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POETRY.

SUMMER DAY IN A WOOD.

—And Jonathan, Sam's son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.—I Sam. xiii. 16.

How beautiful is Nature unadorned
By art, and moving at her own sweet will
Within this silent wood, as though she
scorned
Man's vaunted help and skill.
What needs she here to make her charm
complete.
Where all is exquisitely pure and grand?
God's summer wood is this; and all we
meet
His wisdom planned.

The mighty trees are waving overhead
In their rich garb of foliage bright,
While wafts of quiet harmony are spread,
By breezes light.
And choiring nightingales and cooing doves
Join in the concert with their melting
songs.
Echoing through Nature's own self-plant-
ed groves
From adjacent tongues.
See, on this mossy bank wild strawberries
grow,
And ripe and red invite you to partake;
And here, white lilies of the valley blow,
And yearly wake.
A startled pheasant springs from off her
nest,
In a low alder stub, and shrieks with
fright;
See the young brood, warmed by their
mother's breast.
A beauteous sight!

Streaming along the vale, a crystal brook
Runs with quiescent music clear and
calm
Into a small cascade by yonder nook.
A living psalm.
The wild clematis, twining with the rose,
And white convolvulus form Nature's
bowers.

God walks in summer woods. His voice I
hear.
And trace his footsteps through the
tangled way,
The great infinitude of love is here.
I own his sway.
And kneel beneath this glorious rural
dome—
The temple God with His own hands
has made:
I grasp my Father's hand, and safely roam
Through light or shade.
BENJAMIN GOUGH,
Woburn Sands, Beds.

SOUL-SAVING AND ITS REWARD.

BY THE REV. S. V. LERCH, OF THE BALTIMORE CONFERENCE.

Preached at the Fraternal Camp-meeting, at Round Lake, Friday morning, July 2, and reported in the New York Methodist.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."—Daniel xii. 3.

A youth in whose veins ran royal blood was carried a captive to Babylon. Amid the splendours of this pagan court he was educated in Chaldean learning. Divinely inspired he portrayed the doom of monarchs and kingdoms as foreshadowed in visions and inscriptions. Surrounded by corruptions he maintained his purity. In honouring God he courted, in a den of lions, a martyr's crown. As he neared the close of life as a worker for God he wrote the text. As he wrote it God opened on his vision the reward awaiting those who sow or reap in the moral fields of this world. By this imagery he endeavours to outline the glory awaiting those whose lives are dedicated to the salvation of souls. He first intimates that those engaged in soul-saving are prosecuting a work of eminent wisdom. These toilers he classifies as "they that be wise." The cultivated pagans regarded the wise as men of profound knowledge and great attainments in learning; men whose sound

tion swept a vast compass; men of deep and solid information in philosophy. Daniel held aloft a nobler species of wisdom. He echoed the sentiment, "He that winneth souls is wise"—wise because he pursues the most inspiring work that can claim the endowments of mankind; wise because he seeks to confer on men heaven's richest and most imperishable boon; wise in that he glorifies God in the highest form and by the most acceptable method; wise in reference to time and in relation to eternity.

The worth of the soul manifests the wisdom of the work of soul-saving. Unsaved, it is lost even now. Think of its endowments in ruin; understanding paralyzed, memory bruised, imagination correct, will perverted; conscience ossified, affection abnormal, its grand apartments all defaced. Think of its capacities for enjoyment or suffering, the price paid for its redemption, and of the immortality with which it may for ever march on in bliss. Think of these, and then answer the question, Is the work of soul-saving wise in its nature? No wonder that the dying Lyman Beecher said, "Theology is great, controversy is great, but the greatest of all things is saving souls." No wonder that Alleine, Henry, Doddridge, Welch, and the Wesleyan John Smith agonized for souls.

In turning many to righteousness it is important that we understand the forces by which we can successfully save souls. We can save them by the power of a holy example. Jesus held up this powerful agency when He said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glory your Father which is in heaven." In this centre the aims of life must converge. Paul says, tersely, "Show thyself a pattern of good works." A holy man or woman is a perpetual sermon. Consistent Christian living is an illustrated Bible more beautiful than any whose gilded leaves have ever been bound in sumptuous velvet. Example is the loudest bell men ring to arouse perilled spirits. The conduct of professed Christians formulates the creeds of the masses. Holy living is the most effective method by which we are guiding souls to heaven or hell. Hence even in little things we are to "avoid the appearance of evil."

Another force in soul saving is the power of prayer for imperilled loved ones. In New York they once had a celebrated detective who never forgot a human face. Among the crowded streets he would arrest men whose photographs had reached him as fugitives from justice. But earth never saw such an arresting agency as prayer. Mothers and fathers have offered believing prayers for wild sons far from home, and quicker than a message passes along the wire, prayer has hurried them homeward. It has laid its hand on giddy daughters amid revival phenomena, and they have rushed with streaming eyes to the cross for peace and rest. It gave Jacob power over the angel. It enabled Elijah to make the heavens as brass for years, and at Carmel to bring fire from above to lick up the water in the trench. No wonder, as she had read the marvels wrought by prayer, that Mary Queen of Scots trembled when John Knox entered Scotland, and cried, "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than the swords of a thousand men." You remember Mr. Earle, the great Baptist evangelist. At one of his meetings a lawyer arose and said: "I don't believe in the power of prayer. Try it on me." Mr. Earle immediately asked the vast throng to unite at a certain hour in prayer for the salvation of that gifted attorney. Three evenings afterwards he was pleading for mercy, and to-day he is an eminent minister of Christ.

Has prayer for others efficacy? Two holy ladies promised to spend an hour daily in prayer for the conversion of their husbands. For ten years they were true to their covenant. One night one of the men was found by his wife seeking mercy. Hastening to tell her friend in the morning, she found her full of rejoicing. Both the husbands were awakened and converted the same night. Does prayer help the sick? Have you forgotten that scene in Melancthon's life, when this great reformer was evidently dying? Luther looked on his glazing eyeballs, and cried out, "We cannot save you, Philip!" Then

beside that couch the mighty monk wrestled with God and triumphed. Leaving the room, Luther hurried home, exclaiming as he went, "God has given me Melancthon in direct answer to prayer," and the learned theologian recovered.

Parents tending in these imperial groves, try the power of persevering prayer for your wayward children. Wives, plead importunately for your godless husbands. Teachers, test the efficacy of protracted and believing supplication for your scholars. Get what even savages have called "the gift of the knees." Surround your loved ones with mountains of prayer, and God will give you their souls saved by his Son's blood. A third potential force in soul-saving is earnest and repeated personal counsel. On the subject of personal salvation a word fitly spoken is like an "apple of gold in a picture of silver." Thirty-three years ago a dust-covered and drunken young man leaned against an elm-tree in the public square in Worcester. A poor but earnest shoemaker named Joel Stratton took his hand, and said, "John, you must go to our temperance meeting with me to-night." He consented, went, signed the pledge, and has since been king over all the oratorical prizes of the platform. A kind word gave Gough to the temperance work and to the Methodist Church.

When Malcom was a gay student at Brown University a tutor said to him, "Malcom, how long do you have to make an honest effort for your soul's salvation?" Those words, "an honest effort," pealed throughout the whole day on his spirit ear; and young Malcom, sanctified by the blood, became eminent as a revivalist of the Presbyterian Church. One sentence did the work. Arise and repeat advice. Destinies are poised on your council. Be not discouraged. Wait God's time and speak to souls. Moody and Sankey have found souls all over London ceased in moral adamant, but under faithful bombardment they have surrendered to Christ and run up the white signal of submission. Faithfully admonish with faith in God, and success will crown your efforts.

Another important question interlarded with this subject is, Where can we best work for the saving of souls? In the home circle. Home is the place of confidence. God has made it the introductory field of religious labor. To the old Hebrews He said, "Teach these words diligently to thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house." There it was that Lois and Eunice trained Timothy in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Men like Augustine, Chrysostom, Richmond, Edwards, Payson, Doddridge, Zinzendorf, and John Newton have ascribed their conversion to the holy counsels of pious mothers. Burns tells us in his poems how beautiful was the custom of the Scotch father, who gathered daily the home group and read to them God's word, sang with them the old hymns of Zion, and pleaded pointedly for the salvation of every child. "For, I beg you to maintain morning and evening family worship." John Howard never allowed the custom to be interrupted in his home. Mothers, talk to your children often about their salvation. Have no delicacy of feeling in this momentous duty. You hold the key to the soul of the sunny-faced little girl, who evening by evening nestles her locks and folds her hands in prayer at your knee. Father, you are stamping by home influences, for time and eternity, the coin of your son's character. Be true to your obligations and responsibility.

Another sphere for soul-saving is the Sunday-school. It presents the magnificent work of saving the children for Christ; multitudes of the young secure religious culture nowhere else. Childhood is the period of life when they can most easily be secured to God and the Church. The memory is then tenacious, the conscience keen, the understanding teachable, the will impressible.

Then I would urge you to greater activity and interest in the rescue of the souls of inebriates, and the suppression of the traffic by which multitudes are ruined. Oh for the advent of that day when the Church shall rise in her might for the de-thronement of Bacchus. Survey the pictures the rum fiend has hung up before the vision of the people; 200,000 liquor saloons that would form a street from New

York to Philadelphia; 600,000 inebriates, who, five abreast, would make a procession equally extended; 4 saloons to every school in the nation; 4 vendors to every minister of Christ; 1,200 funerals of drunkards every week; an amount of liquors annually distilled that would fill a canal 120 miles long by 14 feet wide and 4 deep, a vast army of fathers, sons, brothers and husbands filing into prisons, asylums and graves; a long procession of widows and orphans made such by the drink demon; starting statistics of crime and poverty looming up before the drowsy eyeballs of the people like the pillars of cloud and flame; an appalling panorama of squandered fortunes, crushed hopes, broken hearts, desolated homes; and the curse licensed and protected and defended by professed Christian men. Oh for the bugle blast that shall awaken the people to effort in saving the bodies, intellects, and souls of those around whom the serpent of strong drink has wrapped its deadly folds!

Another sphere for Christian exertion is the camp-meeting. From the heat and glare of city life yourselves and families have come to this magnificent encampment, where evil is outlawed and wrong is under severe restraint. Instead of seeking recreation on the sea beach, or your own woods, or Saratoga Springs, where dissipation and dissolute life prevail, you have gathered to enjoy quiet, comfortable and healthful recreation. Here genial Christian influences engirdle you, and no danger to morals is visible. Away from your professional toils and cares, mingling with old friends and forming new bonds of affection, stimulated to profound thought and holy resolve by pointed and pathetic preaching, inspired with new zeal by contact with an army of Christian workers converging here from a wide denominational circumference, with the stirring hymns of the Church ringing hourly in your ears, protractedly engaging in solemn worship calculated to impress deeply your religious future, I beg you to covenant with God to win souls by an ever divinely aided effort. Every visit I make to this forest village I learn to love it more. Here thousands have been enriched in experience, thousands more plucked as brands from the burning. Give these two weeks wholly to God. Gather some sheaves here for the heavenly garner. See to it that every effort is made for the present salvation of your children and friends going down to perdition. Plant stars in the diadem of Jesus that had not blazed in his crown but for your fidelity at Round Lake. Go back to your homes baptized with holy power. Agonize much in supplication with God. May the cloud of mercy this morning begin to roll its folds over this encampment. God grant that this meeting may long be memorable as the greatest spiritual Pentecost this far-famed camp-ground has ever known.

A holy Church wrestling with God may accomplish this glorious consummation. Daniel calls our attention to the celestial rewards destined to crown successful effort in the salvation of souls. But in this life a rich terrestrial reward is given to those who labor for souls. It comes in the sweet testimony of an approving conscience. Terrestrial reward also comes in the form of the profound gratitude of those we win to Christ. In South Africa lay a dying woman, the convert of a devoted missionary. He had apparently toiled fruitlessly until his heart had sickened. As the sweat of death beaded the temples of this convert she beckoned the disheartened missionary and whispered these words: "Missionary, I am going to the Saviour of whom you have told us. I shall see Him, and then come back to the gates and wait for you. I shall take you to Him and say, 'Here is the man that led me to you.'" Her lustreless eyes closed, and with words of gratitude on her lips she saw "the King in his beauty." Gratitude is a reward more precious than rubie. But how glorious the reward celestial! They shall shine like stars for ever. How magnificently the stars shine over old Babylon where Daniel lived! This pagan city was as much renowned for its learned astronomers as for its material splendour. Babylon is desolate, but the stars look down on its ruins now as beautifully as when Daniel looked on them centuries ago. Flooding the dark solitudes of space with light, roll numberless orbs, that before powerful glasses seem but gold

dust sprinkled on the dark back ground of night. So shall shine a numberless host of the redeemed. From every clime and land they shall go up. "A multitude no man can number," washed in the blood of the Lamb. I doubt if in the moral conflict of the centuries Satan is to carry from earth more trophies into hell than God's slain Son shall bear through the gates of pearl.

The stars shine too in their individuality of beauty. Each star that studs the firmament shines independently of associates, and all with a light not inherent, but borrowed from some central sun. Shining in their individuality it is said of God, "He calleth the stars by name." In heaven we are not to be strangers lost in the myriad host, unrecognised and unloved. Each shall wear an individual crown, each shall shine with a light borrowed from the Sun of Righteousness. We shall not lose our personal identity in the kingdom of God.

The stars shine in constellations. They move in companies, blaze in groups, sparkle in clusters. That magnificent constellation called the "Southern Cross" is made up of one hundred great worlds variously coloured. Before a powerful glass it looks like a cross of immense diamonds. Old Uranus always moves attended by his moons. Eight shine around Saturn, and four wait on Jupiter. They do not shine in isolation and lonely solitude; and up in heaven I think several families shall again commune about each other, and in perpetual reunion of association group themselves together.

Your broken home circles may be reformed there where is no death.

We are scattered now, yes scattered,
But we shall meet again.
Meet in a brighter, purer realm,
Beyond the reach of pain.
There, hand in hand, firm linked at last,
And heart to heart unfolded all,
We'll smile upon life's troubled past,
And wonder why we wept at all.

The stars shine in ceaseless activity. The telescopes find them in perpetual march with no weary orbs along the trackless void. He guides their movements "who slumbers not nor sleeps." So shall we shine hereafter. In heaven, John says, the redeemed "rest not day nor night." Thought and praise never become weary. Labour is recreation, work is rest, and toil is luxury. In an eternity of tireless activity we shall shine like the un-resting stars that for ever "declare the glory of God." But when the stars all grow dark we shall shine "for ever and ever." The hour will come when the fixed stars shall fall, the constellations go to their hopeless burial, the moons of Jupiter and Uranus desert them, the rings of Saturn drop from their long embrace, star on star be suddenly extinguished, and the last watch-fire of the sky expire in the gathering blackness; but God's workers—workers in the home circle, the Sunday-school and the reforms of the age; humble men, earnest women, and godly children—God's workers shall survive the death of sun, moon, and stars, and shine on for ever and ever. Charles Wesley well expresses this thought in his grand hymn:—

Rests secure the righteous man, &c.
Paul tells us that "one star differeth from another star in glory." How shall we shine up there? Shall we, by wholly consecrated lives, be as stars of the first magnitude, or are we willing to go into the deep depths of the celestial nebulae? With the graves multiplying around us; with voices all about us crying, "No man careth for my soul," with the heathen sending over the waters the Macedonian message, with eternity throwing its shadows along our paths, with splendid opportunities crowding about us, will we promise here and now to work for souls with vigour of will and relentless energy? "The night cometh when no man can work." May we so grandly fulfil life's mission that the Master shall say:—
Well done, good and faithful servant.
Receiving that encomium from the Judge, then we shall "shine as the stars for ever."

I will answer for it, the longer you read the Bible the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter, and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ.—Romaine.