

shall "consume away for their iniquity." For there is no curse so terrible and far-reaching as, "He shall bear his iniquity."

"If!" but *is* it? It is written, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." On Jesus it has been laid, on Him who alone could bear the intolerable burden; therefore it is *not* upon His justified ones who accept Him as their sinbearer.

This burden is never divided. He took it *all*, every item, every detail of it. The scapegoat bore "upon him *all* their iniquities." Think of every separate sin, each that has weighed down our conscience, every separate transgression of our most careless moments, added to the unknown weight of all the unknown or forgotten sins of our whole life, and all this laid upon Jesus instead of upon us! The sins of a *day* are often a burden indeed, but we are told in another type, "I have laid upon thee the *years* of their iniquity." Think of the *years* of our iniquity being upon Jesus! Multiply this by the unknown but equally intolerable sin-burdens of all His people, and remember that "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us *all*," and then think what the strength of His enduring love must be which thus bare "the sins of *many*."

Think of His bearing them "in His own body on the tree," in that flesh and blood of which He took part, with all its sensitiveness and weakness, because He would be made like unto His brethren in all things; and that this bearing was entirely suffering (for He "suffered for sins"), and praise the love which has not left "our sins . . . upon us."

We cannot lay them upon Him; Jehovah has done that already, and "His work is perfect:" "Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "He hath done this." We have only to look up and see our Great High Priest bearing the iniquity of our holy things for us; to put it still more simply, we have only to believe that the Lord has really done what He says He has done. Can we doubt the Father's love to us, when we think what it must have cost Him to lay that crushing weight on His Dear Son sparing Him not, that He might spare us instead? The Son accepted the awful burden, but it was the Father's hand which "laid it upon" Him. It was death to Him, that there might be life to us. For "if our transgressions and our sins" were upon us, there could be no answer to the question. "How should we *then* live?" for we could only "pine away in them" and die. "Ye shall die in your sins." But being "laid on Him," how shall we *now* live? "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for Him and rose again." Unto Him, by Him, in Him, for Him, now; and with Him, where He is, for ever and ever!

On Thee, the Lord  
My mighty sins hath laid;  
And against Thee Jehovah's sword  
Flashed forth its fiery blade.  
The stroke of justice fell on Thee,  
That it might never fall on me.

#### "TRY THE SPIRITS."

There are false, as well as true spirits in the world, evil as well as good spirits, those which maim and destroy men as well as those which edify and save them. As human beings, there is given us the dread alternative of manifesting the "Spirit of God," or the spirit of the evil one. The spark within that raises us above the brute may flash forth the lurid fires of the pit or the light of Him in whom is no darkness at all; may link us with devils in their purposes of desolation and death, or with God in the tenderness of His mercy to redeem and save. The truth is no mere figure of speech; we speak in our daily lives and actions of heaven or hell. We scorch those with whom we come in contact with the flames of malice and wickedness, or we refresh them with Christian hope and love. Let us not hide from ourselves the fullest sense of it. Our homes, our communities, our churches, are affected by one or the other of these classes of influences. There is a spirit in our words; in their tones of utterance, accents, arrangement, and even absence. There is a spirit in our looks, in the eye, perched upon the very muscles of our faces, preceding our every movement as the figure head of the ship that first cuts every opposing billow. It leads every business speculation, every private and public scheme. "O, is it the Spirit of God," or the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience? You cannot tell! Yes,

there are points when heaven and hell seem to some minds to meet, seem to come so near to each other that you cannot separate them or draw the line of demarcation between them. There are places, I admit, where they even seem to overlap; where heaven's faithfulness appears harsh and cruel, and hell's accommodations of men tender us the mercies of God. But all the greater need of *trying* the spirits.

How, then, are we to know the Spirit of God in men? The Apostle John says, by the confession (conviction and declaration) that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," "that He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." Not the mere fact of the incarnation: "God with us" in the person of the Son of Mary. "Christ is come in the flesh" was the means of God's spirit being poured out upon all flesh universally, as the sunshine and the rain. The confession that "Christ is come in the flesh," or "the Spirit of God" in a man, is the confession then, of a divine yearning and effort, and his personal sympathy with it, for the indwelling of Christ in "*all flesh*,"; for the changing of "false prophets" into true ones, and for the restoration of the divine image in all men. Tender, Christ-like longing for this end fitly betokens the presence of God's spirit in men.

"The Spirit of God" is characterized by the conviction and declaration that "Christ *is* come in the flesh," that He is taking possession of human hearts. "I in them," "Christ liveth in me." "The Church which is His body." Yes, Christ is reigning not only in individual *human* hearts, but in collections of them, in assemblies, or churches of such. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in *me*," yet not only "in me" but also *in my brother*. "not I," says also my brother, "but Christ liveth in me." "Christ liveth in me" is the fact common to both and most prominent in each. Self lowered and Christ exalted in individual life and in Christian assemblies, is the Spirit of God by whom alone we are baptized into the one body of Jesus, leading the world also to believe that "Christ is come in the flesh."

#### "KEPT."

It was one of those days when rain and snow and wind seemed each to be striving for the supremacy, and winter and spring took part in the contest; when the smoke and everything else would go the wrong way; when even the furnace-fire, if it condescended to burn, persisted in sending all its heat into the cellar, instead of, as was right and proper, into the parlour and my own special "snuggery." In short, it was just the kind of day when, if one's temper does not give way, one's spirits do, and poor weak human nature feels hopeless and forsaken by both God and man; murmurs that prayers remain unanswered, and is tempted to doubt that there is a superintending Providence either in the natural or the moral world.

Effort after effort I had made to accomplish something, but all in vain. I could neither sew, nor read, nor write, for it was too cold to sit by the window, and too dark to sit anywhere else. I threw down everything and commenced thinking or rather grumbling over the existing state of affairs. "Why must we have such horrid weather? Why did the sunshine and a warm day flatter us, and then snow and ice fall on everything and keep it back? Keep back the horse-chestnut in front of my window, whose great buds had been swelling for the past few days under the influence of soft showers and sunshine, and seemed ready to burst and disclose their hidden treasures.—Why did they not burst? And that fine large chrysalis, given to me in the autumn, and which I had kept in a warm place all winter, why did it not burst through its brown covering and come forth, a beautiful winged thing, to gladden my eyes and speak of a better resurrection—*now*, when everything seemed dead?

Why did not hopes and well-formed plans and earnest work bring greater results? Why did everything stand still? Why is everything kept back? Kept? Who keeps it?

Almost like the whisper of a voice in my ear came the answer, "Kept by the power of God." It comes to me with added meaning now, not only as applying to our heavenly inheritance, we kept for it and it reserved for us, but all creation kept—kept safe from winter winds and storms, and kept from development too soon. The bud kept back for the fruit-blossom to form beneath, the chrysalis for its wings to grow, and both kept back till winter winds and storms have given place to the balmy air and warm sunshine, in

which flowers fear no blight and butterflies sport joyously and securely.

And for us—God's children—is not *kept back* part of the promise, part of the keeping? Hopes unfulfilled, plans thwarted, answers to prayer kept back that the wings of faith may grow and the fruit-blossom develop beneath the bud. And not that alone. Not only are we kept back till fit to *receive* the blessing, but till the blessing is ready for us. Such as will not blight us, such as we shall enjoy securely, which will not injure us here nor peril our happiness hereafter.—Shall we then murmur as I did, at dark days and winds and ice and snow, for which there is a "need be," when amidst it all there comes to us, sweeter than "joy bells," brighter than sunshine, more restful than a mother's lullaby, this promise of promises, "*Kept by the power of God.*"

#### SAYINGS OF MARTIN LUTHER, FOR MINISTERS AND OTHERS.

"There is no sermon that can improve like a gospel sermon."

"He who seeks a comfortable life should not be a teacher of religion."

"Do thou preach, and let God convert souls."

"The gain of souls must animate the preacher, or he is not a true preacher."

"Three things preserve the church, faithful teaching, diligent prayer, and patient suffering."

"The Word of God must be preached in its purity."

"In order that a man may lift up his head toward heaven, he must find nothing on earth whereon to lean it."

"Be not double-tongued and have not two hearts."

"A good preacher must be able to compress a sermon into two or three words, and also out of one flower to make a whole meadow."

"Form your judgment not from the opinion of the world, but from the Word."

"The life of a Christian must be a warfare, and ministers of the Word must lead the army."

"I earnestly entreat you to contemplate simple sayings, and narratives recorded in the Bible."

"Three properties belong to a good prayer; first the laying hold upon the promise; second, an anxious feeling concerning what is asked for; third, thankfulness and confession. The prayer also should be diligent, increasing, untiring, ever withstanding suspicion, unbelief and despair."

"He is the best Christian who has most love, after that he who has most faith."

"Knowledge without works is like a tree without fruit."

"To stand still is to go back."

#### RULES FOR MAKING A PRAYER-MEETING DULL.

1. Never think of it unless someone mentions it; never pray for it.
2. When anyone speaks of it, say that you think it stupid, ill-conducted, and shamefully cold.
3. If the plan of suggesting a subject in advance be pursued, say that it makes the meeting heartless and formal—if not, call it rambling and useless.
4. Never attend on stormy nights; it might encourage the faithful ones.
5. Never leave any business or amusement for the meeting—you can't have time for everything.
6. When you do go, if you wish to speak, always say the same things—people might forget.
7. Speak slowly, in a droning voice, as if you were going to sleep.
8. Always begin by lamenting the coldness of the Church and the wickedness of the world.
9. Next, scold at the church-members who are not there—it is pleasant for those who are.
10. Close by a desponding remark respecting your own spiritual state.
10. Tell your pastor, as you go out, that you are distressed because the meeting is so low and dead.
12. Suggest to the brother who walks your way that it would be well to give it up, as it cannot be of any use.

By carefully following these rules any and every prayer-meeting will seem dull to you.—*S. S. Times.*

"Tribulation worketh patience." (Rom. v. 3.) When the flail of affliction comes upon me, let me not be as the chaff which flies in Thy face, but the grain which lies at Thy feet.—*Blunt.*