

Pastor and People.

AS THE HART PANTETH AFTER THE WATER BROOKS.

Like as the hart with fevered lips
Seeketh the shady nooks,
Panting and leaping at the sound
Of flowing water brooks,

So thou, my soul, in searching through
The universe abroad,
Art hungry for the bread of life
And thirsty for thy God.

Oft as kind nature broodeth o'er
The shepherd with his sheep,
 wooing them to her fond embrace
In sweet, refreshing sleep,

So thou, Oh Father! givest to
Thy children waking dreams,
Of that blest Eden, where the soul
Qualls from eternal streams.

Oft in some pressing need of life
My cup is over-filled,
When on my soul the cooling dews
Of heaven are distilled.

And I in the full of water brooks
I slake my thirst at length,—
While to some other fevered lips,
I hold my cup of strength.

—Mrs. M. L. W. Tiede.

THE RELIGIOUS MULE.

Be not as the . . . mule.—Psa. xxxii. 9.

What depth of feeling and bitter experience this text expresses! The mule is the incarnation of obstinacy. Standing with his fore-feet wide apart and firmly planted on the ground, his long ears laid back close to his neck, his tough hide, and long, awkward head, he is a picture of firmness. You doubtless imagine that David was thinking of one of those balky brutes, on his father's farm, when he wrote the text. Far more likely he was thinking of Joab,—in comparison with whom the most obstinate of those early acquaintances was pliability itself.

There are mules and mules. All have the same character; but there is a diversity of outward forms. Some are horizontal, others are perpendicular. Some walk on four feet, and some on two. Usually, however, they do not walk at all, but stand very still.

Not a few of these animals are found browsing on the tender grass within the enclosure of the Christian Church. They are easily discovered. In fact, there is no need to discover them, for they soon make their presence felt. The mule, whatever may be his outward form, is an obstructionist. He is tenacious of his own opinions. He will have his own way, or he will stand still, and make everything and everybody else stand still with him, if possible. Lucky enough if he does not let fly with his heels, and pulverize all objects within reach.

Obstinate? An obstructionist? Oh, no! he does not intend to be either. He is very "conscientious." And unfortunately he has adopted that familiar definition of "conscience," namely, "Something within me which says 'I won't.'" There is nothing light or frivolous about him. He makes everything a matter of conscience; and when others differ from him, it is always because they are less earnest and conscientious than himself.

When his mind is made up, he is immovable. Argument and persuasion are alike wasted upon him. He usually plants his feet firmly on one or two Scripture texts which seem to substantiate his position, and from these he will not budge an inch. You may quote a dozen in refutation, but he will throw them all aside, and stand on those which he has chosen. It is indeed fortunate when the rest of the team can move on, and leave him standing there alone in his glory, like Lot's wife on the shore of the Dead Sea. Too often he gets between the shafts; and then, when he comes to a standstill, the rest must halt with him till he is ready to move on, or is taken to his reward. Many a church in our land to-day is standing absolutely still; and has made no progress for years, simply because there is a mule somewhere in the team; perhaps he is in the pulpit, perhaps in the pews.

We can all of us assume this character on occasion. It is one of the strongest points in favour of Professor Darwin's theory, that there seems to be in almost every member of the human family some remaining trace of the ancestral mule. Nothing is more easy than to persuade ourselves that any point which we desire to carry is a matter of conscience. "I feel impelled to do thus or so, therefore I ought," is a common syllogism. We often mistake obstinacy—in ourselves—for moral courage, proper firmness, decision of character, or some other commendable quality,—so nearly are vices related to virtues. When unwelcome advice is offered us, we thrust it aside, and imagine ourselves to be miniature Martin Luthers, determined to enter Worms though there were as many devils as tiles upon the house-tops. Or we fancy that we are but repeating the "Get thee behind me, Satan," of the Master. Very frequently we should find a more accurate likeness in Rehoboam, who forsook the counsel of the old men,—the wisest and safest advisers in the realm.

Decision of character and firmness of purpose are very desirable qualities in the Christian. The church of the pre-

sent day needs men with independent minds and a strong, straight backbone, men who dare to say "No" clearly and earnestly. She needs men like Joshua and Daniel and Paul, who can withstand temptation, and even the false persuasion of friends. But we must beware, lest with the backbone we develop a tail and long ears.

"Be not as the . . . mule."—Rev. George H. Hubbard in *Sunday School Times*.

COUNT OVER YOUR MERCIES.

A Southern woman who died lately at a great age, and who carried to the last days of her life a happy heart, and a singularly gay temper, thus explained the mystery of her unflinching cheerfulness:

"I was taught by my mother when a child to reckon, each morning before I rose, the blessings God had given me with which to begin the day. I was not simply to say:

"When all thy mercies, O, my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise,

but I was to count the mercies one by one, from the neat and serviceable shoes that covered my cold feet, to the sunlight shining on the hill-tops. My school friends, my play, my fun, my mother's kiss, the baby sister in her cradle—all these I learned to consider separately, and of every one to say, He gave it to me."

"This practice taught me the habit of thankfulness. It kept my heart near to Him, kept it light and happy. These every-day blessings were not to me mere matters of course, but special, loving touches from his paternal hand. No pain or sorrow could outweigh them."

We all have a store of richer jewels than the heathen king; and, unlike the crown regalia, these jewels are our own, given to us by our Father.

How many of us mutter over, as the day begins, some perfunctory words of thanks which mean nothing? How many number their mercies, tasting the delight and joy of each, and out of glad hearts thanking the Giver!

And how many quite forget to think either of them or of Him?

HOME.

That is a laudable and worthy ambition which seeks to make home the brightest, sweetest, and happiest place on earth. Nor is it, like so many of our ambitious undertakings, beyond our attainment; at least, all have it in their power to contribute toward the desirable result. Father can be less absorbed in business, politics, and society, and give more of love and service to wife and children. Mother can be less irritable and more considerate of the boys and girls in romp and play. Husband and wife can have less charms for the outside world, and bestow the wealth of their devotion upon one another and the inmates of their household. Children can restrain their selfish tendencies, and have regard to others' enjoyment. In fact, there are a thousand ways by which all can add to the home-attractiveness and delight. Love, tact, taste, and determination must be brought into play. There must be a daily doing and sacrificing—a combined effort—a mutual giving and receiving of the gifts of mind and heart. In the charmed family-life the kind word springs promptly and kindly to the lips; the kind and loving feeling rises to the surface; the right action is performed at the right time and manner; forbearance and charity rule; and the advantages and privileges are common property.—*Presbyterian*.

THE OLD SCOTCH WOMAN'S FAITH.

By the side of a rippling brook in one of the secluded glens of Scotland, there stands a low, mud-thatched cottage, with its neat honey-suckled porch facing the south. Beneath this humble roof, on a snow-white bed, lay, not long ago, old Nancy, the Scotchwoman, patiently and cheerfully awaiting the moment when her happy spirit would take its flight to "mansions in the skies;" experiencing, with holy Paul, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." By her bedside, on a small table, lay her spectacles and her well-thumbed Bible—her "barrel and her cruise," as she used to call it—from which she daily, yea, hourly, spiritually fed on the "Bread of Life." A young minister frequently called to see her. He loved to listen to her simple expressions of Bible truths; for when she spoke of her "inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away," it seemed but a little way off, and the listener almost fancied he heard the redeemed in heaven saying, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

One day that young minister put to the happy saint the following startling question: "Now, Nanny," said he, "what if after all your prayers and watching and waiting, God should suffer your soul to be eternally lost?" Pious Nancy raised herself on her elbow, and turned to him a wistful look, laid her right hand on the "precious Bible," which lay open before her, and quietly replied, "Ae dearie me, is that a' the length ye hae got yet, man?" And then continued, her eyes sparkling with almost heavenly brightness, "God would hae the greatest loss. Poor Nanny would but lose her soul, and that would be a great loss indeed, but God would lose His

honour and His character. Haven't I hung my soul upon His 'exceeding great and precious promises?' and if He brak, His word, He would make Himself a liar, and the universe would rush into confusion."

Thus spoke the old Scotch pilgrim. These were among the last words that fell from her dying lips, and most precious words they were—like "apples of gold in baskets of silver." Let the reader consider them. They apply to every step of the pilgrim's path, from the first to the last.

By faith the old Scotch woman had cast her soul's salvation upon God's promise in Christ by the Gospel. She knew that His dear Son had said, "He that heareth My word, and believeth in Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life." She knew that God had said "By Him (Christ) all that believed are justified from all things,"—that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," for "He bare our sins in His own body on the tree." This was His first step. And all through life the Scotch pilgrim hung upon His "exceeding great and precious promises" for all things and in every hour of need. The divine argument of Romans vii. was hers by faith: "He that spared not His own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" In every sorrow she had found Him a "very present help in trouble," and now about to leave the weary wilderness for her everlasting home, could she think that He would prove unfaithful to His word? No, sooner than poor Nancy's soul be lost, God's honour, God's character, God Himself must be overturned, and "a' the universe rush into confusion." Dear old pilgrim!—*The Wilderness*.

THE HIGHEST GOOD.

Does your soul regard earthly things as the highest, and the business which relates to them as your weightiest employment? Then is your soul, like the waves of the sea, which are driven and blown by the wind: it is given up to eternal disquiet and transient change. For manifold and varied are earthly things, and whoever gives himself up to their dominion, his soul is dragged hither in all directions by hope and fear, by joy and sorrow, by desire for gain and pain at loss. And how should the grace of the Lord and His peace make their dwelling in such a disturbed soul! Oh, my friends, whatever earthly calling may be allotted us—however spiritual in its functions, however blessed in its effects—if its employments drive us forward in breathless haste upon life's path; if we think we can never stand still and to think where we are and whither we will go, and to reflect on the heavenly and eternal concerns of our immortal soul; if prayer has lost its power and the Divine Word its charm for us, then we have cast away our life upon a fearful error, upon a fleeting dream: then are we, with all our apparent richness in bodily and spiritual good, really poor—very poor. We have, like Martha, much care and trouble, but the highest good, which alone gives to our life its worth and significance, is wanting.

PUNISHMENT.

Some time ago, as I was coming up the street, I met young married friend, holding her little boy by the hand. The child had evidently had a fall, for the pretty suit he wore was covered with splashes of mud.

"Just look at Willie's new coat," she said in an aggrieved voice. "It is perfectly ruined; and I have had such trouble to get it made. Is it not too bad?"

While I was expressing my sympathy the little fellow looked up into my face with a woeful expression on his own.

"And mamma is going to whip me just as soon as we get home," he cried.

"I certainly am," she said in the same indignant tone. "I have told him at least fifty times to take hold of my hand, and he never will do it, and this is the consequence."

"It seems to me," I answered somewhat dryly, "that if you have condoned the sin of disobedience for forty-nine times it is for the sin of falling down that the child is to be punished; if the accident had not happened, I imagine that the fiftieth act of disobedience would also have passed without comment."

Her cheek flushed for a moment, then her honest hazel eyes met mine steadily.

"Your reproof is a just one," she said, "and I shall not forget it."

I would like other young mothers, also, to carefully consider this question of punishment, for it is a most important one. While grave moral faults are often passed over carelessly, a child is frequently very severely dealt with for the tearing of a dress, or the breaking of an ornament, or any other fault that involves trouble or expense, even though the mischief may have been unintentionally done.

Shocking as the statement may sound, is it not true that when the angry mother relieves her annoyance by punishing the object of it, she is really revenging herself upon it for the trouble it has occasioned?

Certainly it is very provoking to have beautiful things broken, and work that has been the result of much patient labour destroyed through heedlessness and carelessness, yet some time ago, when I heard a child who had torn a handsome dress, answer sagely to another who had told her that "her mother would whip her for tearing it," "No, my mother never whips for clothes," I felt sure that she was in wise and well as loving hands.—*Lutheran*.