

[SELECTED]

Birds of Plumage;

OR, ARE YOU CONVERTED!



FRIEND of mine, an African lad, who was once the slave of man as to his body, and of Satan as to his soul; but who has been, in the wonder-working counsels of our God, emancipated from both, and is now doubly a freed man. In the meantime one illustration from his life suggests itself.

One day lately I said, "Robert, what sort of birds have you in your part of Africa?"

"Buds of plumage sir," was the reply.

"What do you mean by 'birds of plumage,' Robert?"

"Well sir, they have *beautiful feathers but no song.*"

"Ah!" said I, "they are just the picture of thousand of so-called Christians; they are 'birds of plumage,' outwardly covered with all the words and deeds that are fair in the sight of man; but have inwardly no 'new song' to glorify God, and exalt Christ and gladden this dark scene."

Reader, are you a "bird of plumage," or a "bird of song?" Have you ever, as a lost, ruined sinner, seen that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah lxiv. 6), and flinging them away, come in your helplessness to Jesus the crucified?

"Naked come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Vile, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!"

If so, you can take up the soul-stirring words of that sweet hymn we often sing—

"He maketh the rebel a priest and a king,
He hath bought us, and taught us this new song to sing;
Unto Him who hath loved us, and washed us from sin,
Unto Him be the glory for ever. Amen."

But if not, oh, may God make you hear His voice, calling as unto Adam in the garden, "Where art thou!" And may you be brought out into His presence to take the lost sinner's place now while there is "blood to cleanse and power to free," rather than have to come forth in that awful time written of in God's Word, and spoke of in this solemn hymn—

"There shall come a night
Of such wild affright
And none beside shall know,
When the heavens shall shake,
And the wide earth quake,
In its last and deepest woe.

"What horrors shall roll
O'er the godless soul

Waked from its death-like sleep;
Of all hope bereft,
And to judgment left,
For ever to wail and weep,

"O worldling! give ear,
While the saints are near;
Soon must the tie be riven,
And men side by side,
God's hand shall divide,
As far as hell's depths from heaven."

Walking Before God.

H. K. WOOD, Glasgow.



IT was the counsel of the All-sufficient Jehovah to Abraham His friend, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect," or sincere: and when the Psalmist's devotion was greatly quickened, the resolution gushed warm from his heart, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

A few months ago I noticed a godly husband and wife proceeding to the house of prayer on a Sabbath morning. Before them marched, hand in hand, their eldest children, a little girl and boy. On these little ones the gaze of their father and mother rested with sweet complacency. Ever and anon as occasion required, the former directed them how to shape their course, and he was on the alert continually to shield them from danger. The children were delighted with the thought of the strong arm and watchful eye and tenderly loving heart of their honoured father, following so close behind along with their dear mother. Frequently did they glance back to be refreshed with the beams of affection which rayed from the faces of both their parents, or to ask their way when cross roads were reached. Though very young in years, their steps were buoyant and confident, for they knew that help was at hand, whatever might be their need; and they guided themselves readily and carefully, according to every intimation, however slight, of what was their father's desire.

Such should be your walk before your Father in heaven. Reconciled through the blood of the Lamb, accepted in His righteousness, and become through faith in Him an adopted child and heir of God, you should strive to maintain a happy confidence in Jehovah's fatherly love towards you in Christ. Believing constantly and stedfastly in this love, you will walk with delight before the Lord. It will be no pain, but the highest pleasure to think of Him as ever looking down upon you. You will try to please Him in