

He who would become a good citizen and a really useful member of society can only do so by practising obedience, with great patience, and with all his heart, throughout the whole of his life. To attain excellence in it, as in many other things, it must be begun very early in life. Above all, it must be willingly given. Real obedience is prompt, cheerful, and from the heart.

J.O.M.

Oh! Heavenly Father, thou hast told
Of a gift more precious than pearls or gold,
A gift that is free to every one,
Through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son—
For His sake give it to me.

Oh! give it to me, for Jesus said
That a Father giveth His children bread,
And how much more Thou wilt surely give
The gift by which the dead shall live—
For Christ's sake give it to me.

I cannot see, and I want the sight;
I am in the dark, and I want the light;
I want to pray, and I don't know how,
O give me Thy Holy Spirit now—
For Christ's sake give it to me

Thou hast said it, I must believe,
It is "only ask," and I shall receive;
If Thou didst say it, it must be true,
And there's nothing else for me to do—
For Christ's sake give it to me.

So I come and ask, because my need
Is very great and real indeed;
In the strength of Thy Word, I come and say:
"O Let Thy Word come true to-day"—
For Christ's sake give it to me.

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

SUNLIGHT.

ONE afternoon I was talking to the children about the stars, and, among other questions, I asked: "Are the stars shining now?" "No, Miss M——!" came in chorus from nearly the whole class. But one little fellow, proud of superior knowledge, broke in eagerly: "Plea, Miss M——, they are shining now, for once I was down in a deep well and saw them far above me." The class looked surprised. No one could explain the phenomenon; so, with the remark that some day I would show them why we could not see the stars during the day, we dropped the subject.

Though often reminded of my promise, I put them off from day to day on one pretext or another, until they were on the tip-toe of expectation. One day, however, having provided myself with a tiny wax taper and a match, which I concealed in my hand, I told them that I would now fulfil my promise, and show them why we can't see the stars in the daytime. I

divided the class into two parts, and asked one part to watch me, while the rest looked steadily out of the window. The children did as requested, and I exposed the taper, which I lighted, much to the amusement of those who were in the secret. Having let it burn for a second, I extinguished and again concealed the taper. I then asked for attention from the class. The little people who had been gazing out of the window looked rather disappointed. They hadn't seen anything, they said. I showed the burnt match and the taper, and asked one of the others to explain what I had done. Then they very readily comprehended why they had not seen the little light, which would have seemed so bright in a dark room. They all understood, too, how the brilliant sunlight obscures the light of twinkling stars, which are so important in its absence.

While we talked, the thought flashed through my mind, What a bearing on human life this has! Many a man is steeling his heart, and rejecting the repeated call of the Holy Spirit to come and serve the Master by saying to himself: "I should like to accept the Lord Jesus, but if I do I must give up the pleasures and amusements which make life worth living."

Dear one, whoever you are, your soul is in darkness, and the starlight of this world's pleasures seems very necessary to you. It is the only light in your life. But draw aside the rusty bolts, throw wide open the windows of your soul, and let in the glorious sunlight of Christ's abiding presence. Then these other petty lights will grow dimmer and dimmer until they fade quite away. In the glorious midday brightness of the Sun of Righteousness all human light is darkness. "The way of the wicked is as darkness: But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 19, 18.

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

EPIPHANY.

ON the 6th of January our church celebrates the festival of the Epiphany. It does not always fall upon a Sunday as this year. It is rather a pity that it does not, for the festival is a glorious one. The thoughts that it calls up are among the brightest and most stirring of the whole Christian year. It is in the Epiphany season that we read those matchless later prophecies of Isaiah, the very glory of the Old Testament. He is the prophet of the Epiphany. And who can listen unmoved

to the majestic music of his verse, and follow, without exultation, the train of his thought as it soars through time and space to the days when "the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"; "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising?"

Epiphany means "manifestation," or "showing forth." We commemorate the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. We are brought back to that scene in sacred history where the wise men who have travelled from the East for many months, guided only by the star, stand at length before the infant Jesus, and contemplate Him for whom has been all their quest. They were the first among the Gentiles to welcome Jesus and do Him homage. And their action was full of significance. It meant that whatever the former exclusiveness and isolation of the Jew, He who was born in Bethlehem of David's line would be the hope of Gentile and Jew alike, and put them on a common footing. The Jew of old was privileged beyond other men. He was a child of Abraham, and heir of the promises of God. He felt his position. The Gentile was beyond the pale of his hopes. With pride the Jewish psalmist sang, "In Jewry is God known, His name is great in Israel." But the coming of Christ was to bring a change, and this visit of the wise men declared it. Jew and Gentile now met together to share a common hope and acknowledge a common Lord. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ."

The journey of those wise men has its own wonderful lesson. It tells us that, in spite of its many religions, the Gentile world was restless. Only the Jew had the secret which could satisfy it. The wise men came from the East, to this day the home of religion. Not only were they deeply learned in all the wisdom of the East, but their minds were imbued with its religious teaching. All that it had to tell of God and the human soul, sin and death, and the hereafter, they knew. But it was so meagre it failed to satisfy. Their longings and yearnings remained. The questions they asked were still unanswered. There was to be no rest for them until they should come, guided by God, to the home at Bethlehem, and gaze upon the infant features of Him who was to be their light—"the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." That hour had come at length, and the voice of the prophet cried, "Arise! shine! for thy light is come."