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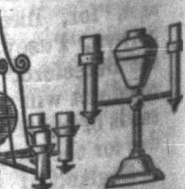
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their part of the work, but they cannot make the seed grow. God alone gives it life, see 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. If the seed is sown in the "good ground" of an "honest and good heart," it will grow; there will be a gradual growth, and we must not be disappointed if, when the blade appears, it does not at once bring forth the "full corn in the ear." We must bring forth "fruit with patience," thus a child not so strong as a man, so there are "babes in Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 1, and must be fed with suitable food, 1 Peter ii. 2. But the blade grows, then the swelling ear, and so the Christian is to grow up to manhood, "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Ephes. iv. 13, and how is this to be done? Our own souls must be fed, God gives us in His Word and Sacraments what we need for our growth. Let us ask ourselves, are we growing? 2 Peter iii. 18, if so, when the harvest comes we shall be gathered as wheat into God's barn, see St. Matt. xiii. 30.

SEPTEMBER 19th, 1886.

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BIBLE LESSON.

"The Rich Man and Lazarus."—St. Luke xvi. 19, 31.

This world is a preparation for the next, all important then, that we should keep the end in view. The parable to day is about this. It is not strictly a parable, rather a history of two imaginary persons who stand for the class to which they belong, the one for those who, having much intrusted to them, are yet destitute of grace; the other for those who, though not possessing much of this world's goods, are yet rich in faith. As this is the only one of the parables, if it can be called such, in which an insight is given into the state of men in the next world, we may be sure that something is intended to be taught us worth knowing.

1. *In this World.* First we have account of a rich man. We can picture him to ourselves as living in a grand mansion, everything that money could purchase at his command, perhaps did not waste his money in dissipation like the prodigal, but he lived for this world alone, a selfish life. Not wrong to be rich, for we have many instances of rich men in Bible history who were men of God, see Gen. xiii. 2; Job xlii. 12; Dan. vi. 3; Neh. v. 17, 18; St. Matt. xxvii. 57; but he had left undone things he ought to have done. He never thought of the life to come, his soul starved, his God forgotten. He was clothed in "purple and fine linen," (purple from Tyre, fine linen from Egypt) but the fine linen had never reminded him of what it is the emblem of, "the righteousness of the saints," he had every delicacy on his table, but had never hungered for that food which "endureth unto everlasting life"; had given grand feasts, but never such as described in St. Luke xiv. 13; or Isaiah lviii. 7; had never thought of Him "Who giveth all," or what should he have done? see St. Matt. xxv. 35, 36. But who is this at the gate of the rich man? whom he met every day, whose name he knew, but never thought it necessary to help or relieve in any way, and yet this poor man was one of God's Saints, bearing his lot cheerfully, a terrible one it was, not poverty alone, but disease; and yet not forsaken. One had His Eye ever upon him, he had a "Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." One Who soothed his troubles, his very name, Lazarus, means "God is my help," and no doubt for this reason our Lord tells it to us.

2. *In the next World.* One day they both die, verse 22, the beggar one minute has none but dogs to bear him company, the next his spirit is borne by angels into the place of bliss described here as "Abraham's bosom," or, as in the Prayer Book, the blessed place "where the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity." But this is not because he had been poor, see St. Matt. v. 3 St. James ii. 5. The rich man, whose is he? his body was laid in the grave with pomp and magnificence, but his soul in Hades, in that part which is separated by a great gulf from the other part. Is this because he was rich? No. For Abraham himself had been rich. Read his state, verse 23. Hear his request, verse 24. He knows deliverance to be impossible, but if he can only obtain one moment's relief. Even that cannot be granted, as he sowed such was the harvest. He had time to prepare, now it is too late. He entreats that Lazarus may be sent to his brethren; as much as to say he did not have sufficient warning, but Abraham tells him they have sufficient light if they really wish to know God's will, and if they despise that, they would not believe even if one rose from the dead. We can see how this was fulfilled in the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, when it only roused the Pharisees to greater hatred of Jesus. What a glimpse this gives us into the unseen world. One thought for us here; a hopeless and eternal separation between the wicked, the lost in hell, and the sacred in heaven. The loving Jesus tells us this for our warning. Now is the accepted time, then, it will be too late. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.

Another thought for us. We shall recognize each other in the next world. We shall meet and know in heaven our beloved friends and relatives. Again, let us remember that this world is a preparation for the next, and that those who persist in closing their eyes to things eternal, will find out too late that there is a higher world. And should not this spur us on to make kind, loving efforts now to stop a brother in a sinful course? It may be that when everything else fails, our prayers may, by God's grace, succeed.

Family Reading.

MY FIRST GRIEF.

How widely varied have been the paths by which those early friends of mine have wandered thus far through life! How many of those paths have already led to the grave! How few to glory! There was one fine boy who was my constant playmate; generous and true, we loved and trusted him: he was the first one from whom I ever received a letter: that was when we were yet boys, and he was removed to the city to be a clerk in a store. That was thought to be something very great: a certain passport to independence. He wrote to me a few times while his heart yet yearned for the green hills and forests of the country; but he found new friends and new pleasures in the city, he ceased to write to me, and I ceased to hear of him. He grew to the verge of manhood, ran a brief career of folly and vice, left his business and lost his character, and died as a fool dieth. This was one; and then there were others who have left the old town to be leaders in the Church and the State; and many, the most of those who were my companions in youth, are sober, substantial citizens and farmers, tilling the land their fathers tilled, and worshipping their father's God.

In the congregation that joined upon ours, but at the distance of several miles, lived a youth whom I tenderly loved. I have never known any love of the same sort since he left me. We were boys at school together when we first became acquainted, and both being of the same age, with similar tastes and pursuits, it was not strange that we should bind us to each other with an absorbing devotion, such as is not felt when the coldness and cares of the world steal around our hearts. George Williams was a manly boy. He was always known among his class-mates as above everything mean or low; despising such things for their own sake, and seeking to be known and loved as a boy of honor. We studied many of our lessons together, and both being fond of the Latin and Greek, we found mutual, and often intense delight in detecting and admiring the beauties which these classics unfolded to our young eyes.

But this was not the true secret of our attachment. We were both away from home, at college, neither of us yet seventeen years old, when we simultaneously set out to seek the Saviour. Often did we meet, and kneeling down by the same chair we poured out our hearts in prayer, and many were the vows we made together that if God should pardon our sins we would consecrate ourselves forever to his service and live to his glory. Those hours of deep distress, when we seemed to be cast off of God, and we had not our parents near us to whom we could go with our load of grief, those hours drew us closely to each other's hearts. There we could unburthen our souls; compare our emotions, pray for one another, and thus gather encouragement to persevere in seeking eternal life through Christ. We found peace very nearly at the same time, and in all the ardor of new love we devoted our whole souls to God. It seemed as if this were the very beginning of our attachment, so new, so deep, so joyous were the emotions that swelled our hearts when we entered the way to heaven, and together sought and found those pleasures which ripen only under the sunlight of the divine eye.

A few months after this, and while we were yet in the ardor of new convert's love, we returned to our respective homes to spend a vacation of four weeks. One morning I was walking out with a friend, about sunrise, and as we were passing along the street he left me for a moment to speak to a gentleman whom he recognized, and who was

travelling by. The young man returned to me, and we resumed our walk. In the course of a few minutes he observed casually, that the gentleman with whom he had just been conversing, mentioned to him a very sudden death in the neighboring town the day before. He said that a young man had been cut down after a few hours' sickness. I asked if he mentioned his name. "Yes," he said, "his name was George Williams." Had a spear pierced my heart, the poignancy of the pain had scarcely been more acute. Rather, had a bolt from heaven fallen on my head, I could not have been more stupefied. For a moment I reeled, like a drunken man and then partially recovering strength I put my ear close to the mouth of my friend, and asked him to tell me what he had said, and to speak loud, for I was not sure that I heard him aright. He begged me to be calm, and refused to repeat the fact. I sat down on the grass, and in the silence of a desolated heart waited for the storm of passionate grief to pass by.

More than fifty years have crept by since that morning, and yet I feel this moment something of the smothering sensations of that hour. The sun was just climbing in the East; but it was dark, very dark; and the whole face of nature, a moment before smiling in the charm of a summer morning, was hung with black. I went home, and rushed to my parents' chamber, and throwing myself across their feet as they lay in bed, I sobbed out (tears then first coming to my relief), "George Williams is dead!" In an instant they comprehended the power of my grief, and, rising from the pillows, threw their arms around me, and we all wept together—I for my Jonathan whom I had lost, and they in sympathy with me and the parents who had lost their boy. In the course of the day I went up to the funeral, and stood petrified with sorrow over the remains of my dearest friend. He was buried. Night after night he came to me in my dreams, sometimes as in the days of our youthful love, and there was nothing to remind me that he was not as in the days that were passed; and again he would come to me all clothed in white, an angel from the skies, and would beckon me to follow him; and touching the strings of a little harp of gold that he held in his hand, as the gentle music fell like the light of heaven on my ravished ears, he would spread his wings and vanish into thin air. Often after such meetings and partings I waked and found my pillow drenched in tears. This was my first grief. It is easy to see that my mind was quite unprepared for such a blow, and that the loss even of such a friend now, might be borne with more composure. There was no manliness in that sorrow. But it was good for me. O how vain the world seemed to me from that date! It was an epoch in my life. I felt that everything my heart was set on here was so uncertain that I would live for God and heaven. And then, in my folly, I thought I would never love anybody again, for fear they, too, would die. How soon I got over that, it is needless to write. This tale of boyish love and sorrow will be read with various emotions according to the tastes of those who read. Some few will understand when I say that it severed the cords that bound me to earthly love, and led me to consecrate every faculty to the service of the Redeemer.—IRENEUS in N. Y. Observer.

A SUNDAY IN LONDON.

London is more than a city. It is a State, a nation, a world in itself. Within its territory of one hundred and twenty square miles there are more than seven thousand streets, which if tacked together in a straight line, would almost reach across the Atlantic Ocean. Through this great labyrinth of house-walled paths more than four millions of people are moving up and down, hurrying to and fro, seeking their living or their pastime. But not only streets and houses—country lanes and fields, and bits of forest, rivers and canals, palaces and parks and ruins are included in this great complex of London: for the city has kept on growing, doubling its population in less than half a century, sending its great boundary circle farther and farther out into the country, swallowing up little towns and ancient heaths and