

parts, and in the hidden parts thou shalt make Me to know wisdom." To realize this great contrast gives a reality to our spiritual life. Here we have the two solemn facts placed side by side: man's proneness to sin, and God's demand for purity. It is a crisis in a man's life when these two facts begin to live before him; when, like Isaiah, he catches a glimpse of the awful purity of God and cries: "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips." The desire for pardon finds voice in prayer—the old prayer, which is by no means out of date: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

According to our view of sin and our sense of personal responsibility will be our thought for forgiveness. If we do not realize our unworthiness and are still content to talk about being as good as others, how can we understand the blessings of forgiveness. There are those who would tell us that there is no such thing as sin; that it is simply a technical term of theology, a fiction of the preacher. This is not the place for elaborate argument even on that point. We find in this parable a true and deep philosophy of the spiritual life. Conscience is still a reality; it responds to the living gospel and rises in rebellion against a cold materialistic philosophy. Such philosophy would destroy at once the reality of sin and the need of pardon; the willingness of man and the gentleness of God; the earthly pilgrimage and the heavenly home.

This story is not mere history; it also is revelation. In the centuries that have passed away this penitent woman knelt at the feet of Jesus there have been in every generation those who have brought their load of guilt and shame to the cross and received new hope and joy. Seeking souls have heard again the authoritative words: "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Loving men still put new passion into the old confession "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." This experience cannot be despised. It may sometimes manifest itself in rude forms, but it is at the essence of faith. It gives a deeper meaning to one common end and is the real foundation of our worship. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ expresses this fundamental fact in connection with his own work in the startling phrase when he declared that the "publicans and harlots" were entering into God's kingdom while the self-righteous Pharisees stood outside, Godless men and taken women had their souls saved by the vision of a true and tender brother, who made them feel the power that divine mercy which, like the sun, shines on all; but the perfect man, who in his own conduct and died in bigotted self-satisfaction, remained unmoved. The kingdom of heaven was at hand; the prodigal was finding his way to the Father's house; there was joy in heaven, but the Pharisee was busy taking care of his respectability. He rejoiced that sinners were not in his set and was confident that he had kept the whole law. To such a man the teaching of Jesus was a great mystery; and many a time his holy language sounded to him strangely like blasphemy. Still he kept on appearing to men in the name of eternal love, promising pardon to the penitent and hope to one despairing.

The fruits of true forgiveness then and now are gratitude and peace; it brings a sense of new hope and joy which passes understanding and defies verbal expression. In the case of this poor woman it finds expression in gifts and tears, symbol of a great emotion. She knew that somehow the power of sin and shame was giving way before the presence of one who was perfectly pure and tenderly kind. Love to God begins in gratitude. He must first overwhelm us with mercy, crown our life with favors, and then we learn to say we loved Him because He first loved us. Then our hymn of praise

or imperfect prayers become real sacrifices of thanksgiving to our Redeemer. Then comes a real peace, for one of the deepest problems of life is solved in the reconciling of the soul to God. Unsympathetic criticism may harass us and the reality of our experience may be questioned; but Jesus stands ready to confirm our hope, saying in tender tones, "Thy faith hath saved thee; enter into peace." So we may sum up the situation in the beautiful words of one who knew well the feverish restlessness of a soul at war with itself:

"She sat and wept beneath His feet, The weight of sin Oppressed her heart; for all the blame And the poor malice of worldly shame To her was past extinct, and out of date Only sin remained—the leprous state She would be melted by the heart of love By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove And purge the silver ore adulterate. She sat and wept, and with untressed hair Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch; And he wiped off the soiling of despair From her sweet soul, because she loved so much."

#### CORRESPONDENCE RE FAMINE CHILDREN.

Rev. Dr. MacKay, F. M. S. Secretary, writes us to say:

A large number very generously contributed toward the support of famine children, which has greatly helped the work and is bound to be fruitful in many lives. The foreign mission committee did not say upon the missionaries the burden of correspondence with donors, which of course would be very pleasant, and helpful too, but would, it was thought, consume entirely too much time and energy.

Yet Mr. Taylor, who is in charge of the Boys' Orphanage, and Miss Campbell, who is in charge of the Girls' Orphanage, are both so eager to meet the wishes of the kind benefactors that they have done a good deal of correspondence, conceding to the disadvantage of the direct work. Now, after all their labor, Mr. Taylor writes that a number of letters came back to him through the dead letter office. This is disappointing to him, and means disappointment to others who may have been expecting. Should this paragraph meet the eye of any such they will understand, and not feel disposed to complain, but rather sympathize. Let it be enough for us here to know that many children are being saved and trained for usefulness without adding a burden to what is already too heavy to bear.

#### KNOX COLLEGE.

Knox College, Toronto, is aiming at the following:

1. To allow Professor MacLaren to retire from the chair of systematic theology, while continuing the special lectures on the Cross and Faith, and continuing to act as moderator of the faculty.

2. The appointment of Prof. McPatrick, of Winnipeg, to the chair of systematic theology in Knox.

3. The chair of New Testament literature, made vacant by the death of Principal Caven, to be filled by Rev. H. A. A. Kennedy, M.A., of Glasgow, Scotland.

If the foregoing proves acceptable to the General Assembly, as probably it will, it will mean the navigation of Knox College by the introduction of two very able new men.

Rev. W. T. Hall, of Salem, Dallington and Gillis Hill, in Bruce Presbytery, has accepted a call to Ninth Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, and his late charge will be declared vacant on the first Sabbath of June. Rev. R. Atkinson, Chelsey, is interim moderator of session during the vacancy.

#### GOOD NEWS FROM DENMARK.

While one might hesitate to speak of the new religious activities in Denmark as constituting a "revival," they are well worth noting, arising as they did from a work among the students of the university. Up to 1800 the spiritual consciousness of the people was at a very low ebb. Some of the city parishes had populations of as much as 70,000 each; with only one church, and that church was never filled. People were not, except the professed Rationalists, hostile to religion, but they were supremely indifferent to it. About fifteen years ago, in connection with the movement to interest young people in school in the duties of religion, there was a positive movement among the educated classes for something better, for a richer experience of personal communion with God. The movement gained headway, and within fifteen years twenty new churches have been built in Copenhagen alone to accommodate the greater number now desiring to attend services. Large parishes have been divided, new pastors sought and a missionary spirit awakened. It is said that there never were so many people at church during any Advent season as during that which has passed this last winter. Forty churches were crowded every evening of the week preceding Christmas, and spiritually the city is a new city compared with what it was a few years ago. The new life is making itself felt in all spheres of Christian worship and activity.

#### DANGERS OF SPECULATION.

It is said that "there is no short road to learning;" there may be on rare occasions short cuts to wealth, but those that take them run great risks; most who try that method of acquiring riches come to grief. Many a promising career has been wrecked because the honest highway is too long and too crowded. That is a painful chapter in high finance which tells of the downfall of a hitherto highly esteemed and trusted bank president in Milwaukee. The defalcation is one of great magnitude and it is feared that other funds with which he was intrusted have suffered at his hands. If he was not afflicted with the speculative mania, it is understood that his son had indulged largely in the perilous pastime of making money on the fluctuations of the market. It is sad to think that a man of great business capacity and a long life of integrity should wreck reputation, position and home toward the end of a successful and honorable career. We no longer countenance the medieval avarice of despising money; but in these days has not the pendulum swung to the other side? The possession of great wealth is held up before the eyes of men as the greatest good and the one great incentive to ambition. Is it not about time for a repetition of the question which little Paul Dombey addressed to his father, "What is money?" "A good name is better than great riches."

#### LIQUOR AND TOBACCO HABITS.

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References as to Dr. McTaggart's professional standing and personal integrity permitted.

Sir W. R. Meredith, Chief Justice.  
Hon. G. W. Ross, Ex-Premier of Ontario.  
Rev. John Potts, D.D., Victoria College.  
Rev. Father Teefy, President of St. Michael's College, Toronto.  
Right Rev. A. Wheatman, Bishop of Toronto.

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