

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE FAR-OFF LAND.

BY T. K. HENDERSON, TORONTO.

Thine eye shall see the King in His beauty.—Psa. xxxiii. 27.

Lord I shall I see Thee, not with those dim eyes,
That scarce can gaze upon Thy shadow here,
When, climbing up into the noon-day skies,
I veil my feeble vision from its glare!
Shall I behold Thee in Thy beauty, where
The lid yet trembles in the lustrous light
That circles round Thy dwelling place so fair—
Wrapped in the radiance of that deep delight,
O'er which no cloud shall come, nor shade of darksome
night!

When, overshadowed by the mercy seat,
We catch some sweet though passing glimpses now,
That struggle down into the soul's retreat—
The presages of heaven here below—
Then the glad spirit feels a warmer glow,
Rays from eternity stream out to cheer
It on its journey, welcome as the flow
Of many waters on the thirsty ear,
That o'er the desert faint the traveller leads to hear.

Flooding the narrow cell o'er which we pace,
With beams of light and loveliness divine,
The halo rests upon us, and we trace
The sacred language of a sunnier clime,
Writing upon its walls in words sublime
Some tidings of the glory yet to be
Revealed to those who shall, throughout all time,
With girded loins and on their bended knee,
—Wait for the prison doors to open and set them free.

Oh in those blessed moments visions come
Crowding upon the soul in bright array,
More glorious as we travel nearer home—
Nearer to the unutterable day!
Airs from the world of spirits seem to play
Around us, and we hear the heavenly tone,
As if an angel finger struck the key,
And felt the breath of the Eternal One,
Perfuming heaven and earth, the footstool and the throne!

Would they were deeper, more abiding still,
But this cold world is harsh and dims the sight,
Lest we should taste the joy it cannot feel,
And bask for ever in the blessed light
To which the soul will turn in this dark night!
But when the veil is lifted we shall stand
With eyes undimmed and hearts attuned aright,
Upon the mountains by the Lord's right hand—
So far, so very far beyond this cloudy land!

Those who have washed their robes and made them white
In the pure stream that flows from Calvary's hill,
And, girded with their snowy garments, white,
Stand forth to do their lawful Captain's will—
A band of faithful men who fear no ill—
Their feet shall stand upon the sunny shore,
Their eyes shall see the Lord they loved so well
Crowned with the glory that He had before
He trod this weary world all sceptreless and poor.

THE IMPRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

If a visitor at St. Paul's Cathedral will cast his eye over the northern doorway, he will see a slab of marble on which is inscribed the names of its architect, Sir Christopher Wren, with the date of his birth and death. The words which follow are of great simplicity. They are as follows: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice," which, rendered into English, mean, "If you seek his monument, look around you. Observe, the inscription says not one word about his genius, or even the grandeur of the work which he executed, but simply tells you, if you wish to form an estimate of his powers as an architect, to look around you, and contemplate his work. A similar course I ask you to pursue with respect to the affirmation of the Jewish Carpenter, that He was the "Light of the world." Do you ask me, Is it true? I reply, Look around you and behold! As a matter of fact, He is the moral and spiritual Illuminator at this present moment of all the progressive nations on earth; and all who are not walking in His light are fallen in to a state of stagnation and decay. Do you ask with respect to His second affirmation, that He is the "Light of life." Do the rays of this spiritual Sun generate vitality and life in the spiritual and moral worlds? I say again, Look around you and behold! From whom, I ask, have sprung all the efforts which are made for the amelioration of mankind? Where were they before this Light of life shone on the moral and spiritual worlds? Scarcely anywhere. What have they now become? A mighty host. All this, I say, is capable of an easy verification by all those who have eyes to see or ears to hear.

The assertion we are considering was a bold one, because it removes the pretensions of Jesus Christ out of the regions of the abstract and the theoretical, and brings them to the test of fact. If we can discover in the facts of the present no clear or unmistakable signs of an illumination and vital power issuing from His person, work and teaching, then the utterer of the affirmation has borne false witness of Himself, and stands convicted of being an impostor. But if, on the other hand, He is, at the present moment, the source of the moral and spiritual illumination of all the progressive races of mankind, then He must have possessed a superhuman insight into the history of the future. Thus a saying which to all His contemporaries, except an inconsiderable number of disciples, must have seemed the height of fanatical presumption, and which must have taxed to the utmost the faith of His friends, is now the strongest evidence that His mission is from God, and that He Himself is a manifestation of the Divine in the sphere of the human.

The contempt with which such an affirmation would be received by ordinary men in our Lord's day, when class prejudices were vastly stronger than they are at present, would be better estimated if we suppose some rustic, whose sole education had been in a village school, were to make his appearance in one of our first-class London congregations, and to proclaim aloud, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Imagine what would be the comments of the men of science, the lawyers, the medical men, the merchants, the ordinary congregation, and even of the theologians, supposing such to be present. What, then, must have been the feeling excited when class prejudices were rampant? Let us now take a brief survey of the modern world, and observe the position which the Carpenter of Nazareth occupies therein.

If you travel through Europe and those parts of America into which European influences have penetrated, you will not travel far without seeing a temple, and not unfrequently a most costly edifice, erected to His honour; and you will find Him acknowledged as the supreme Head of a great spiritual society, of which He is both the founder and the King. On conversing with the men you usually meet in the course of your travels, you will find the names of the great men of antiquity scarcely known, at any rate little cared for, and the influence which they exert scarcely appreciated; whereas the name of the Galilean Carpenter will be familiar to everybody, and His precepts, though imperfectly acted on by His nominal subjects, yet universally acknowledged to approve themselves to the conscience, and to have a binding force. Rome has produced a number of great politicians and great conquerors, among whom the first three emperors occupy a conspicuous place; yet the names of the second and third of these are chiefly preserved in the memory of ordinary men by the fact that Jesus was born in the reign of the one, and crucified in that of the other; and the still greater name of the mighty founder of the empire is known only to a few of these millions who have heard of the name of Jesus. The name of what Roman do you find best known at the present day? The name of that inconsiderable man Pontius Pilate, for he was in reality a very inconsiderable personage. Why is he known, while the names of his far greater countrymen are forgotten? Simply because he presided at the trial and condemned to death the Jewish Carpenter, for whose royal claims he entertained the most profound contempt. None would have been more incredulous than he if he had been told that the words, "He was crucified under Pontius Pilate," would have preserved his name in everlasting remembrance, while those of the reigning sovereigns, the lords of the then civilized world, who were deified after their death, and not unfrequently received divine honours during their lives, had become almost forgotten. Yet such is the fact. There is no greater name known among the civilized races of mankind than the name of Jesus. Emperors and kings profess to be His subjects. The cross of infamy, the scandal of the ancient world, holds the highest place of honour in the noblest monuments of the modern world, for no other reason than because He died upon it, and even a large majority of those who deny that He is the incarnate Son of God assign to Him the highest place among great men. Yet this is He of whom His countrymen once

said in scorn, "Is not this the carpenter?" Yes, He was the Carpenter, but at the same time greater than all their prophets, greater than all their kings, greater than all their conquerors, greater far than the monarch of the civilized world under whose yoke they were forced to bow.—*Rev. C. A. Row, M.A.*

ONE'S BEST IS ENOUGH.

Sometimes the lesson is hard to be learned that all which God asks of any one is to do one's very best. We look back upon a given experience, whether it has been happy or sorrowful, and although we are conscious of having made our utmost endeavours, we seem to see how what we felt obliged to leave undone might have been done, or how what we did do might have been done more skilfully and usefully. There is no pain keener than that which conscientious persons often feel, because of the revelations which the present thus occasionally makes concerning the past, and the bitterest element of it is the fact that these better things really might have been accomplished.

But there is no need of remorse or even regret. Whether it actually were possible or not to act and succeed, as it now appears to have been makes no difference. If we did all which the light which we then possessed revealed to us, as involved in our duty, and if what we did was done honestly in the best way open to us, then we did all which we could have done, and may rest in peace. God's best and our best usually are two quite different things, and it is only the latter for doing which He holds us responsible. To allow ourselves to become morbid and miserable for not having attained an impossible ideal of conduct is a sin.

Nevertheless, two facts must be accepted unquestioningly. We may not be happy or even content, unless we truly have done our very best. Nothing other or less than this, as a sensitive and enlightened conscience decides, can be accepted as a substitute. Nobody must delude himself into playing the hypocrite. Furthermore, our best must grow better continually. We must welcome and use the new light, the fresh knowledge, which comes to us, raising our standard steadily, and using every success, whether complete or partial, as a stepping-stone to something better.—*Congregationalist.*

A BAD TEMPER CURED.

"I should like to tell you my case," said a tall, fine-looking gentleman with a bright, beaming countenance. I had been speaking at a meeting in a large provincial town on the mighty power of the divine grace as all sufficient to save and deliver from the habit of besetting sins. At the close of the meeting this gentleman accosted me as above, and added, "I keep a school, and for years my temper was sadly tried by my boys. Being, as I trust I am, a converted man, and a professed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, I felt that by giving way to my temper I was dishonouring my Lord and Master. This was a sad grief to me. It was a bad example for my boys, and I knew it must mar my influence with them.

"I struggled against it. I made it a subject of earnest prayer. Night after night I confessed my sin, and sought strength to overcome it, but all in vain. I then wrote down and kept on my desk a memorandum of my transgressions, hoping that the constant sight of this reminder of my sins might serve as a check and cure—but still in vain. The outburst of temper broke over all such barriers. Again and again I confessed and wept over my sad and sinful habit. I was injuring my own soul, and dishonouring my Lord in the presence of the whole school. This state of things went on for weeks and months. I knew not what to do. All my efforts were fruitless; all my good resolutions were broken. I was at length so driven to utter self-despair as regarded this matter, that one night I fell upon my knees, and cried unto the Lord, and said, 'It is no use, Lord; I give it up; undertake for me.'

"It is now five years ago this happened. The Lord did undertake for me, he did for me what I could not do for myself. Since that time I have never once been out of temper with my boys, nor have I once felt the inclination to be so. I thought you would like to have your words confirmed by this account of my experience." Such was, in substance, the language of the speaker.—*The Helmet.*