

they should have the rest and refreshing shade of the evening, undisturbed by the perplexing cares and ills of poverty.

There is a story of an ancient king who once gave his subjects a wise lesson on the treatment due to the aged and dependent, of which we shall do well to take heed. This king had caused a belfry to be erected in one of the public squares, and a large bell to be suspended there. When any one of his subjects felt himself aggrieved or injured by another, he had only to ring this bell and call the wise men together, when he should receive justice at their hands. Now, sad to tell, it was so often used that after a time the rope broke, and was lengthened by a long piece of wild grape vine. Once, in the early dawn of the morning, the whole city was aroused by abrupt and violent ringing of the bell of justice. Crowds of people, among whom were the wise men and judges, flocked together, and there they saw, in the vain effort to obtain nutriment from the withered vine, what was a once valuable, but now worn-out horse, gnawing eagerly at the fibres. Each eager grip of the starving steed at the withered, dried-up grape vine, produced the changing noise which had called the people together. The king pronounced the ringing perfectly proper and right. It was no false alarm, but the assertion of a rightful claim by the neglected and half-starved animal. Having ascertained that the creature had long been a faithful servant both in the battle-field and chase, he gave charge to the wise men, to see that justice was done, even to a horse. It was therefore decreed "that the knight whom this horse had served in his youth and strength, should feed and protect him in his old age."

This sentence the king then confirmed under a heavy penalty, so that henceforth no worn-out animal in that city was forced to sleep unsheltered on the common, or to gnaw at withered grape vines for his sustenance. Here is a beautiful lesson with an important moral. For if this king so long ago cared thus for a helpless animal, much more does our Father in heaven, much more does our Saviour Christ, care for His ambassadors. His eye sees the sparrow when it falls, His ear hears the ravens when they cry, and shall we, His favoured children, deal less tenderly with these His servants, when compelled by age and infirmity to give up the work they so much loved, and retire into private life.

Let us not be misunderstood. There is no intention of unkindness or neglect towards these fathers in Israel. These are days of wondrous activity, the world keeps the Church so busy that she has not time to "seek out the cause she knows not," and the sufferers shrink back sensitively from making their wants known. Were there some bell of justice, which might be touched when occasion required, we are well assured that one stroke would suffice to bring the citizens of Zion together, and that the decisions of her wise men would for ever place God's fainting servants above the evils of want, or of painful dependence. Therefore it is with much pleasure that we have watched the efforts to establish a Pastor's Retiring Fund, now being made by Rev. Wm. Clarke.

THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS.

It is not difficult to make men see that all men have sinned, but somehow, most men expect to escape the penalty that certainly attaches to a violation of the Divine law.

Some without much thought about it, conceive that God is very merciful, and will not really punish anybody, forgetting that what would indicate kindness and be mercy in a private character, would betray weakness and injustice in a magistrate. God sustains the character of Moral Governor of the universe. In His private character as our Heavenly Father He loves us and sent His Son to die for us. In His public-rectoral character He must deal out evenhanded justice to all. He has to do with sin as a magistrate, and must claim satisfaction for the broken law.