

## Pastor and People.

"A SINNER, SAVED BY GRACE."

BY JOHN IMRIE.

O, God, I love to think of Thee,  
And heaven, Thy holy dwelling-place;  
I prostrate fall on bended knee,—  
A sinner won by saving grace!

O, Jesus! blessed be Thy name,  
I long to see Thy lovely face;  
Thou bore for me the cross and shame,—  
A poor lost sinner saved by grace!

And not for me alone Thy love,—  
Enough for all the human race,  
What multitudes there are above  
That praise for aye Thy saving grace!

O, Saviour! I must worship Thee,  
And all through life Thy footsteps trace;  
I know Thou hast a place for me,  
For Thine I am by saving grace!

O, holy Comforter above,  
Thy blessed Spirit shower on me;  
May I reflect that perfect love  
The light that leads me up to Thee!

Toronto, Canada.

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### THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

EDITED BY M. H. C.

#### THE GARDENS OF ARIM.

Leaving Lokman still on his knees, the other two hastened down the hill, bought two swift-footed camels from the Amalika and speeded after the cloud, that they might receive all the praise for their successful mission. The cloud moved gently before them, inviting them on, and they followed rapidly, hardly taking time to eat by the way. At last the Adite land was reached, and the envoys saw all the people assembled to gaze upon the monstrous black pall that shrouded the sky just overhead. Breathless with the long race, the two messengers nevertheless dismounted and stood to receive the people's thanks. But gratitude was long gone out of their hearts, where selfishness only reigned. The relieved camels, weary as they were with the forced journey, tossed their heads and roared, then sped with far-outstretched legs rapidly towards their home. Then came a sound beyond the noise of thunder, a blast before which no living thing, man or beast or lofty tree, could stand, which no strong masonry of even Adite workmanship could resist, and the nation of the Adites was involved in total destruction. When at last the rain came, it fell on dead bodies and fallen trees, on ruined walls and barren sand. Thus did the day of long suffering come to an end as in the time of Noah, and as in that of Sodom's overthrow, and as it is yet to end when the salt of the earth is gathered out and the Judge of the world comes to execute judgment.

Lokman remained praying long after the other envoys had mounted their camels and ridden away. Some voice within told him to make no such purchase, but to go back as he had come. On the way he turned aside, both hungering and thirsting, to what seemed a grove of palm-trees. So indeed it was, and there he not only found food and water, but also his countrymen whom Hud had advised to leave the Adite land. He told them of the clouds, and they replied that they also had seen the black one moving westward like a living thing. And they had heard what he had not, the terrible noise that shook the earth for miles around. Together they went to their former home, fearing as they proceeded, but their fears were as nothing compared with the terrible reality. "Let us leave this place that God has cursed," the people cried. And Lokman answered, "Let us indeed leave the place, but know that God curses nor place nor man. It is man who brings a curse on himself and on the earth he inhabits, and on the things that God has made by yielding to the power of the Destroyer." So they went into the east and chose Lokman for their king, who ruled over them in the fear of God. Never did those who had witnessed the desolation forget the lesson taught by the overthrow of the first Adite nation.

Lokman's wife was among those saved by Hud, saved for Lokman's sake, for her father and all her relatives perished in the overthrow because they feared not God. Outwardly she worshipped, but her heart was with those who had been destroyed, and when her son Arim was born she determined to make him as far as she was able like the mighty men of old. So when he was old enough to learn, while his father taught him humbleness toward God and kindness toward all men, his mother sought to puff him up with ungodly pride, and with contempt for the peaceful and good-living Adites of the second nation. While Lokman warned him by the terrible fate of the despisers of religion who had perished in their sins, his wife told the boy tales of the prowess of these giants, what warriors and hunters they were, what clever robbers, how free they were, unbound by any law of God and man, until the child's mind, fired by the recital of his ancestors' deeds, learned to look upon his father as a mean-spirited creature, and to regard religion as a badge of slavery. Lokman soon saw this and tried to correct it, but the mischief was done and his efforts were all in vain. So the boy grew

up, tall, strong and handsome, an Adite of the Adites, but one of the old type who feared not God, neither regarded man.

Arim was a fullgrown man, a great hunter and warrior, a robber of caravans, a corrupter of youth, when his father Lokman died, calling upon the name of the God in whom he trusted. Just men carried him to his grave and made great lamentation over him. But Arim was secretly glad, for now he was free, with no strong hand to check him in his wild career, no warning voice to plead with his conscience that he should turn from the paths of wickedness. As his father's son he sat upon the Adite throne, but little justice was wrought on that judgment seat, save as it pleased his mad humour or suited his interests. Every kind of forbidden pleasure and crime he indulged in, and went so far as to become a man stealer. Going forth with his bands of strong young Adites into the defenceless villages beyond the bounds of his little kingdom, he would make prisoners of all their inhabitants, men, women and children, with all that they possessed of any value, and then in their sight commit their homes to the flames and cover their cultivated ground with stones. Then the sorrowful procession of new made slaves would set out, at the point of the spear or under the lash of hippopotamus hide whips, for the Adite country, there to be sold to cruel taskmasters, while their cattle and other property was divided between the king and their captors. So the Adites ceased to work and set their slaves to do all that they once were compelled to do for themselves.

A few good men and women remained who had seen the judgment and lived in the fear of God. Arim gave orders that no one should name the name of God openly or say anything to his young warriors about the fate of their countrymen, on pain of severe punishment. Otherwise, he said, his people could worship any God they chose. An old man called Khaldjun would not obey these orders, but said his prayers in public every day. He reproved the young men for their evil ways, and prophesied that the fate of the old nation would be that of the new, unless they repented and turned to God. He was dragged before Arim's judgment seat, and hundreds of wicked young men testified against him. The old man listened to all, then turned to the king and pleaded with him, for the love of God, for his father's memory, for the people's good, and his own salvation, to cease doing and teaching wrong. "What is this I hear?" thundered the king, "an insolent old traitor speaking treason to my face. Do you not know your master who has power to stop your words and your breath together?" The old man answered, mildly, "You have the power and I care not how soon you use it, for I have been longing to get out of this den of thieves into the paradise of God." "You shall go there straightway," roared the infuriated Arim, as he gave a signal to his warriors. With ferocity, not unmingled with shame, they led the feeble Khaldjun out into a stony field. There he knelt to make his last earthly prayer to God, saying, "Lord, receive me into Thy paradise," when the young men picked up great stones as large as a strong man could lift and threw them upon him so that he died.

The king passed by and looked at the mangled form of him whom he called his enemy, although he had been the best friend that remained to him since his father's death. "Had the insolent old hypocrite any more to say," he asked, and the murderers told how he had prayed God to receive him into His paradise. "Twice this paradise," said Arim to himself as he went towards his mother's house. After their greetings were over, he asked her what God's paradise was. She tried to put him off, saying it was better to enjoy the world and not think of such things. But he insisted on knowing, so she was forced to tell of the Garden of Eden, once fair and beautiful, without decay or any blemish, whence our first parents were driven on account of sin, and which God took up into the heavens to be a paradise for those who live and die to Him. The mother thought that perhaps her speech about God and paradise would frighten her son away from sin to seek after God, and as, though old, she was still a woman of the world, she did not like the thought. But nothing was farther removed from Arim's mind. "So God has a paradise hidden away somewhere, so that no man can see it," he said; "then Arim too will have his hidden away earthly paradise, where he can enjoy himself with those who worship him." The foolish, blasphemous woman, proud of the vain glorious despoiser of God that her poisonous training had made, knelt before her son and all unconsciously mocked the words of Khaldjun, the martyr, saying, "Receive me into thy paradise, lord Arim." The king promised, and left her.

To the south of the country of the new Adites lay the rocky peninsula of Sinai. It is a desolate region. Its great mountains of rock, granite, sandstone, chalk and other kinds shine wonderfully in the sun with many brilliant colours, presenting a scene of glory combined with majesty and desolation. It is supposed that at one time they were covered with trees and other vegetation, but that the copper and turquoise miners cut the trees down to make into charcoal for their smelting furnaces, so that the hot sun dried up what growth remained, and the rains swept the earth that supported it down into the village, whence it was carried by rapid mountain torrents and lost in the gulfs of the Red Sea. In one of the broadest of the valleys, shut in on almost every side by perpendicular rocks or cliffs, from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet high, Arim decided that he would make his garden. And there he meant to bring his bride, his mother, and the chief officers of his court.

First he went to claim his bride, far into the delta of Egypt where the river Nile became divided into seven streams that poured their waters into the Mediterranean Sea. With the Egyptian princess he obtained silver and gold and negro slaves, and much wealth of other kinds to enrich his Adite kingdom. And he promised her in a little while such an earthly paradise as the eye of mortal man had never seen. Then he set about his great undertaking. A large body of captives under the escort of a band of soldiers was led into the desolate valley, and set to work building a strong and high stone wall along its south-western end, with heavy buttresses of solid masonry, every here and there, to strengthen it against all pressure from above. Now, when the rains came down in torrents from the upper mountains of rock, washing away the soil, they found no outlet and so filled up the valley until it became a lake. But Arim had provided for this. In the centre of the valley running down its whole length he had made a water course of stone, an artificial canal widening here and there into fountains and small lakes. Into this canal the waters gradually subsided, leaving the rich earth they had brought down in the bed of the valley all round about. At the lower end of the valley in the wall was a sluice with a flood-gate, that could be thrown open when the waters increased too rapidly and be closed during the drought of summer. Dry earth of the best quality was brought in on the backs of camels, until at last, the desolate valley was such no longer, but a great succession of well-watered fertile fields.

There were skilful gardeners among the Egyptians, and the wealthy king of the Adites sent to his father-in-law for some of them, into whose hands he gave hundreds of slaves to do their bidding. Arim was not going to wait until seeds sprouted and grew through long years into shrubs and trees. He must have his garden at once. So the slaves under the guidance of the Egyptian gardeners dug up great palms and dragged them on long rollers and axles over the rough ground to the paradise and there planted them in the virgin soil. There also they planted fig trees and sycamores, pomegranates, and peach trees, olive trees, almond shrubs, evergreen oaks and acacias with milky blossoms, vines that climbed up the rocks, orange and lime trees; and under them, every kind of beautiful flower, roses and lilies, anemones, hyacinths, tulips, narcissus and the scarlet everlasting, while the air was filled with the fragrance of laurels and myrtles, of the oleaster and the styrax, of arbutus and thyme. And in the lakes, under the shelter of great cypress and willow trees, flourished the broad leaved lotus and the paper reed. The canal was stocked with all manner of fish, after the young of which came all kinds of brilliant water fowl, as well as after the rice that grew on the borders of the lakes. Wide patches of wheat and other grain invited the presence of song birds that filled the garden with melody by day and night. There was an enclosed park for deer, pastures for cattle and sheep, stables for horses, asses and camels. The wild goats could not be hindered climbing the steep mountain sides, but no serpent or dangerous beast was allowed to enter the gardens of Arim.

So the work of transformation was complete, and the slaves returned home, through the dreary burning wilderness, to the scene of their everyday life. Arim took his mother, his queen and her little son Haril, with singers and musicians, butlers and bakers, the chief people of his court and a great company of soldiers, and journeyed towards his paradise. The journey was a dreary and painful one, but it soon came to an end. Then before what seemed a wall of solid rock the king's trumpet sounded and the summons was answered by a blast within. Slowly, a massive gate of stone revolved, revealing a glimpse of the cool freshness and beauty beyond. In a moment the company seemed to leap from desolation and dread silence into heavenly beauty and perpetual song. As they moved forward to the lordly summer palace in the midst of the gardens, no one dared to speak. They were awe stricken and ravished with such a vision of earthly glory. First the king's mother found her tongue, and said as she knelt before her unworthy son: "This is thy work, lord Arim: I thank thee for admitting me into thy paradise." But the queen said, "Why do you kneel, mother? He is your son, and human like us all." "He is no man," was the reply. "Man could never make such a garden as this." Thereupon the courtiers cried, "This is the work of a god," and they bowed in homage before the vain despot who lorded it over them.

The garden was indeed a lovely place, a place like the lotus eater's land, to make one forget all ties and engagements, all business and duty, and yield up every sense and faculty to the enjoyment of the moment. Shut out or shut in from all the rest of the world, only the swift winged birds of prey hovering above, and the sure footed mountain goats upon the summit of the precipices could look down upon it. Had there been good people there, they would have known One whose eyes are over all the earth, and from whose knowledge nothing is hid. But Arim in his earthly paradise had usurped the place of God; yet he showed himself to be a man and a very vile one too. What to him were water and foliage, fruit and flowers, the hum of bees and the songs of birds, to him without a thought of the God who made them, and in them caused part of this beauty to be upon His creatures? They were simply objects of sense, and so they led unto other objects of sense, to music, singing and dancing, to gluttonous banqueting, to intemperate drinking and to worse things that one dare not name. So the beautiful gardens became vile in the sight of the Holy God, and vile also in the sight of that good Egyptian princess, the queen, and of her little son Haril, whose constant cries gave her the desired opportunity of leaving the scene of revelry, and retiring to a quiet spot in the artificial imitation of nature's loveliness.

(To be continued.)