

## THE DEPARTED.

The burying ground was called by our ancestors, "God's Acre." The name is significant, and it shows the Faith and Hope of those who gave it. "God's Acre!"—No claims it as his own. His seed is sown in it, and his great harvest will be reaped from it. The resurrection is God's reaping-day. What rich deposits lie under that dust! What hopes are buried there! And what golden harvests await the reaper's hand at the coming of our Lord. It is now the quietest place near the suburbs of the city. Men and women, and even children, go into its gates and pass through its walks, and visit the resting places of the dead with delicate steps and hushed voices. No one speaks aloud. No noise as of merriment, breaks in upon its silence; and the distant clamor of the busy city falls with subdued harshness upon "the place of graves." We are walking among the sleepers; we would not disturb their repose. But what a change will come upon that sequestered spot, one day. The city will become quiet; all business will be stopped and pleasure cease. The wheels of industry and gain, ever revolving now, day and night, will pause, and the city of the living will be as the city of the dead. But in this cemetery, now so quiet, will be heard the trumpet of the resurrection, and the stirring of the dust of many generations, and the shout and song as of the last battle and the last victory.

We plant the willow and the rose by the side of the sleepers, as speaking to the living both of our sorrow and joy; and we place our "*Immortales*"—our wreaths of evergreen upon the hillocks where they repose, to shadow forth our hopes of a future and better life; and we think all this proper. There is nothing in the genius of our religion that forbids it. Far better does it seem to me than the gaudy display of the sculptured marble, addressing more our taste for art, than our love for nature; and rather for the living than the dead. A simple rose at the feet or the head—a little evergreen; some choice plant of affection, is more in harmony with the scantiness of the grave, than mausoleums or cenotaphs which speak of art.

I think the earth is growing daily richer, not from the pearls of the ocean, the gems of the mountains, or the gold of California. The treasures hid in its crust give it an increasing value. As it rolls on its axis,—nothing to the eye of angels and the spirits of the just, attracts more attention and awakens brighter hopes than the struggles of the few to overcome, by the faith of the gospel, and the garnered seed, which anticipates the coming harvest. What a rich freight does this ship carry, to the distant heaven, and what hallowed affections and tender recollections lie buried in its dust. In the silent chamber of the dead, before the coffin is borne to its resting place, how subdued the feelings, how chastened the memories, how tender the regrets! Weep on, fond mother! Weep on, stricken father! Jesus wept. It is not in the higher circles of life,—yea, often in the humblest, the truest sorrow is felt. Hear the story of the blacksmith and his wife at "wee Davie's coffin."

"When the house was quiet, Davie was laid in it gently by his father. Jeannie stood by and assumed the duty of arranging with care the white garments in which her boy was dressed, wrapping them round him, and adjusting the head as if to sleep in her own bosom. She brushed once more the golden ringlets, and put the little hands in their right place, and opened out the frills in the cap, and removed every particle of dust which soiled the shroud. When all was finished, though she seemed anxious to prolong the work, the lid was put on the coffin, but so as to leave the face uncovered. Both were as silent as the child. But ere they retired for the night they instinctively went to take another look. As they gazed in silence, side by side, the smith felt his hand gently seized by his wife. She played at first nervously with his fingers, until feeling her own hand held by her husband, she looked into his face with an unutterable expression, and meeting his eyes so

full of unobtrusive grief, she lent her head on his shoulder and said: "Willie, this is my last look o' him on this side of the grave. But Willie, dear, you and me maun see him again, and, mind ye, not to part, na, I canna thole that! We ken whaur he is, and maun, gang till him. Noo, promise me! Vow along wi' me here, that as we love him and aye another, we'll attend mair to what's gude than we ha'e dune; that—O, Willie, forgie me, for its nay my pairt to speak, but I canna help it anoo, and just, my bonnie man, jast agree wi' me—that we'll gie our hearts noo and forever to our ain Savior, and the Savior o' our wee Davie!" The smith spoke not, but bent on her neck as he whispered, "Amen!" Jeannie! so help me God." He then took the hand of his boy and said, "Farwell, Davie, and when you and me meet again, well baith, I tak' it, be a bit different frae what we are this night!" Yes, truly when they meet again not merely in spirit, but in their immortal bodies at the resurrection of the dead how "different" and yet how like,—both being in the fashion of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mourners in this vale of tears, forget not in your deep affliction, that the love of the departed never grows cold. They live and they love forever. The weaknesses and the miseries which they have on earth and which excited our compassion—these they have left behind. The love which bound them to our hearts remains. *Jesus is the connecting link between them and us.*

"I do not wonder," said one, to bereaved parents, that "you dwell with feeling so intense on the bereavement which you have suffered. I have known what such feelings are, and now, at the distance of more than forty years, they return, though mellowed and softened by the lenient hand of time." Surely, there is something in the resurrection of the body, in harmony with all our feelings and wishes in this our natural state; and although, it is a fact depending upon revelation and not within the domain of sense or reason, yet when made known the heart gladly embraces it and rests contented with its realization. We shall see them—the same—but, how "different"! If after more than forty years, the loved one and the departed is remembered with feelings, only tormented down and mellowed by the hand of time, what a sad disappointment, if they should not be found again, in that day when God shall make up his jewels.

"The harp of heaven  
Had lacked its least, but not its meanest string,  
Had children not been taught to play upon it."

How beautiful the language of Elliot: "I have had six children, and I bless God for his free grace, that they are all *with* Christ, or *in* Christ, and my mind is now at rest concerning them. My desire was that they should have served on earth, but if God will choose to have them rather serve him in heaven, I have nothing to object to it; His will be done!"

Read the following epiaph on four infant children:

"Bold infidelity, turn pale and die,  
Beneath this stone four infants lie;  
Say, are they lost or saved?  
If death's by sin, they sinned, for they lie here;  
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear;  
Reason, ah, how depraved!  
Revere the Bible's sacred page, the knot's untied:  
They died, for Adam sinned—they live, for Jesus died.

JAMES CHALLENGER.

—Evangelist.

AS SALT does not season salt, but only that which is unsalted, so the living energy of the children of God should not be expended in contests among themselves, but devoted to the awakening of life in the world.—Olshausen.

IF WE try to find God in every thing, our hearts will overflow with thanks and our mouths will be filled with praise.