

likened it to ascending an invisible staircase far up into the clouds. You cannot see a step before you, but you wind up towards the light. When you look downward all is dark, and before you lies nothing visible but cloud, while beneath you yawns a fathomless abyss. Yet we have climbed, some of us, now for years up this perpetually ascending stair, never seeing an inch before us. We have often paused, almost in horror, and asked in wonder, "What next, and what next?" Yet what we thought was cloud has proved to be solid rock; darkness has been light before us, and slippery places have been safe. Every now and then, when the darkness has been denser than usual, a darkness which might be felt, when all the past behind us has vanished, and nothing has been seen but the one step we stood on, we have said, "How did I come here? What a strange, mysterious life mine has been!" We have almost wished ourselves down on the level among the worldlings, who can always see their way and know what is underneath them; but faith has come to our help again; we have believed, and believing we have seen the invisible and grasped the eternal; and then we have gone on, have put our foot down again, and anon have run up with joy the shining way. What an ascent we have sometimes made on that ladder of light, so that we have accompanied with angels, and left the world far down beneath our feet! Now and then we have enjoyed a glimpse through the thick darkness of the jewelled walls of the eternal city, which needeth no candle, neither light of the sun; we have seen, I say, its brightness, and determined still to climb the mysterious way. Well, believer, at this moment, though thou canst not see thy way, yet since thou art walking by faith 'underneath are the everlasting arms.'"

THE HOME OF THE GLORIFIED.

Many have believed that the home of the glorified will be ethereal, but a place; intangible, but local; somewhere, but unknown; but there are those who do not believe that heaven is a place. Pulpit and press have denied its locality. They are not Annihilationists, but they believe that the future is but a mere state. According to their views, the righteous and the wicked will be placeless, and, therefore, homeless.

The Bible presents no such views. Even to the dead there is a home—a *hadean* home. Eccl. xii. 5. "Man goeth to his *long home*, and the mourners go about the streets." But beyond the resurrection man will be sure of a home—an abiding home. They will not be homeless wanderers in the universe. But what and where shall the home of the righteous be? On the EARTH. It was made for man. Gen. i. 25: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and *over all the earth*, and over every creeping thing upon the earth." The earth was man's portion given to him by God. If he had continued faithful, he never would have lost his portion. It is sin lost, and only sin lost. All the power of the enemy would have been utterly unable to have robbed him of his portion if he had remained holy. He could only be robbed through sin.

What was lost in Adam and through sin will be restored to Christ's redeemed ones. The whole inheritance, and all that was lost through sin, will be restored through Christ. The whole power of the enemy will be utterly unable to rob one of the holy of his right to the earth by creation and redemption. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. v. 5). "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 10). If the earth and on the earth does not mean what it says, what can it mean? I fear to say that God does not mean what He says. If Christ is ours, we will lose nothing through sin and Satan.

That the earth shall be the inheritance of the holy is clearly taught by such passages as Matt. v. 5; Ps. xxxvii. 9, 11; 24; 29, 34; xxv. 13, etc.; Isaiah lx. 21; Prov. ii. 27; Dan. vii. 18-27; Rom. iv. 13; Rev. v. 9-10.

To undo what sin and Satan have done, Christ came and suffered, and will come again. The complete work of redemption will not have been accomplished till all the effects of sin shall have been removed from man and from his home. The heavens and the earth are to wax old like a garment, and like a vesture they are to be changed. (Ps. cii. 26). Change is not annihilation or destruction. The change of a garment

is to fit it for use. This change of the earth will be necessary to fit it for the abode of the glorified man. When he shall be glorified, the earth will be perfectly fitted for him. There will be no more a curse on the earth. (Rev. xxii. 3).—*Christian Observer*.

DENIAL.

We look with scorn on Peter's thrice-told lie!
Boldly we say, "Good brother I you nor I,
So near the sacred Lord, the Christ indeed,
Had dared his name and marvelous grace deny."

O futile boast! O haughty lips, be dumb!
Unheralded by boisterous trump or drum,
How oft 'mid silent eyes, and midnight chimes,
Vainly to us our pleading Lord hath come,

Knocked at our hearts, striven to enter there;
But we, poor slaves of mortal sin and care,
Sunk in deep sloth, or bound by spiritual sleep,
Heard not the voice divine, the tender prayer!

Ah! well for us if some late spring-tide hour
Faith still may bring, with blended shine and shower;
If through warm tears a late remorse may shed,
Our wakened souls put forth *one* heavenly flower!

HOLDING FAST OF JESUS.

"Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her; for she is thy life."—Prov. iv. 13.

The first argument is, take fast hold of true religion, because it is your best friend. Read the text: "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go." You cannot find your way to heaven without this guide, therefore do not suffer it to leave you. Do as Moses did, who, when his father-in-law, Hobab, was with him, would not suffer him to depart, "for," he said, "thou shalt be to us instead of eyes, for thou knowest where to encamp in the wilderness." As Moses kept Hobab, so do you keep the faith, for you cannot find your road except by holding the true gospel with a true heart. What a sweet companion the gospel is! How often it has cheered you! How easy has the road become while you have been in intercourse with it! Do you what the disciples at Emmaus did when Jesus talked with them; they constrained him, saying, "Abide with us." Do not let him go; you will be a lonely pilgrim if you do. No, if you could be led by an angel, but must lose the presence of your God, you would be wise to cry out against such an evil, and like Moses plead: "If thy Spirit go not with us, carry us not up hence."

The next argument is that true godliness should be held fast, for it is your treasure. "Keep it," says our text. It is your best inheritance at the present moment, and it is to be your eternal inheritance; keep it then. Let everything else go, but do not part with a particle of truth. The slightest fragment of truth is more valuable than a diamond. Hold it, then, with all firmness. You are so much the richer by every truth you know; you will be so much the poorer by every truth you forget. Hold it, then, and hide it in your heart. A certain king who had a rare diamond sent it to a foreign court, entrusting it to a very faithful servant. This servant was attacked, however, on the road by a band of robbers, and, as they could not find the diamond, they drew their swords and killed him. He was found dead, but his master exclaimed, "He has not lost the diamond, I am sure!" He judged truly, for the trusty servant had swallowed the gem, and so preserved it with his life. We also should thus place the truth in our inward parts, and then we shall never be deprived of it. A priest took a Testament from an Irish boy. "But," cried the boy, "you cannot take away those six chapters of Matthew that I learned by heart." They may take away our books, but they cannot take away what we have fed upon and made our own. "His flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed," for when we have fed upon him our Lord Jesus remains in us the hope of glory. Hold fast the truth, O believers in Jesus, for it is your treasure.

Lastly, it is your "life." Mr. Arnot, in his very beautiful book upon the Proverbs, tells a story to illustrate this text. He says that in the Southern seas an American vessel was attacked by a wounded whale. The huge monster ran out for the length of a mile from the ship, and then turned round; and with the whole force of its acquired speed struck the ship and made it leak at every timber, so as to begin to go down. The sailors got out all their boats, filled them as quickly as they could with the necessaries of life, and began to pull away from the ship. Just then two strong men might be seen leaping into the water who

swam to the vessel, leaped on board, disappeared for a moment, and then came up, bringing something in their hands. Just as they sprang into the sea, down went the vessel, and they were carried round in the vortex, but they were observed to be, both of them, swimming, not as if struggling to get away, but as if looking for something, which at last they both seized and carried to the boats. What was this treasure? What article could be so valued as to lead them to risk their lives? It was the ship's compass, which had been left behind, without which they could not have found their way out of those lonely southern seas into the high road of commerce. That compass was life to them, and the gospel of the living God is the same to us. You and I must venture all for the gospel; this infallible word of God must be guarded to the death. Men may tell us what they please, and say what they will, but we will risk everything sooner than give up those eternal principles by which we have been saved. The Lord give all of us his abundant grace that we may take fast hold of divine instruction. Amen.—*Spurgeon*.

HOW TO BEAUTIFY GOD'S HOUSE.

But there is a way to be adding ever-increasing beauty and glory to the house of God. Oh that we may prize it more and more! Go out into the lanes and highways; find some outcast wretch—some stray fragment of the universal wreck of man, some trampled stone in the miry clay; sound aloud the Word of the Lord, that harp of blessed music by which the Spirit draws dead stones to Christ. By-and-by, under the power of God blessing the Word, that soul is awakened to a sense of ruin and want, and is led, in the strong captivity of the truth, to Christ. No sooner does he touch that rock, than the virtue of a new life comes unto him, and he lives. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart. The beautiful garniture of inward graces, more precious than the most fine gold, adorns him. He is united to Christ, and through him to God. Here is the honour of the Church, the preciousness of the Gospel, and the glory of the grace of God. How wonderful that communication of life, that resurrection from the dead, that ascension of the regenerate soul "to sit in heavenly places with Christ!" Look unto the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged! How is God glorified in such an addition to His Church? What joy is it to the angels that do His will? By such is the Church a building of God. Thus does it rise towards heaven. They are thy jewels, daughter of Zion; "thy walls, salvation; thy gates, praise."

MARCHING ORDERS.

It is familiarly related of the Duke of Wellington—the Iron Duke, as he is sometimes termed—that when a person asked of him one day for a position in the public service which it was believed to be in the power of the Duke to secure, he asked at once the profession or calling of the petitioner. "A minister of the gospel," was the reply. Quickly, and in a manner in which every movement spoke, the Duke took up a Bible that was lying on the desk before him, and turning to Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, slowly read: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

And then, looking upon the man, said with great solemnity and force: "There, sir, as a minister of Jesus Christ, you have your marching orders. Follow them."

WHEN we come into a printing-office and see the vast variety of different letters, so regulated and disposed as to make a book, we are at once convinced there is some compositor by whose art they were brought into such a frame.

VERILY, he has the highest condition on earth who best serves his fellow-men with what he is and has. Napoleon I. once in the street very meekly gave way to a heavily-laden sack-bearer, and in an earnest tone said to his surprised attendants, "Respect the burden!" Yes, if all had felt so we should now see a very different state of things in this world. Let Christians, then, strive to bring serving on earth to honor again; every one at his post, every one stirring up and using the gifts which God has given him for the common good.—*From the German*.