

CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY.

BY DR. TALMAGE.

THE day will come when we will all be turned out-of-doors, without any exception—bare-foot, bare-head, no water in the canteen, no bread in the haversack, and we will go in that way into the future world. And I wonder if eternal hospitalities will open before us, and if we will be received into everlasting habitations? Francis Frescobald was a rich Italian, and he was very merciful and very hospitable. One day, an Englishman by the name of Thomas Cromwell appeared at his door asking for shelter and alms, which were cheerfully rendered. Frescobald afterward lost all his property, became very poor, and wandered up into England; and one day he saw a procession passing, and lo! it was the Lord Chancellor of England; and lo! the Lord Chancellor of England was Thomas Cromwell, the very man whom he had once befriended down in Italy. The Lord Chancellor, at the first glance of Frescobald, recognised him and dismounted from his carriage, threw his arms around him and embraced him, paid his debts, invited him to his house, and said; "Here are ten pieces of money to pay for the bread you gave me, and here are ten pieces of money to provide for the horse you loaned me, and here are four bags, in each of which are four hundred ducats. Take them and be well." So it will be at last with us. If we entertain Christ in the person of His disciples in this world, when we pass up into the next country, we will meet Christ in a regal procession, and He will throw His arms around about us, and He will pour all the wealth of heaven into our lap, and open before us everlasting hospitalities. And oh, how tame are the richest entertainments we can give on earth compared with the regal munificence which Christ will display before our souls in heaven. I was reading the account which Thomas Fuller gives of the entertainment provided by George Neville. Among other things, for that banquet they had three hundred quarters of wheat, one hundred and four tuns of wine, eighty oxen, three thousand capons, two hundred cranes, two hundred kids, four thousand pigeons, four thousand rabbits, two hundred and four bitterns, two hundred pheasants, five hundred partridges, four hundred plover, one hundred quail, one hundred curlews, fifteen hundred hot pasties, four thousand cold venison pasties, four thousand custards,—the Earl of Warwick acting as steward, and servitors one thousand. Oh, what a grand feast was that; but then compare it with the provision which God has made for us on high: that great banquet hour; the one hundred and forty and four thousand as guests: all the harps and trumpets of heaven as the orchestra; the vintage of the celestial hills poured into the tankards; all the fruits of the orchards of God piled on the golden platters; the angels of the Lord for cup-bearers, and the once folded starry banner of the blue sky slung out over the scene, while seated at the head of the table shall be the One who eighteen centuries ago declared: "I was a stranger and ye took me in." Our sins pardoned, may we all mingle in those hospitalities!

CHRISTIAN SUNSHINE.

ALMOST any one can endure a word of encouragement. There is nothing more depressing in a commercial or mechanical establishment, where a young man is trying to do his duty, than to meet with entire silence on the part of his employers, save when he has done something wrong or failed in a specific undertaking. And if men need encouragement in secular service, how much more do they need it in the service of God? Let Christian men tell all the joyous things they know, and recite the most exhilarant promises of the Gospel, and breathe out of their own life anything by way of encouragement into the hearts of those who may be depressed and despondent. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is the grandest practical encouragement any man can have. It is not a mere sentiment, or whim, or phantasy; it is something which a man may enter with his entire physical, mental, and moral nature.

The religion of Jesus Christ is illumination. There are a thousand things in life that are very dark to us. There are

many things in our own constitution that need explanation. We are coming across a hundred things in life that are beyond our capacity of solution. How grand to come back from all the mysteries and the unsuccessful soundings in life to God's word, and to the glorious Gospel, and find there an explanation for everything. The religion of Jesus Christ is never in all the Bible once represented as darkness. It is a lamp. It is a lantern. It is a daybreak. It is a noontide glory. It is an illumination.

More than that; our religion is warmth. It is not a light falling on icebergs. It is warmth, sympathy, kindness, congeniality. There may be men so egotistical or so self-poised that they can go through life without any expression of kindness or sympathy or help on the part of others; but we do not know such men. The vast majority of persons whom we have happened to meet are those who need the comfort, the all-heartedness, of religion. It is more than all this, for it is an anticipation. It pays down into a man's soul certain instalments of grace and satisfaction, but it goes on to say there will be other instalments—when days of trial and perplexity come, more instalments; when death itself shall appear before the soul, another instalment; the final instalment paid when the soul stands before the throne of God eternally emancipated. So that, however much religion may be to us now, it is a very small affair compared with what will be to us after a while, when we have clambered up higher associations, and have carried other burdens, and have gained other victories. Let us rejoice because of what it is now; but rejoice still more exhilarantly, because of what it will be in the future.

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand secret sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields
Or walk the golden streets."

—Christian at Work.

BILLY BRAY'S TATURS.

I WAS goin' to tell the story that I heard from dear Billy Bray. He was preachin' about temptations, and is what he said:—

"Friends, last week I was a-diggin' up my 'tatur. It was a poor yield, sure 'nough; there was hardly a sound one in the lot. An' while I was a-diggin' the devil come to me, and says, 'Billy, do you think your Father do love you?'

"I should reckon he do," I says.

"Well, I don't," says the tempter in a minute.

"If I'd thought about it I shouldn't ha' listened to 'em for his 'pinions ben't worth the leastest bit o' notice.

"I don't," says he, "and I tell 'ee what for; if your Father loved you, Billy Bray, he'd give you as pretty 'tatur; so much as ever you do want, and ever so many 'em, and every one of 'em as big as your fist. For it ben't trouble for your Father to do anything; and he could just as easy give you plenty as not. An' if he loved you he would."

"O' course I wasn't goin' to let him talk o' my Father that, so I turned round 'pon him. 'Pray, sir,' says I, 'may you happen to be, comin' to me a-talkin' like this? If I ben't mistaken, I know you, sir, and I know my Father too. And to think o' your comin' a-sayin' he don't love me! Why, I've got your written character home to my house. It do say, sir, that you be a liar from the beginnin'. An' I'm sorry to add, that I used to have a personal acquaintance with you some years since, and I served you faithful as ever. A poor wretch could; and all you gave me was nothing but a slap to my back, and a wretched home, and an' aching head, no 'tatur—and the fear o' hell-fire to finish up with. Here's my dear Father in heaven; I've been a poor servant of his, off and on, for thirty years. And he's given me a good heart, and a soul full o' joy, and a lovely suit o' white never wear out; and he says that he will make a king of me before he've done, and that he'll take me home to his palace to reign with him forever and ever. And now you come up a-talkin' like that!

"Bless 'e, my dear friends, he went off in a minute, like I he'd been shot—I do wish he had—and he never had manners to say good-morning."

DAN'L QUINN