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"Abide in me, and I in You."

THE SOUL'S ANSWER.

BY HARRIET BECHER STONE.

That mystic word of Thine, O Sovereign Lord!
Is all too pure, too high, too deep for me;
Wearily striving, and with longing faint,
I breathe it back again in prayer to Thee.

Abide in me, I pray, and I in Thee;
From this point hour, O leave me never more!
Thou shalt the discord cease, the wound be healed,
The life-long bleeding of the soul be o'er.

Abide in me, O overshadow by Thy love,
Each half-formed purpose and dark thought
Of sin;
Quench ere it rise each selfish low desire,
And keep my soul as Thine, calm and divine.

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay,
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own—
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.

The soul alone, like a neglected harp,
Grows out of tune, and needs that Hand Di-
vine;

Dwell Thou within it, tune and touch the chords,
Till every note and string shall answer Thine,
And give its own sweet music to the world.

Abide in me, there have been moments past,
When I have seen Thy face, and felt Thy
power;

Ow'd I the Divine enchantment of the hour,
These were but seasons beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be;
I pray Thee now fulfil my earnest prayer;
Come and abide in me, and I in Thee.

The Christian Church in the Fifth Century.

BY CHARLES KINGSLEY, JR.

For somewhat more than four hundred years, the Roman Empire and the Christian Church, born into the world almost at the same moment, had been developing themselves side by side as two great rival powers, in deadly struggle for the possession of the human race. The power of the Empire had been not merely an overwhelming physical force, and a ruthless lust of aggressive conquest, but even more powerful still, an unequalled genius for organization, and an uniform system of external law and order. This was generally a real boon to conquered nations, and had produced the most regular spoliation for the fortunes and arbitrary miseries of savage warfare; but it arrayed, meanwhile, on the side of the empire the wealthier citizens of every province, by allowing them their share in the plunder of the labouring masses below them. These, in the country districts, were an ignorant, while, in the cities, their nominal freedom was of little use to masses kept from starvation by the aims of the government, and dragged into brutish goul humour by a vast system of public spectacles, in which the reams of nature and of art were ransacked to glut the wonder, lust, and ferocity of a degraded populace.

Against this vast organization the church had been fighting for now four hundred years, armed only with its own mighty and all-embracing message, and with the manifestation of a spirit of purity and virtue, of love and self-sacrifice, which had proved itself mightier to melt and weld together the hearts of men than all the force and terror, all the mechanical organization, all the sensual baits, with which the empire had been contending against that Gospel in which it had recognized, instinctively and at first sight, its interest, and its power to conquer. The work things of this world had confounded the strong. In spite of the devilish cruelties of persecutors; in spite of the contaminating atmosphere of sin which surrounded her, in spite of having to form herself, not out of a race of pure and separate creatures, but of a most literal "new birth" out of those very fallen masses who insulted and persecuted her; in spite of having to endure within herself continual outbreaks of the evil passions in which her members had once indulged without check; in spite of a thousand counterweights which sprung up around her and within her, claiming to be her, and alluring men to themselves by very exclusiveness and party arrogance which deprived their claim; in spite of all she had conquered. The very emperors had arrayed themselves on her side. Julian's last attempt to restore paganism by imperial influence failed to restore to the hearts of the masses; and at his death the great tide-wave of new opinion rolled on unchecked, and the rulers of earth were fain to swim with the stream; to accept, in words, at least, the church's laws as theirs; to acknowledge a King of kings to whom even they owed homage and obedience; and to call their own slaves their "poorer brethren," and often, too, their "spiritual superiors."

But if the emperors had become Christian, the Empire had not. Here and there an abuse was heaped off, or an edict was passed for the visitation of prisons; and for the welfare of prisoners; or a Theodosius was recalled to justice and humanity for a while by the stern rebukes of an Ambrose. But the Empire was still the same; still a great tyranny, enslaving the masses, crushing national life, fattening itself and its officials on a system of world-wide robbery and plunder; and, therefore, there could be no hope for the human race. Nay, there were even those among the Christians who saw, like Dante afterwards, in the "fatal gift of Constantine," and the trace between the Church and the Empire, fresh and more deadly danger. Was not the Empire trying to steal away the hearts of the people, and shadow with which it had withered up every other form of human existence; to make her, too, its stipendiary slave-official, to be pampered when obedient, and scourged whenever she dare assert a free will of her own, a law beyond that of her tyrants; to throw on her, by a redoubtable robbery, the King and support of the masses on whose livelihood it was feeding? So thought many then, and, as a fancy, not unwisely.

But if the social condition of the civilized world was anomalous at the beginning of the fifth century, its spiritual state was still more so. The universal fusion of races, languages and customs, which had gone on for four centuries under the Roman rule, had pro-

duced a corresponding fusion of creed, an universal fermentation of human thought and faith. All honest belief in the old local superstitions of paganism had been long dying out before the more palpable and material idolatry of Emperor-worship; and the gods of the nations, unable to deliver those who had trusted in them, became, one by one, the vassals of the "Divus Caesar," neglected by the philosophic rich, and only worshipped by the lower classes, where the old rites still lingered to their gross appetites, or subserved the wealth and importance of some particular locality.

In the meanwhile, the minds of men, cut adrift from their ancient moorings, wandered wildly over pathless seas of speculative doubt, and especially in the more metaphysical and contemplative East, attempted to solve for themselves the questions of man's relation to the unseen by those thousand schemes, heresies, and theologies (it is a disgrace to the word philosophy to call them by it) on the records of which the student now gazes bewildered, unable alike to count or to explain their fantasies.

Yet even these, like every outburst of free human thought, had their use and their fruit. They brought before the minds of churchmen a thousand new questions which must be solved, unless the church was to relinquish forever her claims as the great teacher and satisfier of the human soul. To study these bubbles, as they formed and burst on every wave of human life; to feel, too often by sad experience, as Augustine knew, the charm of their allurements; to eliminate the truths at which they aimed from the falsehood which they offered as its substitute; to exhibit the Catholic Church as possessing, in the great facts which she proclaimed, full satisfaction, even for the most subtle metaphysical cravings of a diseased age;—that was the work of the time; and men were sent to do it, and aided in their labor by the very causes which had produced the intellectual revolution. The general intermixture of ideas, creeds, and races, even the mere physical facilities for intercourse between different parts of the Empire, helped to give the great Christian fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries a breadth of observation, a depth of thought, a large-hearted and large-minded patience and tolerance, such as, we may say boldly, the church has since beheld but rarely, and the world never; at least, if we are to judge those great men by what they had, and not by what they had not, and to believe, as we are bound, that these men were not, and not then, they would have towered as far above the heads of this generation as they did above the heads of their own. And thus an age, which, to the shallow insight of a sneerer like Gibbon, seems only a rotting and aimless chaos of sensuality and anarchy, fanaticism and hypocrisy, produced an Ambrose and a Jerome, a Chrysostom and an Augustine; absorbed into the sphere of Christianity all which was most valuable in the philosophies of Greece and Egypt, and in the social organization of Rome, as an heirloom for nations yet unborn; and laid in foreign lands, by unconscionable agents, the foundations of all European thought and ethics.—*Preface to Hypatia.*

A Love Feast in the Catacombs.

In those early ages, the followers of our Lord held at times a common feast where they sat at the feet of their master, and intended to show the chain of brotherhood which bound them in one body. It was called the Agape, or love-feast. The spirit which originated it was beautiful, and in accordance with every precept of our faith showing that the rich and the poor are to love one another as themselves, and that the one is to be as the other. It generally preceded or followed the administration of the Eucharist; and it is supposed to have been this connection which led to the abuses St. Paul condemned when he wrote: "When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat your supper, for each one eateth of his own; and one is hungry and another is drunken. What have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?" St. Jude, too, mentions it in the passage: "These are spots in your suppers, when ye eat and drink without regard to the poor." Tertullian, in the second century, in a single passage describes its object and the manner of its administration: "Our supper, which you accuse of luxury, shows its object in its very name. For it is called Agape, which signifies Love, and is the translation of the Greek word for love, which is the same as it is an expense upon the account of piety. For it is to relieve and refresh the poor. There is nothing vile or immodest committed in it. For we do not sit down before we have first offered up prayer to God. We eat only to satisfy hunger, and drink only so much as becomes modest persons. We regulate ourselves in such a manner, as that we remember still that we are to worship God by night. We discourse as in the presence of God, knowing that he hears us. Then, after water to wash our hands, and lights brought in, every one moved to sing some hymn to God, either out of Scripture, or as he is able, of his own composing. Prayer again concludes our feast."

As, however, the Church grew and extended, and the days of persecution passing away, crowds half-Christianized entered its fold from the heathen world, this simple feast degenerated into an occasion of revelry, which brought scandal on the faith. Therefore it was that St. Augustine uttered his indignant charge against some in the African Church—"The martyrs bear your bottles full of wine, and your drunken revels." In the fifth century, therefore, this rite was entirely abolished, as a custom unsuited to the altered condition of the Church.

In a retired crypt of the catacombs of St. Marcellinus, a rudely designed picture representing this ancient rite, and more interesting to us, therefore, as a relic of Christian antiquity, than the triumphal arches and trophies which remain of the faded grandeur of Imperial Rome.

In the foreground, at the end of the table, are seated two matrons, who preside, presiding Peace and Love, with their names written above and heads in the Etruscan fashion. At the table itself three guests are seated, while a page supplies them with food from a small round table in front, containing a lamb and a cup. The inscriptions are abbreviated, but should be read thus:

"Tene, da colidam aquam." (Peace, give her actively almost good; the desperate of his age, and that too for a short period, is that he can give to religion. Piety in youth, however, enters the field by the morning; and this makes a vast difference on the score of prospective usefulness. The later Christian loses what the earlier one gains; he loses immensely in respect to time, and those services as well as acquisitions, which are obtained with time. Suppose two Christians to be at the age of sixty, and converted at the age of fifty-five, and the other at that of twelve; what a vast difference there will be in the productive value of their religious characters! Those who have distinguished themselves for Christian piety, have done so in the early part of their lives, and their youthful mark upon the world, who have yielded a strong religious influence among men, have with but few rare exceptions, embraced the gospel in the early period of life. This is undoubtedly the rule. Hence the future of the church are to a great extent dependent upon the piety of the young. The conversions come to an end; and very soon her aggressive power would be amazingly reduced; her ministry would die out, and all her appliances and means of grace sink into rapid decay. Indeed, the great change passed over you. It was a surprising, a wonderful change. You knew it, you could not doubt the fact. Though no angel had announced it—no voice whispered it—no vision revealed it—no miracle declared it, yet you knew that your sins were forgiven. For you felt in your soul the favor of God. Everything without told of a change within. All nature seemed lovely and joyful; the heavens looked down upon you with new glory. All attraction and moral beauty seemed to centre in Christ. A peace such as language cannot express flowed in upon your soul. A joy such as angels feel pervaded your heart. And you hastened with burning emotions to tell what Christ had done for your soul.

How gently and sweetly did God come to you in that first visit of his forgiving mercy. And thus he always comes to his people. We must not seek him nor expect him in the noise and bustle of the world; nor in the tumult and excitement of a crowd; nor along the pathway of marches and campaigns, displays of power and glory. But rather must we look for and seek God in the holy quiet of the closet; in the silent and unobscured action of the truth on the inner man; in the way of ordinary and established means; in the calm thoughts of the mind; in upward directed prayer; and in every unobscured channel of the blessed Spirit.—*M. Y. Evangelist.*

Early Piety.

Besides the general reasons for a religious life, of equal significance in youth and age, and addressed alike to all persons, reasons growing out of the wants of the soul, and the nature of our relations to God—there is a special argument for piety in the season of youth. It is one, moreover, of great weight and solemnity, an argument that ought deeply to affect the minds of parents and their children.

The Saddest of all Ruins.

It is sad to see anything in ruins. When we stand in the once splendid cities, the palaces of ancient Egypt, or Greece, or Rome, and behold them all in ruins, immense masses of rubbish, deserted by man and tenanted by filthy reptiles, we sigh over the wreck of human greatness and splendour; yet we know that that same industry can remove those masses of ruins, and erect in their places gorgeous temples and palaces. When we look upon the devouring element consuming whole blocks of buildings, involving them in ruin, and reducing many to a heap of stones, we are glad to know that their other buildings can be reared in their place, and by active industry the property lost can be restored. When we see a young man—any man—indulging in excess in intoxicating drink, or other sensual vices, ruining his health, his reputation, his property, and involving his family and friends besides breaking their hearts, our bosoms swell with sadness; but though degraded and disgraced, yet there is, after all, a lingering hope that he may be recovered. When we look upon that wonderful workmanship, the human mind, and see it, when upon which we look upon what was once the fair young brow, the glowing cheek, the flashing eye, and the graceful, elastic form, and perceive a moral paleness spread over them all; when we see it fast dissolving in ruins; when we know that as we convey it away from the wreck, and see it, when upon which we look upon what was once the fair young brow, the glowing cheek, the flashing eye, and the graceful, elastic form, and perceive a moral paleness spread over them all; when we see it fast dissolving in ruins; when we know that as we convey it away from the wreck, and see it, when upon which we look upon what was once the fair young brow, the glowing cheek, the flashing eye, and the graceful, elastic form, and perceive a moral paleness spread over them all; when we see it fast dissolving in ruins; when we know that as we convey it away from the wreck, and see it, when upon which we look upon what was once the fair young brow, the glowing cheek, the flashing eye, and the graceful, elastic form, and perceive a moral paleness spread over them all; 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