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Religious Miscellany

Heaven or Home.

By ALICE CART.

The fields with flowers blowing,
They are behind us all—
Our autumn, it dwells high;
But, O, my friends, we are going
To the Summer hills on high.

We are vexed with work and warring—
Our strife with our days increase;
But there cometh a swift release—
For, O, my friends, we are nearing
The life of eternal peace!

Our roof-tree drops a shadow—
Our floor-planks slide like sands—
In our doors the darkness stands;
But, O, my friends, there is splendour
In the house not made with hands!

We know no full completeness—
In the sky of the day most clear
Some shadow is sure to appear;
But, O, my friends, there is sweetness
In the days of the endless year.

The winds are beating and blowing—
The front on our heads is white—
We are drawn near to the night;
But, O, my friends, we are going
To the morning land of light!

In spite of the fast possession,
Our thoughts, they wander and flee,
But this we shall not see—
For we long to know the fashion
Of the life that is to be.

Our golden gains we are losing—
Our hopes are dim with dust;
But, O, my friends, we are going
To the land where there is no rest.

Our life is a twice-told story
That charms no longer lands;
But, O, my friends, we are going
To the coming fad to the glory
That never fades nor ends.

We stand of our strength broken,
And sick unto death in sorrow,
But this we know of a truth,
That out of the dust we shall awaken
To a life of immortal youth.

The Winter brings rough weather,
And into the chill and gloom
We go, and never come!
But, O, my friends, we shall gather
Together in Heaven—our home.

Fragment.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."—Psalm 125.

The very centre of the Christian religion is union with Christ, and the receiving of him as our life; in other words, called faith, or "staying our minds upon him." To the doing this, there are many hindrances, and the two greatest are—

First, the want of self-knowledge; this keeps ninety-nine out of one hundred from Christ. They know not, or rather feel not that they are blind, naked, leprous, helpless, and condemned; that all their works can make no atonement, and that nothing they can do will fit them for heaven. When this is truly known, the first grand hindrance to our union with Christ is removed.

The second is the want of understanding "the Gospel of Christ;" the want of seeing therein the firm foundation given us for this pure and simple faith, the only solid ground of staying our souls on God. We must remember that the Gospel is "good news," and not to slow of heart to believe it. Christ received sinners; he undertakes their whole concern; he gives not only forgiveness, but remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. He creates them anew; his love first makes the bride, and then delights in her. The want of vision of Christ in this light, as the author and finisher of our salvation, hinders the poor, humble penitent from casting himself wholly on the Lord, although he hath said, "cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

I do not mention sin, for sin is the very thing which renders man the object of Christ's pity; our sins will never turn the heart of Christ from us; for he brought him down from heaven to die for our sake; and the reason why iniquity separates between God and our souls, is because it turns our eyes from him, and shuts up in us the capacity of receiving those beams of love, which are ever descending upon and offering themselves to us. But sin, sincerely lamented, and brought by "a constant act of faith" and prayer before the Lord, shall soon be consumed, as the thorns laid close to a fire; only let us abide thus waiting, and the Lord will pass through them and burn them out together.

When the soul feels its own helplessness, and receives the glad tidings of the Gospel, it ventures upon Christ; but through the world, the flesh, and the devil pursue, so that the soul seems often to be on the brink of ruin, it has only to listen to the Gospel, and venture on Christ, as a drowning man on a single plank, with "I can but perish;" remembering these words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

The consequence of this trusting is, that God keeps the soul from its treacherous enemy; defends it in temptation, in persecution, in heaviness. Through all, it finds power to resist itself on Christ, to say, "God shall choose my inheritance for me." Here the Christian finds peace with God, peace with himself, and peace with all around him; the peace of pardon, the peace of holiness; for both are obtained through staying the mind on Christ. He walks in the perpetual remembrance of a present God, and is not disturbed by anything. If he feels sin, he carries it to the Saviour; and if in heaviness, through manifold temptations, he still holds fast his confidence, he is above the region of the clouds.

The careless sinner is not to be exhorted to trust in Christ; it would be to cast pearls before swine. Before an act of faith, there must be an act of self-denial; before filling there must be emptiness. Is this thy character? Then suffer me to take away thy false prop.

dost thou stay thy soul? Thy honesty, morality, humility, doing good, using the means, business, friends, confessed thoughts of God's mercy?— This will never do. Thou must be brought to say, "What shall I do to be saved?" Without trembling at God's word, thou canst not receive Christ. Nothing short of love will do.

The penitent needs, and blessed he who has every encouragement. You have nothing but sin—it is time you should understand the Gospel. You are yourself sinking—Christ is with you.

You despair of yourself—hope in Christ. You are overcome—Christ conquers. Self-condemned—he absolves. Why do not you believe? Is not the messenger, the word, the Spirit of God sufficient? You want a joy unspeakable—the way to it is by thus waiting patiently upon God. Look to Jesus. He speaks peace; abide looking, and your peace shall flow as a river.—Pitchee.

Little Links.

Never was I more deeply impressed with the part that little events play in God's great providential dealings with his children than the other day. I was listening to a little reminiscence in the early history of an eminent servant of God, who for more than fifty years has labored in the vineyard, whose life has been a perpetual blessing to others, and whose praise is in the churches. Speaking of the goodness of God to him in his providence, and of the ways by which his Father's hand had led him, he said:

"A dog made me a Christian."

"How was that, Doctor?" asked lady listener.

"It was in the summer time. Several rabid dogs had been shot in the city, and were running at large, causing considerable trepidation among the people. I was in the streets one beautiful bright morning, when one made his appearance, followed by a noisy crowd of men and boys. Just then a wagon, loaded with wood, was passing, and the horses becoming excited by the crowd, threw part of the load off a heavy stick falling and striking me a severe blow on the knee. I was laid up with it for several weeks. Restless and weary from my long confinement, I thought of my neglected Bible, and began to be exceedingly anxious to read and to study it. There was no Bible in the house. I soon secured one, however, and fell to a careful perusing of its blessed pages. It was not long before I came to a knowledge of Christ as my Saviour, and to a belief in those principles of religious faith and practice which I now hold.

"When able to walk I sought a clergyman's house for further instruction. My heart felt as at the door of his house, and before the sermon had a widow, she had taken, she called on me to take me by a sudden death! She could not bear to see me live the life of a poor, despondent minister of Christ! I could not change, however; the path was plain."

"And your mother, did she relent?" we asked.

"O, yes, she came to see that the church to which I had joined myself was not what she had been taught to believe. In after life she often heard me preach, and died in the faith which I first espoused."

A noble life-work traced back to such trivial causes as the appearance of a rabid dog in the streets, the falling of a stick of wood. Small and trivial we may call them, but yet links in the chain of quite as much importance as those which we regard as deeper impressions amongst us, and seem to be of so great moment at the time.

Various as the paths are through which God leads his children, it is sweet to think that they all tend to the same place, "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—S. S. Times.

Waiting till our Work is Done.

When Mr. Whitefield was last in this country, Mr. Tennent paid him a visit as he passed through New Jersey. One day, after dinner at a friend's house, with other ministers, Mr. T. adverted to the difficulties attending the Gospel ministry; lamented that all zeal availed but little; wearied with the burdens of the day, declared his great consolation was, that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ; he appealed to the ministry if that was not their consolation; to which they severally assented, except Mr. T., who sat in silence, seeming to take little interest in the conversation. Mr. W. tapped him on the knee, and said: "Well, brother Tennent, you are the oldest man amongst us, do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand when you will be called home?" Mr. T. bluntly answered, "I have no wish about it."

Mr. W. pressed him again, but he said:—"No, sir; it is no pleasure at all to me; and if you knew your duty it would be none to you; I have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can—as well as I can—and to serve my Master as faithfully as I can—until he shall think proper to call me home."

Mr. W. still urged for an explicit answer, if it was left to his own choice.

Mr. T. replied:—"I have no choice about it; I am God's servant, and engaged to his business as long as he pleases to continue me therein. But now, my brother, let me ask you a question, What do you think I would say, if I were to send my Tom into the field to plough, and if at noon I should go to the field, and find him lounging under a tree, and complaining, 'Master, the sun is very hot, and the ploughing hard. I am weary of the work you have appointed me, an overdone with the heat and burden of the day; do, master, let me re-

turn home, and be discharged from this bad service? What would I say? Why, that he was a lazy fellow; that it was his business to do the work I had appointed him, until I should see fit to call him home."

The pleasant manner in which the reproval was administered rather increased the social harmony of the company, who became still more united and earnest, "to depart, and be with Christ," which, in itself, "is far better," and that it is the duty of the Christian in this respect to say, "All the days of my appointed time I will wait till my change come."—Life of W. Tennent.

The Personality of Satan.

The assertion of the existence of a Tempter at all, of a personal Wicked one, of the devil, this, as a well known is a stumbling block to many. Not urging here the extent to which the veracity of Christ Himself is pledged to the fact; will content myself with observing that it is supported by Scriptural arguments alone that it is supported. There is a dark mysterious element in man's life and history, which nothing else can explain. We can only too easily understand the too strong attractions of the objects of sense as a being who is as senseless as well as spiritual; the allowing of that lower nature, which should have been the ruled, to reverse the true relation, and to become the ruler. We can understand only too easily man's yielding, even losing himself in the regions of sense. But there is a mystery far more terrible than this, a phenomenon unintelligible except upon some assumption. Those to whom the doctrine of an Evil Spirit is peculiarly unwelcome have been at infinite pains to exorcise the evil; and from that domain at least to cast Satan out, even though they should be impotent to cast him out from any other. All who shrink from looking down into the abyssal depths of man's fall, because they have no eyes for the heavenly heights of his restoration, seem to count that much will have been gained thereby; although it may be very pertinently asked, as indeed one has asked, "What is the profit of getting rid of the devil, so long as the devilish realm of evil expelling away an Evil One, so long as the will over who remains are so many? What profit indeed? Atraciously this doctrine of an Evil Spirit, tempting, deceiving, compelling to rebellion and revolt, so far from casting a deeper gloom on the destinies of humanity, is full of consolation, and lights up with a gleam and glimpse of hope spots which seem utterly dark without it. One might well despair of oneself, having no choice but to believe that all the strange suggestions of evil which have risen up before one's heart had been born there; one might well despair of one's kind, having no choice but to believe that all its hideous sins and all its monstrous crimes had been self-concocted and bred within its own bosom. But there is hope in the casting of these words against Him, the actual and active Author of God which it is impossible not to recognize in some wicked man? What else will account for delight in the contemplation or in the infliction of pain, for strange inventions of wickedness, above all of cruelty and lust—just hard by hate? What else for evil chosen for its own sake, and for that which has led him to often find in the violation of law, this violation being itself the attraction; with all those other wicked joys, 'maia, gaudia mentis,' as the poet in a single phrase has characterized them so well?

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