults? And the ordinary answer would be, “The man is worth twenty thousand, or a hundred thousand dollars.” Then we can only say that he will have twenty thousand or a hundred thousand dollars to account for at the bar of God. Then will he be either the happy reaper of immortal joys, when every well-employed coin shall nod like a golden ear in the full sheaf of his heavenly harvest; or else he must meet thousands of scorpions to torment his soul through his dreary eternity of despair. Is a man worth uncounted thousands in bullion or bank stock, in real estate or rare commodities? Then he ought to be worth a vast deal to the community in which he lives, and to the Church of Jesus Christ.

He ought to be worth—bread to the hungry, schooling to the ignorant, Bibles to the unevangelized, and mission-schools to the heathen children at our doors. He ought to be rich towards God in the large and liberal employment of his high stewardship.

For not every rich man is “rich toward God.” Else our Saviour would not have uttered the parable from which our text is taken. He probably had in His mind just such a person as I could easily find in a ten minutes’ walk through this commercial city,—a self-complacent Croesus, shrivelled in soul, but corpulent in purse ; a man in whom avarice has devoured all the other appetites of the heart, as voracious sharks gulp down whole shoals of smaller fish ; one who could call up his immortal part, and address it in the same spirit in which he would talk to a silken-haired pet spaniel, “Now, my little soul, thou hast much goods laid up for thyself !” Not for others, observe. Not for God. But for *thyself*. “Now eat, drink, and be merry. Sate thyself. Feast thy eyes on full barns, full board, full bags, full bank-vaults. Gloat over them, They are all thine. Never will I be so weak-headed as to be cheated out of them,—never so weak-hearted as to squander them on foolish charities.” “*Thou fool!*” thunders the voice of God above him,—“thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of

thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

This terrible satire of Divine indignation is not expended upon the subject of this parable because he was rich in earthly goods. The Bible has no controversy with men of wealth. It never discourages the acquisition of gold, as long as the heart owns the gold, and the gold does not own the heart. The anathema of the parable is not against riches, but against *selfishness*, the mammon-worship which dethrones Jehovah. And by as much as this selfishness is the selfishness of wealth, by just so much is it the more abominable and hateful. For when God makes an individual worth tens of thousands, and he makes himself worth less than nothing to his Creator and his fellow-men, God will curse such selfishness with the most crushing condemnation. Even at the bar of final judgment, one test-question will be, in regard to you and to me, and to every man, "How much is he worth,—worth to his Saviour and the Saviour's cause? How much has he been worth to his fellow-men?" In that great day of decision I should like to stand up as the pastor of a rich Church,—exceeding rich in faith and good works. If so, you must begin now, with a holy covetousness, to lay up spiritual and eternal treasures. Let me point out to you a few simple rules for becoming "rich toward God."

I. And, first, let me remind you that *every soul on earth is born poor*. There is no exemption from this hard lot. Whether in royal nurseries, where the heir to the throne is well-nigh smothered in down, or in the pauper's thatched hovel, every immortal soul begins its existence poor. Sin spares not a solitary child of Adam. Sin writes its moral poverty on every occupant of every cradle. As the emptiness of the purse makes one poor financially, so the entire emptiness of the heart as to all holy emotions, holy desires, and purposes, constitutes our native moral poverty. Who would go to the ragged urchin in the industrial school for a loan? Yet it would be quite as wise to expect a depraved heart to give forth what it has never yet possessed,—one pure, holy emotion.

How then can any soul become rich toward God? He does not inherit spiritual wealth, but rather the entire and most pitiable want of it. He inherits guilt. He inherits evil passions. Noble faculties and capacities are his inheritance, but not one particle of native grace comes with them. The more gifted in intellect, the more dangerous will he become, if those mental powers are wholly uncontrolled by the law of God. Without grace, he is a guilty creature on earth, and a lost creature through eternity.

He must begin then on that grace,—on God's free

gift to him through Christ. Just as a liberal father establishes his son in commercial business by furnishing him a certain sum as his capital, so (if we may thus speak) our heavenly Father gives the new heart as a Christian capital. This is the starting point. As soon as converting grace enters the soul its condition changes. At that moment, by that act, the seeking sinner becomes the forgiven, the accepted, the adopted heir of God. And the religious principle then implanted by the Holy Ghost is the spiritual capital with which the new-made heir begins his stewardship. Sometimes this capital is furnished in childhood or in early youth, and then a long "threescore and ten" witnesses the growth of that soul into vast possessions. Sometimes a person begins late in life; and then, like those who mistake their secular callings, and only get hold of the right occupation at forty, he seldom becomes a spiritual millionaire. In fact, he does not get far beyond his original capital. It is hard work to make a "first-class" Christian out of an aged sinner. Old habits of sin have become inveterate. The best soil of the heart has been worn out in growing enormous crops of tares. There is a want of spring and pliability in an old man's temperament; he does not readily adapt himself to new positions and new duties. As the

merchants who have accumulated the most gigantic fortunes are commonly those who began to be rich before thirty, so the richest Christians are usually to be found among the converts of the Bible-class room and the Sabbath-school. Begin young, my friends, if you would attain to great riches. Those who are no longer young may still be saved if they will come heartily to Jesus ; but I doubt if they often do much towards saving others. God reserves the highest reward to those who enlist the earliest, and serve the hardest and the longest.

II. In the second place, let me remind you that *he who would amass large wealth must not sit down content with his original capital.* He makes investments. He plants his gold in a well-tilled farm, or sends it seaward in strong-bottomed ships, or sets it to spinning new fortunes in the factory. He must venture what he has, if he would gain more.

Even so in the spiritual world that professor is but a lean, poverty-stricken starveling, who never gets beyond the infantile condition in which he stood for the first time at Christ's table. Such professors there be in every Church. Their single talent is hidden in a napkin,—a very small napkin. What God bestowed upon them at the time of conversion is all that they have now : if there has been any change, it has been

rather a reduction than a growth. Such began small—they continue smaller. They never were anything but rivulets, trickling with slender thread of water among the barren stones, at the mercy of every August drought, and well-nigh drunk up by every thirsty noonday sun. Year after year they trickle—trickle—trickle—until death dries them up, and nobody misses them. They watered nothing; they refreshed nobody, and blessed no living thing. Earth is little the poorer for losing them; heaven scarcely the richer for gaining them.

But a growing believer's course is like yonder river's,—its birth-place some secluded fountain under the mossy rock. Cool and clear, it steers its modest path whithersoever God shall lead it, laughing evermore and leaping to its own silvery music. For long we lose sight of it. Then we meet it again, no longer a wayside brook, but a deep-voiced river, beating against its banks,—swelling up to kiss the marge of green meadows,—winding around the highland's base,—rolling on its majestic march until it spreads out into a hospitable bay, on whose placid bosom fleets ride at anchor, and in whose azure depths the banners of all nations are mirrored. Such is the onflow of a rich soul,—every day widening in influence, every day deepening in experience, every day running

purser and purer. To human eyes such believers may move more slowly as old age draws on. But it is because the volume of their graces is increasing, and they are nearing the ocean of Eternity. How these lives gladden the regions through which they pass! How they mirror back the glory of Christ's gracious handiwork! How they bear up human hopes, and spread themselves out like broad, patient rivers, to carry all burdens that are launched on their bosoms!

Yet such a glorious Christian career, so beautiful in its daily flow, and so beneficent in its results, is only the original grace of conversion employed at compound interest. This mighty river of holy influence is only the original fountain magnified. Behold the virtue of *accumulation*! To this the apostle exhorted when he urged his brethren to "*grow in grace.*" To accumulate soul-wealth for God is the purport of that apostolic injunction,—"*Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.*" Brethren, I repeat and re-enforce the exhortation: Grow in grace. Expand. Absorb every down-pouring of heavenly influence. Catch every descending

drop of spiritual blessing. Open your hearts to every stream of Bible knowledge. Be filled with the fulness of Christ. So shall ye be neither empty nor unfruitful, but "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

III. This leads me, in the third place, to speak of the METHODS of spiritual wealth-getting. How shall a believer become "rich toward God"? We answer that the rules for securing success in secular affairs will apply to the advancement of the soul in grace. The real currency in commerce is metallic, the broad earth over. And the gold and silver which make up the basis of personal wealth are the product of the mines; each glittering coin the result of the miner's hard toil with sieve or with mattock. Now, the currency of God's kingdom is *truth*; and the Bible is the ore-bed. To every one of you this mine is open. He must be a blind or a careless miner who does not come out of this inexhaustible ore-bed with some new and massive "nugget" as the result of every hour's research. Do you consider every bank solvent, whose vaults are the hiding-place of solid bullion, amply sufficient to meet its liabilities? So is he a solvent Christian whose secret soul is stored with gospel principles, all coined and stamped for daily use. Nor should any Christian ask credit any further

than he can fully redeem his promises and professions by the "ready money" of consistent, godly conduct.

To make a rich believer, something more than faith is needed. More, too, than scriptural knowledge. There must be also—*experience*. Ah, this is a costly possession! Nothing is bought so dear; and yet it is worth all it costs us. This is a part of the soul's wealth that no one can purchase for us; no dearest friend can make it over to us as a gift. We must "go and buy for ourselves," and exorbitant is the price we often pay for it.

There are sometimes rare and beautiful wares brought into the market that are invoiced at almost fabulous rates. Ignorant people wonder why they are priced so high. The simple reason is that they cost so much to procure. That luxurious article labelled £200 was procured by the adventurous hunter, who, at the hazard of his neck, brought down the wild mountain-goat, out of whose glossy hair the fabric was wrought. Yonder pearl that flashes on the brow of the bride is precious because it was rescued from the great deep at the risk of the pearl-fisher's life, as he was lifted into the boat half-dead, with the blood gushing from his nostrils. Yonder ermine, flung so carelessly over the proud beauty's shoulder,

cost terrible battles with Polar ice and hurricane. All choicest things are reckoned the dearest. So is it, too, in Heaven's inventories. The universe of God has never witnessed aught to be reckoned in comparison with the redemption of a guilty world. That mighty ransom no such contemptible things as silver and gold could procure. Only by one price could the Church of God be redeemed from hell, and that the precious blood of the Lamb,—the Lamb without blemish or spot,—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

And so is it that the best part of a Christian character is that which was procured at the sorest cost. Patience is a beautiful trait, but it is not worn oftenest by those who walk on life's sunny side in silver slippers. It is the product of dark nights of tempest, and of those days of adversity whose high noon is but a midnight. For "the *trial* of your faith worketh patience." Purity of soul is like purity in gold, where the hottest fires turn out the most refined and precious metals from the crucible. Joseph found his crucible in an Egyptian prison; but he came out thence with the soul of a virgin. Purity of character is often bought in this wicked city by the bitter price of a crust of bread eaten with a good conscience in an attic; when a guilty connivance would have been

rewarded with French satins and a harlot's sumptuous couch.

The knowledge of our own besetting sins is a knowledge we all crave. We imagine that we would be willing to pay liberally for the insight into our own hearts which shall reveal all our weak points, not knowing how soon some unexpected emergency might develop some foible or some vice of character hitherto unsuspected. But men have paid dearly for such discoveries. David paid for his self-knowledge with the life of a darling child and a broken heart; Hezekiah paid for his by the wearisome sufferings of a sick-chamber; Peter for his by the bitter agonies in Pilate's garden. But the discoveries were worth all they cost. Among God's jewels there is no brilliant which flashes with such lustre as the tear of true penitence. Yet God only knoweth what heart-pressure, as in a vice,—what wringings and rendings of soul, what crushings of pride and wrestlings of agony,—may have been needful in order to press out that jewel-drop upon the cheek of the stubborn sufferer! We have sometimes met with a person in social circles, who possessed a peculiar gentleness and docility of character. As we came to know her better, we were amazed and charmed by her calm self-poise, and her heroic submissiveness to God under sudden shocks of

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calamity. We admired so beautiful a character. We envied its possessor. We coveted such a spirit for ourselves. Ah, we little knew at what fearful price of severe chastisements and bitter disappointments, of hopes desolated and expectations crossed, of faith put to the rack, and patience burned bright in seven-times-heated furnaces, all that meek loveliness of character had been gained ! So true is it, dear brethren, that he is the most rich toward God who is ready to toil the hardest, and to bear the most to gain his acquisition.

To be truly rich, all these graces of patience and purity and meekness and long-suffering are indispensable. Cost what they will, they must be attained. By prayer and by practice they must be sought after, and so sought as to secure them. He is a meagre, crude, unfinished, unripe, and unimpressive Christian who does not possess those peculiar graces which are only to be won by suffering and trial. Do not draw back from the possession of any spiritual treasure, I beseech you, from the dread of paying dearly for it. The worldling withholds no toil, no sacrifices, that are needful to secure his coveted gains or honours. The merchant begrudges not the evenings spent away from his own fireside, if those extra hours over his ledgers will give but an extra dividend of profits. The

sculptor counts not the long months wasted which see him with hammer and chisel pursuing the imprisoned figure which his keen eye detects within the block of Parian marble. And the children of light must carry into their service of Christ the same untiring ardour, the same zeal, and the same self-denial by which the children of the world win wealth and honour and emoluments. Oh for a holy enthusiasm!—a holy covetousness to become rich toward God!

IV. The fourth and last principle that I shall present is, that whoever would become rich in spiritual treasure must *give away bountifully*. This is the truest paradox in Christian economy. He that saves for self only loses: he that loses for Christ's sake is sure to save. Would you grow rich toward God? Then learn to give. God loveth a cheerful giver. Nor do I limit this rule to the donation of the purse. The mere gift of gold is but a part of Christian benevolence, though by no means an unimportant part. I often wish that I were the possessor of the wealth of Henry Thornton or Amos Lawrence, provided that I had always, too, the wealth of heart-love to do good that those princely men had. But a rich *soul* can be always giving; as the noonday sun overflows his golden urn of ceaseless radiance, and is yet


none the poorer in warmth and glory when a whole universe has been lighted.

We must freely give of everything that we have freely received from the Lord. If we have the heart to pray, let us give of our prayers. No legacy that a rich father could have left me would compare in value with my widowed mother's prayers for me at the mercy-seat. You that have acquired the wisdom which age and experience confer can give those counsels which are apples of gold in baskets of silver to the young, the inexperienced, and the unfortunate. Give your personal labours, too, for Christ. Many a rich man seeks to compound with his conscience by bestowing bank-checks in lieu of his own presence in the mission-school, the prayer-meetings, or the abodes of suffering. O man of wealth! God gave thee that very leisure thou enjoyest in order to do the very work of charity which thy poorer, hard-toiling neighbour has no time to perform. Those that have not money or counsel, or charitable deeds to bestow, can at least afford a godly example. And so a godly life may be, from first to last, all expenditure; just as the temple lamps consumed themselves away in giving light. But the life and the heart grow the fuller, the brighter the stronger, the more they expend. What were rich-souled Christians given to the world for but to be reservoirs of blessings?

Happy is the man who can bring the very atmosphere of heaven with him whenever he approaches us!—who acts upon our spirits as the May breezes act upon the first shoots of the tulip and the violet! He is a bountiful giver. He confers on us light; he beams goodness into our souls; he teaches us patience; he showers on us brotherly kindness; he illustrates for us faith; he exhibits the true beauty of meekness; he sheds hope by his very presence; and his unflinching bravery has often been an inspiration of valour to our failing hearts. Next to Christ Himself, there is no blessing to the community like a Christ-like Christian.

My dear reader, I covet for you the best gifts. Ask of God who giveth liberally that ye may all be rich,—rich in faith, rich in good works, rich in revenues of joy, rich in heart-holiness and the love of Jesus. And then, although your frame be wrapped in coarse raiment, your soul shall be enfolded in the shining garniture of Christ's righteousness. Though your dwelling-place be so lowly, yet your heaven-seeking affection may be at home in the celestial courts before the throne of God and of the Lamb. Although your purse be scanty, your heart will be a palace whose chambers are filled with "all pleasant and all precious riches." So shall you be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

WHO KINDLED THE FIRE?

 ONE article in the Mosaic law, given from heaven, is this : “ If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn be consumed therewith, *he that kindled the fire* shall surely make restitution.” This statute had a peculiar necessity in such a hot, dry country as Palestine, where there was a peculiar danger from accidental conflagrations. If a man burned over his stubble field, it was necessary, before the dry grass was lighted, to see that the wind was in the right quarter, and every precaution taken that the flames should not kindle upon the property of a neighbour. If any farmer neglected to take these precautions, and the swift-footed flames went careering through vineyards, and orchards, and stacks of barley, then he who kindled the fire was required to pay for the damage produced by his own carelessness.

The sound principle that underlies this law is that men must suffer for the evil they do through thoughtless recklessness, as well as for what they do with malicious intent. Men are to be held accountable, not only for the injuries which they wilfully

perpetrate, but for the injuries which they occasion to others through wanton carelessness or even thoughtless indifference. The person who set his neighbour's barley-stacks on fire was required to make restitution, although he did not intend to burn him out. The responsibility comes back on him who kindled the flames. Let us apply the principle of this Divine enactment to our own times, and point out the moral dangers of *playing with fire*. Perhaps we may discover that some very respectable people are often very destructive incendiaries.

I. If I invite a group of young men in my house to surround a card-table, I may simply design to furnish them an hour's amusement. But perhaps a lust for gambling may lie latent in some young man's breast, and I may quicken it into life by my offer of a temptation. There is fire in that pack of cards: And I deliberately place that fire amid the inflammable passions of that youthful breast. On *me* rests the consequences of the act, as well as upon him whom I lead into temptation. The motive does not alter the result by one iota.

“For evil is wrought by want of thought,
As well as by want of heart.”

II. Among social virtues none is more popular than that of hospitality. When bountifully practised

towards the *needy* it rises to the dignity of a Christian grace. And ordinary hospitalities may be set to the credit of a generous spirit. But here is the master or mistress of a house who spreads their table with a lavish provision for the entertainment of their evening guests. Among the abundant viands of that table the lady of the house places the choicest brands of Madeira wine, and on a side-board she sets out a huge bowl of inviting punch. And among the invited guests of the evening comes a man who has promised the wife of his early love that he will never again yield to his awful appetite and turn their sweet home into a hell. He sees the tempter in that accursed punch-bowl, and is pressed very courteously to "take a glass." The fire "catches in the dry thorns" in an instant. He drinks. He goes reeling into his own door that night, and his whole household is in a flame of excitement and terror, and agony and shame. *Now who kindled that fire?* Let her who put that bottle to her neighbour's lips make answer! According to the Jewish law, the incendiary was required to pay the damages of the conflagration. But what "restitution" can be made for a ruined character, a desolated home, or a broken heart?

If my house and its contents are destroyed by fire,

the insurance company may restore my pecuniary loss ; but they cannot replace the precious keepsakes and the relics of the loved and lost which my dwelling contained. To-day there are thousands of human houses in New York and Brooklyn—dwellings of immortal souls—that are on fire ! In these burning bodies of our fellow-men are precious things beyond the wealth of Ophir,—hopes, talents, faculties, affections, and an immortality of being. Who kindled those fires ? We answer that every one who tempts another to the social glass is a partner in producing the conflagration. Who *feed* the fires ? Unquestionably the vendors of strong drink, who, for lucre's sake, deal out the liquid flames of perdition. The proprietors of the ten thousand drinking-saloons in our twin cities do not aim to kill their fellow-men. But they do kill them, whatever be their secret motives in pursuing their abominable traffic. At the bar of God they will be held responsible. And let me inquire just here, whether those Christian citizens who do not even lift a finger to sustain the law which *banks the grog-seller's fires during God's own Sabbath*, are not themselves partially guilty for some of the consequences of the wide spread conflagration ? We commend this question to the consciences of our neighbours on the day of election.

III. The artillery of this Divine law against incendiarism has a wide range. It is pointed against that social nuisance the *slanderer*. "Behold how great a matter his little fire kindleth!" The utterance of evil reports may be well likened to playing with fire. For there is but a spark required to set a whole neighbourhood in a blaze; and when the flame gets under way it is beyond all human control. No matter that the spark may have been lighted without malicious motive. The ugly scorch upon the commercial integrity of the merchant, or upon the good name of the Christian minister, or upon the reputation of the young maiden, may not have been the prompting of wilful malignity. But the scorch is there; and somebody struck the spark.

A careless word sometimes makes irremediable mischief. I have read that a foolish young English clerk, fond of practical jokes, once said to a friend, "Have you heard that E—— & Co., the bankers, have stopped payment?" He merely meant that the banking-house had as usual closed up for the night. But he amused himself by seeing how he had startled his friend. He did not stop to explain his real meaning. His friend mentioned the alarming report to another: the rumour spread. Next day there was a "run upon the bank," and Messrs. E——

& Company were obliged to suspend payment! The silly youth did not mean to burn down the commercial credit of a prosperous house: he only meant to amuse himself *by playing with fire*. And a kindred mischief to his is perpetrated by every one who retails contemptible gossip, or gives birth to a scurrilous slander. "An abomination to the Lord is the false witness who speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

IV. This law against incendiarism applies to every utterance of spiritual error and infidelity. He who utters a devilish suggestion to corrupt the innocence of chastity sets fire to passion, and becomes the incendiary of a soul. He who scatters a pernicious literature comes under the same condemnation. He who sows scepticism, by tongue or pen, sets fire to the "standing corn" of righteous opinion. Beware how you play with the sparks of falsehood! Beware how you play with the fire of wicked *suggestion*, that may kindle a blaze of sin in another's heart! Beware how you fling an infidel thought among the growing barley of a young and sensitive mind! For in the day of final reckoning you will be called up to answer to the question. Who *kindled* the fire?

WEDDED FOR HEAVEN.

NEXT to choosing the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and guide, the most important choice a young man can make is that of a *wife*. Yet this most eventful step is too often regarded from first to last in the most trivial aspect. With many it is the merest matter of fancy or boyish caprice. Sometimes a wife is sought for the sole gratification of sensual appetite. Sometimes marriage is viewed entirely as a shrewd pecuniary speculation. Indolent, extravagant young men often intrigue through a marriage-vow for a wealth which they are too lazy or too thriftless to earn by honest toil. On the other hand, many an ambitious parent has sought to purchase a splendid "establishment" with the sweetest charms that Heaven has bestowed upon a daughter. What baser bargain can be consummated? And when a woman consents to sell her person without her heart to a rich suitor, what is it but the essence of prostitution without its loathsome name? Only one man should be rich enough to win my daughter: it is he who can offer a love without a rival, and a character without

a stain. True religion, common sense, industrious habits, and a warm heart,—when a young man can offer *these*, no daughter who is worthy of such a prize will be likely to “say him *nay*.”

With what a rash recklessness do millions rush into the momentous engagements that yield their inevitable retribution of domestic misery! How few seek by prayer for Divine guidance when choosing the companion of their heart, their home, and their destiny! Far oftener, we fear, is it passion than prayer that controls this great decision. The gratification of a fancy, the excitement of a courtship, and the frolic of a wedding are frequently the only preparations for the serious realities of wedded life.

Boyish caprice and girlish romance look vastly different in human eyes when they have crystallized down into the permanent forms of daily existence under the same roof, at the same table and fireside, year in and year out, for summer and winter, for sickness or health, for better or worse, clear on to the doorway of the tomb. When the novelty of wedded life has worn away, and perhaps the beauty of the fair face that inspired the early passion has quite faded out, then there must be something *solid* left behind, or marriage is a mockery and its coveted happiness but a dream. There must be mutual

confidence, mutual respect, unity of aim, and old-fashioned love: there ought to be also a union of hearts in the love of Christ, in closet devotions, and at the communion-table. When these are the qualities of a nuptial union, it is a marriage in the Lord. It "shineth more and more" from the auroral dawn of first love unto the perfect day of rich and ripened bliss. When young hearts are wedded in Christ, they are wedded for heaven. It is a delightful act for a Christian minister to join such hearts and hands together; but the words sometimes stick in his throat when he attempts to pronounce a benediction on a marriage which neither common sense nor conscience have had a share in bringing about. His *fee* seems to come out of Judas's bag.

The admirable Philip Henry, of Broad Oaks, England, sought the hand of an only daughter in a somewhat prominent family. Her father said to her, "This young man seems to be an excellent preacher, but I do not know whence he came." "True," replied the daughter; "but I know *where he is going*, and I want to go along with him." The marriage proved eminently happy, and one of the children was the famous commentator. When his own son Matthew and his daughters asked his consent to their marriage, he said, "Please God,

and please yourselves, and then you will be sure to please me." At their weddings he saluted them with a fatherly kiss, and said, "Other people wish you much happiness, but I wish you much *holiness*: if you have that, you are certain to be happy."

No two steps in a man's life are so solemn as those which join him to Christ's Church, and join him to a wife. Marriage is an ordinance of God. It has often proved a "saving ordinance" to those who had no other tie to Christianity. The men whom a wise marriage has saved (with God's blessing) are innumerable. The men whom a reckless, wretched marriage have ruined,—are their histories not written in the "Book of the Chronicles" of prayerless homes and impenitent death-beds?

"Rebekah," said a dying husband to the wife who bent over him in remorseful agony,—"Rebekah, I am a lost man. You opposed our family worship and my secret prayer. You drew me away into temptation, and to neglect every religious duty. I believe my fate is sealed. Rebekah, you are the cause of my everlasting ruin." Terrible in eternity will be the reunion of those who helped each other on the downward road, partners in impiety, and wedded for perdition.

On the other hand, many a man has owed his

conversion to the steadfast, noble, attractive godliness of a praying wife. "I never doubted the immediate answer of prayer since the conversion of my husband," said a devoted Christian once to her pastor. He had long been a stranger to God, and bitter in his opposition to the Gospel. During a powerful revival in her Church she attended a morning prayer-meeting. This annoyed him, and he denounced it as a waste of time, and forbade her to go again. Next morning she came down with her bonnet on to go to the meeting. He sternly said, "If you *do* dare to go, you will be sorry for it." She could not speak: the rudeness of her husband crushed her into silence. But she determined not to retreat; and when she reached the meeting she could only bow her face on the desk before her, and pour forth her tears and prayers for the obdurate heart she had left behind her. There was certainly *one* praying woman in that gathering.

When evening came, the kind wife put away the children in the crib, took her needle, and sat down by the fire. Presently the husband came in. "Wife, are you not going to meeting to-night?" "No," she replied, gently; "I thought I would stay home with you." He sat awhile in guilty silence: the

fire burned brightly in the grate, and a hotter fire burned in the poor fellow's heart. "Wife," he exclaimed, "I can't stand this any longer. The words I spoke this morning to you have tormented me all day. I can't get any peace till you have forgiven me and prayed for me. *Won't* you pray for me? Oh, what a life I have led!" They knelt together. "That night I shall remember through eternity," said the happy woman, afterward. "There was no sleep for us. Before the dawn of day peace dawned into his soul: we went to the morning meeting together, and he rose and confessed Jesus as his Redeemer." That man walked faithfully with God ever after: from that memorable day they two were *wedded for heaven.*

Happy are those who, like Aquila and Priscilla, are united in the Lord! Happy are they who walk the life-journey,—all the safer and all the happier for walking it hand in hand, keeping step to the voice of duty and of God. Wedded in time, they are wedded for heaven; and will sit down together, with exquisite rapture, at the "marriage-supper of the Lamb."



GREAT EXPECTATIONS—FROM GOD.

THE less we expect from this world the better for us. The less we expect from our fellow-men, whether of spiritual help or of inspiring example, the smaller will be our disappointment. He that leans on his own strength leans on a broken reed. We are always *going* to be something stronger, purer, and holier. Somewhere in the future there always hangs in the air a golden *ideal* of a higher life that we are going to reach; but as we move on, the dream of better things moves on before us also. It is like the child's running over behind the hill to catch the rainbow. When he gets on the hill-top the rainbow is as far off as ever. Thus does our day-dream of a higher Christian life keep floating away from us; and we are left to realize what frail, unreliable creatures we are when we rest our expectations of growth and of victory over evil in ourselves. "My soul, wait thou only upon GOD! My expectation is only *from Him*."

God never deceives us and never disappoints us. I do not say that God never allows us to be disappointed in our darling plans of life, in our children,

or in our most cherished projects. What I mean is, that we are never disappointed in God. When we study the Almighty, whether in His glorious word or in Nature, we find our utmost expectation overtopped by the stupendous and magnificent reality. Read such a book as "Ecce Cœlum," and see if you are disappointed in your Creator. When, too, we obey God, we always find our reward, either sooner or later,—just as surely as light comes with the sunrise. When we trust God, He never deceives us. When we pray to Him *aright*,—that is, with faith, with perseverance, with submissiveness, and with a single eye to God's will,—He answers us. He *always* returns the best answer possible. Our Heavenly Father makes no mistakes in His dealings with suppliants. He is a sovereign but not a despot. If it pleases Him to keep us waiting for the trial of our faith, then we must wait.

But delays are not denials. God's long-dated promises are honoured in His own good time. If we had but to demand from God just what we desired, and when we desired it, we should be stealing His sceptre and ruling the Almighty Ruler. Did you ever know a child that ruled its parents without ruining itself? And, if it spoils our children to let them always have their own way, I am sure that it would

be my ruin if I could bend my Heavenly Father's will to all my own wishes. If *this* be your "expectation" from God, He will very soon teach you better.

God fulfills no foolish, greedy, presumptuous requests. But He does keep His promises. '(He never promised to let you or me *hold the reins.*) He always answers a right prayer, and in the way and at the time which His all-wise love determines. And with what unexpected deliverances and blessings He often loves to take us by surprise! I never went through a revival in my congregation without discovering that I could not trust God our Saviour too much, or my fellow-man too little.

Are you Christ's, my brother? Then all things are yours. In Him dwelleth all the *fulness* of the Godhead. "Of His fulness have all we received," said that beloved disciple who leaned on the Saviour's bosom. John was never disappointed in his Lord; nor was Paul either, when he found himself "filled with all the fulness of God." There is a fulness of sufficiency in Christ as a Divine Redeemer. His blood cleanseth from all sin. There is a fulness of justifying merit in Him; for "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." There is a fulness of power in Him who "is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." There

is a fulness of love in Him who "having loved His own who are in the world, loveth them to the end." In my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is a fulness of grace and strength and peace and consolation that no man has ever been able to explore, and all the needy sinners in the universe could never be able to exhaust.

To little brooks men have often gone in seasons of drought, and found only a parched bed, cracked open with the heat. But who ever saw the Atlantic *low*? What ship ever failed to set sail for Liverpool through lack of water? Oh the *depth* of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge and grace of God! When some one urged old John Jacob Astor to subscribe for a certain object, and told him that his own son had subscribed to it already, the old man replied, very dryly: "Ah! he has *got a rich father.*" Brother, you and I have got a rich Father, too. You are an heir of the King of kings. Then ask for great things, for "all our expectation is from Him."

God must take it ill in us that we ask for so little and with such a puny faith. He says, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." He must wonder that we expect so little from Him. "The Lord taketh pleasure"—in whom? Why, in "those that hope in His mercy." He loveth to be inquired after. Oh if

we would only expect enough, and strive after enough, and ask enough from our infinitely rich Father up yonder, who can tell what blessings we might obtain !

Paul only expressed the unanimous judgment of all the heirs in God's household when he exclaimed, "I *know* whom I have believed." He summed up his glorious past, and his expectations for the future, when he cried out, with rapture, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: *henceforth* there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give me in that day!" Paul "looked for" that magnificent inheritance. So do I. So may you, if you are a follower of Jesus. I expect that if I endure to the end, I shall be saved. I expect, and confidently too, that through faith I shall be kept by the power of God unto salvation. I expect that when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He will be with me ; His rod and His staff will comfort me. Heaven is to me only an expectation. So is to-morrow's sunrise. I have not yet *seen* either of them ; but they are coming. Behind this day's midnight lies to-morrow's dawn. Behind that night called death, lies the day-dawn of heaven's exceeding weight of glory !


I expect that, if I hold fast to Christ, I shall see it.

Beyond all that human eye hath yet seen, or human ear heard, is that glory to be revealed to me! I expect a *joy* that shall be to me as a “harp,” and a *triumph* that shall be to me as a “palm,” and a *glory* that shall be as a “crown unfading.” Figurative or not though the words may be, I expect the substance which they describe. My soul, wait thou only upon God; my expectation is *from Him!*

“Our knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And we shall be like Him!”



THE BITTER WATERS SWEETENED.

HREE days of torrid and thirsty travel from the Red Sea brought the children of Israel to a fountain in the desert. All rush forward eagerly for a cooling draught. But, alas! the waters are so bitter that neither man nor beast can drink them. The disappointing spring is at once named by the murmuring Israelites, *Marah*, which signifies the waters of bitterness.

To this day a fountain is known (about seventeen hours' travel from the "wells of Moses"), which the Arabs still call *Howara*. It is supposed by many geographers to be the identical spring of *Marah*, for its waters are exceedingly brackish. Professor Stanley, of Oxford, mentions a spring, a short distance south of *Howara*, which "was so bitter that neither men nor camels could drink it."

Beside one of these two fountains of bitterness stood the great host of thirsty Israel, with a terrible bitterness of disappointment in their hearts. They cry out against God. The deliverance at the Red Sea is forgotten. Past mercies are lost sight of, and present griefs seem to stir up all the acrid

humours within them. They murmur against Moses, and exclaim, despairingly, "What shall we drink?"

Fellow-pilgrims to the promised land, how exactly this scene tallies with our own experiences! Right after happy days of prosperity and mercy, we come suddenly upon a *Marah* of bitter disappointment. We had set our hearts upon some favourite project. Perhaps we were going on a long-coveted tour, and had made all our arrangements. But the day for the departure finds us on a sick-bed; and the medicine we swallow is not half so hard to take as the disappointment. Selfishness murmurs and chafes under the trial. But presently we begin to see that this bed of sickness lay right on the road to Canaan. We begin to talk with our own hearts, and to think over our past lives. We begin to pray with a new hunger of soul, and to read God's promises with new eyes. We make fresh covenant with God, that, if He will restore us to health, we will use it for Him, and will walk more closely with Him. We take up one precious promise after another, and drop it into the fountain of trial, and lo! the waters begin to taste sweeter to us! Prayer becomes sweeter, and Christ's presence sweeter; and something within us whispers, "After all, is not this better for us than the journey to Europe or to the

mountains? Is it not good for me that I have been shut up here with Jesus?"

Now this was just what happened to angry and disappointed Israel. The Lord showed to Moses a tree, which, when he had cast it into the fountain, made the waters to become so sweet that the whole host drank of them with delight. I doubt whether God created that tree miraculously; He simply "showed" it to Moses. So God does not create a Bible, or a mercy-seat, or an atonement, or a jewel-casket of promises, or supplies of grace, especially for us. His Spirit simply opens our eyes to see them, and our hearts to enjoy them. He reveals to us the tree of healing which turns a draught of bitterness into a draught of holy joy. Thus,—

"Trials make the promise sweet ;
Trials give new life to prayer :
Bring me to the Saviour's feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there."

It is delightful to sit down beside a child of God who has in his hand a bitter cup of trial, but the "sweet breath of Jesus" has turned the bitterness into such a blessing, that he "tastes the love" of Jesus in every drop.

I love to hear old Richard Baxter exclaim, after a life of constant suffering, "O my God! I thank Thee for a bodily discipline of eight-and-fifty years."

I love to sit down by Harlan Page, and hear him say, "A bed of pain is a precious place, when we have the presence of Christ. God does not send one unnecessary affliction. Lord! I thank Thee for suffering. I deserve it. I deserve death eternal. Let me not complain or dictate. I commit myself to Thee, O Saviour, and to Thy infinite love. I stop my mouth, and lie low beside Thee!" So God built up the blood-bought soul faster than disease was pulling down the frail tenement in which it dwelt. And through the rents heaven's glory shone in with rapturous radiance!

I suppose there is rarely a *Marah* on earth more bitter than that which a father or mother reaches when they bend over the coffin which holds the darling of their hearts and home. In all God's chemistry, is there any solvent which can sweeten such a draught of disappointment?

Yes; there is! I have now before me a tear-moistened letter from my beloved brother W——, the superintendent of the famous B—— Sabbath-school. It was written by the waters of *Marah*. But mark how the angel of love is letting fall the sweetening leaves into the fountain. Brother W—— writes:—

"Our darling Hattie was another of God's beautiful things, wise beyond her years, more like a sister

to us older ones, than like a little child. On the last Sabbath morning that she came to the breakfast table, she had, as usual, her text, but it was a new one to her: "Hide me under the shadow of Thy wing." God heard the little tired body's prayer, and gathered the lamb to His bosom. We watched and watched beside her; and when all others had given her up, I was still hopeful; and taking the physician aside I inquired, "Doctor, will she wake up, do you think?" His reply almost killed me as he covered his face, and sobbed the answer, "No: not till she wakes in heaven!" O my brother! I cannot tell you the anguish of that moment. I sat in the shadow of our great affliction, dumb. But Christ Jesus, the Man of sorrows, was acquainted with my grief. He put His everlasting arm around me,—the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Unto those that believe, He is precious; and never more so than when He brings heaven close up to us."

Beautiful words of a victorious soul! I send them through these pages as a bough from the tree of experience, to sweeten the fountain of bitterness beside which many of my readers may be sitting to-day. If God's grace can make the waters of trial so sweet on earth, *what will the fountain be in heaven?*

WHERE IS YOUR PLACE?



PLACE for every man, and every man in his place! This motto is as good for Christ's Church as it was for the army during the war. But what is every Christian's right place?

We answer that it is the one for which God made him, and for which the Holy Spirit converted him. To mistake it is a sad blunder; to desert it is a disgrace. The Bible acknowledges that God made His servants for some especial "niche:" for it says, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth on teaching; or he that exhorteth on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." The principle here laid down is that every man or woman who loves Jesus should select and should fill that post of duty for which his or her gifts have fitted them. But "let no man neglect the gift that is in him."

Some men—like Spurgeon and Newman Hall and Bishop Simpson—were created for the pulpit. God

gave them clear heads, warm hearts, strong lungs, and eloquent tongues, and a hunger for saving souls. To possess such gifts is a clear call to the ministry. And thousands of humbler preachers who cannot attract Spurgeon's crowds are yet as clearly called to the ministry of the Word as the London Boanerges was himself. But the vain-glorious creature who cannot attract an audience except by sensational "clap-trap," or by Barnum-ish advertisements, was certainly never called of God to the sacred ministry. He may draw auditors; but he commonly draws them away from places where they would be more profited.

Suppose a man or a woman feel—after deep prayer and self-examination—that God has not called them to the pulpit; what then? Must they be silent? Are all the speaking gifts of the pious lawyer, or doctor, or merchant, or mechanic to run to waste? No, verily! Let such proclaim the glad tidings of Christ, and the story of their own Christian experience in the prayer-meeting, or the mission-school, or the cottage conference meeting, or wherever they can find souls to plead with. How successfully this lay-labour may be made, let such men as Harlan Page, and Richard Weaver, and George H. Stuart, and D. L. Moody, and John Wanamaker, bear witness. Let the powerful lay-preaching heard every

day in "Fulton Street" answer. Some of the best discourses I have ever heard were but five or ten minutes long, and were delivered in my own prayer-meeting. Christian lawyers ought to do more of this tongue-work. As a class, they are too silent in our meetings and Sunday schools. God is opening a wide field for laymen to act on "picket-duty" and as skirmishers and sharpshooters in the spiritual warfare.

What our churches most need (next to the baptism of the Holy Ghost) is the development of all the members. So much is thrown upon the ministry that some of us can hardly catch a spare hour for our own family and fireside. The Spurgeons and John Halls and Guthries are being ground to death by overwork. A city pastor is often expected to prepare three sermons or lectures, to visit the flock, to see the sick, to bury the dead, and to act on a dozen committees, and to make two or three speeches, all in a single week! The church becomes Dr. Tyng's church, or Mr. Beecher's church, or Dr. Crosby's church, or some other man's church—instead of being the people's church, with some gifted man as its overseer and pastor.

Now I love to work exceedingly; but not one whit more than I love to see my congregation work. And

no man in my flock has any more right to turn his spiritual work over upon me than he has a right to send me to market for him, or to cook or eat his dinner for him. He needs his work as much as I need mine. In revival-times the whole Church is alive and busy. But where and when did the Master ever give a "furlough" to three-fourths of our people to quit the ranks just as soon as a revival-campaign is over?

A Christian who is keen for work will soon find his place. If he is "apt to teach," he or she will soon gather the Sabbath-school class, and will be there, Bible in hand, every Sunday, even though the rain is pattering on the pavements. Commend me to the teacher who wears a "waterproof," and always consults conscience sooner than the barometer.

Whoever has the gift of song should join God's great choir, and sing at every religious service. The owner of a good voice must give account for that voice at the day of judgment. We never shall have genuine congregational singing until every redeemed child of Christ sings from duty, and consecrates the gift of music to the Lord. Those who expect to sing in heaven had better practise here.

Tract-distribution is going too much out of fashion. It is a blessed and heaven-honoured agency for doing

good. Every one who has some spare time and a tongue and a little pious tact can go out with a bundle of tracts to the abodes of ignorance and irreligion.

Those who cannot exhort, or teach in a Sunday school, or distribute tracts, can at least live for Jesus at home, and come and join in the prayers of the prayer-meeting. The oldest, the timidest, the least gifted, can do surely as much as this. Every one, too, can give something when the contribution-box is passed. The gift of a "cup of cold water" in Christ's name has its reward. Every one whom Jesus saves has a place assigned to him in the vineyard. An idle Christian is a monster!

Friend! have *you* found your place?



CHRIST A SERVANT.



HERE is one character in which Christians too seldom think of their Divine Redeemer. It is that of a disinterested SERVANT, ever serving our highest interests. We call ourselves Christ's servants. Do we constantly think of Him as ours?

At the last supper, we read that Jesus rose from the table and laid aside His robe. He takes a towel, and girds Himself after the manner of an attendant in a guest-chamber. Pouring water into a basin, He washes the disciples' feet, and wipes them with the towel wherewith He is girded. After the surprising act of self-humiliation is over, He says to them, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord : ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ; ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

Then He tells His disciples for what paltry distinctions the Gentiles and the worldlings crave. But *they* were to aim at a nobler, sublimer supre-

macy,—the supremacy of disinterested love, and devotion to the wants of others. “Let him who would be chiefest among you become *servant of all*.” The feet of His followers were scarcely dry from the washing He had given them, as He says, “I am among you as *he that serveth*.”

Run your eye, my brother, over the whole earthly career of our blessed Lord, and you will find in it a beautiful illustration of the truth that the loftiest post of honour is the lowliest post of service. Every word, every act, is inspired by disinterested love. He condescends to teach the most ignorant, for they have the deepest need of light. He condescends to feed the hungry poor out of His miraculous basket. He condescends to sit at meat with despised publicans, to heal wayside beggars and outcast lepers, the children of poor, heart-broken mothers, and the servants in noblemen’s kitchens. More than one fallen woman, whom most parents would have thrust out of doors, He allows to come into the sunshine of His presence, and does not let them go until they are penitent and pardoned. And so all through that three years’ pilgrimage of love,—instructing the benighted, comforting the afflicted, pardoning the guilty, healing the sick, stooping to wash disciples’ feet and to cleanse their still more

polluted hearts,—Jesus is everywhere the “servant of all.” The years of penitent self-denying service culminate in the grandest, most stupendous, and sublime service of all,—the service of suffering on the cross of Calvary! Oh, self-indulgent Christian, who art unwilling to lift a finger to relieve a fellow-being or undo his burthen, look on the wondrous spectacle of an incarnate God stooping to the lowliest offices of love,—bearing poverty, and ignominy, and toil,—bearing the curse of the broken law,—bearing your sins in His bleeding body on the cross,—look at this, and hide your selfish head in shame!

Nor did the service of our Divine servant end with the cross and the new tomb in the garden. When He ascended to heaven, He only ascended to new departments of service for us. He ever liveth there to make intercession for His people. He is our “friend at court.” He is our advocate to plead our suit. He hears our complaints, and gives a ready ear to the faintest prayer which the feeblest faith breathes forth in its closet.

Does He not gird Himself as with a towel, to wash away our impurities? Not once only, but constantly. One cleansing of a soul at the time of regeneration will no more keep a Christian for ever pure, than a single ablution of his face or form would make his

body clean for a life-time. The world soils our souls every day. Each unholy thought, each angry word, each act of deceit, each covetous touch of gold, each insincere, unbelieving prayer, each cowardly desertion of duty, leaves an ugly spot. "Create in me a clean heart" is an every hour's prayer for a Christian's whole life. And He who girded a towel about Him, and washed His disciples' feet from the dust of Jerusalem's streets is ever beside us, ready to wash away the moral defilement which our daily walk on the world's highways brings upon our souls.

How many other services, too, our Saviour is rendering us! When starved on husks, He gives us the bread of life. When faint in spirit, He brings us into His orchard, whose apples of delight cause our lips to sing. Many an obscure saint in a smoky hovel has yet dwelt in the King's banqueting-house. The holy Rutherford, when in prison for Christ's sake, testifies that his prison-cell was "the King's wine-cellar" to his thirsty soul, in which every taste of the Divine love only made him more hungry for the "supper-time" in heaven. He says, "I get sweet *tastings* of my Lord's comforts; but the cause of that is not that our steward, Christ Jesus, is niggard and narrow-hearted, but because our stomachs are so weak, and our souls are narrow; but the

great feast is coming, when our hearts shall be enlarged to take in the fulness of the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Time would fail us to tell in how many ways the loving Jesus serves His people,—as their physician, their protector, and their guide through the valley of the death-shade. And one of the great practical teachings of Christ's sublime, self-denying service for us is that the lowliest post of service is the loftiest post of honour. If Jesus was a servant, who shall be ashamed to serve?

Why is it that so many professed Christians "feel above" undertaking humble work for God and humanity? We have heard of a minister of Christ complaining that his station was "beneath his talents"! As if the soul of a beggar were beneath the genius of a Paul! Some are unwilling to enter a mission-school, or to distribute tracts through a poor district, strangely forgetting that their Divine Master was himself a missionary.

Have such never learned that the towel with which Jesus wiped His disciples' feet outshone the purple that wrapped Cæsar's limbs? Do they not know that the post of honour is the post of service? "My seat in the Sunday-school is higher than my seat in the Senate," said an eminent Christian states-

man. When we take the lowliest place of sacred service, we find ourselves in the best society,—in the society of mothers serving their children, of patriots serving their country, of pastors serving their flocks, and of ONE who is ever the gracious servant of His people. Heaven is but a higher sphere of service. For in that realm of unwearying activity and blissful worship we read that “they *serve God* day and night in His temple; His name is written on their foreheads;” and “they follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth, and He leadeth them to living fountains of water.”



THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.

THE most successful toilers are those who know best how to serve God in "small things." The Almighty never "despises the day of small things," or else He would not put His mighty oaks into acorns, or His golden grain-crops into little seed-bags.

I. Nearly all the greatest and best things had their feeble beginnings. The Mississippi begins as a rivulet; the splendid suspension bridge at Niagara first went over the deep chasm as a mere kite-string. And the noblest, holiest Christian lives had their origin in some word faithfully spoken, or in the reading of a tract, or the offering of a broken and brief prayer, or in a solemn resolution to quit favourite sins and yield to Jesus. One sentence seems to have brought Peter and John to follow Christ. One sentence converted the jailer of Philippi. Now if every Christian life sprouted out of the act of a single hour, and was probably the result of some humble agency, then it is a sin and a folly to "despise the day of small things."

Cases to illustrate this truth thicken in our memory.

A godly woman spoke kindly to her maid-servant about her soul : the gardener overheard the conversation through a hedge, and was himself convicted of his sins. Stray arrows often hit the mark.

The late Dr. William Wisner once stopped on a hot summer day at a Berkshire farmhouse for a glass of water. He talked faithfully with the young woman who gave him the refreshing draught, and directed her to the "living water." Long years afterwards, a middle-aged woman introduced herself to Dr. W—— on a steamboat, and thanked him for the plain, kind word that brought her to the Saviour.

Harlan Page, coming early to a meeting, found a stranger sitting there, and politely spoke to him. The conversation went on until the man—who said that "Christians had always kept him *at arm's length*" before—was melted into penitence.

On the last day of the year 1867, I met a man of fifty in the streets, and said to him, "Had not you and I better begin the new year with a new life?" That simple remark set him to thinking, and resulted in his conversion.

The lesson of all these cases, and of innumerable others like them, is that the most effectual way to save sinners is to *use the day of small things*, and seize our opportunities. Nearly all revivals start with a single

man or woman. One live coal can kindle a great flame.

II. There is another view of this matter. As the usefulness of a Christian grows out of little deeds well done, so the influence of many Christians is terribly poisoned by little sins. Alas! how great sinners we may be in small things! Little irritations of look and manner; little meannesses in our daily dealings; little fibs and insincerities of speech; little jealousies and spites; little neglects of kind acts we might do,—all these are the “little foxes” that have spoiled many a goodly vine. Pile up enough tiny snowflakes on a railway track, and they will blockade the most powerful locomotive. So I verily believe that the *aggregate sum* of Christians’ daily inconsistencies and neglects of duty often block up a revival, and stay the progress of Christ’s kingdom. Jesus Christ laid great emphasis on “keeping the least of His commandments.” That was an awfully mischievous spark that lighted Chicago into a blaze; but it *was* once only a spark!

III. This brings me to say to the unconverted, It is a fatal mistake to think that any wilful sin is a trifle. If you are lost, my dear friend, it is not likely that one huge crime like Judas’, or Pilate’s, or Ananias’, will sink you to perdition. It will be the sum of your

daily sins left unrepented of, the aggregate of thousands of offences against God's law and God's love. I pray you, do not say, "Oh, *this* is not much!" No sin is a trifle. No sin is harmless. In Sudbrook Park, England, a naturalist saw a small worm boring into the bark of a stately sycamore-tree. "If that worm is *let alone*," said he, "it will kill the tree." The experiment was tried. The next year the leaves turned yellow, and the year after the tree was a skeleton. Now if one sin is so deadly, what must a life time of sin be?

My last thought is that life is a series of steps. Each step counts. Coming to Jesus is a single step. It may be the work of a moment. It may turn on a small pivot. And you will never come to Christ, or never reach heaven, while you continue to "despise the day of small things."



DIGGING FOR WATER.

SOME of the “out-of-the-way” passages in God’s word contain precious teachings, which will repay us for hunting them out and turning them up. There is a rich ore of truth hidden under them. For example, there is an historical incident narrated in the third chapter of the Second Book of Kings which is very seldom noticed. We read that the kings of Judah and of Israel were at war with the heathen armies of Moab. The armies of the Lord were suffering from the want of water. Within the compass of a seven days’ journey they cannot find a drop. In their straits they send for God’s prophet, Elisha. He becomes God’s oracle, and gives them this message from Heaven : “ Thus saith the Lord, *Make the land full of ditches.*” The word may be better translated *trenches*. How shall they be filled? That is not their concern. It is the duty of faith not to question, but to obey. “ For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain ; yet this valley shall be *filled with water*, that ye may drink ; both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.” The trenches were dug, and presently the waters began to steal into them from

some mysterious, invisible source. It was not an ordinary process of Nature; but a supernatural process, accomplished by the direct agency of God. All the awakening, converting, and quickening power that operates on human souls is really supernatural. Up to a certain point human agency acts, but not one hair's breadth further. "Paul may plant," and there he stops; "Apollos may water," and there he must stop. Then comes in the Divine agency, when "God giveth the increase." All that the thirsting Israelites could do, or were asked to do, was simply to dig the trenches. And then a supernatural power filled them mysteriously with water. There does not appear to have been any Huxley, or Tyndall, or Darwin in the camp, to teach God's people that *supernatural* agencies are never exerted, even for a good object. The simple-hearted Israelites wanted water, and they dug channels for God to pour it in. They prepared for a blessing, and the blessing came.

This is the pithy and practical truth that we find by lifting up this text and looking under it. It is a suggestive one to hundreds of our Churches, which have long been languishing in spiritual drought. If we want spiritual blessings, we must dig the trenches to receive them.

The first trench that ought to be opened in some Churches is a deep, broad channel of mutual confidence and brotherly love. When Christians grow cold and neglectful of their own duties, they grow censorious toward each other. As love declines, the critical temper increases. All along the eaves of a cold Church hang the sharp, piercing icicles of criticism and censoriousness. Then everybody suffers. The pastor catches his share: his most honest efforts are the most censured. The officers of the Church are blamed roundly, and those who happen to be unpopular are made the luckless scapegoats on which to load the failures of the Church. Each blames the others; but no one goes down in the dust of contrition, and blames himself. Sometimes this censoriousness is born of the very impatience at the want of success. Sometimes good men and women, vexed that things do not go better, fall to hitting right and left their fellow-members, their officers, the pastor getting a blackened eye among the rest. It is as if a rifleman on the battlefield, seeing the fight go badly, quits firing, and takes to battering his comrades with the butt of his rifle. Whereas his own *example*, in just standing firm and taking sure aim at the foe, would do more to restore the battle than all his disorderly assaults

on his fellow-soldiers. The charity that "thinketh no evil," and is "not easily provoked," and that "seeketh not her own" (way), is the first grace to be exercised in many a cold, discordant, fault-finding Church. How can Christians expect the outside world to put confidence in them when they put so little confidence in each other? The first duty in such a Church is to run a deep, broad trench of cordial charity and brotherly love right through the whole congregation. This trench must be dug by every one *before his own door*.

Another trench to be opened speedily is earnest, penitential *prayer*. This is God's appointed "channel to convey the blessings He designs to give." I sometimes think that there are no equal number of utterances by reputable people in which so many falsehoods are told as in public prayers. Loving words are often spoken by people whose hearts rankle with mean spites and malicious grudges. Sins are glibly confessed in prayer which if anybody else should charge upon the speaker he would grow red in the face with wrath. Words of solemn self-consecration are fluently uttered by persons who are living to themselves, and not to Jesus Christ. Such prayers are a mockery. They cut no channels for God's blessings. But genuine prayer—born of

Digging for Water.

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 tides of spiritual influence will flow into our souls.
 As the tides rise from the ocean over bare and
 slimy ground, and lift up the keels of grounded

These blessings of the Holy Spirit
comes. Not by might, not by
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When article may reach
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Pray for it!

Digging for Water.
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contrition and soul-thirst, poured out with faith and wrestling importunity—breaks its way up to the Throne of Infinite Love. Such prayer always brings a revival ; nay, it is itself a revival.

A third work of preparation for the Divine blessing is equally indispensable. It is personal repentance of sin. Not of other people's sins, but of our own. The best draining of a farmer's field is subsoil drainage. In our Churches we need a subsoil repentance. It must cut deep. It must cut up sin by the root. If the ploughshare run through the flower-beds and melon-patches of our self-indulgence, so much the better. The trench that drains off our sins will be a channel for the sweet, life-giving waters of salvation.

We might mention other trenches that are needed,—such as hard work and liberality in giving for Christ. The wider we cut these channels, the broader and the fuller will be the stream of God's blessings. Thus saith the Lord to His people, "Make your valley *full of trenches.*" We may "see no wind nor rain." We may hear no sounds of violent excitement. But silently and steadily the tides of spiritual influence will flow into our souls. As the tides rise from the ocean over bare and slimy ground, and lift up the keels of grounded

vessels, so shall these blessings of the Holy Spirit flow into our Churches. Not by might, not by human power, but “by my Spirit, saith the Lord.”

Brethren, this plain-spoken article may reach scores of Churches who are so dry that there is “no water within a compass of seven days’ journey.” God’s command to you is to *prepare for blessings*, or they will never come. When your trenches are ready, the currents of spiritual power will flow in. If you want water, *dig for it!*



THE SHEPHERD'S SLING.

A PLEA FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

“Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.”—1 *Sam.* xvii. 45.

THAT was a remarkable encounter which once took place in the little valley of Elah. With its thrilling story you are all as familiar as you are with the grapple of American yeomanry on Bunker Hill, or with the dear-bought victory of freedom on the heights of Gettysburg. From our early childhood we have all loved to read the brief epic of David and Goliath. With our childish eyes we distinctly saw the boastful champion of the Philistines plant himself in full view of Israel, and of Israel's heathen foes.

The champion measures six cubits and a span ; and every inch of his giant stature is encased in flashing brass. The staff of his spear is like to a weaver's beam ; the head of his spear weighs six hundred shekels of iron. A shield-bearer goes before him. His impious proclamation is : “ I defy the armies of Israel this day : give me a man that we may fight together.”

For forty days the heathen's challenge remains unaccepted, and for forty days the heart of Israel is growing weaker than water. At length a shepherd's boy, fresh from his flocks, with the ruddy tint of toil on his fair young face, steps modestly forth into the lists. In one hand he carries a staff; in the other he carries a common sling. He has dropped five smooth stones into the shepherd's pouch by his side. These are his only weapons; the protection of God is his only armour. Even so was ruddy-cheeked free labour, fresh from its fields, pitted against the giant of oppression in our late national conflict.

I need not recount to you the bulletin of that battle at Elah,—so short, so sharp, and so decisive. I need not repeat to you modest David's reply to the disdainful champion: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, whom thou hast defied." I need not tell you how the stripling put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth. I need not depict to you the triumphant youth standing on the giant's prostrate carcass, and hewing off his swaggering head; nor the subsequent rout of the heathen before Israel's reassured and victorious armies.

I have brought to you this narrative as a starting-point and an illustration. It furnishes a happy *parable* of the "irrepressible conflict" between God's right and the devil's wrong. Goliath typifies the giant of ERROR that for forty centuries had defied the living God. Ruddy David is the Missionary Church. The five smooth stones are Gospel truths. The staff they bear is the unbroken promise of God. Before the "countless cloud of witnesses" in heaven and on earth the conflict is joined; and all that "assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for *the battle is the Lord's,*" and He will yet give the enemy into our hands.

If the stripling of Bethlehem seemed a most unequal match for the brazen-mailed giant of Gath, how much more disproportionate is the Church's missionary band to the stupendous enemy which they confront! Worldly wisdom smiles at what it styles their "weak-minded enthusiasm;" and, while it coldly commends their object, it predicts an inevitable failure. But the little band stand to their post. Rationalism derides them. Infidelity scoffs at them. The false prophet and the false priests of Baal threaten them. But yet the little band toils on. When one of their number sinks at his post, there is another ready to step forward and to take up the abandoned

implements of labour. The ranks swell every year, and often a gentle woman steps forth, and with meek heroism takes up the burden of a toil that has sunk so many a strong man to his grave. Occasionally a youthful missionary falls when he has just learned how to wield his sling. Occasionally a Lyman or a Lowrie is struck down by murderous violence. A Winslow, a Judson, and a Poor sink under the burden of the long day, and are laid to rest. A Father Goodell comes home to die. A nobler life no man can live, a sublimer death no man can die, than to live or die a Missionary of the Cross !

“ How beautiful it is for man to die
Upon the walls of Zion ! To be called,
Like a watch-worn and weary sentinel,
To put his armour off, and rest in heaven.
What is the warrior's clarion—though its blast
Ring with the conquest of a world—to this ?
What are all the trumpeting of proud humanity
To the short history of one *who dies for souls*,
And makes his sepulchre beside the King of kings ? ”

I. Wherein lies the real power of the Missionary Church ? (I use this term because my Bible gives me no other idea of a true Church than a missionary, aggressive, reformatory, soul-saving body of working believers.) Wherein lies her power ? Manifestly not in her numbers ; for she embraces less than one-fourth

of the human race. Manifestly not in her earthly resources; for Mammon has more wealth than the Church, and Antichrist possesses cunninger statecraft and mightier armies. Her power lies in her living *union with the living God*. And in proportion to her closeness of union with Christ Jesus will she be sagacious in plan, steadfast of purpose, fertile in resources, zealous in labour, prevalent in prayer, and victorious in achievement. Christ is in the Missionary Church. He is *not* in heathenism, or in Moslemism, or in Rome. When He gave the Church her commission, "Go, teach all nations," He sealed up with it the priceless promise, "Lo! *I am with you* to the end of the world."

With one slender rod, Moses cleft the Red Sea asunder; but God was in the rod. With a herdsman's sling, David brought down the Philistine; but God strengthened the young shepherd's arm, and guided the fatal stone. Out from the doorway of a prayer-meeting in Jerusalem, a handful of plain people issued forth, to turn the heathen world "upside down," and to carry the cross from the Euphrates to the Tiber. But Christ went with them and in them from that "upper chamber." Christ flamed on Peter's tongue; Christ reasoned from Paul's cultured brain; Christ spake from Apollos' lips; Christ throbbed

in the pulsations of John's warm heart; Christ shone from Stephen's face, when it was like unto the face of an angel. *Lo! I am with you always*, blazed on the banners of every apostolic corps; *Lo! I am with you always*, rang as her bugle call to every march to victory. The power of that missionary apostolic Church lay in her piety; for her piety was the measure of her union with Jesus Christ. And in our day the Church's piety is the Church's power. Do not forget, my brethren, this truth of truths for a moment. The power of the missionary Church is her living, toiling, self-denying piety. For this there can be no substitute. The Church may increase her agencies as she will; she may multiply her machinery a hundred-fold; but it will be all for naught, unless Christ Jesus be the "living Spirit within the wheels." What the Missionary Church now most needs is another Pentecost. And all ye who would see new vigour in the work of missions, who would see a new zeal, a new liberality, a new inspiration in the Church at home, must besiege God's mercy-seat for powerful, soul-quickenings revivals.

II. Look now with me, a moment, at another element of strength in the Missionary Church. Not only is the power of God promised to her fidelity, but the wisdom of God is visible in the choice of her

materials. In our modern times, God has put His gospel faith into the *best races* on the globe. David has better blood in his veins than Goliath. The races to which God has entrusted His staff and five smooth stones of gospel truth are the same races that drew up Magna Charta and the Declaration of Independence,—the races that have made metal types to talk and iron ships to swim,—that have strung the telegraphic nerves through humanity's limbs, and have woven out of revealed law the highest forms yet reached of Christian civilization. For the spread of His gospel, God has made Great Britain strong, and Holland industrious, and Germany learned, and has saved our American Republic as by fire. The welfare of Christianity has God bound up with the welfare of certain races and nations. If this be so, how vitally important it is that those nations who essay to Christianize other nations should themselves be Christianized to the very core!

When the diplomacy of Christian nations has been employed to outwit simple savages, and the commerce of Christian nations has been employed to cheat them; when the same ship that carried out the Bible was also freighted with opium and fire-arms, and with hand-cuffs to bind on savage limbs,—we need not wonder that the very name of Christianity became

an opprobrium and a terror. Only a short time ago a vessel was cleared from an American port to the coast of Africa, which carried seven missionaries in her cabin and several hundred barrels of New England rum in her cargo! I very much fear that the contents of her cargo will prove an overmatch for the contents of her cabin.

Of other nations I am not to speak. But, for my own beloved land, I rejoice to say that her Divine Deliverer seems to be preparing her for her predestined work abroad by no common discipline. What our liberated land now needs is another baptism, the baptism of Pentecost. Wherefore, all ye who long to see America's influence go forth like the morning light over every land, I pray you that ye besiege the mercy-seat for powerful, purifying, Pentecostal revivals.

III. Before I close, let me remind you of another pertinent parallel between the shepherd-boy of Israel and Christ's Missionary Church. The young David of Bethlehem brought from his sheep-cote to the battle-field of Elah a hearty frame, a rustic simplicity, and an intrepid heart. Like the strong-limbed rail-hewer of our day, he was a plain-born son of toil, with the smell of mother earth on his garments. His cheek was ruddy with temperance; his sinews were

knit with athletic exercise. That rustic son of Jesse, fresh from the hills, is a beautiful type of Christ's Church in its best days,—its *days of self-denial*,—its apostolic days, when fishermen and tentmakers conquered principalities and powers,—its Reformation days, when the miner's son from Saxony, and the lean student of Geneva, smote the Papal Goliath,—its Puritan days, when Cromwell's "Ironsides" sent curl-pated cavaliers "whirling" over Marston Moor; when a band of Yorkshire farmers and herdsmen steered the *Mayflower* through wintry tempests to bleak Plymouth Rock! And in our days the missionaries of the Cross have mostly come from such households as the household of Jesse. Herein lies a lesson and a warning.

Brethren, I have a prodigious fear for our metropolitan churches. I fear that fast-growing wealth is impoverishing the Church's piety; I fear that an unparalleled prosperity is making our churches luxurious, fashionable, worldly-minded, self-indulgent. The religion that walks on life's sunny side in Paris laces, and sips its choicest wines in freestone mansions, is not the religion that breeds missionaries, or fights Goliaths.

Don't you remember reading in your childhood's favourite fiction about Sinbad's voyage into the

Indian Ocean? Do you remember that magnetic rock that rose from the surface of the placid sea? Silently the vessel was attracted toward it; silently the bolts were drawn out of the ship's sides, one by one, through the subtle attraction of that magnetic rock. And when the fated vessel drew so near that every bolt and clamp were unloosed, the whole structure of bulwark, mast, and spars, tumbled into ruin on the sea, and the sleeping sailors awoke to their drowning agonies!

So stands the magnetic rock of *worldliness* athwart the Church's path. If the Church draw too near, then bolt after bolt of godly purpose will be drawn out, clamp after clamp of Christian obligation will be unloosed, until the sacred argosy, that is freighted with immortal hopes, shall tumble into a shattered and disgraceful wreck. Depend upon it, brethren, that God will never suffer this to be. He will not let us rob Him. Depend upon it, that if we lie down to luxurious slumber on couches of rosewood, while the world is perishing, He will snatch the couch from beneath us in financial judgments. If we persist in paving the way to our places of amusement and our parties of pleasure with His silver and gold, He will wrest it from us with the terrible rebuke, "Ye may no longer be my stewards!" Oh for the descent of

a Pentecostal fire to consume this "wood, hay, and stubble" of pomp and luxury! O ye who long to see the self-pampering churches brought back to a hardier self-denial and a holier self-consecration, I pray you that ye besiege the mercy-seat, and labour, too, for soul-humbling, church-purifying *revivals!*

But I must not weary you with the discussion of a widening theme. As we close, we seem to be looking out upon the stupendous conflict between light and darkness, between the hosts of truth and the hosts of error. The field of this conflict is not a narrow vale of Elah : it is the wide, wide world. Like the swarming squadrons of Philistia on the mountain side, stand the combined innumerable hosts of heathenism, of the false prophet, and the man of sin. Like the brazen-mailed giant of Gath, stands *Antichrist*,—proud, stubborn, impious, and defiant. As the shepherd's boy of Bethlehem came forth to confront Israel's foe, so come forth the missionary band of Christ. They are inferior indeed to the foe in numbers ; but a single man with God on his side, is in the majority. In the missionary band of Christendom are represented eighty-five different organizations. Of these, twenty-two hail from Great Britain ; twenty from our beloved Union ; thirteen from Germany ; nine from little Holland ; seven from

the lands of the "Norsemen ;" one from France ; and the remainder from British colonies. Of these organizations, the two largest are the "Wesleyan Society" of England, and the "American Board of Foreign Missions." As the roll of the American Board is called, three hundred and twenty missionaries answer to their names. The Presbyterian Board have two hundred and forty in the field. These are the men of whom the most eminent Scotch painter once said to me, "America has produced many great artists and authors and orators ; but the most superior body of men she has yet furnished are her missionaries." Each one of them is equipped with the staff and the sling. Each one has in his scrip the five smooth stones from

"Siloa's brook,
That flows fast by the oracles of God."

To our weak faith, these missionary bands seem small and few for the moral conquest of the globe. But who can tell how many Martyns and Winslows and Duffs the eye of God may discern yet waiting in the household of Jesse? Who can say that there is not now upon his mother's knee another Luther, who shall lead the last great onset against the man of sin ; or another Calvin, to vindicate the cross before European scepticism ; or another Wesley, to awaken

with Gideon's trumpet a formal Church to fresh revivals and a loftier zeal? Who can tell how soon the eye of God may see an American missionary preaching Christ in the Mosque of Omar, or proclaiming the downfall of the Papacy under the frescoed dome of St. Peter's?

That time is coming! It is eighteen centuries nearer than when the first missionary concert of prayer was held in the "upper room" at Jerusalem. It is sixty years nearer than when the first American missionary sailed from Boston wharf to the shores of India. It is as sure to come as to-morrow's sunrise. Do you ask, When will that time arrive? I answer: It will come when the Church of Christ shall pray as the first missionary concert prayed at Jerusalem: it will come when all the followers of Jesus shall write *Holiness to the Lord* on every dollar in their coffers; when the Church shall consecrate all her children to self-denial and to holy toils, and shall train every David from his cradle to wield the sling! Then, all the world shall know that God saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and on the brow of the ENTHRONED LAMB shall rest the diadem of victory.

HEBER AND HIS HYMN.



HERE have been men who have won an honourable immortality in an hour. A brave word fitly spoken, or a noble deed promptly done, has given them a place on the bead-roll of fame for ever. Sometimes in a happy moment of inspiration a poet or an orator has "said or sung" what will last for ages.

One of these happy songsters, whose grandest strain was born in an hour, but which the world shall never willingly let die, was REGINALD HEBER, Bishop of Christ's flock in Calcutta. If the great mass of Christians around the globe were asked to name the two English bishops whose memory is most dear to them, they would probably name Jeremy Taylor and Reginald Heber. Yet the veneration and gratitude felt towards the latter is mainly founded upon a few lines which he threw off in a sudden inspiration, and which could be written on a single page.

Reginald Heber was born at Malpas, in Cheshire, on the 21st of April, 1783. He was a precocious boy, and at seven years of age he had translated

Phædrus into English verse. His prize poem at Oxford University on "Palestine," written in his twentieth year, stands at the head of that class of somewhat ephemeral productions. His "Palestine" will live, and so will his tender and graceful lines to his wife at Bombay, and so will his nautical hymn,

"When through the torn sail the wild tempest is streaming."

But all his poetry, and his Bampton Lectures, and his able *Quarterly Review* articles, are weighed down by his single matchless missionary hymn. Its composition was on this wise.

While Reginald Heber was rector of the Episcopal Church at Hodnet, in Shropshire, he went to pay a visit to his father-in-law, Dr. Shipley, then Vicar of Wrexham, on the border of Wales. Heber was in his thirty-sixth year, and had come to Wrexham to deliver the first of a series of Sunday evening lectures in Dr. Shipley's church. In the morning of that same day, Dr. Shipley was to deliver a discourse in behalf of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

On the afternoon before "Whit-Sunday" (1819), Heber and his father-in-law sat chatting with a few friends in Dr. Shipley's parlour. Dr. Shipley, knowing his son-in-law's happy gift in rapid composition, said to him, "Write something for us to sing at the

service to-morrow morning." Short notice that, for a man to achieve his immortality. Heber retired to another part of the room, and in a little time had prepared three verses, of which the first one ran thus :—

“ From Greenland’s icy mountains,
From India’s coral strand,
Where Afric’s sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand ;
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error’s chain.”

Heber read the three verses over, and only altered a single word. The seventh line of the second verse was—

“ The *savage* in his blindness.”

The author erased that word, and substituted for it the better word *heathen*. “ There, there,” coolly remarked Dr. Shipley, “ that will do very well.” Heber was not satisfied, and said, “ No, no : the sense is not complete.” In spite of his father’s earnest protest, Heber withdrew for a few moments longer, and then, coming back, read the following glorious bugle blast which rings like the *revue* of the millennial morning :—

“ Waft, waft, ye winds, the story,
And you, ye waters, roll !

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Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole !
Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign."

"What shall we sing it to?" inquired Dr. Shipley. Mr. Heber, who had a fine musical ear, suggested a popular air called "'Twas when the seas were roaring." The suggestion was adopted, and on the next morning the people of Wrexham church listened to the "first rehearsal" of a lyric which has since been echoed by millions of voices around the globe. The air to which it was sung originally has given place, at least in our American churches, to a sonorous and lofty tune composed by Dr. Lowell Mason. The air is worthy of the hymn, and both are perfect. No profane hymn-tinker ever dared to lay his bungling finger on a single syllable of those four stanzas which the Holy Spirit moved Reginald Heber to write. Little did the young rector of Hodnet dream, as he listened to the lines sung that Sabbath morning, that he was catching the first strains of his own immortality. He "builded better than he knew." He did more to waft the story of Calvary around the earth than if he had preached like Apollos, or had founded a board of missions. In the "monthly


concerts," held in New England school-houses, in frontier cabins, on the decks of missionary ships bound to "Ceylon's Isle," and in the vast assemblies of the American Board, Heber's trumpet-hymn has been sung with swelling voices and gushing tears. It is the marching music to which Christ's hosts "keep step" as they advance to the conquest of the globe.

Heber lived but seven years after the composition of his masterpiece. In June, 1823, he departed for Calcutta, as the missionary Bishop of India. For three years he toiled and travelled incessantly, and wherever he went his apostolic sweetness of character and benignity won even the "heathen in their blindness." After a laborious day's work at Trichinopoly, he went to his bath to refresh his weary frame. He remained in the bathroom until his attendants became alarmed, and when they came in they found Reginald Heber *asleep in Jesus*. His gentle spirit had stolen away to join in the "song of Moses and of the LAMB."



NOTHING BUT LEAVES.

A REVERIE FOR THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

ESUS was on His way from Bethany to Jerusalem,—“hungry.” He espied a fig-tree afar off, well laden with leaves. As that tree puts forth its fruit in *advance* of its foliage, when a man should discover leaves on it he would, of course, expect to find figs. The successor having already appeared, he would look for the forerunner.

Jesus hastens to the tree which had telegraphed to Him already that it was in bearing condition ; and lo ! “He found *nothing but leaves.*” Forthwith He dooms it to perpetual barrenness. “No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.” The deceitful tree, thus cursed of its Owner, withered down to its very roots.

Here is a parable for the close of the year. It is full of tender and touching solemnity to thousands of our readers. This parable from history teaches us the worthlessness of religious promises that are never fulfilled, and the guilt of appearing to be fruit-bearers when the eye of God sees “nothing but leaves.”

There is no sin in promises. Cherry-trees must issue their white and fragrant "promissory notes" in May, or there would be no payment in delicious fruit at the end of the allotted sixty days. God makes precious promises to us; and a converted heart is only in the line of duty when it makes a solemn promise, or covenant, to the Church and its Head, Christ Jesus. There is no sin in a church-covenant honestly made. The sin is in breaking it.

How full of leaves was the plausible fig-tree on the road to Bethany! How profuse of promises is many a young professor, as he stands up laden with the foliage on which the dew-drops of hope are glistening! How much his pastor expects from him! He makes no reserve when he covenants to "consecrate himself, all that he is, and all that he has, to the service of his Redeemer." As many a reader sees this solemn sentence, it sends a pang to their hearts. That was *their* promise. They once put forth just such "leaves" before their Master's eye, and before the eyes of men, and led them to expect an abundance of fruit. For a time the glossy leaves of profession made a fair show. But when the novelty of a new position had worn off, and that time of reaction came which always follows a strong mental

excitement, then the yoke began to gall the conscience, and every religious duty became an irksome drudgery. The Cross lost its charm; prayer lost its power; the Word of God lost its attraction; the very name of Jesus lost its hold; and church-membership became a hateful mask, which its owner was ashamed to wear, and yet afraid to fling away. Before the world, the fig-tree still bore leaves; but beneath them was utter barrenness.

My backsliding friend, this tells the sad story of your past year's life. As you look back over the barren year now closing, you find *nothing but leaves*. Your name is still on a church-record, but this fruitless wasted year has had no "record on high." Out of all the three hundred and sixty days that God has given you, not one has been passed with Christ, not one is marked with a "white stone" of fidelity. Instead of a sheaf, you have not gathered a single spear. Instead of leading others to Christ, you have not even followed Him yourself. Instead of growing in grace, you have lost even the self-respect which a false life always forfeits. The past is past. Fold up the pages of this dead, barren, wasted year, and write on it the bitter inscription, "Nothing but leaves."

Will you bear with a few plain truths even though

they have a sharp edge? You need them, and they are spoken in love. The simple fact is that you are "backsliders in heart." The best evidence of this assertion is that you do not feel as you once felt, you do not do what you once did, you do not enjoy what you once enjoyed, you do not pray as you once prayed, and you do not live as you did in the days of your "first love." You are off the track, and are *on* a track that leads away from heaven. You are more intent on making money, or in pleasure-hunting, or in pushing up into social promotions, than you are in serving God, or in trying to save sinners from hell. You would blush if you attempted to ask an impenitent sinner to become *what you profess to be?* Your worldly self-seekings have only been a climb-up to that dizzy "mast-head" from which you may be flung off the farther into the yawning sea. If you confess your sins to God, you still cling to them. And if you dealt as faithlessly with your fellow-men as you deal with your Lord, your note or your word would not be taken by a solitary person for a moment! While you live thus, you can have no peace of conscience. While you live thus, neither the Church nor the world fully trusts you; for you once left the world to join the Church, and then slipped away from the very fellowship

which you still profess to hold. While you live so, you are nullifying your pastor's labours, and voting deliberately *against* a revival of religion in your church. Not only are you yielding "nothing but leaves," but they are brown, withered, worthless leaves, such as the wintry winds are now whirling through the forests.

"Nothing but leaves.: the Spirit grieves
Over a wasted life;
Sin committed while conscience slept,
Promises made but never kept,
Idle words for earnest deeds,—
Nothing but leaves !


And shall we meet the Master so,
Bearing our withered leaves ?
The Saviour looks for perfect fruit :
We stand before Him ashamed and mute,
Waiting that word He breathes,—
Nothing but leaves !"

Such are the sad thoughts and sorrowful self-reproaches that are troubling the spirits of many professed Christians as they review the year now closing. They admit that they have backslidden from their "first love," and have borne no fruit to their Master's glory. But the best repentance for sin is to forsake it ; and the only amends that can be made for neglected duties is to resume them, and perform them at once. Do not stop, then, my

brother, with sighing and sorrowing over the lost year that is just going with its accounts to God. Lay hold of the incoming year by the forelock, and begin it with a new consecration of yourself to Jesus. Go back to that deserted place of prayer. Put on the armour afresh,—humbled, yet hopeful. Seek such a reconversion as Peter had when he came out of Pilate's garden, weeping but forgiven. Make for yourself "a happy new year" by commencing a new life! "*This battle is lost,*" said one of his marshals to Napoleon; "but there is time enough before sundown to *fight another and win it.*" The opening year calls us to new resolutions, new hopes, and new consecrations. It has glorious revivals in store for us, if we will but resolve, with God's help, to cover with golden fruit the boughs that have been bearing *nothing but leaves!*



BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT.

E shall *all* stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." The colossal dimensions of that assemblage utterly stagger me. I try to imagine all the present population of the American republic—forty millions strong—convened in one mass meeting. To them I add all the existing peoples on the globe. Then I begin to add the generations of the dead. But the tremendous total breaks me down. There is not room in one little finite mind to put the bare *idea*. But there is room in God's mind; and there will be room enough too for them all "before the judgment-seat of Christ." He who telleth all the stars of heaven by name will recognize every single individual so closely that not even a beggar-child will be missed. Each person will stand as distinct and alone before the eye of the Judge, as Warren Hastings stood before the tribunal of the House of Lords. No one must imagine that he will be "lost in the crowd," or escape that flame-bright eye.

Upon that throne of judgment, Jesus shall sit; for the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son of

Man. The despised Nazarene shall then come in His glory to that great white throne, and all His holy angels with Him. Is it a violent supposition that He will then bear the marks of the nails and the spear of Calvary on His glorified form? We trow not. Sinners shall then look upon Him whom they have *pierced*, and shall wail because of Him. The heirs of glory shall see in those scars of the cross their title to an everlasting inheritance. It will be upon the brow that once wore the crown of thorns that the imperial diadems will then be placed. John in his vision saw "on His head many crowns."

Before that dazzling tribunal, we are told that "the books shall be opened," and that every man will be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to his works. The wonder grows. All the myriad millions of the globe in one assemblage! And *every act* of all these innumerable myriads brought out, and weighed, and passed upon with the most infallible equity! Yet we must accept this statement, or reject the whole revelation. For we are distinctly told that God "will bring *every* work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil." Fasten your mind to that fact, my friend. Just consider that you will be called to give account for every mercy and every moment,

every talent and every trust, for every Sabbath and every sermon, for every line and letter of God's law and God's love. For *all* these the Omniscient Judge will "reckon with you." And for nothing may you expect a closer and more searching inquiry than for your use or abuse of your influence. And suppose that your influence may have thrown some fellow-creature off of the track that leads to heaven! Are you *sure* that you will be admitted to the realms of bliss from which you have helped to keep another out? Think about this a moment before you sing again those self-assuring lines about "reading your title clear to mansions in the skies." It will certainly require an infinite wisdom in the Supreme Judge to unravel the tangled web of daily life in which so many good men have been instrumental in producing so many bad acts of their fellow-creatures. Will all these sins of God's people which *misled them into iniquity* go entirely unpunished? I tremble at the very question.

"There's pity for the hardened knave,
And mercy for the thief that stole,
But God in justice ne'er forgave
The murder of a human soul."

At that august judgment-seat every one will be dealt with in the impart'al spirit of a justice that

cannot err a hair's breadth. There can be no bribery in that court. No titled sinner will reap any favours from his rank. No cunning sinner can take advantage of the technicalities of law. No appeal can be made to a higher tribunal. No wily advocate can befog the case, or move for an arrest of judgment. For once the universe will behold a tribunal on which infinite justice will preside, and dispense decisions with a spirit of ineffable love.

We learn beforehand that, in that Supreme Court, those who "*knew* their Master's will and did it not" shall be condemned to "many stripes." Oh, it will be a terrible thing to go up to that judgment-seat of Christ from before some pulpits, and out of some communities! It will certainly fare better with the poor wretch who stumbled into eternity from the heathenish haunts of Sodom, than with the cultured sinner who trampled on ten thousand Gospel truths in his guilty road to the judgment-seat. To topple over into hell from the very summit of the hill of Zion will be a frightful fall. If faithful pastors ever shudder at that judgment-seat, it will be when they see what is becoming of some of their own congregations. The very people who once melted and wept under revival sermons may then be calling upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them

from the wrath of the rejected LAMB. Perhaps the reader of this paragraph may be one of those very people.

There is another thought which always weaves itself into every conception I ever form of the judgment scene. And that is the excruciating *separations* which that day will make. All the heart-breaking farewells of earth melt into nothing when compared with those leave-takings for an endless eternity. Who dares to conceive of them? How well I remember the shudder with which, in early childhood, I used to listen to that homely but thrilling hymn :—

“ Oh, there will be parting, parting, parting—
At the judgment-seat of Christ :
Brothers and sisters there will part,
Parents and children there will part,
Will part to meet no more !”

If we would but run that dividing line—even in our imaginations—more often now, it would make us more tenderly *faithful* to the souls of those we love. God save us from the agony of breaking away from our own children then—and for ever !

Such are a few of the thoughts which crowd into my mind as I sit to-night alone, and let the light of that tremendous judgment scene break in upon me. It is an awful mystery ; but through the mystery I see

clearly a righteous Saviour on His throne, a heaven of glory, a hell of torment,—and every single human being bound either to the one or to the other. With the “fierce light” of that judgment-seat beating upon our path, let us all enter upon *a year* that brings us the nearer towards it.



HYMNS OF OUR OWN LAND.



OF all the hymns born on this side of the Atlantic, the most celebrated, and the most perfect in execution, is Dr. Ray Palmer's "My faith looks up to Thee." The history of this exquisite production, which, like Heber's missionary hymn, was thrown off "in a heat," we have already published. The venerable Dr. Muhlenberg is about telling to the world the biography of his famous lines, "I would not live away:" probably they rank next to Palmer's in popularity among our American churches.

The first hymn ever composed by one of our countrymen, that has won permanent place in all our collections, came from that "king of New England," Timothy Dwight. While he was President of Yale College he wielded a wider intellectual and religious influence than any man of his day in the American pulpit. His discourses on "Theology" were in every minister's study: they were a text-book for students of divinity while Andover and Princeton were in their infancy. But they have gradually been supplanted, and few of our younger clergymen ever

open the four formidable but almost obsolete volumes. President Dwight will live longest in his one classic hymn, whose first verse is so familiar to us all,—

“ I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved,
With His own precious blood.”

It is a metrical version of the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm; and it contains one verse of pathetic sweetness, worthy of Watts or Cowper. In addressing the Church of God, he passionately exclaims,—

“ For her my tears shall fall ;
For her my prayers ascend ;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.”

- This fine hymn was born in the first year of this century, while Dr. Dwight was at Yale. His more ambitious poem of “Greenfield Hill” is now forgotten except in the families who still live on that verdant and picturesque spot. His theological treatises have climbed away into upper shelves. And the great and good Timothy Dwight, like several other good men, owes his main chance of immortality to a score or two of lines, which he could have written on a small sheet of note-paper.

The classic city of New Haven has given existence

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to another hymn, which Dr. Leonard Bacon says is "unsurpassed in the English language, and as near perfection as any uninspired production can be." This is rather extravagant praise of a composition which not one person in a hundred has ever heard of. But it is certainly an exquisite hymn both in thought and in diction. If any of my readers will turn to the 557th of Dr. C. S. Robinson's "Songs of the Sanctuary," they will find it under the head of "Hymns of Repentance and Reception of Christ." It opens with the utterance of lowliest abasement. In the second verse, joy breaks in upon the penitent from the loving countenance and voice of Jesus. The third verse is "a gem of purest ray serene." My readers will thank me for giving these stanzas complete :—

" Trembling before Thine awful throne,
O Lord ! in dust my sins I own ;
Justice and mercy for my life
Contend ! Oh, smile, and heal the strife !

The Saviour smiles ! Upon my soul
New tides of hope tumultuous roll ;
His voice proclaims my pardon found ;
Seraphic transport wings the sound.

Earth has a joy unknown in heaven,
The new-born peace of sins forgiven !
Tears of such pure and deep delight,
Ye angels ! never dimmed your sight."

The thought of this third stanza is expanded in three more verses of most magnificent imagery. So grand a hymn ought to have an air adapted to it, and it would soon become a universal favourite.

The author was Mr. Augustus L. Hillhouse, one of that cultured family from whom "Hillhouse Avenue" is named. He was born at New Haven, in 1792, and died near Paris twelve years ago. While in France he composed this graceful and melodious hymn, and left it as a legacy of love to "that Name that is above every other."

About the year 1847, the late Dr. George W. Bethune, then pastor of a church in Philadelphia, published a hymn of rare beauty which soon found its way into nearly all the later collections. The reigning idea of this song of triumph over death is similar to that of Dr. Cæsar Malan's, "*Non, ce n'est pas mourir,*" a French production, which has been well translated by Professor R. P. Dunn, of Brown University. Before Dr. Bethune's remains were borne to their last resting-place in Greenwood Cemetery, these notes of victory were sung:—

"It is not death to die,
To leave this weary road,
And 'midst the brotherhood on high
To be at home with God.

It is not death to close
 The eye long dimmed by tears,
 And wake, in glorious repose
 To spend eternal years.

It is not death to bear
 The wrench that sets us free
 From dungeon chain, to breathe the air
 Of boundless liberty.

It is not death to fling
 Aside this sinful dust,
 And rise, on strong, exulting wing,
 To live among the just.

Jesus, Thou Prince of life !
 Thy chosen cannot die ;
 Like Thee, they conquer in the strife,
 To reign with Thee on high."

To many of our readers the Rev. Dr. Charles S. Robinson of New York is known as the successful compiler of the "Songs for the Sanctuary." But only a few sharp eyes may have detected his name appended to the 773rd hymn as its author. Those who do not possess this volume may thank me for inserting Dr. Robinson's sweet hymn entire :—

"Saviour ! I follow on,
 Guided by Thee,
 Seeing not yet the hand
 That leadeth me ;
 Hushed be my heart and still,
 Fear I no further ill,
 Only to meet Thy will
 My will shall be.

Riven the rock for me
Thirst to relieve,
Manna from heaven falls
Fresh, every eve ;
Never a want severe
Caused my eye a tear,
But Thou art whispering near,
' Only believe !'

Often to Marah's brink
Have I been brought ;
Shrinking the cup to drink,
Help I have sought ;
And with the prayer's ascent,
Jesus the branch has rent, —
Quickly relief He sent,
Sweetening the draught.

Saviour ! I long to walk
Closer with Thee ;
Led by Thy guiding hand,
Ever to be ;
Constantly near Thy side,
Quickened and purified,
Living for Him who died
Freely for me !"

When that most apostolic minister of Jesus Christ, Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg composed his world-known lines, "I would not live away" (in 1824), it is said that he was suffering under a sore heart-sorrow. A spirit of mournfulness over "life's woes" breathes through the poem. But in later years he has expressed some doubts whether the hymn is

not too lugubrious for a "happy warrior" in the glorious service of Immanuel. In a letter now lying before me, the sunny-hearted old man says, that "Paul's 'to depart and be with Christ' is far better than Job's 'I would not live away.'"

Like many other hymns, this precious production of Dr. Muhlenberg's genius has suffered many mutilations. The following verse, which originally closed the hymn, is now omitted from most of our books of metrical devotion :—

"That heavenly music, hark ! sweet in the air,
The notes of the harpers, how clear ringing there !
And see, soft unfolding those portals of gold,
The King, all arrayed in His beauty, behold !
Oh, give me, oh, give me the wings of a dove,
To adore Him, be near Him, enwrap with His love !
I but wait for the summons, I list for the word,
Alleluia ! Amen ! Evermore with the Lord !"

Of one more American hymn we must speak before closing this paragraph. Its author was my beloved friend and teacher the late Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander. He certainly never dreamed that it would find its way into any collection for public worship when he threw it off one evening rapidly from his versatile pen. The day after its composition he mailed it to Rev. Dr. Hall, then the editor of the *Sunday School Journal*. The lines were published


under the title of "The Doomed Man," and they describe with solemn and terrible energy the fate of a sinner who has "crossed the hidden boundary between God's patience and His wrath." These fearful lines are not so much a hymn as a thrilling appeal to the impenitent, in metre. They were at first circulated in small hand-bills through prayer-meetings, in seasons of revival. They went the rounds of religious journals, and finally lodged in Dr. Robinson's Hymn-book, and in one or two others. As originally written, the opening verse was—

"There is a time, we know not when,
A point, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair "

If Hillhouse's hymn is a prelude to the minstrelsy of heaven, these solemn lines of Alexander may be styled the *dirge* of a lost soul against whom the gates of heaven are closed for ever !



THE SUCCESSFUL PASTOR.

“HE sermon always sounds better to me on Sunday when I have had a shake of my minister's hand during the week.” This was a very natural remark of a very sensible parishioner. We always listen with a more open-hearted readiness to everything which falls from the lips of one who has won our friendship or showed us a grateful attention. Even the instructions from God's Word and the precious invitations of the gospel come more acceptably from one we love than from him who treats us with indifference or neglect. After all, the great power of a good pastor over his people is *heart-power*. Intellectual brilliancy may awaken the pride of a congregation in their minister; but it is his affectionate sympathy and personal kindnesses to them that awaken their love for him and keep it burning.

When a pastor has gained a strong hold on the affections of his people, he may preach ever so pointedly against popular sins, and the people will receive his unpalatable truths without flinching, or

hurling a reproach at him. On the other hand, we have known fearless denouncers of wrong-doing to be ousted from their pulpits, simply because the radical thunderers had no *grip* on the affections of their flock. The sermon against rum-drinking or dishonesty was a mere pretext for blackballing him: the secret reason was that they did not love the man. Conscience sometimes requires a faithful ambassador of Christ to put a severe strain on the "tether" that binds him to his pastorate: at such times it is a happy thing for him if that tether is securely fastened to a hundred family-altars and firesides. The great mass of the ministry are not men of genius; and, even if they were, they could not afford to dispense with that heart-power which can only be acquired by personal kindness and sympathy with their people.

We could name a certain successful pastor who for a quarter of a century has kept his church full and prosperous; he has sided with most of the moral reforms of the day, and his vineyard has been irrigated with many a copious revival-shower. Yet he never could be accused of brilliant talents or profound learning. He has, in their stead, a warm heart, good sense, tact, winning manners, and fervent piety. He is not a powerful preacher, but he *is* a powerful pastor. He knows where all his congre-

gation live, and he visits them. He never comes as a stranger, or in a ceremonious manner; if the parlour is cold, or locked up for repairs, he drops into the nursery, takes a youngster on his lap, chats with the mother, inquires about the spiritual welfare of the family, and probably offers a fervent prayer with them before he departs. That family are pretty certain to be at church on the next Sunday. If a business man in his congregation has met with a reverse, he calls in at his counting-room, gives him a warm shake of the hand, and a kind word of encouragement. The unfortunate merchant *feels* the warm pressure of that hand the next time he goes to church: he is ready to put into that hand the key to his own heart.

If there is a sick child in the flock, the pastor is kneeling beside its little crib; if there is a bit of crape hanging at the door-knob, the pastor is quite sure to be found amid the weeping family within. At every pastoral visit he makes, he weaves a new strand into the cord of love that binds that household to him and to the sanctuary. Such a pastor bases the pulpit on the hearts of his people; and all the mischief-making *Guy Fawkeses* in the parish cannot put enough powder-kegs of discontent under that pulpit to "blow out" the incumbent.

It may be said that all this pastoral visitation consumes a vast amount of time. So it does; but it can generally be made in the afternoon, while the morning is devoted to study. And the minister is studying *human nature* at every visit: is not this next in importance to a knowledge of God's Word? It is idle for any pastor to plead that his flock is too large for him to visit them. The writer of this paragraph has over three hundred pews in his church,—every one of them rented, to the last sitting,—and he finds no difficulty in reaching every family, at least once in each year. The very exercise of walking from house to house is a life-preserver. Every visit gives an observant pastor some information that he wants, and some new materials for a sermon. It would be a great mercy to many a minister, and to his people, if he could be dragged out of his books, and be brought into personal contact with every-day life.

There is about one minister in every generation who is so situated that he cannot possibly be a visitant of his flock. Charles H. Spurgeon is such a one. With a congregation of five thousand souls, and a membership of over three thousand, with the charge of a theological school, the editorship of a religious magazine, and the oversight of a dozen mission stations, he cannot be expected to visit six or seven

hundred families. Spurgeon is the hundred-handed Briareus of the modern pulpit; but the visitation of his immense flock he necessarily leaves to his board of elders. When he does encounter his parishioners, he is said to be very cordial and affable.

Many arguments might be urged in favour of regular and systematic pastoral visitation on the part of every Christian minister. For what is the real object and end of a minister's office? Is it simply to preach sermons? No! It is to *Christianize and save immortal souls*. It is to edify Christ's Church, to purify society, to fight sin, to lead souls to Jesus. Preaching sermons is *one* of the means to this-end. It is, indeed, a chief and indispensable agency. But if a pastor can prepare more practical sermons, and can lodge those sermons more effectually in the hearts of his auditors, by constant pastoral intercourse with them, then is he morally bound to keep up that intercourse. The mass of sinful men are only to be reached through their affections. Sympathy is power. Christ Jesus did not win Zaccheus the publican by argument. He simply went to his house, and won him by a Divine sympathy. Methinks, as I close this article, I hear some good, plain, humble "fisher of souls" whisper to me, "Brother C——, I thank you for your words of cheer. My Master never trusted me with

ten talents ; but He gave me one talent in my *heart*
I cannot be a Spurgeon ; but I can go out and love
somebody into the sphere of the gospel. With
God's help, I may become a successful PASTOR."



A SONG OF PEACE.



Close these pages with the following sweet song of peace. It issued first from the devout heart of one of God's suffering children. Mrs. Jane Crewdson of Lancashire, England, a member of the orthodox branch of the "Society of Friends," sang this heart-song from a chamber of painful sickness. She kissed the rod of chastisement which was laid upon her, and found that, like Jonathan's "rod," it had the "taste of the honey" upon it. Many who have never seen them before will doubtless welcome them here; and will read them the more often as they draw nearer to the "Better Country."

THE LITTLE WHILE.

Oh for the peace which floweth as a river,
Making life's desert places bloom and smile;
Oh for the faith to grasp heaven's bright "for ever,"
Amid the shadows of earth's "little while"!

"A little while," for patient vigil keeping,
To face the stern, to wrestle with the strong;
"A little while," to sow the seed with weeping,
Then bind the sheaves and sing the harvest song;

"A little while," to wear the weeds of sadness,
To pace, with weary step, through miry ways;
Then to pour forth the fragrant oil of gladness,
And clasp the girdle round the robe of praise.

"A little while," 'midst shadow and illusions,
To strive by faith love's mysteries to spell;
Then read each dark enigma's bright solution;
Then hail sight's verdict, "He doth all things well."

"A little while," the earthen pitcher taking
To wayside brooks, from far-off fountains fed;
Then the cool lip its thirst for ever slaking,
Beside the fulness of the Fountain-head.

"A little while," to keep the oil from failing,
"A little while" faith's flickering lamp to trim;
And then the Bridegroom's coming footstep hailing,
To haste to meet Him with the bridal hymn.

And He, who is Himself the Gift and Giver,
The future glory and the present smile,
With the bright promise of the glad "for ever"
Will light the shadows of the "little while."



HEART CULTURE.

v

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE SOUL FIRST	I
TO JESUS—AT ONCE	6
GIVING UP—FOR CHRIST	12
THE GRACE THAT PINCHES	16
THE HONEST DISCIPLE	20
THE SINS OF THE TONGUE	26
CHRIST CLEANSING THE HEART-TEMPLE	32
LIKE FATHER, LIKE FAMILY	38
WRESTLING PRAYER	43
SUNSHINY CHRISTIANS	48
CHRIST IN THE NIGHT-STORM	54
THE JEWELS IN THE CUP.	61
STRENGTHENING A PASTOR'S HANDS	64
THE WORKING TEMPERANCE CHURCH	68
HIGHER !	75
HYMNS OF HOMAGE TO CHRIST	80
THE FATHER OF ENGLISH HYMNS	86
BRAINS, AND HOW TO USE THEM	92
HYMNS OF LONGING FOR REST.	108
THE GREAT HYMN OF PROVIDENCE	113
"SIN NO MORE"	119

HEART-CULTURE.

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THE SOUL FIRST.

IF you have crossed the Atlantic in a mail-steamer, you may have observed how ready the captain was to come into the cabin on a quiet evening, and to minister to the pleasure of his passengers. But if you were suddenly to hear the loud tramp of hurrying feet across the deck overhead, and the hoarse brattling of the first-mate's trumpet to "haul in the jib," and "close-reef the top-sails," would you dare to invite the captain to a game of chess, or to listen to an operatic air? No! The sturdy seaman would reply, "In an hour the hurricane may send two hundred souls to the bottom, if everything isn't made fast. I can't play with you while the gale is playing with my ship."

My unconverted friend, when your soul is saved you may talk about the price of gold, or the ten per cent. that offers to you in some new speculation, or the latest discoveries in the gold regions. Until

then your real *business* must be to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on eternal life. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

When your soul is saved, you may talk about building the new house, or adorning the present one with pictures and Parisian upholsteries; you may then discuss the new library, or the grand tour, or the series of evening entertainments for your friends. We do not denounce fine dwellings, or paintings, or Parians, or superb libraries, or foreign tours: all these things are to be settled by extent of purse, and the ability to possess them without robbing God or the claims of charity. What we insist is, that no one has any right even to *think* of such things while the soul is yet under the condemnation of unpardoned sin. What right have you to be planning a house when you have never thought of your soul's dwelling-place through an endless eternity? Why insure your property before you have insured your soul? Why so anxious about getting into "good society" for a dozen or two of years on earth, and yet not a moment's thought about your soul's everlasting companions? Why so ready to prepare for everything else except to prepare to die?

The simple reason is, that you make this world everything and eternity nothing. You do not ex-

pect to take up your abode in hell, but the business of securing heaven you propose to set about when you have nothing else to do. At present your whole heart is drowned in money-making, or in pleasure-seeking, or in getting, keeping, and enjoying what your heart most covets. If I come to you, Mr. A—, in your counting-room, and whisper that God has a claim upon your soul; if I come to you, young Mr. B—, in your study; or to you, Madame C—, with your bundle of invitations for a daughter's *fête* beside you,—the prompt answer is, "Please don't interrupt me. I am busy." True enough: you are busy. So was Daniel busy; but he found time to pray thrice a day, and he served God in everything he did. You are busy; but so was Wilberforce, who did five men's work at once, and honoured God in every act. You are busy, but only busy in the service of self and sin: if not a Christian, you are not busy in serving God. You do not fancy an interruption by one who longs to draw your soul to Christ. Well, my friend, *death* will interrupt you, one of these days. He will not stop to knock at the door of your counting-room, or your new library. He will not wait, perhaps, till the daughter's *fête* has passed off. He will come when God sends him, and in that moment thy soul will be required of thee.

When Nehemiah was urged to quit the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and go down to a parley with his enemies on the plain of Ono, he replied manfully, "I am doing a *great work*, so that I cannot come down to you." Nehemiah was successful, because single-hearted. And so must you be, if you ever save your soul and serve your God. You must say to the world, when it clamours for your time, "I am doing a great work. I am seeking the pardon of my sins. I am settling the question of my everlasting destiny. God is calling me, and I am finding my way to Him. The Holy Spirit is striving with me; and, if I grieve Him away, He may leave me to die as callous as a rock. I have never yet prepared to *live*, much less to die; and I am determined not to give my attention to anything under the sun, until I have given my heart to Christ."


An earnest, resolute setting about the work of repentance, and of seeking God, seldom fails. Where God's help is invoked, and where the aim of the seeking heart is to please God, it never fails. God is nigh to them who call upon Him in spirit and in truth. "Ye shall seek me, and find me," He says, "when ye seek for me *with all the heart*." He demands the heart. He demands the first place in that heart. He demands that His will be made the

rule of your life. He demands that you be ready to deny self for His sake. He demands that you serve Him to your dying hour from principle. He offers to you sustaining grace and an everlasting heaven.

This *is* a great work, you confess ; “ but how shall I accomplish it ? ” God’s answer is, “ Work out your salvation ; for it is God that worketh in you. ” “ My grace is sufficient for you. ” Yes, it is a great work ; but Christ has done a greater,—he has died to make your salvation possible. It will be *certain*, when you give your heart to Him. And when you so desire to be a Christian that you are willing to take up any cross and follow Jesus ; when you so desire to be saved that you are willing to pray for it ; and not only pray, but give up your favourite sins ; and not only forsake sin, but to embrace the Saviour,—then the work is done, and you have a right to all the glorious privileges of a child of God. If a child, then an heir,—a joint-heir to heaven’s inheritance. *The soul must be first!* And Christ first in the soul! Then “ all’s well ” for time and eternity.



TO JESUS—AT ONCE.

T a certain prayer-meeting a friend of ours arose and gave the narrative of his first year's experience as a Christian. He had *tried* the religion of Jesus for himself; and the more he followed the Saviour, the more of delight he found in the service. If those who sneer at practical religion would only seek it for themselves, and make a fair trial of it, their lips would be sealed to scoffs, and only opened in grateful praise. I never heard of a sincere Christian who pronounced Christianity an imposture or a failure. Have you?

Our friend told us of his conversion. It was very sudden, yet none the less genuine for that. No conversion could be more sudden than that of Saul of Tarsus; but the jailer's at Philippi, and the eunuch's on the road to Gaza, seem to have been quite as much so. In fact, the Bible descriptions of regeneration are generally alike in two particulars: there is a powerful drawing of the soul by the Holy Spirit, and there is an immediate turning from sin to the Divine Redeemer. It was so with my friend. He told us that he was at church on a certain Sabbath

evening, and the command of Christ to Andrew, "*Follow me,*" came into his mind with prodigious power. He at once resolved to follow Jesus; and ever since that time has been an earnest, working Christian. He had no protracted season of distress before he was willing to accept the Saviour. But he commenced the practical duties of the Christian life *at once*, and sought to "do the work of to-day, with to-day's light and help from the Lord."

This was a very brief and business-like statement of a great religious revolution in a human soul. It furnishes a model for every unconverted sinner with whom the Spirit of God is striving. That loving Spirit may now be striving with you, my reader. If you have felt, or do feel, an inward compunction over your life of sin, and a yearning after a better life, then is the Divine Spirit at work upon your conscience. Do not wait for the Spirit: he is already with you. Yield to Him; pray for His deeper power and renewing grace. Do not wait for a more vivid sense of guilt; men find out more of their own wickedness after they have come to Jesus than they ever dreamed of before. Do not wait for more feeling of any description. If you had fallen from a ferry-boat into yonder river with its floating ice, would you wait to *feel any colder*

before you seized the rope flung to you from the vessel's deck?

Christ has waited long enough—too long—for you already. Accept Him at once! When the leper came to Him for healing, the Master bade him “Go show himself to the priest,” and report himself cured. The suffering creature did not stop to count his loathsome “scabs,” or to pull off a single “scale” from his frightful face. He asked no questions either, but set off at once as directed; and we read that “*as he went* he was healed.” The path of obedience was the path of his salvation. When Christ found Andrew and James and John on the lake-shore of Galilee, He said to them, “Follow me.” They obeyed the authoritative call, and straightway followed Him. He did not come twice after them, nor did He need to speak twice to them. They forsook their nets, their homes, their kindred, and entered at once upon a career of self-denying toil, which gradually grew into the mightiest mission for God and humanity that was ever entrusted to mortal hands and hearts. Just imagine that those men had said *no*, instead of *yes*.

But they did not even sit down to weep over their sins, or stop to chaffer with the Saviour about the profits of the trade they were abandoning. The

gripe of that command, "Follow me," was like the gripe of a hand of steel clothed in velvet: it was soft, but strong. They rose up, left their nets, and set off immediately on a march of toil and humiliation, which led to martyrdom on earth, and to a crown of unfading glory in the presence of God and the holy angels.

You, too, must forsake your "net." It is your favourite sin. Perhaps many a sin; but often a single besetting sin is a "net" that entangles a soul in its meshes, and unless that net is forsaken, the soul cannot follow the Master. What is your net? God knows; and so do you. Perhaps others have seen your hindrance in a sparkling glass which fashion or appetite keeps on your table. Break that glass, or it may break your heart in the world of woe. We have seen more awakened sinners drawn back to impenitence through the stress of sensual temptation than by any other device of the devil. The decanter, the card-table, and the play-house are damning more souls to-day than all the infidelity on the globe.

Perhaps your "net" is a complicity with dishonest dealing. You may be making money against the protest of conscience. Perhaps you are held back by fear of your associates; you seek to live on

good terms with sinners, and to die on good terms with God. This cannot be done. He who takes up no cross shall wear no crown. But suppose that some irreligious friend does stare at you, or sneer; it may be that some other one may be startled out of his thoughtlessness by your fearless standing up for Jesus, and you may save a soul unawares. Do right, and leave consequences to God.

We cannot specify all the "nets" of favourite sins, or indulged cavils and doubts, which our thousands of readers may be clinging to; no matter what the hindrance, so that it keeps you from Christ. A man may be crushed by an avalanche, or poisoned by an atom of strychnine; each one *takes life!* And the sin that keeps you from Jesus takes your life for all eternity.

The only true repentance is an abandonment of known sin. The only true faith is the entire yielding of the soul to Jesus for salvation. The two make up evangelical conversion. And sincere *coming to Jesus* embraces the two. This vital step may be attended with poignant distress of mind, or it may not. This will depend on your temperament and on the methods of the Holy Spirit's work. Do not be anxious about the degree of your distress. Tears

do not save: Christ does. Wait for nothing. Wait for no one. Just begin to serve Jesus in the first duty that comes to your hand. Just refuse to do the first wrong thing to which you are tempted. Do this in prayer for Divine help. You will get no help and no comfort while you remain with your "nets": *hasten to Jesus, and at once!*



GIVING UP—FOR CHRIST.



FRIEND requested me to name a few simple and practical rules for Christian self-denial. "It is not what a man takes up, but what he *gives up*, that makes him rich towards God." Now what ought a follower of Jesus to give up for his Master's sake?

1. Of course every man who would become a Christ's man must renounce everything that God's Word and a healthy conscience set down as wrong. All sins are "contraband" at the gateway of entrance to the Christian life. The sentinel at the gate challenges us with the command,—“Lay down that sin!” “Cease to do evil” comes before “Learn to do well.”

2. We must give up whatever by its direct influence tends to injure ourselves or others. Here comes in the law of brotherly love,—the law of avoiding the appearance of evil, and of renouncing whatever causes our brother to stumble. This is the generally accepted basis for the duty of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks. They endanger my neighbour A—, and they are destroying my

brother B——; therefore I ought to avoid setting the example of their use before A—— and B——. Total abstinence then rests on the double ground of self-preservation, and of self-denial for the sake of others. We have a very poor opinion of the piety of any man who will not give up his bottle of wine or any other self-indulgence for the sake of taking a stumbling-block out of a fellow-creature's path.

This second principle of abandoning every practice which may mislead others is the one to be applied by a Christian whenever he is solicited to play whist, or to attend the opera, the circus, or the dancing-party. You may not become a gambler, but cards make gamblers of others. You may not be corrupted by the opera-stage or the promiscuous dance, but their influence has damaged thousands of your fellow Christians. The *safe* side of all questionable amusements is the *outside*.

3. Give up whatever tends to pamper the passions, or to kindle unholy desires. Paul's noble determination to "keep his body under" implies that there was something or other in Paul's fleshly nature which ought to be kept under. It is also true of about every Christian, that somewhere in his nature lies a weak point, a besetting tendency to sin; and right there must be applied the check-rein of self-denial.

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Even eminent Christians have had to wage constant battle with sexual passions. Others have had sore conflict with irritable, violent tempers. Old Dr. Alexander used to say to us students, "Young brethren, *envy* is a besetting sin with the ministry : you must keep that abominable spirit under." When a servant of Christ is willing to take a back seat, or to yield the pre-eminence to others, he is making a surrender which is well pleasing to his meek and lowly Master. One of the hardest things to many a Christian is to serve his Saviour as a "private," when his pride tells him that he ought to wear a "shoulder-strap" in Christ's army.

4. Another very hard thing for most persons to give up, is to give up *having their own way*. But the very essence of true spiritual obedience lies just here. It is right here that self-sufficiency and vanity and waywardness and obstinacy are to be met. Here they must be sacrificed to that demand of the Master, that He shall rule and not we. Only a truly self-denying, self-abnegating disciple can adopt those words which the holy-minded Dr. Skinner lined off to his brethren just before his death :—

'My Jesus, as *Thou* wilt :
Oh, may Thy will be mine !
Into Thy hand of love
I would my all resign."

5. The last rule of giving up which we have room for is that time, ease, and money must all be held tributary to Christ. In these days of stylish equipage and social extravagance, how few Christians are willing to give up to Jesus the key to their purses and bank safes! Too many go through the solemn farce of writing "Holiness to the Lord" on their property, and then using it for their own gratification. Every servant of Christ should systematically bestow at least one tenth of his annual income in Christian charities, and as much more as he or she can afford without robbing others. What child of God was ever bankrupted by benevolence?

It is harder to give up ease than money. Personal exertion to save sinners, to do disagreeable duties, and to "keep at it" in up-hill work, is one of the severest tests of self-denying godliness. Blessed is that disciple who can say, "It is my meat to do my Master's will, and to finish the work which He gave me to do." He goes on giving up, and giving up, for Christ, until his dying hour; and then when he gets to heaven he will find that what he "lost for Christ's sake" has been saving up for him, to be his everlasting treasure in glory.

THE GRACE THAT PINCHES.



THE prevailing sin of the day is *self-indulgence*. It is eating like a canker into the life of many of our churches. It leaves Christ's ministers to address empty pews on unpleasant Sabbaths. It robs Christ's treasury to keep up a showy "turn out." If it hangs a bough of profession over on the *church-side* of the dividing wall, yet its roots are deep down in the soil of the world. It is often ready to deny Christ, but seldom ready to deny itself.

The most unpopular doctrine to preach in these times, and the hardest one to practise, is the old-fashioned apostolic doctrine of *self-denial*. This is the grace that pinches. The daily battle of Christian principle is with that artful, subtle, greedy sinner, *self*. And the highest victory of our religion is to follow Jesus over the rugged path of self-denial. This is mainly to be done in the little everyday acts of life. The great occasions that demand sublime sacrifice are few and rare.

The Christian who suppresses a jest or a witticism because it would burlesque his religion practises self-

denial. When he speaks out a bold but unpopular word for the right,—in “fashionable society,”—he is really taking up a cross for his Master. All genuine acts of philanthropy are born of the noble principle to deny self, and to honour Christ in the persons of those for whom Christ suffered.

The mission-school teacher, who sallies off in the driving storm to carry his gospel-loaf to a group of hungry children, is an example of this. “Why should I sit by the warm fire on my sofa to-day? Christ will look for me among my class.” The seamstress who drops her hard-earned dollar into the missionary collection is really enthroning her Saviour above herself. Those educated Northern girls who went South to teach ragged freedmen their alphabet and the Bible are truer ladies in God’s sight than all the self-pampering belles who air their fineries in Fifth Avenue.

We cannot emphasise too strongly this grace which pinches selfishness. I care not how orthodox is a man’s creed, or how eloquent may be his prayers in public; if he has never learned to say “no” to the demands of fashion, and pride, and luxury, he is but a sorry specimen of the Christ-man.

What a touching lesson of self-denial we behold in every crutch and in every “empty sleeve” of

those heroes in blue whom we yet meet on all our public thoroughfares! These noble men counted not their limbs dear, if only the nation might be saved, and freedom might triumph. Yet there are thousands of professed Christians who are unwilling to deny themselves the paltry gratification of a glass of wine or ale in order to help the sentiment of total abstinence to become popular, or to aid in saving the "weak brother who stumbleth." They know they are setting a bad example when they use or offer the poison-cup. They know that they are throwing their influence on the side of the tipplers. Yet because it is "genteel" to partake of wine or punch, they do not hesitate to "take a drop" in the social circle. Perhaps they thrust the decanter before some weak, temptable friend, to his everlasting damnation! If the drunkard shall "not inherit the kingdom of heaven," what right has a professed Christian to ask to be admitted to heaven if *he has helped to make* a drunkard of his neighbour? I fear that God will say to the "pious" tempter, "That man's blood will I require at thy hands." Paul acted with a truer spirit of Christ when he uttered the noble precept, "It is good *not* to drink wine whereby my brother stumbleth."

Brethren! Let us pray for the *grace that pinches.*

If it "goes against the grain," all the better. If it wounds our pride, so much the better. If it makes us look "singular," let us remember that we are commanded to be a "*peculiar* people," and not to look like the votaries of Satan. Brave old Dr. Wisner, who went home the other day to glory, was once the most *singular* man in the village of Ithaca. He dared to stand alone. He was ever ready to testify on the Lord's side, on which he had planted himself so valiantly.

Oh for a new baptism of self-denial ! Oh for a new training in that lesson which our dying Master taught us, which apostles and martyrs echoed from the prison cell and kindled stakes,—the sublime lesson that—

“Not to ourselves alone,
Not to the flesh, we'll live,
Not to the world henceforth shall we
Our strength and being give.

No longer be our life
A selfish thing, or vain ;
For us, e'en here, to live be Christ ;
For us to die is gain !”



THE HONEST DISCIPLE.

SOME characters in the Bible are painted with a single stroke. Enoch, the staunch old patriarch who walked with God; Caleb the faithful, "who followed the Lord *fully*;" Dorcas, who made the needle sacred; Onesiphorus, the model gentleman, who oft refreshed Paul and "was not ashamed of his chain;" Demas, the deserter from duty,—all these and many others owe their peculiar immortality to a mere line or two of Holy Writ.

One of these striking characters of whom we would like to know more is NATHANAEL, of Cana. The main facts that we gain about him are that he dwelt in the village where Christ turned pure water into *pure* wine; and it is possible that he was the bridegroom at that famous wedding. His name in Hebrew has the same significance with Theodore in the Greek,—“The Gift of God.” Perhaps his mother laid his name on the little head of her newborn darling in especial gratitude for a child whose coming she regarded as a special mercy. Would that we all so recognised God’s hand in the bestowal of children that we could write beside each name in the family

record, "*A gift of God to my heart*, and therefore not to be given by me to the Devil!"

Every good man is God's boon to society; but this Nathanael's especial trait was downright sincerity. He was an honest man. When his friend Philip invites him to come and follow Jesus, he rather bluntly inquires, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Not merely did he mean by this that the Nazarenes were a disreputable set; but he was too close a student of the Jewish Scriptures not to know that the Messiah was predicted to make his appearance in Bethlehem of *Judea* (not in Galilee). Philip's curt and sensible reply is, "Come and see." This is the conclusive argument, after all. The only satisfactory test of Christianity is the test of personal examination and personal experiment. Come and see Jesus for yourself! Come and try Him for yourself. There are some truths which, like good medicines, must be taken in order to be trusted, as well as trusted in order to be taken. Of such truths, the pre-eminent is a Divine, incarnate Redeemer. Friend, if you want to know Christ's ineffable beauty, come and see Him; if you want to know His pardoning love and sustaining power, come and obey Him. *Do His will*, if you would know of His doctrine. I never heard of an infidel who had fairly tried the

experiment of living out the religion of Christ Jesus.

Philip's request was obeyed ; and when Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, He said of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, *in whom is no guile!*" It is as if He had said, Behold a man of faith and of frank sincerity. Christ does not pronounce Nathanael to be absolutely sinless. And if Nathanael had so pretended, he would not have been guileless ; for if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Nathanael was an honest Israelite, a man of faith, a man of prayer, and above all a man above shams and false pretences. Even when Jesus pronounced him "without guile," he did not begin to stammer out any self-depreciating cant : "Lord, you give me too much credit ; I don't deserve to be called an honest man. I am only a miserable sinner." Nathanael left all such lying cant to those Pharisees of modern prayer-meetings who pretend to be worse than they are, in order to get credit for humility. I believe that there are as many lies told in self-depreciation as there are in self-exaggeration. When a Christian *knows* whom he has believed, and knows that he is sincerely striving to follow Jesus, even in an imperfect fashion, he has no moral right to apply to himself, in penitential prayer, the same words

which describe a sceptic, a felon, or a hypocrite. Some people have a very sneaking way of feeding their self-conceit on phrases of profound humility. Other people—and really sincere Christians—introduce many phrases of self-abasement out of mere form ; just as I have overheard giddy, frivolous girls and careless men of pleasure mumble that solemn litany, “Lord, have mercy upon us *miserable sinners.*” Had I told them the same thing to their faces, they would have grown red with wrath and resented it as an insult.

Our holy Redeemer had an intense abhorrence of hypocrisy. He denounced sanctimoniousness with a severity that startles us in One so gentle and compassionate. On no class of sinners did He thunder such terrific rebukes as on the “whited sepulchres,” who looked fair on the outside, but within were full of rottenness. Christ emphasised the necessity of consistency between the faith of the heart and the practice of the life. “By their *fruits* ye shall know them.” And where the renewed heart is a sweet fountain, His Word teaches us that it should not send forth bitter waters. The honest accordance of the heart that loves Christ and the life that honours Christ is what the Bible means by “godly sincerity.” Those memorable words of Robertson of Brighton,

will bear to be quoted again. "The first lesson in religion is, *be true*; the second lesson is, *be true*; and the third lesson still is, *be true*." I cannot believe that growth in grace is possible to the man or woman whose daily habit is to confess a guilt they do not feel, and to profess a love for Jesus which they do not experience.

The glory of Nathanael is that he was an honest disciple. For he *was* a disciple, and one of the chosen twelve. His call to discipleship was similar to that of Andrew and Peter. He obeyed the call of Jesus, and did not go back to his "fig-tree," under which the all-seeing Eye had discovered him. In the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, this honest brother is mentioned by his surname or second name, *Bartholomew*. His whole name seems to have been Nathanael Bartholomew, which last word signifies "the son of Tholmai." John, however, calls him only by his beautiful "Christian name," the "Gift of God."

Philip and Nathanael Bartholomew are always spoken of together. They seemed to have grown to each other like twins. After Christ's resurrection, Nathanael met his Master on the beach of Galilee; and his hand had hold of the net when the huge draught of fishes came up to the shore. After the

Ascension, Nathanael attended the prayer-meeting in the "upper room." From that hour we never hear of him again. Tradition says that he was crucified in Armenia. But, wherever he died, we never hear that he forfeited that golden name which Jesus bound about his brow : "The Israelite indeed in whom is no guile."



THE SINS OF THE TONGUE.



THE gift of speech is a marvellous gift. For five whole days of creation's first week the Almighty was clothing the newborn earth with light and verdure, and covering it with the myriads of animal life. But it was a voiceless world. At length God made man in his own image, with not only a soul to appreciate his Creator, but a *tongue* to give expression to his homage, and "as the new-formed being gazed around him, the silence was broken, and creation thrilled with the melody of speech."

Philosophers tell us that every uttered word produces a vibration in the atmosphere: an ingenious theory has therefore been broached that these vibrations never entirely cease! If this were true, we should still be moving among the inaudible words of all our progenitors. This seems fanciful in natural philosophy; but there is a sense in which every uttered word *lives for ever*. It lives in its influence on the speaker, in its influence on others. Paul's voice echoes still; millions of God's faithful messengers, being dead, yet speak!

When Latimer was on trial for heresy, he heard the scratch of a pen behind the tapestry. In a moment he bethought himself that every word he spoke was *taken down*, and he says that he was very careful what words he uttered. Behind the veil that hides eternity is a record-book, in which our every syllable is taken down. Even the most trivial are not forgotten, for the Lord Jesus tells us that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment!" If our words have an eternity of existence, if good words have so potent an influence to save, if idle, or profane, or poisonous speech work such perennial mischief, how needful is the perpetual utterance of the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips!"

I. Among the many sins of the tongue are *idle words*. "Avoid foolish talking," says the wise apostle, "and let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." There is a peculiar sin in idle talking when we remember that the same expenditure of breath might be productive of so much blessing. When we contemplate a Whitefield in the full rush of his resistless oratory,—now startling a guilty sinner from his slumber on the verge of hell, now leading a bewildered wanderer to Christ, now kindling a saint

into rapture, and now melting a rebel into penitence, —we grow indignant at the thought that this prerogative of speech should so often be spent in silly jests and contemptible frivolities. Are time and eternity so lacking in themes of importance that we shall spend our precious breath in fuming emptiness? Surely, if we would but reflect how soon our tongues will lie silent in the tomb, and how speedily the dust will gather upon our lips, we should be awed into more sobriety and purity and carefulness of speech.

Shall we never jest? Does not a pleasant joke sometimes do good like a medicine? Very true. There is more marrow in a wise man's jokes than in a fool's solemn inanities. But a wise man "sets a watch on his lips" even when he utters a pleasantry. Especially, he never jests at the wrong time, or about sacred things. He never utters puns and parodies on the Bible; for what men have once laughed at, they seldom reverence. Heartily do I wish that I had never uttered a ludicrous application of a Scripture line, and had never heard one; for the profane or indecent burlesque will often shoot into my mind in the midst of a sermon or a prayer. Wit and humour are allowable when controlled by good sense and by reverence for God; but when we venture into

the sublime domains of Revelation, we should put our shoes from off our feet, for the ground whereon we stand is holy. From my soul I abominate *merri-ment in the pulpit*. Should he court a grin who should be winning souls to God? When an ambassador of Christ descends to make sport in the sacred desk, the devil laughs.

II. Malicious words are cousins in sin to idle and profane words. Paul says, "Let all bitterness and *evil speaking* be put away from you, with all malice." Kind words are the oil that lubricates every-day intercourse. They cost little. A phrase of common comfort, "that by daily use hath almost lost its sense, will fall upon the saddened heart like choicest music." We love to meet certain people. They always have a kind, cheerful, inspiriting word for us. They make us hopeful, and heal our heart-aches. Others we instinctively shun. They always have a sly thrust at somebody. They hatch mean suspicions in our minds. They are ever letting out a drop of *acid* on some character or cause that is dear to us, and the acid leaves an ugly stain. There was an ancient malediction that the tongue of the slanderer should he cut out; if that summary process were now enforced, we fear that some of our acquaintances might soon lose the "unruly member." A slanderer is a public

enemy. One reckless tongue is enough sometimes to embroil a whole village and to set a church in a flame. "There are six things which God hates; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him." The seventh of the category is "the false witness who speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

III. In treating of the sins of the tongue, we must not omit a word in regard to that feculent ichor that exudes from some lips in the form of obscenity. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and a filthy imagination, like a fever, comes out on the tongue. In companies of youth, in shops and counting-houses, in rooms of colleges and boarding-schools, in ships' cabins and soldiers' tents, a vendor of obscenities is a walking pestilence. Long years do not obliterate the filthy memories; not even the converting grace of God can wholly purify the unclean chambers of imagery.

And then there is *profane swearing*. This is the most gratuitous and inexcusable of sins. The man who swears turns speech into a curse, and before his time rehearses the dialect of hell. He waits for no bait, but "bites at the devil's bare hook." The shrewd Quaker's advice to the profane youth, "Swear away, my young friend, till thee gets all that bad stuff out of thee," points to the real source of the vice; for

it is out of an evil *heart* that proceed evil thoughts, false witness, and blasphemies.

We fear that the purest tongue will need much purifying before it is fit to join in the celestial praises of God's upper temple. For that worship let us attune our voices by ceaseless prayers, by words of love, by earnest vindications of the right, by habitual "speech seasoned with salt" of Divine grace. The melody of heaven will spring from a *harmony of hearts*; each voice there will bear a part in the song of Moses and the Lamb.



*CHRIST CLEANSING THE HEART-
TEMPLE.*

IN what a turmoil and confusion did our blessed Lord find the Temple when He entered it on a certain time of the Passover ! A noisy crowd of money-changers and cattle-brokers are driving their selfish and sacrilegious traffic. Herds of oxen are lowing ; sheep are bleating ; cages of doves block up the way ; the air is filled with the jabbering babel of traders' tongues, all eager to sell their beasts and birds for the sacrifices. It is a terrible desecration of an edifice sacred to the Lord of heaven and earth.

Right among these noisy traffickers enters One who is greater than the Temple. Seizing the small rushes which were used for tying up the cattle, our Saviour twisted them into a "scourge" or whip, and drove out the whole crowd of profane intruders. The tables of the money-changers are overturned ; and to those who were turning the sanctuary into a pigeon-house the Divine Master says, "Take these things hence ! make not my Father's house a house of merchandise !" The Temple is cleansed in an

instant. Not, of course, by the terror inspired by a small whip in a single hand ; but by a supernatural authority,—the authority of the Divine Messiah, which asserted itself in such a manner that the sacrilegious rabble moved off, convicted of their wrong, and overawed by the rebuke of that Sovereign who was “ Lord also of the temple.”

In this striking scene I find a parable, full of spiritual instruction. The soul of every Christian is a *temple*. It becomes such at the time of conversion. Formerly a habitation of the evil one, it becomes, by regeneration, a “habitation of God through the Spirit.” As the stones on mount Moriah were but common stones until they were consecrated to God’s use, so the powers and affections of a sinner’s heart become, through true conversion, a dwelling-place for Jesus. “ Know ye not,” said Paul, “ that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy, for the temple of God is holy ; *which temple ye are.*” What a glorious idea this presents of a faithful follower of Christ ! His heart is a sanctuary of the Spirit,—full of holy thoughts and devout aspirations. Not a gloomy cloister ; but a tabernacle of praise, with strains of lofty melody pealing through the arches,

and the sweet incense of gratitude ascending from the altar. The mercy-seat of prayer is there; and the flames of love, consuming the offerings, send forth the "savour of a sweet smell."

But alas! how often is this inner temple of the believer profaned by intruders as sacrilegious as they who brought their beasts and birds and bullion into the sacred edifice on mount Moriah! Selfishness brings in its herd of sinful schemes into the apartments which belong to Christ alone. Gradually, and under fair pretences, self edges in,—first into the outer courts, and then into the very sanctum of the soul. But into this profaned heart how often does the loving Jesus come with His *scourge* of sharp chastisements! How often does He twist the very plans of our selfishness into a thong to smite us! Selfishness becomes its own retribution. Our pride, too, is often fearfully scourged by humiliations and mortifications and exposures. Poor boastful Peter! What a scourging did his self-conceit receive in Pilate's garden! And what a terrible whip of retribution did David's lust receive when the child of his guilt lay dead before his weeping eyes! It was to purify, and not to destroy, that the chastising Lord entered into those heart-temples. And our pitying Saviour, when He weaves out of our sins a scourge to

Christ Cleansing the Heart-Temple. 35

punish us, only carries out His discipline of mercy. Whom He *loveth* He chasteneth; and *scourgeth* (observe the word)—*scourgeth* every child whom He receiveth.

We could point to hundreds of Church members into whose heart-temple covetousness has intruded and set up its tables of traffic, in despite of that solemn caution, “Ye *cannot* serve God *and* Mammon.” Such men are eaten up by the greed for gain; they are thoroughly worldly-minded and unspiritualized. The heart that was once a temple has become a warehouse or a broker’s office. Let such backsliding professors look out for the scourge! Perhaps it may come in a sore spiritual distress; perhaps in commercial disaster, which shall overturn the tables and scatter the hoards of coveted wealth. In 1857, the Lord entered into the American Church with the scourge of commercial chastisements, and threw down the tables of traffic in terrible bankruptcies; but it was to prepare the way for the most glorious revivals known in this century.

Sinful ambition is another intruder into the heart sanctuary. “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.” But, in spite of this tender warning, ambition gets possession; until at length the indignant Master enters to overthrow our guilty schemes,

with the stern rebuke, "Take these things hence ;" "he that exalteth himself shall be abased." Me thinks that some of us may have set up *domestic idols* in the temple of the heart. We loved them more than we loved Him who gave them. And when the scourge came—came, too, in an unlooked-for hour—it drew the heart's blood! The surgery of bereavement was terrible. The death-wail sounded through the inner chambers, while the Master was carrying off our idols. But, when the idol was gone, there was more room for Him to whom the *whole heart* had once been promised. When our loved ones are taken, then, like the sisters of Bethany, we send for that FRIEND who had been quite too much forgotten or neglected before. Blessed be the chastisements, however bitter, which purify the heart for Jesus! Blessed be the scourge, if it is only in that hand which was once pierced for our redemption! Love never gives one blow too many, or too hard.

There is one other thought worth noting here, if it be not too close a torturing of the very words of the inspired narrative. You will observe that, when Christ cleansed the temple of intruders, He "made a scourge of *small* cords." He wove the little withes that lay about the floors into the whip of chastisement. So does that same loving Lord now employ

Christ Cleansing the Heart-Temple. 37

little trials as well as great bereavements in the spiritual discipline of His people. Many a Christian has a daily vexation to try his patience or to punish his besetting sins. Little pains, little annoyances, and little discomforts are as much a part of our discipline as are the formidable adversities that occasionally smite us like hurricanes. Little vexations often creep into the secret places, and, by finding out the sore spots, discover to us our faults. Let us not despise the chastening of our Divine Physician and Purifier when He sends small trials as well as great ones to test our graces or to drive out our sins. Remember that it was with a scourge of small cords that the Lord of the temple expelled the profane intruders from His dwelling-place. Better, far better, to bear the scourge of little cords, when laid on by the hand of love, than to endure the whip of scorpions in that world where punishment can torture and sting, but may never purify.



LIKE FATHER, LIKE FAMILY.

MANY a sermon has been preached to mothers, many a tract and treatise written on the mother's influence. But how often are sermons preached to fathers? Is there any power for good or evil greater than the influence of him who *leads the family*, who propagates his own character in the persons and the souls of his children, who lives his own life over again in the lives of those whom he has begotten?

Like father, like family. Set this down as a philosophical principle. Occasional exceptions do not undermine the rule: it is an organic one. The father impresses himself upon his children just as undesignedly, but just as surely, as I impress my shadow on the ground when I walk into the sunshine. The father cannot help it, if he would. The father *leads*, by God's decree. He makes the home-law; fixes the precedents; creates the home-atmosphere; and the "odour of the house" clings to the garments of the children, if they go around the globe. "His father was a Papist," or "his father was a Protestant," is the sufficient reason that determines most men's religious

opinions. "He is a chip of the old block," said some one when he heard the younger Pitt's first speech. "Nay," replied Burke, "he is the old block himself."

In nothing is this so true as in moral resemblances. A father's devoted godliness is often reproduced in his children. But still oftener are his errors and his vices. He commonly sets the habits of the household. Whatever "fires the father kindles, the children gather the wood." If the father rises late on the Sabbath morning, the boys come down late and ill-humoured to the table. If he goes on a Sunday excursion, they must carry the lunch and the fishing-tackle, and share in the guilty sports. If he wishes to read a Sunday paper, then George or Tom must go out to buy it.

In looking over my congregation, I find that while several pious fathers have unconverted children, there are but few prayerless fathers who have converted sons. The *pull* of the father downward is too strong for the upward pull of the Sabbath-school and the pulpit. If the father talks money constantly, he usually rears a family for Mammon. If he talks pictures and books at his table, he is likely to awaken a thirst for literature or art. If he talks horses and games and prize-fights, he brings up a family of jockeys and sportsmen. If he makes his own fireside attractive in the evening, he will probably succeed in

anchoring his children at home. But if he hears the clock strike eleven in the theatre or the club-house, he need not be surprised if his boys hear it strike twelve in the gambling-house or the drinking-saloon. If he leads in irreligion, what but the grace of God can keep his imitative household from following him to perdition? The history of such a family is commonly written in that sadly frequent description given in the Old Testament: "He walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him."

I find two very different types of paternal religion. Both are nominally Christian. The one parent prays at his family altar for the conversion of his children. He then labours to fulfil his own prayers. He makes religion prominent in his family: it is as pervasive as the atmosphere. The books that are brought home, the papers selected, the amusements chosen, the society that is sought, the aims in life that are set before those children, all bear in one direction, and that the right one. God is not invoked by that father to convert his offspring to godliness, while he is doing his utmost to pervert them to worldliness, or self-seeking, or frivolity, no more than he would ask God to restore his sick child while he was giving the poor boy huge doses of opium or strychnine.

Yet there is a class of professing Christians who do


this very thing. They pray for a child's conversion, and yet on the very evenings when prayer-meetings are being held they take that son or daughter to the opera or the fashionable rout. They pray that their households may live for God, and then set them an example of most intense money-clutching and mammon-worship. A man sits down with a solemn face to the communion-table, and then comes home to gossip, to crack jokes, to talk politics, to entertain Sunday visitors at a sumptuous feast, to do anything and everything which tends to dissipate the impressions of God's worship and the sacramental service. Such fathers never follow up a pungent sermon, never watch for opportunities to lead their children Christward, never co-operate with God's Spirit for the conversion of an impenitent son or daughter. What must an ingenuous child think of such a father's prayers?

I entreat parents most solemnly not to stand in the way of their children's salvation. If you do not help the good work, pray do not hinder it. The selfish or inconsistent life of some fathers is enough to neutralize all the teachings and appeals of both pulpit and Sabbath-school. To Paul's question, "How knowest thou, O wife, if thou mayest save thy husband?" we would add the startling query, "How knowest thou, O father, but thou mayest destroy thy own children?"

How many a devoted praying wife is struggling to lead her children heavenward, and finds her every effort nullified by the open irreligion of an ungodly father! She toils on *alone*, prays on alone, works alone, and weeps alone over their perils and the fatal example at their own fireside. God pity and support her! She is striving to bear her children on her own shoulders; but to-day her sad failure is written in the homely adage, *Like father, like family.*



WRESTLING PRAYER.

“HERE'S nae good dune, John, till ye get to the *close grups*.” So said “Jeems, the door-keeper” of Broughton Place church, Edinburgh, to the immortal Dr. John Brown, the author of “Rab and his Friends.” Old Jeems got into a marvellous nearness with God in prayer, and conversed with him as he would with his “ain father.” He understood the power of a *close grip* when an earnest soul is wrestling with God for a blessing.

Jacob, the patriarch, had such a struggle in that remarkable and mystical scene at Penuel. We are told that he wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant—who *may* have been the incarnate Jesus—until the breaking of the day. The angel said, “Let me go, the day breaketh.” Here was a trial of the patriarch’s faith. “What is that to me,” thought the eager man, “that the day is breaking? I must have the blessing *now*. There is no daylight of hope for me unless I obtain what I am struggling for. *I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me!*” He triumphed on the spot.

So clung the Syro-Phoenician mother to Christ

when she was beseeching Him to heal her sick daughter. The Master seemed to put her off, in order to try the mettle of her faith. But she came up into what the old Scotchman called a closer grip, with the heart of infinite love, and she carried the day. "Go thy way," said Jesus unto her. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And so He granted to a great faith what He might have denied to a little faith. Precisely so is it with Christians now, and with Churches. An honest persevering faith, a faith that works while it prays, a faith that holds on through discouragements, — achieves the result it pleads for. For faith creates such a condition of things that it is wise for God to grant what would otherwise be denied.

There are many things in the providence of God to which we ought to submit. We ought to submit unconditionally and without a murmur to chastisements and bereavements. But there are certain other things placed in our way expressly that we may wrestle with them and overcome them. If a temptation assails us, we are never to submit to it. If a difficulty blocks our path of duty, then is the time for a stout faith to "remove the mountain." A father whose children are yet unconverted has no business to sit down in silent submission to such a

state of things. Neither has a pastor or a Church any right to sit down submissively to the terrible fact that the truth is powerless, and no souls are converted. The Syro-Phœnician woman would have done wrong if she had gone home submissive when Christ *seemed* to be denying her reasonable request. God is a supreme sovereign up yonder ; but we are responsible free agents down here. And as a sovereign He has commanded us to pray, to "pray without ceasing." He reserves to Himself the right to grant our requests when He chooses and as He chooses. It is our right to pray, and it is God's right to bestow just such answers as seem best to Him. I would define faith to be that temper of the soul which submits to all which God orders, but *never submits to what God can better*. If we yield to sin or discouragements when we ought to struggle against them, or if we yield to the absence of spiritual blessings without an earnest wrestling for those blessings, we are unworthy clods, and we deserve to suffer.

What a magnificent epic are the triumphs of faith ! The Bible history fairly shines with the bright record of persistent, prevailing prayer. The early Church were "continuing with one accord in supplication" when the Holy Spirit descended in the Pentecost.

When the Apostle Peter was locked up in a dungeon, prayer was made without ceasing by the people of God for him ; and the heaven-sent angel opened his dungeon doors, and sent him to the prayer-meeting as a living witness to their prevalence with God. I have seen awakened sinners come into prayer-gatherings who were just as truly delivered out of Satan's prison as Peter was, and by the same agency of intercessory prayer. I have known a mother to cling to the mercy-seat, and to wrestle with God until the beloved child whom she could not convert has been converted. The wife has wrestled for her impenitent husband : " I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless him ! " We have seen a godly wife sit and sob through a prayer-meeting until the handkerchief that covered her face was soaked with tears ; and she has gone home to find her husband himself weeping over his sins.


Prayer is power. When Luther was in the mid-heat of his awful battle with the Great Beast, he used to say, " I cannot get on without three hours a day in prayer." John Welsh, of Scotland, often leaped out of his bed at midnight, and wrapped a plaid about him, and wrestled with the Lord until the breaking of the day. His preaching was mighty when he came to his pulpit from these *Penuels* of pleading with his

God. There is many a Church among us which is in a midnight of slumber and barrenness. But repentance and wrestling prayer will *bring the day-break.*

Unless we are much mistaken, there are two things which Christians ought to do. The one is to quit the companionship of a self-indulgent corrupting "world." The other is to come into closer companionship with Christ. Closer to Christ in godly living. Closer in persevering prayer. And let us not forget, brethren, that it is the "close grup" which achieves the victory, and brings the revival blessing.



SUNSHINY CHRISTIANS.

“ CHEERFUL heart doeth good like a medicine.” Our translation has it a “merry heart;” but the word has got rather “dissipated” in these modern days, and savours of jollity, rather than wholesome heart-joys. Once the word had so discreet a meaning that the apostle inquires, “Is any one merry? Let him sing psalms.” It is the same Greek expression as that one used by Paul in the midnight tempest, when he exhorted his fellow-voyagers to “be of good cheer.”

There is a cheerfulness that is a Christian duty; yea, that is distinctly commanded to every heir of God. “Rejoice always; and again I say, Rejoice.” This cheerfulness is not the mere effervescence of animal spirits. Nor is it born of the decanter or the dance. It depends in no wise on external circumstances. Christian cheerfulness is that sunshiny, hopeful, happy frame which comes from *heart-health*. Such a temper of mind doeth the body good “like a medicine.” For many a lean dyspeptic is dying of sheer worry and peevishness. The acid humours of the mind strike through, and disease the digestive

organs. The medicine such a man wants is not to be found in the drug store. A good dose of Divine grace, with a few grains of thankfulness, and a bracing walk on some labour of love to the poor, will do more to put healthy blood into his weazen skeleton than all the drugs of the apothecary. A "merry heart" was about all the medicine that old Lyman Beecher ever took.

Cheerfulness, be it remembered, is a temper of the soul, and not dependent on external conditions. Some of the most miserable people we wot of are grumbling every day over porcelain and silver, and lay their wretched heads every night on embroidered pillows. The sunniest hearts I have ever found in my pastoral rounds have often been lodged in houses so poverty-stricken and obscure that even the tax-collector never found them. They were people who had very little of this world, but a great deal of the next. They took short views of this life, but long ones of the life to come. Living pretty much "from hand to mouth," they learn to trust God a great deal more than their prosperous brethren, who secretly trust—their own bank accounts and Government bonds.

The happiest heart I encounter in Brooklyn belongs to an aged cripple who lives on charity in a

fourth storey. She is old and poor, and without relatives, and lost even the power of speech twenty years ago! By dint of hard effort she can make a few words intelligible. But I never saw that withered face distorted by a frown; and a few Sabbaths since, when she was carried in to the communion-table, I looked down from the pulpit into that old saint's countenance, and it "shone like the face of an angel." She lives every day on the sunny side of Providence, and feeds hungrily on the promises. Jesus knows where she lives. He "oft-times resorts thither." She is one of His hidden ones. That old disciple will not have far to go when the summons comes from her Father's house. She lives near the gate now, and catches the odours and the music of that "marriage supper" for which she has her wedding garment on. Would to God that some of the sour-spirited, morose, and melancholy Christians of our acquaintance could drop in to that old woman's garret occasionally, and borrow a vial of her *sunshine!*

Those who cannot visit such an antechamber of heaven for themselves may enjoy a kindred satisfaction in reading the brief biography of old "Uncle Johnson,"—a tract of twenty-five pages, published by the "Presbyterian Board." Johnson was a Virginia negro, who died in Michigan at the almost incredible

age of one hundred and twenty! He never would have lasted so long if he had not—like Father Cleveland, of Boston—carried about with him that cheerful heart that doeth good like a medicine. One day, when he was at work in his garden, singing and shouting, his pastor looked over the fence, and said: “Uncle, you seem very happy to-day.” “Yes, massa. I’s e just tinkin’.” “What are you thinking about?” “Oh! I’s e just tinkin’” (and the tears rolled down his black face)—“I’s e tinkin’ dat if de crumbs of joy dat fall from de Massa’s table in dis world is so good, what will de *great loaf* in glory be! I tells ye, sir, dar will be enuf and to spare up dar.”

Once Mr. F—— said to him, “Uncle Johnson, why don’t you get into our meetings once in a while?” He answered: “Massa, I wants to be dere, but I can’t *’have* myself.” “You can’t *behave*?” “Well, massa, ob late years de flesh is gettin’ weak; and when dey gwin to talk and sing about Jesus, I ’gins to fill up, and putty soon I has to *holler*, and den some one ’ll say, ‘Carry dat man out de door, he ’sturbs de meetin.’” “But you should hold in till you get home.” “O massa! I can’t hold in. I *bust* if I don’t holler.” (Would not it be a blessed thing for some prayer-meetings that are now dying of dignity if they could have such a “holler” to wake

them out of their slumber?) This jubilant old negro lived in literal dependence on God. When a gift was made to him, he received it as if sent to him by Elijah's ravens. "When I wants anyting, I jes asks de Lord, and He is sure to send it; sometimes afore I'se done askin', and den sometimes He holds back, jus' to see if I trust Him." One of the last things remembered of him was the message he gave to a minister who called to see him, when he was "waitin' for de chariot ob de Lord." "O massa!" said he, "if you gets home afore I do, tell 'em to keep de table standin', for old Johnson is holdin' on his way. I'se bound to be dere."

We have given so much of this article to a sketch of this sunny-souled pilgrim, not only because it might be new to most of our readers, but because such a living example of a "merry heart" is more impressive than a sermon on cheerfulness. There are three or four "recipes" for securing this sunshine in the soul.

(1.) Look at your mercies with *both* eyes; and at your troubles and trials with only half an eye.

(2.) Study contentment. In these days of inordinate greed and self-indulgence, keep down the accursed spirit of grasping. What they *don't have* makes thousands wretched.

(3.) Keep at some work of usefulness. Such men

as "Uncle Vassar" and John Wanamaker are seldom troubled with the blues. Work for Christ brings heart-health.

(4.) Keep your heart's window always open toward heaven. Let the blessed light of Jesus' countenance shine in. It will turn tears into rainbows. The author of "Nearer my God, to Thee" has sweetly sung,—

"He sendeth sun, He sendeth shower,
Alike they're needful to the flower ;
And joys and tears alike are sent,
To give the soul fit nourishment.
As comes to me or cloud or sun,
Father ! Thy will, not mine, be done.'



CHRIST IN THE NIGHT STORM.



THE third watch of the night had nearly passed. For many weary hours the disciples have been toiling at the oars through the tempest. But all the strength of the fishermen's brawny arms can scarcely push forward the little boat against the angry waves which smite the bow like a sledge. Peter and John, who were brought up on this lake of Galilee, had never seen a rougher night.

There is no compass on board, and no lighthouse on the beach. Through the thick darkness the little bark is invisible to human eye. If Peter's anxious household had looked out from their door in Capernaum on that awful night, they could not have seen a boat's-length from the shore ; or, if they had set the olive-lamp in the window, it might not have been discovered by the toiling rowers in the smack. It is a fearful night to be out in ; but there is One *Eye* that beholds them from the hills of Gadara. *Jesus watches them.*

I. Many of my readers may be, just now, in a fearful night-storm of trouble. One is in the darkness of a mysterious providence. Another is under the tempest

of commercial disaster. He has lost the "rigging" of his prosperity; his canvas is torn to shreds, and his pride has come down as a top-sail comes down in a hurricane. Another one is toiling with the oars against a head-sea of poverty. The guiding rudder of a dear and trusted friend has been swept away by death. Still another one is in a midnight of spiritual despondency, and the promise-stars seem to be all shut out under gloomy clouds. My friend A — is making a hard voyage, with her brood of fatherless children to provide for. Friend B — has a poor intemperate husband on board with her; and Brother C —'s little bark hardly rises out of one wave of disaster before another sweeps over it. There are whole boat-loads of disciples who are "toiling at rowing" over a dark sea of trouble. But *Jesus watches them*. His eye of love discerns every single child of His adoption over all the wide sea of human experience.

The hour of the Christian's extremity is the hour of Christ's opportunity. At the right moment Christ makes His appearance to the tempest-tossed disciples on Genesareth. For we are told that "in the fourth watch of the night Jesus came to them walking on the sea!" We do not wonder that the sublime and sudden miracle astounded them. We do not wonder that, as the ghost-like form draws nearer and nearer through

the darkness, the awe-struck mariners throw down the oars, and cry out, "See! see! it is a spirit! it is a spirit!" But straightway Jesus speaks unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer; *it is I*; be not afraid." In an instant their fears vanish, Jesus comes near to them. He steps into the boat, and "the *wind ceases.*" The overjoyed disciples fall at His feet, and gratefully exclaim, "Truly, truly, Thou art the Son of God!"

Now, good friends, who are breasting a midnight sea of trouble, open the eye of faith, and see that form on the waves! It is not an apparition; it is not a fiction of priestly fancies, as the scoffing sceptic has often insinuated. It is JESUS HIMSELF! It is one who was Himself a "man of sorrows." It is one who has been tried on all points as we are, and yet without sin. It is the Divine Sufferer who says, "It is I; be of good cheer." Christ comes to you as a sympathizing Saviour. He comes as a cheering, consoling Saviour. His sweet assurance is, "Lo! I am with you. Fear not; I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by my name. Thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and they shall not overflow thee." Behold that Saviour! Receive Him into the ship. No vessel can sink or founder with Jesus on board. No struggling soul, no struggling Church, no struggling work of reform, ever went down

when the Son of God had set His divine foot within it. Let the storms rage, if God sends them. Christ can pilot you through. Let the midnight hours of darkness come, if Jesus only comes through them with the hailing signal, *IT IS I!* There may be a night coming soon on some of you, when heart and flesh shall fail you, and the only shore ahead is the shore of eternity. If Jesus is only in the bark, be not afraid. Like glorious John Wesley, you will be able to cry aloud in the dying hour, "Best of all, Christ is with me! best of all, Christ is with me!"

II. I wish to bring home the teachings of this inspiring scene on Galilee to those who are in a mid-sea of convictions of sin and troublings of conscience. The storm of divine threatenings against sin is breaking upon you. You acknowledge that you are guilty, and you hear the rumbling thunder of that divine declaration, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Alarming passages from God's Word foam up around your distressed and anxious soul. You cannot quell this storm, or escape out of it. Toiling at the oars of self-righteousness has not sent you a furlong nearer to the "desired haven." You have found by sore experience that sin gives no rest, and that your oars are no match against God's just and broken Law.

Friend, give me your ear ! Listen ! There is a voice that comes sounding through the storm. Harken to it ! It is a voice of infinite love. "*It is I !*" What voice is that ? It is the same voice that spoke Galilee into a calm ; that saith to Jairus' dead daughter, "*Maiden, arise !*" that awoke Lazarus from the rocky sepulchre of Bethany ; the same voice that sweetly said to a praying penitent, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." That omnipotent voice says to you, "Be of good cheer ; it is I !" It is I, who am one with the Father. It is I, who so loved you that I gave myself for you. It is I, who came into the world to seek and to save the lost. My blood cleanseth from all sin. I am able to save to the uttermost. Whosoever believeth in me shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.

Troubled sinner, let me assure you of this one thing ! If you will only admit this waiting, willing, loving Jesus into your tempest-tossed soul, the "wind will cease." All will be well. Christ can allay the storm : receive Him. Christ can take away your guilt : receive Him. Christ can forgive you : receive Him. Open your whole soul to Him in penitent, humble faith ; welcome Him with grateful trust ; do all He asks ; surrender the helm to Him ; and you can then feel as the rescued disciples did when they knelt down

in the drenched bottom of their little boat, and cried out, "Truly Thou art the Son of God!"

An intelligent merchant friend of mine, who was once in a night-storm of anxiety and haunted by the terrors or a guilty conscience, writes as follows:—

"I have a right to speak about faith in Christ. Well, I have tried Him these thirty years; and I assure you that, though I once felt as you feel, and feared as you fear, my doubts and fears were given to the winds from the hour I gave my confidence to Christ. I heard His gentle entreaty, "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters;" and I came. I heard His invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I came, and He gave me rest and peace, and joys innumerable and immeasurable, in comparison with which all that I had ever known before was but the bubble which bursts when you seek to grasp it. All this He will do for you. He longs to do it; but first He must have your submission and trust: this is the unalterable condition."

All that this merchant did, was to recognise Christ and receive Christ. As soon as Jesus came into his soul, the wind ceased. The clouds broke away. And now he is going joyfully on his life-voyage with Jesus in the vessel. So may you, if you will cry,—

“Jesus ! Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high :
Hide me, oh ! my Saviour, hide
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh ! receive my soul at last.”



THE JEWELS IN THE CUP.



HERE was a fine touch of poetry as well as of Christian philosophy in the cheerful words of a young servant of Christ who was near his last hour. "When I have the most pain in my body," said he, "I have the most peace in my soul. I do not doubt but that there is love in the bottom of the cup, though it is terribly bitter in the mouth." It was at the *bottom* of the cup that God had placed the precious blessing ; and it was needful that he drink the whole bitter draught in order to reach it.

"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This was the submissive utterance of the Man of Sorrows in Gethsemane. Thousands of His followers have faltered out the same words through their tears, when a heart-breaking trial was trying their faith to the utmost. But the "sweet breath of Jesus has been on the cup," and made it more palatable. And the lips that tasted the draught of sorrow have uttered such prayers as they had not made, and could not make in seasons of prosperity.

The richest jewels of grace often lie at the bottom

A A

of sorrow's cup. Jesus could not push from Him the bitter agony of Calvary: redemption was at the bottom of that cup. He could not save Himself and yet save a guilty world of sinners. Either He must drink the cup of suffering, or we must drink "the wine of the wrath of God."

Looking down into the draught of sorrow which God mingles often for His children, what precious jewels glisten in the depths! Promises are there, sparkling like pearls:—"As thy day, so shall thy strength be." "Whom I love, I chasten." "My grace is sufficient for thee." What afflicted child of God would fling from him a cup which contains such priceless gifts as these?

Graces sparkle too in the goblet of grief which Divine love mingles for those who are to become more "perfect through suffering." How lustrous shines the grace of Patience! I used to go occasionally, and read the Bible to an invalid who had been tortured for forty years with excruciating pains; and her sweet words of submission were the *commentary*. I used to go home ashamed of my own impatience under paltry vexations. She never asked God to take her cup of suffering from her: in it were her jewels,—patience, meekness, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Experience of the love of Jesus is another of the

pearls dropped into the draught which is mingled for His chosen ones. Christ has His *choice* ones. Dr. Arnot says that the true meaning of the text "many are called, but few are chosen," is this,—“many are called to be Christians, but only a few are *choice*.” Only a portion of all the flock are “called and *choice* and faithful.” This is certainly a truth, whether it be the true meaning of the Bible text or not.

These *choice* Christians are often chosen for affliction, and become more choice and excellent through the regimen of severe trial. There is an experience of the love of Jesus which they gain in their hours of bereavement, or poverty, or hardships, which they never could have acquired in any other way. The “love in the bottom of the cup” was only to be reached by drinking the sorrows which held the jewel. The school of suffering graduates rare scholars. To the disciples in that school it is often given to “know the love of Jesus which passeth knowledge.” Suffering Christian! be not in haste to quit thy Master’s school; thou art fitting for the *High School* of heaven. Push not away peevishly thy cup of sorrow; for the sparkling diamond of Christ’s love for thee is in the draught He gives thee to drink.

STRENGTHENING A PASTOR'S HANDS.

“And Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose, and went to David in the wood, and strengthened his hands in God.”—1 *Sam.* xxiii. 16.



BEAUTIFUL friendship was that which warmed the heart of the tyrant’s son towards David the hunted fugitive ; it was a “love passing the love of woman.” Jonathan went on no sentimental errand of romantic affection, but from a lofty sense of duty, to strengthen the faith and to cheer the spirit of the noblest servant of God then living. David had a mighty work to do for Jehovah. When the faithful Jonathan went out to strengthen his hands in God, it was that those hands might yet hold Israel’s sceptre, and might pen the matchless psalms, and might protect the ark of the Lord. We can imagine these godly brothers kneeling down together amid the thickets of Ziph, and pouring out their hearts to Him who was their “refuge and stronghold in the time of trouble.”

That was probably the last time that these twin-spirits ever met on earth. The black surge of civil war soon rolled between them ; and in a few weeks

the mangled form of Jonathan was picked up on the bloody field of Gilboa. It must have been a sadly precious thought to David, that the last time he ever saw his friend was when he came, at the risk of life, to *strengthen his hands in God.*

Now, every true pastor is "anointed of the Lord," as David was, to do a holy work. When his hands hang down through discouragement, or when he is in a "thick wood" of troubles, and his work lags or fails utterly for want of helpers, then is the time when he needs the Jonathans. Paul found his in that noble committee who came down from Rome to Apii Forum, and gave him such a reception that he "thanked God, and took courage." How many a minister is to-day crippled in his work and well-nigh crushed in spirit, just for the want of hearty, sympathetic, godly supporters. He can afford to wear a threadbare coat, and to go hungry for books, better than he can to "spend his strength for naught." He can stand an empty purse better than an empty prayer-meeting.

How shall I strengthen the hands of *my* pastor? cries some reader whose conscience is suddenly smitten within him. You can do it in many ways. Go and give him your hand and heart. Talk over the affairs of your church (yours as much as his); help him to lay plans of usefulness, and then help him to push

them forward. It is just as much your duty to work for the Master as it is your minister's duty.

Perhaps your pastor has been often disheartened by the emptiness of your pew on the Sabbath. He prepared carefully more than one sermon especially for you ; but you were not there to hear it ; so both suffered from your absence. For one, I confess that I never yet preached a sermon loud enough to awaken a parishioner who was dozing away the day at home, or sauntering off to other churches. If a good reason keep you from your pew, send a substitute ; invite some church-neglecting friend to go and occupy your place. Perhaps the sermon may save his soul.

When a discourse is adapted to the spiritual condition of your husband, your wife, your son, or other one dear to you, *follow it up* with prayer and with personal efforts for that friend's salvation. While your pastor is endeavouring to draw your unconverted friend to Christ, pray don't pull the other way. The backward pull of your unkind criticisms, or your inconsistent conduct, will avail more than the forward drawing of his sermon. If one of your family comes home from the sanctuary tender and thoughtful, try to deepen their impressions. Your pastor is drawing : draw with him. Strengthen his hands in God. We could name certain Sunday-school teachers who always bring

the awakened inquirers in their classes immediately to their pastor for conversation: in those classes conversions are frequent, because they are looked for, and laboured for too. Oh for more such Jonathans!

It is a happy thing to have even one worker in our churches. But it is far better to have an hundred. Aaron and Hur answered very well to stay up Moses' hands for a few brief hours; but what if our "Aaron" is sick, and our "Hur" is out of town? Who then shall stay up the arms that hang down for want of help? We don't call that a thrifty apple-tree which bears all its fruit on one limb: neither is that a thrifty Church in which half-a-dozen persons do all the praying and all the working. Let *every* hand, even the youngest or the feeblest, be stretched forth to help the ambassador of Christ, and a revival is already begun.

Finally, the power your minister most needs, is the power from on high. This comes through prayer. Peter's eloquent sermon on the day of Pentecost was pioneered by the rousing prayer-meeting in the "upper chamber," and three thousand souls were converted before sunset. What the steam-cylinder is to the engine, that is the prayer-meeting to the Church. There let the life, the heat, the power be engendered. And when the place of prayer is thronged by fervid importunate souls, then how gloriously are the pastor's hands *strengthened in God!*

THE WORKING TEMPERANCE CHURCH.

BVERY true and timely moral reform should be born, and nursed, and reared, and supported by the Church of Jesus Christ. There is not a single moral precept which sinful humanity needs, but the Church should teach it ; there is not a wholesome example to be set, but the Church should practise it. That Christian Church will be the most *Christlike* which does the most to “seek and to save the lost.”

Among all the great moral reforms, none has a stronger claim on Christian men and Christian ministers than the enterprise for saving society from the crime and curse of drunkenness. And intemperance never will be checked, the liquor traffic never will be prohibited, the drinking usages of social life will never be overthrown, until the members of Christ's Church all feel that they are also members of Christ's great temperance society. If the Church does not save the world, then the world will sink the Church. And what a burlesque it is to style that Church organization a “salt of the earth” which has a trimmer in its pulpit and tipplers in its pews !

The Working Temperance Church. 69

Holding these incontrovertible opinions, we earnestly insist that every Christian Church which expects to do its whole work must have a *temperance department* as much as a Sunday-school or a missionary department. It must have a machinery to promote total abstinence, just as much as a machinery to promote Bible distribution or mission-schools, or Sabbath observance. A well-appointed steamer must have not only a good engine in its hull and a good pilot at the wheel, but a good supply of life-preservers in the cabins.

What are some of the essential features of a working temperance Church ?

I. We reply that the first essential is a thorough teetotaller *in its pulpit*. An active temperance Church with a wine-bibbing minister is as rare a curiosity as a victorious army with a drunken commander. A zealous teetotaller will not only practise abstinence from intoxicating drinks, but he will *preach* it as a vital part of his gospel-message on the Lord's day. The Bible abounds in temperance texts ; and every community abounds in people who need to hear them. It is the pastor's office to expound the causes and the curse of drunkenness. It is his office to create a temperance conscience among his congregation. It is his duty to take the lead in arranging

and conducting temperance meetings in his neighbourhood. Not only may a zealous temperance pastor look for revivals in his flock, but also for a more extended influence among the surrounding world.

A fearless preacher against popular sins commands, in the long run, the popular ear and the popular heart. Let the career of a Beecher in Brooklyn, a Tyng in New York, a Barnes in Philadelphia, a Kirk in Boston, and a Hatfield in Chicago testify to this fact. The minister who brings God's word to bear against the great sins of the time must be heard and will be felt. He may repel a few trimmers and time-servers; he may awaken some bad passions in the self-indulgent and the lovers of their lusts; but he attracts to him the warm-hearted, the philanthropic, the spiritually-minded. Drunkards' wives will persuade their husbands to come and hear him. Mothers will rejoice to place their sons under his faithful ministry. The benevolent will co-operate with such an earnest advocate of Christian reform. The masses love and honour a *bold defender of the right*. It is not the man who drifts with the current of evil, but he who, like the sure-anchored rock, stems the current, that is sure to arrest the popular attention and command the popular heart.

II. Every efficient Church should have a well-

organised total abstinence society. The title to membership should be the simple signing of the abstinence pledge. We would recommend, also, that an annual payment of a half-dollar should be made by each member, in order to provide some permanent income for the society. Collections should also be taken up at public meetings ; but tickets of admission should seldom be used, because they tend to exclude the very persons who most need the benefit of the lecture. The public meetings of Church societies should be held in the Church edifice, and as often as *proper* advocates of the cause can be secured to address them. Better no meetings at all than to have the audiences trifled with by a catch-penny buffoon or ranting adventurer. The number of acceptable speakers might be vastly increased if Christian laymen, as well as ministers, would fit themselves for this noble and needed work, by studying temperance books and publications. It is easier to make a good Temperance address than a good political speech ; but political speakers are plenty as blackberries.

The best possible music should be provided for all public meetings, and the pledge should *always* be circulated at the close. It is the province of the society to subscribe for and circulate temperance

papers through the congregation. Several times in each year the tracts of the *National Temperance Society* might be distributed in the pews.

Such an organization does not require much "constitution and by-laws," or many officers. A wide-awake president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, and a live board of half dozen "managers," are amply sufficient. Choose your president for his working qualities, and not for his "name." All meetings should be opened with prayer or the reading of God's word.

In Surrey Chapel, London, the celebrated Newman Hall has a temperance society which has enrolled 8,000 members in fifteen years; 150 reformed inebriates have been received into membership with the church in which Brother Hall is so bold and faithful a spiritual leader. There is also a *Band of Hope*, which enrolls a great number of children.

III. This leads us to say that a working temperance Church will lay out no small part of its efforts on the youth of the Sunday-school. Here is the point to apply *prevention*. As the Sunday-school deals with the beginning of life, it should logically deal with the beginnings of sin. If all our children could be kept from touching the first glass, intemperance would disappear.

In efficient Sunday-school operations, the following are absolutely indispensable :—

Good temperance books in the library.

A circulation of the *Youth's Temperance Banner*, or some similar paper, among the scholars.

The total abstinence pledge, discreetly administered by the teachers.

Frequent and simple addresses to the school on the dangers of tampering with drink, and on the sin and sorrows of the drunkard.

No teacher's breath should ever be flavoured by the odours of the wine-glass or the beer-cup.

Total abstinence should be taught as a Christian virtue. "Woe unto him who causeth one of these *little ones* to stumble."


IV. Our final recommendation is, that every Church-member should make temperance a part of his daily religion. The bottle is the deadliest foe to Christ in our Churches and our communities. A friend of Christ must be the enemy of the bottle. More souls are ruined by the intoxicating cup than by any single vice or error on the globe. Every professed Christian who gives his example to the drinking usages, is a partner in the tremendous havoc which those evil customs produce.

"If any man will come *after* ME," said the Divine

Master, "let him *deny himself.*" And the great apostle only clenched this glorious precept when he said, "It is good not to drink wine whereby my brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." On this immutable rock of self-denial stands the temperance reform. There the Divine Founder of Christianity placed it ; with Christianity it is linked ; with Christianity it will stand or perish. We do not hesitate to close this brief paper with the declaration that with the triumph and prevalence of Christian *self-denial in the Church* is bound up the only hope of the triumph and prevalence of pure Christianity in our world.



HIGHER!

HAT a bugle-call the veteran apostle sounded in the ears of his younger brethren at Colosse, when he exclaimed, "If ye then be risen with Christ, *seek those things which are above.*" In whatever way we apply these words, whether as meaning a preparation for heaven, or a clearer view of heaven, or heavenly-mindedness, they still breathe the same spirit of aspiration. Jesus had delivered Paul's brethren from the sepulchre of sin and corruption. They had risen with Christ. Now, instead of sitting in the gates of the tomb, breathing the chill dreary atmosphere of the charnel-house, Paul exhorts them to cast away their grave-clothes, and to live as Christ's freemen, and as the happy heirs to a magnificent inheritance. *Look higher!—live higher!* These two words seem to condense the grand old man's inspiring call to his fellow-soldiers in the warfare for Christ.

There is the greatest difference in the world between the "high look" of sinful pride, and the high look which every blood-bought heir of glory should fix on his everlasting inheritance. It is not only the privilege, but the *duty*, of every converted soul to realize to the

utmost, and to *enjoy*, the infinite blessings which flow from a union with Jesus. If "Christ liveth in me," I ought to be a living man,—a rich man,—a cheerful, athletic man,—a holy and a happy man. I ought to enjoy the open vision of Jesus as my Prophet, my Priest, and my King. I ought to be strengthened with all might in the inner man, with long-suffering and joyfulness. I ought to be filled with the Spirit, and to rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Do the majority of God's people "thus seek the things that are *above*," and live in the higher atmosphere of perpetual fellowship with Christ? We fear not. Thousands in our Churches are *barely alive*. Their pulse is feeble. Their joys are few. Their assurance of hope is so scanty that they can only articulate, with a painful hesitation, "Well; I hope that I *am* a Christian. I think I am converted. If I can only get inside of the gate of heaven, I shall be satisfied." There is no muscle in their faith, no power in their prayer, no ring in their devotions, no inspiration in their example. They see through a glass darkly, and the clouds run low in their spiritual skies.

All this poor meagre experience is better than—*something worse*. It is better than sheer impenitence, or rank unbelief. A sick child is better than a dead

child ; but to make a sick child *well* is the best of all. What, then, shall these halting, feeble, doubting, and almost useless professors do? Look down? Lie down? Stay down? *No!* It is the immediate duty of every one who has been born into Christ to seek the very highest and holiest and happiest life which Divine grace can impart to them. Just what happened to the disciples when they were endowed with the "power from on high," may, in no small measure, be the experience of every Christian in these days who will *seek* a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost, and make a complete consecration of himself to his Redeemer. What a different man Peter is in the "Acts of the Apostles," from the half-finished, crude, and inconstant Peter in the book of John! No more denials of his Master now! No more vain boastings and cowardly lies! Peter, on the day of Pentecost, is as superior to Peter in Pilate's hall, as a stalwart man is superior to a puny stumbling child. He had now risen with Christ and into Christ; he had been baptized into a clearer illumination and a more glorious *possession* of the unsearchable riches of Christ. We never hear of his ignominious fall again. He has climbed into the higher life of holy *union with his Lord.*

Something similar to this has been the experience

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of tens of thousands of God's people. They have come to Jesus on their knees, and sought a new baptism. They have begun to clear out the sins that monopolized all the house-room in the heart. They have confessed their guiltiness in dragging out such a half-dead existence. They have sought a re-conversion, a new quickening from on high. New light has burst in upon them. New joys have been awakened. They have *put on Christ*, and are arrayed in a robe of spiritual beauty that is "white and glistening." In the ecstasy of this fresh consecration they can sing with Charles Wesley,—

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want ;
More than all in Thee I find."

What different men and women they are in the Church of Jesus ! How differently they pray ! And with what spiritual *power* they approach the unconverted, and persuade them to come to the Cross !

Payson of Portland had such an experience as this. The great President Edwards tells us that, after reading a passage in God's word, he had a fresh baptism from above, and "there came into his soul and was diffused through it, a new sense of the glory of the Divine Being." "From that time," he says, "*I began to have a new idea of Christ*, and of the work of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation

by Him. I had a view, that was *extraordinary*, of the glory of the Son of God, and of His wonderful grace." Under this celestial baptism, he tells us that he was in a flood of tears, and wept aloud for joy.

Now this is the true "*higher life*," about which so many crude and extravagant things have been written by men of more enthusiasm than theological accuracy. What Payson, Edwards, Rutherford, and Wesley felt, *we may feel* in our humbler measure. Every child of Christ should covet it intensely. This, too, is what our Churches need in this day of apathy and self-indulgence and barrenness. We need the new consecration under Christ, and the new baptism into Christ. An ungodly world will never be converted by men and women who are barely gasping for life themselves. Brother! sister! get a new hold on Christ if you would draw sinners from the pit! Let your battle-song be,—

"I have done at length with trifling:
Henceforth, O thou soul of mine,
Thou must take up sword and gauntlet,
Waging warfare most Divine.
Oh, how many a glorious record
Had the angels of *me* kept,
Had I done instead of doubted,
Had I *ran instead of crept!*"

HYMNS OF HOMAGE TO CHRIST.



HERE are many popular hymns whose key-note is an ascription of heart-loyalty to Jesus Christ. Among these, two are especial favourites ; yet so little is generally known of their authorship and their history that we propose to write what we have been able to gather in regard to them.

The first of these hymns is one which always stirs us like the sound of a trumpet. Everybody knows the words, and everybody is familiar with the tune of "Coronation," to which it is wedded. If a man like George H. Stuart or D. L. Moody were called upon to lead a vast miscellaneous meeting of Christians, probably the first hymn which they would choose to "fire the heart" of the meeting would be those well-known lines,—

" All hail the power of Jesus' name !
Let angels prostrate fall ;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all ! "

As published in our American collections, this joyous and inspiring hymn contains only five verses.

But the original version—now preserved in the British Museum—contains eight stanzas, of which the last one is as follows :—

“ Let every tribe and every tongue,
That bound creation's call,
Now shout in universal song,
And crown Him Lord of all ! ”

Of this stanza our ordinary version retains but one line. The whole hymn has been most ruthlessly tinkered by the tribe of hymn-menders ; but not content with patching the sacred song itself, they have plundered it of its rightful authorship. It was often attributed to Rowland Hill, with whom it was a great favourite. In most of our books it is attributed to one “ Duncan.” But the real author was the *Rev. Edward Perronet*, a zealous minister of Jesus Christ in the ancient county of Kent. He was a man of keen wit and indomitable courage, and broke loose from the English Established Church to become a travelling companion of Charles Wesley. He afterwards became the pastor of one of Lady Huntingdon's chapels in Canterbury. He must have been a kindred spirit with joyous-hearted Wesley, and we can imagine them as singing their way through southern England like old “ Great-Heart ” and “ Standfast ” in Bunyan's allegory. Perronet published a small volume of

“Occasional Verses, Moral and Social,” in 1785, which is preserved in the British Museum. He wrote many verses, but only one great hymn. That was enough: the man did not live in vain who taught Christ’s Church her grandest coronation-song in honour of her King. When and where Perronet was born we do not know; but he died with holy ecstasy in 1792, and went up to join in the coronation services of heaven. His last words were, “Glory to God in the height of His divinity! Glory to God in the depth of His humanity! Glory to God in His all-sufficiency, and into His hands I commit my spirit.” He left no written biography on earth; but, when his soul entered the realms of bliss, there must have been a “new song” of peculiar sweetness and rapture heard before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

With the song of homage to Jesus, left to us by Edward Perronet, there is worthy to be coupled another, which is pitched to the same joyful key. It, too, was composed by a hymnist quite unknown to fame. Very few persons, as they see the name of *Medley* attached to the list of authors in their hymn-books, are fully certain whether the word describes a man or a musical “medley” of some kind. Let it be known, then, that Samuel Medley was a man,—every inch of him,—and a rather extraordinary

man too in his way. Born somewhere in England during the year 1738, he became a midshipman in the British navy, and fought bravely in several battles under some of old William Pitt's stout admirals. He was converted by reading one of Isaac Watts's discourses. He then quitted the sea and entered the army of Christ's ministers, serving in the Baptist "corps" with remarkable zeal and success. Medley preached in Liverpool for many years, attracting troops of sailors to his chapel. Sometimes he went out on mission-tours through the land, and once he was preaching in a barn, on the text, "Cast down, but not destroyed." In the midst of the discourse his temporary pulpit of rough boards gave way and precipitated him upon the barn floor. The lively sailor leaped up, and in a Beecher-ish vein of humour, exclaimed, "Well, friends, you see we too are cast down but not destroyed."

While in Liverpool the Spirit moved him to compose over two hundred hymns, which he published first on slips of paper for circulation. Many of them were sold for a halfpenny by a poor blind girl who sat on the church-steps, and thus earned her daily bread. But that poor sightless child had some rare treasures in her pile of "broad-sheets." For among them was that glowing lyric,—

“ Oh, could I speak the matchless worth,
 Oh, could I sound the glories forth,
 That in my Saviour shine,—
 I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,
 And vie with Gabriel while he sings
 In notes almost divine!”

In that collection was also the hymn, “ Dearest of names, my Lord and King.” But the choicest treasure in the poor blind girl's pile of handbills was the one on which was printed that dear old hymn which has been sung in ten thousand revival meetings,—

“ Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
 And sing thy great Redeemer's praise ;
 He justly claims a song from me ;
 His loving-kindness, oh, how free !”

In this jubilant song there were originally nine verses : the last one has been dropped out of our collections, and I therefore insert it here :—


“ There with their golden harps I'll join,
 And with their anthems mingle mine ;
 And loudly sound on every chord
 The loving-kindness of my Lord,”

Æsthetically considered, this is not a remarkable bit of poetry ; but for a popular outburst of loyal love to the Redeemer it is unsurpassed. The common people sing it gladly. It will be chanted through tears of joy when many a massive epic is forgotten. It bears the odours of paradise.

Samuel Medley, like Perronet, went home to glory, shouting. On his dying-bed he seemed to be watching the points of a compass, and kept saying, "One point more ; two points more ; now only one point more." Then he shouted out, "How sweet will be the port after the storm ! . Dying is sweet work ! Home, home, hallelujah ! glory, *home, home !*" And so the glorious old mariner passed in, with all sails set, to the "desired haven,"



THE FATHER OF ENGLISH HYMNS.

BOUT the year 1675, a worthy Deacon Watts, who kept a Puritan boarding-school in Southampton, England, was locked up in prison for being an incorrigible Dissenter. It was during the reign of the second Stuart, which Macaulay has well styled "the reign of the strumpets." Before the door of the good deacon's cell, his wife used to come and sit while she sang for the comfort of her imprisoned husband, and for the quieting of her eldest born baby, which she held in her arms. The little ISAAC must have been drawing in some inspirations of his mother's music with his mother's milk. He was a poet from the cradle. His earliest thoughts he shaped into rhyme.

His mother offered a copper prize to the children in her husband's school for the best bit of poetry they could produce ; and Master Isaac, then in his eighth year, won the prize by the following saucy couplet :—

" I write not for a farthing, but to try,
How I your farthing writers can outvie."

At fifteen, the precocious lad had made choice of the "better part," and became a follower of Jesus.

He worshipped at the Independent Church in Southampton, of which his father was a deacon; but the preaching edified him more than the service of song. The congregation were endeavouring to praise God every Sabbath in the clumsy, jaw-breaking measures of Sternhold and Hopkins, or the jolting rhymes of Nahum Tate. To the tuneful ear of the young student this saw-filing process in the name of sacred psalmody was utterly beyond endurance. One Sabbath morning (in 1702), he vented his contempt for such ill-conditioned doggerel, and the only reply he received was, "Give us something better, then, young man." He accepted the taunting challenge, went home, and produced before sunset a hymn which was lined off, and sung at the evening service. It began with the verse—

"Behold the glories of the Lamb,
Amidst His Father's throne :
Prepare new honours for His name,
And songs before unknown."

The author was just eighteen years old; but on that Sabbath *our English Hymnology was born*, and young Isaac Watts was its father. Well might Montgomery say that he "was almost the inventor of hymns in our language, so greatly did he improve on his now forgotten predecessors in English sacred

song." Richard Baxter had written twenty years before, his beautiful—

"Lord, it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live."

But the single seed-corn did not sprout into a hymnologic harvest. Watts had struck the Meribah rock of melody, and the waters continued to gush forth. In the year 1707, he gave to the churches an original volume, entitled "Hymns and Spiritual Songs," and for the copyright he received the munificent sum of *fifty dollars!* If kept to this day, it would have yielded to its owners a solid million. The book of hymns was soon followed by another, entitled "The Psalms of David imitated in the language of the New Testament." In this second volume appeared the famous "Old Hundredth," which began with the words—

"Nations, attend before His throne
With solemn fear, with sacred joy."

John Wesley altered these lines to the grander ones—

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy!"

This stands as the solitary instance in which hymn tinkering has improved upon the original. The man

must indeed rise early in the morning who can improve upon Isaac Watts.

That he ever composed any one sacred song which can take rank beside Toplady's "Rock of Ages" or Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of my soul," we do not claim. Those two, like the morning and the evening star, ride brightest in the firmament. But Isaac Watts wrote more of the great hymns of our mother tongue than any other man. No lay of Calvary has ever yet approached in pathetic grandeur that offering which Watts laid at his Redeemer's feet:—

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.”

I can imagine that the apostle Paul may have already thanked Isaac Watts in paradise for having taught the Church how to sing his own immortal declaration, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" No funeral hymns either have equalled those which issued from Watts's pensive spirit. How many of us can recall the first scenes of burial which we witnessed in our early country homes! We seem to see again the rural neighbours gathered on the grass before the door,

while the sun shimmered through the trees upon the group around the open coffin. We seem to hear again, to the sweet, plaintive strains of old "China," those soul-melting words:—

"Why should we tremble to convey
This body to the tomb?
There the dear form of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume."

It is an evidence of wondrous versatility of genius that while Watts composed lines which Daniel Webster murmured on his dying-bed ("Show pity, Lord! O Lord, forgive!"), he also wrote the most perfect child-hymns in our language. Nothing in our modern Sabbath-school collections quite equals the old dog-eared primer which contained, "How doth the little busy bee," and "Whene'er I take my walks abroad." Bradbury was good; but the vintage of Watts, nearly two hundred years old, is better still. The only child-hymn of our day, which might have come from Watts's pen, is that gem of sweet simplicity,—

"Jesus loves me,—this I know,
For the Bible tells me so:
Little ones to Him belong;
I am weak, but He is strong."

The author of "Divine and Moral Songs for Children" was himself childless. He lived a bachelor

under the roof of Sir Thomas Abney, in London, whom he went to visit, and lingered there as a welcome guest for thirty-five years. In 1748 he fell asleep in Jesus, leaving as his beautiful posterity seven hundred white-winged hymns. They are flying under the whole heaven. His body rests in Bunhill Fields, the Westminster Abbey of the glorious Puritans. Close by the gate, and not far from Bunyan's grave, is a plain tomb, which bears the name of ISAAC WATTS, *the father of the English hymn.*



BRAINS, AND HOW TO USE THEM.

(A TALK WITH YOUNG MEN.)

FOR what has the Creator given us our brains? Why are affluent mental gifts bestowed upon some men? And how may even moderate abilities be made most effective for the promotion of truth and the well-being of humanity? These are questions that concern young men, especially those who are placed on the highest planes of intellectual culture and influence. All men are concerned in these questions; for a great man is, perhaps, the greatest fact in the history of an age. No more decisive influence can be brought to bear upon any age, or any community, than the employment of its highest intellect for truth or for error,—for God and the right, or for the devil's wrong. Intellect ennobled, purified, heaven-directed, is the universal power to build up. Intellect perverted, corrupted, sin-directed, is the most terrible of agencies to pull down and destroy. "How shall I use my intellect?" is the most vital moral problem that can come before the court of your conscience.

Some men hold that talents are given for the same purpose that wealth is often inherited,—for mere personal luxury. There be intellectual millionaires who decorate their mind, as a palace, for pride to walk through. Its superb picture-galleries, whose walls a creative imagination has clothed with visions of entrancing beauty ; its saloons of receptiveness, in which stately thoughts do come and go ; its costly libraries, where memory stores up its massive accumulation, shelf on shelf ; its statue-lined corridors and halls,—are but the splendid realm which self has adorned by the “*might of its own power, and for the honour of its own majesty.*” Scarcely a living being is the wiser, the better, the happier, for such mental monopolists. They stand in the midst of humanity as the marble mansion of a selfish Duke might stand in the midst of a poverty-cursed and squalid peasantry. While the nabob is gorging at his rosewood table, or lounging before his Murillos, the poor Lazarus without is begging crumbs for the lean and hungry brats, such as Murillo portrayed upon his canvas. One man surfeits : the others starve. There is enough for all, if it were distributed. Distribution is heaven’s law, whether the treasures be in the lordly mansion or in the lordly mind. For God never gave to man fine intellectual powers — vigorous understanding,

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strong-winged imagination, cunning invention, or soul-rousing eloquence — for the owner's sole use and benefit. Talent is trust. Let no man covet it, unless there come with it wisdom from above to insure it a right direction.

One student uses his brain—as he uses his midnight lamp—merely to illuminate the page before his single eye. Another man makes his intellect a meridian sun! How bountifully does the full urn of noonday overflow! Not only on Alpine peaks, and “heart of the Andes,” kindled into pyramids of fire, but down into modest vales the sunlight falls, warming the honey-suckle o'er the cottage doorway, lifting the tiny wheat-blade from its earthly tomb; and even when some solitary daisy is shaded beneath an overgrown tree, the generous sun wheels round and round, until before nightfall the daisy too is reached, and fills her little cup with golden light. Such full-orbed intellects there be. They turn midnight into noon. Upon the most elevated minds and the most favoured classes their rays may fall the earliest; but at length the lowliest valleys of human life are warmed in the celestial influence. So rose the tent-maker of Tarsus upon a benighted age. Amid the gloom of the sixth century shone out Augustine; amid the prejudice of the fifteenth beamed Christopher Columbus. The

sixteenth century came in with clouds and darkness on its awful front. God said, "Let there be light," and Luther was! When his sun departed with its trail of glory, the moral heavens beamed, in turn, with Lord Bacon, Milton, Isaac Newton, Leibnitz, Pascal, Edwards, Chalmers, each an overflowing orb of truth.

Have you never observed the descriptive phrase which inspiration employs to set forth the moral benefactors of mankind? The phrase employed is the happy one of "watering," conveying the noble thought that it is the office of great intellect both to descend and to distribute.

In the torrid lands of the Orient, it was the wont of monarchs to construct vast reservoirs on the mountain sides. These were filled by the rains of heaven. When the summer-heats had drunk the gardens and the vineyards dry, the waters of the reservoir were conducted down, and forthwith the wilted vine lifted its head again, and the drooping fig-tree smiled. Green grew the pomegranate at the water's cool touch; and golden grew the barley-harvest. So, on the heights of influence, God replenishes intellectual reservoirs. He fills them from on high. He fills them to irrigate the masses below them. The truths that accumulate there will stagnate if selfishness lock up the sluice-gates. But let it be your ambition to accumulate for

others ; freely receiving, freely give. Let not the curse that rests on him who hedges round his well in season of drought, or on him who locks up his granary in time of famine, rest on you, for intellectual stinginess. The meanest of misers is he who hoards a truth.

The sources of intellectual power are various. The range of employment for your mental attainments will be as various also as your several pursuits in life,—far too wide for the reach of a single hour's discussion. But there are two sources of mental power and usefulness, which are opened to every young man who has a brain to think or a heart to feel. Learning and Eloquence—getting the truth and giving the truth—are the two most attainable possessions for every healthy mind. For while the Creator has bestowed great analytical acumen as a gift comparatively rare ; while the imagination, which can

“ Glance from heaven to earth,
From earth to heaven,”

belongs to a favoured few ; while fertility of invention is a monopoly of genius,—yet nearly every healthy intellect can acquire truth and impart it. Young brethren, every affirmative man in your class (who is not smitten with congenital barrenness) may become measurably learned and measurably eloquent. For

what is learning but storing the interior man through the five conduits of sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing, and so storing it that every precious parcel shall be at arm's reach in the instant of need? This depends on industry, not genius. (Unless you make genius to be the power of doing with prodigious rapidity what other minds effect by slow and steady strain,—as the driving-wheels of a locomotive achieve the same number of revolutions in a minute that the wheel of a baggage-wagon accomplishes in an hour.)

Within the last few years England and America have laid in their honoured graves two men, who were prodigies of acquirement unsurpassed. One of them lies by the side of Addison in Westminster Abbey. The other—a namesake of Addison—lies by the side of President Edwards in the Westminster Abbey of America.* One of them, when at school, was known among his school-fellows as “Macaulay the Omniscient.” From boyhood he was a terrible toiler. He saw everything; he heard everything; he read everything; he remembered everything. It is even said that, if every copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost* had been committed to the flames, the whole of

* The cemetery at Princeton, New-Jersey, which contains the ashes of Jonathan Edwards, Davies, Witherspoon, Dod, Miller, the Alexanders, and many other men of sacred renown.

the matchless epic could have been recovered, line for line, from the tablets of Macaulay's memory. That Macaulay had genius none will deny ; but his special power was the power of acquiring, classifying, and presenting vast arrays of truth, and so presenting them as at once to enrich the memory and captivate the understanding. He was one of the distributing reservoirs of history. He is the father and founder of a school of authorship, in which he as yet stands without an equal. Other men have penetrated into profounder political philosophy. Others have preserved a more rigid impartiality. But no other man has combined in himself such power of acquisition, and such power of presentation,—such exhaustless wealth of knowledge “from the royal cedar to the hyssop of the wall,”—such enthusiastic conception of the grand and heroic, mingled with such detestation of what is sensual, selfish, and devilish in human history. In his own fine language it may be said of him that, “among the eminent men whose bones lie near him in the Great Abbey, none has left a more stainless, and scarcely one a more splendid name.”

If Macaulay had no superiors in Britain, he certainly had one American rival in powers of acquisition and retention. His own attainments in the domain of letters and of civil history were not more remark-

able than the attainments in sacred literature, in Oriental research, and in ecclesiastic history, by Joseph Addison Alexander.

As I pronounce that hallowed name, the visions of student-days come back before me. I seem to see again that form as it once stood in the sacred desk ; I seem to hear again those plaintive tones as they once melted on the air. That square, massive head (which we fancied to be like to Napoleon's) rises once more before us ; the ruddy glow on the cheek a beautiful emblem of the soul-health within. From those lips we seem to hear again those streams of concinnate exegesis, those brilliant bursts of impassioned vehemence, those tides of holy emotion,—all poured forth in a voice that sometimes swelled through the vestibule to passers in the street, and sometimes hushed itself to the plaintive melody of a lute.

Such a reservoir has not been opened from any American pulpit in our generation. No man ever saw the bottom of that profound, capacious, all-containing, inexhaustible intellect. No man ever laid a task too heavy on that Herculean memory. From a single reading he could commit a whole discourse ; from a single perusal he rose up master of an intricate volume,—his mental recreations were other men's

arduous toils. A thousand pulpits are the richer for the accumulations of that one busy and beautiful life,—that career of labour and of love. Alas for us, that such a life should have ended! Alas for the bereaved town, the bereaved seminary and church, that never can grow reconciled to its bereavement! We go into our libraries, and behold two fatal gaps in two favourite departments of study; and we ask ourselves, “Who will ever finish yonder magnificent history since Macaulay’s hand has forgot its cunning? Who will ever carry on those affluent commentaries since Addison Alexander has passed to the loftier knowledge and clearer light of the heavenly world?”

Lest any one should be discouraged by the presentation of such prodigies of mental acquisition as the two celebrated examples just cited, let me say that they owed their eminence and usefulness to Herculean industry. Young men, choose for your patron-saint Industry. Get some starling to cry, Work—work—work—study—study—study. Study everything, but with a bearing on your own line of intellectual labour. Concentrate on one point, or a few points, “as a gardener, by severe pruning, forces the sap of the tree into two or three vigorous limbs, instead of suffering it to become a sheaf of spindling twigs.” Concentration is the secret of strength.

“Stick to your brewery,” said the great Rothschild to Mr. Buxton, “and you will be the first brewer of London. Try to be brewer, banker, manufacturer, and merchant, and you will soon be—in the Gazette.”

“Mr. A—— often laughs at me,” said Professor Henry once in Princeton College laboratory,—“often laughs at me, because I have but one idea. He talks about everything, aims to excel in many things, but I have learned that, if I ever make a breach, I must play my guns continually upon one point.”

This sober wisdom met its reward. He gave his days and nights to physical science. From the time when, an obscure youth, he studied Silliman's Journal by fire-light, in a log cabin, on to the day when English dukes and earls rose up to do him respect, he had but one aim in life,—to add to the sum of human knowledge. He found the earth and air full of electricity; and he found, too, that the galvanic current, slow but steady and continuous, was worth a thousand brilliant electric flashes. He set to work upon this with might and main. He linked battery to battery; harnessed the subtile fluid into gigantic magnets, and made it lift prodigious burdens. And when at last, by his untiring toil, a chaos of facts was marshalled into the symmetry of a science; when, in obedience to his guidance (in common with other co-

labourers), the electric current mounted the wires as a message-bearer round the globe,—then did the genius of truth crown Joseph Henry with the benediction, “Thou hast sought me and found me, because thou didst search for me with all the heart.”

Thus much for the acquisition of knowledge, which depends upon a busy brain. It is the result of concentration and industry invincible.

Eloquence, on the other hand, which is the second source of intellectual power that I am commending to you,—eloquence is the golden product of an inspired heart. No elaboration of rhetoric, no oratorical culture, can produce it, which ignores the spontaneous emotions of an honest, fearless, loving heart.

Would you rule men from the rostrum, from the bar, or from the sacred desk, let no devil cheat you out of your conscience; let no callous critic shame you out of your honest emotions. For what is eloquence but truth in earnest? The mind's best words spoken in the mind's best moments.

When truth gets full possession of a man's conscience; when all his sensibilities are aroused and his sympathies in full play; when the soul becomes luminous, until the interior light and glow blaze out through every loop and crevice; when, from head to foot, the whole man becomes the beaming, burning

impersonation of truth,—then is he honestly, naturally, irresistibly eloquent. To this a great head is not always essential : a great heart is, and must be.

David, wailing over his self-ruined darling Absalom ; Paul, pleading before Felix, until the guilty man paled to the colour of his marble throne ; Martin Luther, stretching up to the full height of his manhood, in those words, “ Here I stand, I cannot otherwise. God help me. Amen ;” Patrick Henry, sounding the key-note to Bunker Hill in, “ Give me liberty, or give me death !” Whitefield, depicting the perils of a lost soul on the verge of the pit, until the plumes on duchesses’ head-dresses quivered, and Chesterfield cried out, “ Good God ! he is gone !” Kossuth, sounding the requiem of his dead nationality ; and Alexander Duff, pronouncing his sublime farewell to the heathery hills of Scotland,—these men were eloquent, not by special inspiration of the head, but by overpowering inspiration of the heart. The burning soul kindled the lips ; and the baptism of eloquence came in the form of a “ fiery tongue.”

The loftier the emotion, observe, the more impressive the utterance of the orator. The same law applies to eloquence that applies to hydrostatics. If the jet is to be thrown to a great height in the public fountain, the spring that feeds the fountain must have

a lofty birthplace on the mountain-side. He who is false to the better instincts of his soul seldom can be eloquent. To the limber-tongued politician labouring with cunning speech to make the worse appear the better side, to the hireling pleader who barter justice for a fee, or to the hireling priest who sells souls for salary,—Nature denies to such that gift which she reserves for the leal and loyal spirit.

The grandest achievement of eloquence has been reached when the orator has received the fullest celestial baptism of love, when self has become swallowed up in the glory that surrounds the Cross of Calvary.

And where should we look for the highest realizations of true eloquence, but in the pulpit? Where is there less excuse for tameness, for affectation, for heartlessness, for stupidity? Where can the strongest intellect find fuller play? For the ambassador of truth has not only the loftiest of themes, but his text-book is the most perfect of models. In it may be found everything that is most sublime in imagery, most melting in pathos, most irresistible in argument. The minister of Christ need not betake himself to the drama of Greece, the forum of Rome, or to the mystic retreats of German philosophy; he need not study Chatham in the senate chamber, or Erskine at

the bar. He may ever be nurturing his soul amid those pages where John Milton fed, before those eyes, which had "failed with long watching for liberty and law," beheld the gorgeous visions of "Paradise." He may be ever amid the scenes which inspired Bunyan to his matchless dream, and taught Jeremy Taylor his hearse-like melodies. The harp of Israel's minstrel is ever in his ear; before his eye moves the magnificent panorama of the Apocalypse. He need but open his soul to that "oldest choral melody," the book of Job; if it used to inspire Charles James Fox for the Parliament-house, why not himself for the pulpit? Paul is ever at his elbow to teach him trenchant argument; John, to teach persuasion; and a heart of steel must he have who is not moved to pathos in the chamber of heart-stricken David, or under the olive-trees of Gethsemane. The Bible is the best of models too, for it is always true to the life. It reaches up to the loftiest, down to the lowliest affairs of existence. The same Divine pencil that portrayed the scenic splendours of the Revelation and the awful tragedy of Golgotha condescends to etch for us a Hebrew mother bending over her cradle of rushes, a village-maiden bringing home the gleanings of the barley-field, and a penitent woman weeping on the Saviour's feet. What God has ennobled, who

shall dare to call common? What true orator of nature will fear to introduce into the pulpit a homely scene or a homespun character, a fireside incident or a death-bed agony, the familiar episodes of the field and the shop, the school-room and the nursery. He does not lower the dignity of the pulpit: he rather imparts to it the higher dignity of human nature.

Would that the pulpit, which is the most potent educator among us, would that every pulpit were thoroughly liberated, not only from a time-serving expediency that muffles its rebuking thunders, but from a contemptible *petit-maitreism* that curbs its free, manly activities.


From the pulpit, the statesman should learn the "higher law" of justice and of right; the merchant should learn the golden rule of integrity. Before the pulpit the politician should breathe an atmosphere of such crystal purity that a descent into the Avernus of our ordinary "politics" would be instant suffocation. The patriot should find his minister more patriotic than himself; the maiden should be the purer for his delicacy; the mother should find a Christian culture made the easier for his luminous portraiture of the child-life's joys and sorrows. His every utterance should be a fresh inspiration to the artist, a fresh stimulus to the intellect of the scholar. No man

should build so high, but the pulpit should build above him. No reckless youth in his wildest aberration of profligacy should ever reach a pitfall or a precipice that had not been mapped out to him beforehand in the pulpit. And on life's rough highway no sinning sufferer should faint or fall, or be flung into thicket so dense and dark, but over him should bend Christ's messenger of love, and into his bleeding wounds should distil the balm of Heaven's Gospel.

In all this, is there no scope for the loftiest intellect?



HYMNS OF LONGING FOR REST.

“H that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest!” The reference in this beautiful verse is to the turtle-dove of Palestine, a bird of such free spirit that if confined in a cage, it soon droops and dies. How often the child of God breathes this yearning aspiration for a higher and a holier atmosphere! How often, in seasons of grief and disappointment and utter disgust with the inconstancy of our fellow-creatures, the homesick heart pines for escape into the very bosom of Jesus! For there only is *rest*, full, sweet, and all-satisfying.

This aspiration is not only breathed in prayer. It is uttered in song. Many of our richest hymns are prayers in metre. And few yearnings break forth oftener in the psalmodies of God's people than the yearning for soul-rest. Of the hymns that are pitched to this key we might mention many. Of the hymnists who have composed them, none is more celebrated than JAMES MONTGOMERY.

He is the Cowper of the nineteenth century,—not in the poetry of nature, but in sacred song. Scot-

land gave him birth, as she did to Henry Lyte and Horatius Bonar. He was born in Ayrshire, the land of Robert Burns, in 1771. His father was a Moravian missionary, who laboured and died in the West Indies. James united with the Moravian Church at the age of forty-three, and his memory is held in high veneration among that small but true-hearted band of Christians. The Moravian body is like a tuberosc, small in bulk, but sends its sweet odours afar off. With this communion Montgomery worshipped until in his later years, and then he attended an evangelical Episcopal church (St. George's) in Sheffield, England.

During my student days I spent some time at Sheffield, and often met the venerable poet. He was small of stature, with hair as white as snow. Although he had long been an editor,—and once been imprisoned for his bold utterances in his newspaper, the *Iris*,—he would be easily mistaken for a clergyman. He wore an exceedingly conspicuous white cravat, which reached close to his chin, and gave you the impression that he was suffering from a chronic sore throat. When I first called on him at his residence, "The Mount," several of his most familiar lines began to repeat themselves to me, such as,—

"Friend after friend departs,
Who hath not lost a friend?"

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And that other exquisite verse, which often weaves itself into our secret devotions :—

“ Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam ;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,
One day's march nearer home.”

There are few finer verses in the whole range of devotional poetry. It is a pilgrim's wayfaring song, as he pulls up the tent-pins every morning, and moves onward towards his everlasting rest.

Montgomery never visited this country, but he was full of warm enthusiasm towards America, in whose churches his hymns are sung every Sabbath. He was also full of honest indignation that so many people would persist in confounding him with the spasmodic Robert Montgomery, whose poem on “Satan” has been impaled, like a buzzing beetle on a pin, by the sharp pen of Macaulay. “Only think,” said the dear old poet to me, “that I should have just got a letter telling me that my poem on *Satan* is the *best I ever wrote.*” I do not wonder that his wrath waxed warm under such an imputation. The last time I ever saw the veteran, he was sitting in his pew at St. George's, the “good, gray head” bending reverently over his Prayer-Book, as he joined in the responses. He “flew away, and was at rest,” in 1854, at the ripe old age of eighty-three.

Montgomery's most popular hymn is that one which breathes out the longing of a weary heart :—

“ Oh ! where shall rest be found,—
Rest for the weary soul ?
'Twere vain the ocean depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole.”

Ten thousand times have God's best beloved children, when made sick at the worthlessness and emptiness of worldly treasures, broke out in the fervid protestation :—

“ This world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh ;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.”

Of Montgomery's other favourite hymns, “ Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,” and “ What are these in bright array ? ” I wish I had spacē to speak. But we must confine ourselves in this brief article to those songs of Zion which are full of longings for the better life and the better land.

Of this class of hymns there is one which everybody knows and everybody sings, and yet almost nobody knows its authorship. For *Robert Seagrave* is one of God's “ hidden ones ” from all celebrity in the world of letters. He was a minister of the English Established Church, but being a caged dove there, he broke loose into Dissent. This unfettered spirit of

his gave birth to that vigorous hymn whose uplift has carried us often into the higher climes :—

“ Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
 Thy better portion trace ;
 Rise from transitory things,
 Towards heaven, thy native place.”

Seagrave sang this one bird-song about the year 1748, but I never heard that he sang again. But his inspiring lyric is ringing yet, like the notes of a lark at the gates of heaven. Probably all the sermons preached that year throughout Christendom have not lifted so many souls towards the gates of pearl as that single melody of Robert Seagrave. We must all seek to become acquainted with him in our Father's house.

Yes, and we shall all love to know Horatius Bonar there, and thank him for his many hymns, so full of heavenward aspiration. Another singer, from our own land too, who has lately flown above the clouds, sweet, sorrowful Phebe Cary. For she taught us all to sing amid our care-burdens and our crosses,—

“ One sweetly solemn thought
 Comes to me o'er and o'er :
 I am *nearer* home to-day
 Than I ever have been before.”

THE GREAT HYMN OF PROVIDENCE.



CORRESPONDENT expresses some surprise that in sketching the biographies of many of the foremost favourites in our Christian hymnology, no notice had yet been taken of Cowper's masterpiece. Certainly it was not from lack of loving admiration for a hymn which justly ranks among the half-dozen sublimest compositions in the whole range of sacred song. But it is not easy to say anything new about so familiar a production. Let us briefly sketch its remarkable origin, for the information of those who have often sung it through tears, and yet never knew that it was born of tears and trials from the most gifted poetic soul in Britain.

About the beginning of the year 1773, Cowper was residing at Olney, on the borders of Huntingdonshire. He had recovered from the awful gloom of that partial insanity which had cast its fearful cloud over his early manhood. Close by him lived and preached that robust man and minister of Christ, *John Newton*. They became as intimate as David and Jonathan; and it was from their very dissimilarity that there grew up such a loving fellowship between the bluff and brawny

converted sailor, and the timid melancholy poet. Newton brought to Cowper just what he wanted—a devout spiritual guide, and a soul-cheering companion.

Between the two was originated and completed the rich and heaven-born *Olney Hymns*. To this famous collection John Newton contributed two hundred and eighty-six hymns—and Cowper added sixty-two. But the smaller contribution proved to be the more precious in weight of metal. Among Newton's many hymns are a few which God's people will always love to sing. But to that collection Cowper's genius brought those two gems of devotion, "Oh for a closer walk with God," and "There is a fountain filled with blood." It yet remained for him to contribute one more—and one which ranks as the greatest *Hymn of Providence* in our mother tongue.

For seven years Cowper had been comparatively cheerful. The sun shone and the birds sang in his spiritual sky. But a foreboding impression of another attack of insanity began to creep over him. The presentiment grew deeper. The clouds gathered fast. It is said that he even meditated self-destruction, and left his quiet cottage to drown himself in the neighbouring river Ouse! Whether this statement be true or not, it is certain that he went forth from

his house under the pall of an overwhelming gloom. Just while these black clouds of despair were darting their vivid lightnings into his suffering soul, the grandest inspiration of his life broke upon him, and he began to sing out these wonderful words :—

“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

For several years Cowper's splendid intellect was to be under a total eclipse. The penumbra was already darkening its disc. But in full view of the impending calamity, the inspired son of song chanted forth those strains of holy cheer :—

“ Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace ;
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.”

Cowper never could have sung that sublime anthem of victory except under the immediate inspiration of the “power from on high.” It was to be his last song for many years. The storm was coming, but Cowper's eye of faith saw Jehovah “riding above the storm.” The heavens gathered blackness, but the ineffable *smile* of his Divine Lord lurked behind the tempest. The “bud” of sorrow which was springing fast did have “a bitter taste,”—the very

wormwood was not more bitter,—but oh, how ‘sweet the flower’ that it unfolded!

This matchless hymn of providence which God put into the soul of His afflicted servant has been a “song in the *night*” to millions of His people when under the discouraging clouds of adversity. A beloved friend in the city of St. John’s tells me that during the terrible famine in Lancashire, England, the work ran low at one of the cotton-mills. Occupation and wages grew less day by day. At length the overseer met the half-starved operatives, and announced to them the fatal tidings, “*There is no more work.*” Flickering hope went out in black despair. One delicate sweet girl—thin and pale with suffering—arose amid the heart-broken company, and began to sing the cheering words she had learned in the Sunday-school :—

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take !
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain ;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”

A sunburst of hope came over the despairing company when the sweet strain was ended. It

proved a prophecy. For the proprietors determined to struggle on a while longer,—and ere long that mill was running again at full work. This scene was a parable. It had its counterpart in the darkest hours of our nation's conflict, when we once heard Cowper's sublime lines quoted in a vast patriotic meeting, amid tears and thunders of applause. Thousands of God's children have chanted these stanzas as they walked through "valleys of death-shade." Blessings and honour and praises to Him who giveth us such songs in the night !

Such was the history of Cowper's unrivalled hymn of providence. We close this biography of an old and familiar hymn, by presenting a new and exquisite *evening hymn*, which most of our readers never saw before. It is to—

CHRIST THE HEALER.

At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay ;
Oh in what divers pains they met,
Oh in what joy they went away !

Once more, 'tis eventide, and we,
Oppressed with various ills, draw near ;
What if Thy form we cannot see,
We know and feel that Thou art here.

O Saviour Christ ! our woes dispel,
For some are sick, and some are sad.

And some have never loved Thee well,
And some have lost the love they had.

And some have found the world is vain,
Yet from the world they break not free ;
And some have friends who give them pain,
Yet have not sought a Friend in Thee.

And none, O Lord ! have perfect rest,
For none are wholly free from sin ;
And they who fain would serve Thee best,
Are conscious most of wrong within.

O Saviour Christ ! Thou too art man,
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried ;
Thy kind but searching glance can scan
The very wounds that shame would hide.

Thy touch has still its ancient power,
No word from Thee can fruitless fall ;
Here in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy, heal us all.



“*SIN NO MORE.*”



CHRIST did not excuse her sin. He did not defend or palliate it when He refused to decide that she should be stoned to death on the spot; especially by such a gang of guilty sharpers as the scribes and Pharisees who had dragged her into His presence. He set before the already convicted adulteress one clear practical duty,—*reformation*. This displayed the highest wisdom and the highest love. The woman had wandered away from the right; now let her come back to it. She had sinned against the purity of her womanhood; now let her stop her evil courses, and sin no more.

My object in this chapter is to press upon every unconverted person this one precise duty,—*reformation*. These are times of revival in many of our congregations, and many are inquiring, “What can I do to be saved?” Come to Jesus, is, of course the first answer to this vital question. But can an awakened sinner come to Jesus with any hope of being forgiven and renewed while he is wickedly clinging to his besetting sins? No! *Repentance* is as essential as faith in order to salvation. Repentance is not

merely sorrow for past sins: it is abandonment of present sins. It is the abandonment of our own specific sins.

This wretched woman of the story had been guilty of a distinct transgression. She had trodden one dark and damnable path until it brought her up against the holy sin-hating Son of God. He does not crush her with curses. He just points out to her the *other* path,—the better path, the brighter path of reformation. “Go, and sin no more.” Quit this life of sin. Our Lord did not teach any visionary doctrine of “perfectionism.” He did not command her to become a faultless angel; but He did command her to become a better woman. As she had stained her soul and her life by abominable practices, the all-wise Jesus exhorts her to abandon them. This was to be the proof of her repentance; this her guide to a better life.

Before my unconverted reader I hold up these inspiring, hope-kindling words,—*faith in Jesus*, and *reformation*. Your conscience condemns you. The Spirit of God is striving within you. You often say to yourself, “Would that I were a better man, or a better woman! I am not fit to die. I am not fit to live. I am guilty before God.” Your past is irreparable. You cannot live that over again. It is gone,

with all its guilty record, into the “books of remembrance.” But you can save your future; you can save the present. There is a door of hope set before you by the loving Jesus. It is the door of repentance and reformation.

Stop and change! Don’t excuse yourself by saying that a change of heart requires God’s aid. It does; but He offers and promises His aid, and He offers it to you as a *free agent*. You are an intelligent, accountable being, with the power of choice. “Stop sinning!” said Christ to the adulteress. Stop sinning! “*What sin?*” you inquire, perhaps. We answer: *Your sin*,—the sin you committed yesterday, and the sin you are committing to-day.

You may be owing an old debt, or indulging an old and wicked enmity. Go at once and pay the one, and settle the other by asking forgiveness. The refusal to pay a just debt which you can pay, or to love one whom you maliciously hate, are sins against God; and while you harbour them your repentance cannot be genuine. You never will be saved “*by works* ;” but let me tell you most plainly that you never will be saved *without* works. You must “keep the commandments,” or the love of Christ cannot be within you. Christ’s command to you is to forsake your sins.

Perhaps you are profane. Then stop swearing.

You have been "damning" long enough. God may take you at your word, and damn you for ever. Wash your soiled lips with prayer, and swear no more.

More than one whom I know is kept from Christ by too much familiarity with the decanter. He *loves* his glass. The moment a man begins to love the stimulating cup, and to hanker for it, he is in danger. I can name scores of my acquaintances whose chief hindrance is their slavery to the bottle. Is that your hindrance? Then you must give up your bottle, or give up your soul. Implore God's help, and sin no more. The Saviour is *testing* you, just as he tested the young ruler whom he commanded to sell his possessions and "come and follow me." If you are unwilling to deny yourself in the indulgence of a favourite vice, you cannot be Christ's disciple.

The atoning Saviour has opened a door of salvation to the guilty. There is room for every sincere seeker; but there is no room for the sinner's sins. There is no room for self-righteousness. Those "filthy rags" must be flung away if you would enter. There is no room for covetousness. If you love gold more than Jesus, you cannot enter. Every sinful practice is *contraband* at the gate. You cannot smuggle in a besetting sin. Here probably is the core of

your difficulty. Many an awakened sinner has failed to be converted simply because he clung to some one or more favourite sins which God commanded him to give up.

One of my neighbours went home lately, convicted of the sin of ingratitude to God. He had led a prayerless, thankless life. He went down on his knees and asked forgiveness. He began to pray with his family. He confessed his sins at his household altar. He not only made his Christian wife happy, but has become a happy man himself. God has given him a new heart ; but the man asked for it.

Friend, if you are still leading a prayerless, godless life, you are in fearful peril. You are presuming on God's forbearance. Your Maker has “let you alone” for a long time, though a barren fig-tree. You are sinning against wondrous love. You are sinning against a noonday light of truth. You are sinning against the Redeemer's compassion. You are trampling His cross under foot. This sin of hardened impenitence will cost you your soul. Go straightway to the forgiving Jesus, whose “blood cleanseth us from all sin,” and determine that with His help you will *sin no more.*

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