

[SELECTED.]

Sons or Servants.



HE "prodigal son" when he decided to arise and go to his father, only intended to ask for a hired servant's place, saying, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But when the father met him, he cut his confession short at that point where he was about to say "make me as one of thy hired servants." and turning, said to the servants (who seem to have been present), bring "the robe," and "the ring," and "the shoes," and "the fatted calf," "for this MY SON was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found,"—as though he would impress upon the servants the fact of *sonship* which belonged to the returning prodigal, and upon the prodigal himself the fact that there was but *one* place in the household for him to occupy and that was a son's place. So he would not so much as let him speak the words "*hired servants.*" I think the father meant to banish the idea of servility forever from his mind.

Have we nothing to learn from this? If we are Christians we are not hired servants, we are sons and heirs. It may be, and is ours to serve, but not to serve servilely. And yet how many Christian's who came, and at the first joyfully took their place as sons, have suffered themselves to fall into the place of *hired* servants. Mark the characteristics of such.

1. They do not dare to stand forth with open, glad, joyous faces, and say: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, and so we are." They embrace not with joy that salvation which is set forth by the "kiss," the "robe," the "ring," the "shoes," the "fatted calf," the "merry-making," and the open declaration of "*this my son.*" The rather they will brood over their past lives of "prodigality," which was all forgiven and blotted out, and live in memory, at least, if not in heart, and in fact, in the old estate of rags, husks, swine, and famishing. Instead of eating the honey out of the rock, and finest of the wheat,—the food God has prepared for His sons (Psalm lxxxi. 16),—they will take their places among, and live like hired servants. They are so foolish! Having begun in the Spirit, they now seek to be made perfect by the flesh (Gal. iii. 3). Beginning as sons, they degenerate into hired servants, and live under law.

2. They serve for hire. "If only we get to

heaven at last," say they, "we shall be content;" not knowing that that is the spirit of the hired servant, who only seeks

"—to save the soul,
And shun eternal fires."

3. They serve *in fear*, having the "spirit of bondage," and not having the perfect love that belongs to sonship, and that casts out all fear, and so are without confidence toward God.

4. They serve *grudgingly*—

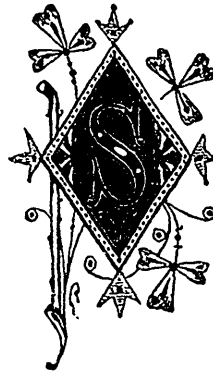
"Doling their duties out to God."

They confess and lament this, but cannot help it, because they have the spirit of servants, and therefore cannot be "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Dear friends! oh, see to it that you do not occupy the place and illustrate the character of an "hired servant," while claiming to be a son of God.—*Dr. Pentecost.*

Condemned or Not Condemned, Which?

By REV. R. MACKAY, late of
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OME time ago, while preaching in Western Ontario, I spent a few evenings at the house of a brother minister. This dear friend has three of a family, very dear children—two sons and a little daughter. In telling this simple story we will give the boys assumed names. The eldest, then, is "Herbert,"

who is eleven years of age, and his brother "Artie" is between six and seven years.

While in conversation with the boys one evening, I was surprised to hear the father say, "I am sorry to tell you that Artie is under condemnation at present." I said, "I am sorry too, what has he been doing?" Father said, "He has been naughty, and is to be whipped on Monday morning." After coming from church on Sunday evening, we found Artie asleep on the couch, in the parlor. I called attention to his condition under condemnation, and said we had in him the picture of many a sinner asleep, unconscious of the condemnation resting upon them (John 3: 18). Next morning, I found Artie up before me.

"Good morning, Artie; how are you to-day." "Not very well." I could not sleep, I wakened at four o'clock in the morning, when I thought of my whipping." I said, "Well, Artie, you