

Pastor and People.

BE STILL.

Be still, my soul! Jehovah loveth thee;
Fret not, nor murmur at thy weary lot;
Though dark and lonely thy journey seem to be,
Be sure that thou art ne'er by Him forgot.
He ever loves: then trust Him, trust Him still:
Let all thy care be this: the doing of His will.

Thy hand in His, like fondest, happiest child,
Place thou, nor draw it for a moment thence!
Walk thou with Him, a Father reconciled,
Till in His own good time He call thee hence:
Walk with Him now, so shall thy way be bright,
And all thy soul be filled with His most glorious light.

Fight the good fight of faith, nor turn aside
Through fear of peril or from earth or hell;
Take to thee now the armour proved and tried,
Take to thee spear and sword—O, wield them well!
So shalt thou conquer here, so win the day,
So wear the crown when this hard life has passed away.

Take courage! faint not, though the foe be strong;
Christ is thy strength—He fighteth on thy side;
Swift be thy race; remember, 'tis not long—
The goal is near: the prize He will provide,
And then from earthly toil thou restest ever,
Thy home on the fair banks of life's eternal river.

He comes with His reward; 'tis just at hand;
He comes in glory to His promised throne.
My soul, rejoice! ere long thy feet shall stand
Within the city of the Blessed One.

Thy perils past, thy heritage secure,
Thy tears all wiped away, thy joy forever sure.

—Horatius Bonar, D.D.

For THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE SABBATH QUIET HOUR

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

When the Sabbath comes, it comes laden with blessing. It is like a camel that has crossed the hot, sandy desert, burdened with all the precious things of the East. It brings release from toil, and in that, rest for the wearied body. It offers refreshment to the soul by the thoughts it suggests of our Lord's resurrection from the dead in proof that sin has been put away, of the rest that remaineth for the people of God in the presence of the King. It affords opportunity for meditation upon the high themes with which the revelation of God deals, so that the spiritual being may be fed and nourished, and grow with a vigorous and triumphant joy. It comes armed with the rousing notes of the church bell, the open door of the House of God, the preached Gospel, the course of worshipping hearts, each knowing its own joy or sorrow, and the prayers and praises of multitudes of people. It carries with it a strange unearthly calm, a peacefulness like that of the far-off paradisiac time, when sin had not yet created discord and pain—a calm that invites to the enjoyment of rest, that quiets the turmoil of the soul, that soothes the ruffled feelings of the heart, that gives wings to the soul so that it rises above the seen and holds converse with the unseen, that restores the being to the equilibrium it has lost amid the storms of the week. The Sabbath is God's love-token to the race. In it He lays an arrest upon the noisy business of labouring men, and says: "Be still; take time to think; reflect; encourage those thoughts that wander through eternity, let the glory of the Infinite come in upon you and bless you with all fulness; widen your horizon; enlarge your spiritual being." On the Sabbath God makes us to lie down in pastures of tender grass, He leadeth us beside the waters of quietness. The Sabbath is the greatest gift next to Christ God has given to men. It is His "sign" to men of unspeakable grace. And the right observation of it is the key to all that is healthful and invigorating physically and morally and spiritually.

How we keep it determines how we keep all else. If we play fast and loose with it then nothing is secure. It is to be sanctified, i.e., set apart to the highest and holiest uses. And one measure of this is in having a quiet hour in which the family is gathered together from every other occupation and entertained by the father or the mother with Bible truth. It is well to do as Job did, pray for the children lest they have sinned; but beyond this it is better to speak to them personally of the great things of God's law. That may be done at other times, as occasion serves, but on the Lord's Day—when the very air is full of holy thoughts, and the mind is drawn to meditate upon the hereafter and all that is related to it, and the circumstances of the family are favourable to reflection—the opportunity should not be lost of opening the Word of God, and reading it and conversing freely on the revelation it makes. Even though it be but for one brief space, the seed thus sown by parental love and watered by parental intercession shall never die. The very grandest results shall flow from it. The beautiful picture of it shall live in the memory to cheer many a dreary day with its love

and its brightness, and the words spoken shall be as goads fastened by the Master of Assemblies. Its power over heart and imagination shall never perish. And of all the heirlooms of the family this shall be the most cherished and the most valuable. Indeed, it is a means by which parents exert their influence mightily upon the coming generations, crowning them with saving energy. The editor of the *Sunday Magazine* in introducing a series of papers entitled "Sunday Evenings with the Children" (1877-78) speaks thus: "Looking back through many years, few things seem to the editor to have so told on his spiritual life as his mother's Sunday evening simple, natural and loving talks about God and Christ and heaven. Whilst he was still very young the dear voice was hushed in death. What were the words that won his boyish interest he cannot tell; not one of them does his memory retain. Even the features of the kind face are all too dim. But one thing is clear and certain, that mother taught him God. The only friend his mother had of whom he has any clear and fond recollection is God. In the hope that he may somewhat help to make in many homes the children's Sunday evenings as holy and blessed as, long ago, they were made in his, he sets apart in the coming year this portion of his magazine."

This testifies emphatically to the influence of the Sabbath quiet hour. Some may be ready to say that they have no talent for speaking to the children, to which we might make answer: "If you love your children you will soon learn to talk to them simply and interestingly. Love is the great teacher. Love instructs the mind, moves the heart, ministers largeness of utterance on any theme."

An excellent story, because it is so scriptural, is Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." That might be read and talked about. J. A. Froude, the historian, in his "Reminiscences of the High Church Revival," tells us this: "We had no copy of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' in the house. I never read it till after I had grown up, and I am sorry I did not make earlier acquaintance with it. Speculations about the Church and sacraments went into my head, but never into my heart; and I fancy, perhaps idly, that I might have escaped some trials and some misfortunes if my spiritual imagination had been allowed food which would have agreed with it. There is the very best food for the imagination in the Bible stories of the Old Testament, and, going beyond the Bible, Dr. Newton's Sermons and Dr. John Todd's Lectures to Children cannot be excelled. These might be read and form the basis of conversation. Care should be taken to furnish the mind with material for thought touching the soul, Christ Jesus, God and eternity. Let the *Unseen Holy* become a reality to it. What a beautiful scene the 'Life of Philip Henry' calls up, in which the family, all alive with the deepest interest, are gathered around the Bible, while the father with faithfulness and earnestness opens up its precious truths, and sows the incorruptible seed in minds reverent and reflective! That is what Dr. James Hamilton would call 'a church in the house,' whose influence is imperishable. Philip Henry 'being dead, yet speaketh,' and he shall never cease to speak to all godly parents who desire the highest good of their children. An important consideration is urged by Dr. Edward Payson in his excellent 'Sermons for Christian Families,' where he is dealing with the education of the children for God. He says: 'The first thing implied in educating children for God is a realizing, heartfelt conviction that they are His property, His children, rather than ours, and that He commits them for a time to our care, merely for the purpose of education, as we place our children under the care of human instructors for the same purpose. However carefully we may educate children, yet we cannot be said to educate them for God unless we feel that they are His, for if we feel as if they were ours exclusively, we shall, and must, educate them for ourselves and not for Him.'

Many, no doubt, doing this, desire time to teach their little ones the fear of God, but owing to business engagements and worldly pressure, are unable to do so any time through the week. Ah, thank God, there comes the Sabbath with its quiet and solemn hours, set apart for holy and heavenly communings. Let it be used to the utmost. Let it never pass away unimproved. Seize fast hold upon it, and fill its moments with a ministry that shall become a memory the grandest and most blessed the child has. And if the exhaustion of the week demand the early hours for rest and recuperation, let there be set apart, sacredly, one quiet hour for fellowship in the Truth with the dear ones who are your charges. What a delightful thing it is to be able to sum up one's early education as Dr. James Hamilton's father does, in two short sentences: "The Bible was my class-book; my mother was my tutor!" All we would alter is to insert "father" for "mother," because the father often is, while the mother hardly ever is, wanting in this duty.

LET us be careful only of the quality of our work—that it be thorough, genuine, simple-hearted, the best that is in us, the best that can come out of us. And above all, let us leave success to God, who is a just taskmaster.

TEACH PRESBYTERIANISM IN ITS PLACE.

If I were a Methodist minister, I would, on principle, try to teach my people the reasons for their being Methodists. If I occupied a Congregational pulpit, or an Episcopalian, I should feel bound to show the people the grounds on which I adhered, and would have them to adhere, to Congregational or Episcopalian administration. If it be alleged that this is the way to make them "churchy," "sectarian," "uncatholic," the reply is, No; it is the ignorant who are intolerant; the intelligent are in a particular denomination for cause, and that cause being known by them in itself, and in its relations to other religious matters, they do not exalt themselves unduly, nor despise all others. And on the whole it is better for the worshipper to be in a Church on intelligible and known grounds than to be there by accident. I am a Presbyterian for reasons that apply to administration, and I am not hindered by these from appreciating the moral and spiritual good in Christian communities with a different management in the details of government.

Ministers of the Presbyterian Church then, it is respectfully submitted, ought to instruct their people in the elements of Presbyterianism. It is not necessary to the doing of this that they should go outside the line of Scripture exposition. The Epistles of Paul to Timothy and to Titus are not to be passed over in setting forth the entire word of God. A series of lectures on them would often both interest and edify the people. Nor can many portions of the Acts of the Apostles, not to speak of direct words and allusions of our Lord, be properly passed over. If they are expounded, they will show that Presbyterianism was formulated with the intention of carrying out the directions of the Bible. The Church cannot but be presented to the people in the light of her machinery, as, for example, when setting forth such causes as Home Missions, Church Extension, Ministerial Relief, and other great common enterprises. The teaching comes in its place. It involves no attack on sister Churches. The preacher is not going out of his way to parade his own notions or preferences. His people called him to declare the counsel of God. They called him in his capacity of a Presbyterian minister, and in their capacity as a Presbyterian people. Presbyterianism is the necessary orderly means of communication between him and them. It is natural and according to the fitness of things that it should be recognized in its place.

Why is it proper to teach Presbyterianism, giving it is our public ministrations the place no higher and no lower than its elements have in the Scriptures? Many reasons might be adduced. Our people should have ordinary Christian intelligence. The ministry must endeavour to develop it. Under wild and twisted conceptions of what it is to be "free and equal," our people in many cases have inadequate ideas of constituted authority, and Christian obligation and submission. With no intelligent conception of the sphere and nature of Church government they are too much the "creatures of chance." They happen to like this or that incidental for the time. It has, in some cases no element of permanency in it. It is by its very nature incapable of holding its place in the mind as the mind is enlightened. So the old has been parted with, and the new is powerless, and the life is without the influence that ought to steady and purify its development. "I was born a Presbyterian and grew up so; I happened to fall in with—and I liked it for a while; but it ceased to interest me; and now I have no attachments anywhere." Is not this a too frequent confession made more or less articulately? —John Hall, D.D.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE LOST?

"What must I do to be lost?" "Neglect so great salvation." It is not necessary to do anything. We are lost already. Jesus offers to save us; but if we reject His offer we remain as we were. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Escape is impossible, if we neglect the only means of safety. If a deadly serpent bites you, and you refuse the only remedy, you die. If you are drowning, and will not seize the life-buoy thrown to you, you sink. Neglect is ruin. Jesus alone can save the soul! Neither is there salvation in any other. O, sinner! your damnation is sure if you neglect Jesus. If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God? Dost thou think God will not execute His threatening, that thou canst escape His piercing eye, or that the rocks will cover thee? Vain hopes! There is no escape but to come to Jesus, and simple neglect is certain perdition! "Because I called, but ye refused! . . . then shall they call, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me, but shall not find Me!" O, sinner! escape this awful threatening! Jesus now stands with open arms. He entreats you to be saved! Come with all your sins and sorrows—come just as you are—come at once! He will in no wise cast you out! —Newman Hall.