

CLING TO THE ROCK!

A LONG train of cars, four, ten or fifteen, were, a few months since, passing over the Alleghany mountains, on their way eastward. They were crowded with passengers. As the men-horse snorted and rushed on, they began to feel that they had begun to descend, and needed no power, but the invisible power of gravitation, to send them down with terrific swiftness. Just as the passengers began to realise their situation, they came to a short curve cut out of the solid rock—a wall of rock lying on either side. Suddenly the steam whistled as if in agony, "Put on the brakes! put on the brakes!" Up pressed the brakes, but with no apparent slackening of the cars. Every window flew open, and every head that could be was thrust out to see what the danger was, and everyone rose up in his place, fearing sudden destruction. What was the trouble?

Just as the engine began to turn in the curve the engineer saw a little girl and her baby brother playing on the track. In a moment the cars would be on them; the shriek of the whistle startled the little girl, and every eye looking over could see them. Close to the rail, in the upright rock, was a little niche, out of which a piece of rock had been blasted. In an instant the baby was thrust into this niche, and as the cars came thundering by, the passengers, holding their breath, heard the clear voice of the little sister, on the other side of the cars, ring out, "Cling close to the rock, Johnnie! Cling close to the rock!" And the little creature snuggled in and put his head as close to the corner of the rock as possible, while the heavy cars whirled past him. And many were the moist eyes that gazed, and many a silent thanksgiving went up to heaven.

In a few hours the car stopped at a station, where an old man and his son got out of the cars. He had come so far to part with his child who was going to an eastern city to live, while the aged father was to turn back to his home. All the dangers that would harass the son seemed to crowd into the heart of the father, as he stood holding the hand of his boy—just now to part with him. He choked, and the tears filled his eyes, and all he could say was, "Cling close to the Rock, my son." He wrung the hand of his child, and the passengers saw him standing alone, doubtless praying that his inexperienced son might cling close to the Rock. Christ Jesus!—*American Messenger.*

PUTTING CHRIST BY.

LUTHER says, in his *Table Talk*, that Albert, the Archbishop of Mayence, had in his court a Protestant courtier, who, when he found himself out of favour with his master, made use of this base expression:—"I'll put Jesus Christ by awhile until I've made my fortune."

How many Christians put Jesus Christ by for awhile? Let us see what kind of professors of religion act out this principle, if they do not use the same words.

1. The young man who has made a profession of religion, and permits himself to be induced to visit the theatre, or the horse-race, puts Jesus aside for the time being.

2. The young lady who goes from the communion-table to the ball-room, puts Jesus by for the time being, and, of course, expects to make her fortune in that way.

3. The old professor, when he gets angry, loses his temper, and becomes cross and ill-natured, "puts Jesus by" for awhile.

4. The mother who is scolding like a settled rain, also for the time being "puts Jesus by."

5. The professor of religion who becomes worldly-minded and gives up his religion for gain, has "put Jesus by."

6. The young man who gives up his religion for the pleasures of the world, "puts Jesus by."

7. The man who backslides, and forsakes the prayer-meeting for the bar-room, has "put Jesus by."

This putting the Lord by is a bad business for Christians. Christ says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven, and all other things shall be added." "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." Paul says (Heb. iii. 12), "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

LOVE.

BY THE LATE THOMAS GUTHRIE, D.D.

LOVE is a power of universal influence. Many powers of nature are not always or everywhere in action. There are lands where rain, and others where snow never falls; rivers of water which no winter freezes, of ice which no summer melts. There is a metal which fire cannot burn; there is life which water cannot drown; and the lightning that flashes along a thousand miles of iron is stopped by a film of glass. Happily for the world the destructive powers of nature are not always active. Etna and Hecla exhaust their forces, and long ages may pass ere they recover them for a new eruption. It is at rare intervals that earthquakes shake our globe, or the skies flash with lightnings, or hurricanes sweep through the troubled air, and lashing the sea into mountain billows strew its shore with wrecks. Day leaves our world, and that light which paints its colours on every flower, and touches the clouds with gold, and wakes each morning the song of birds and hum of busy cities, departs with the setting sun. Winter ascends her throne, and waving an icy sceptre over fields and forests, stops all growth: once clothed in green, the trees are leafless; once enamelled with flowers, the meadows are bare. But the powers of winter in their turn cease; nature bursts her icy tomb! rising, she throws off her shroud of snow, while, their chains melted by the breath of spring, the springs, like happy children set loose from the constraint of school, rush off, laughing, dancing, singing on their way to their home and parent in the deep.

But while substances, and laces, and seasons limit the action of many material agencies, there is a power—that which England's greatest philosopher discovered—which neither substance, nor place, nor season limits. Universal in its action, it is everywhere, affecting everything. It determines the movements of the motes in a sunbeam, and of the planets in the firmament; it shapes the tear on your infant's cheek, and has given its rounded form to the sun; it makes the rain-drops fall to the earth, and prevents the stars dropping out of the sky. Most powerfully affecting every atom of matter on earth, and every planet and sun in heaven, amid all the agencies which science studies, art employs, and God has established, gravitation alone extends its empire from the centre to the circumference of creation. In a subordinate sense, indeed, we may say of it what is said of God, it reigneth over all.

Now, such place love holds in the kingdom of grace. In representing it as the ruling principle which should shape and influence all our conduct to God, in our families, to our friends, aye, and also to our foes, for, followers of Him who died for His enemies, we are to love ours—blessing them which curse us, and praying for them that despitefully use us—I do not exaggerate its importance. Love was the dominant power in St. Paul, and the principle of his whole obedience; "The love of Christ," he says, "constraineth us." And did not our Lord Himself assign it such an imperial place? Those ten commandments from which all duties branch, like the boughs of a tree from the parent stem, He brings into the compass of a word, a single, simple word; that word—Love. Thou shalt love thy God, and thou shalt love thy neighbour, are the whole duty of man. It is this that makes a religious, a happy life. With love, a dinner of herbs is better than a stalled ox; obedience is liberty with it; and without it slavery, call it by what name you may. And as it is earthly love, not its walls, however lofty, nor its furniture, however costly, nor its inmates, however great or beautiful, that makes a home below; so it is holy love that makes a heaven above, not its crowns, or palms, or harps, or robes; no, with reverence be it spoken, not God, or Christ, or saints, or angels, but love—their love. And as if by some strange power we could leave this nether world, and, winging our way upward, alight on a distant, starry sphere, we should find that we had not left that gravitation behind us, which binds all things and holds this world together; so saints shall find, on rising from the bed of death, and entering heaven, that they have but ascended into a region of purer and more perfect love.—*From "Speaking to the Heart."*

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."