

Pastor and People.

O ABASSEH'S HOUSE.

"O blessed house, that cheerfully receiveth,
Thy visits, Jesus Christ, the soul's true Friend,
That far beyond all other guests, believeth
It must to Thee its warmest cheer extend;
Where every heart to Thee is fondly turning,
Where every eye for Thee with pleasure speaks,
Where all to know Thy will are truly yearning,
And everyone to do it promptly seeks.

"Oh blessed house, where man and wife united
In Thy true love, have both one heart and mind,
Where both to Thy salvation are invited,
And, in Thy doctrine, both contentment find,
Where both, to Thee in truth forever cleaving,
In joy, in grief, make Thee their only stay,
And fondly hope in Thee to be believing,
Both in the good and in the evil day.

"O blessed house, where little children, tender,
Are laid upon Thy heart, with hands of prayer,
Thou Friend of children, who wilt freely render
To them more than a mother's loving care;
Where round Thy feet they gather, to Thee clinging;
And hear Thy loving voice, most willingly;
And in their songs, Thy hearty praises ringing,
Rejoice in Thee, O Blessed Lord, in Thee.

"O blessed house, where faithful servants, knowing
That all their works are done within Thy sight,
In all their works with holy zeal are glowing,
To do alone what Thou esteemest right;
As Thy true servants, in whom Thou delightest,
In meekness willing, by Thy love constrained,
Which shows in all its works, the least, the brightest,
How in small things great faith may be maintained.

"O blessed house, the joys of which Thou sharest,
And never art forgot in scenes of joy;
O blessed house, for whose sad wounds Thou carest,
Where all the sick Thy healing power employ;
Until, at last, the day's work fully ended,
All, finally, in joyful rapture fly
To that blest House to which Thou hast ascended,
Unto the blessed Father's House on High."

—Translated from the German.

THE DANGER OF DELAYING TO FORWARD THE WORK OF THE LORD.

We read in the Book of Exodus that when Moses was commanded to raise up the tabernacle the people were invited to contribute materials.

As soon as this was known through the camp men and women came in crowds, bringing the Lord's offering. Gold, and silver and brass, linen and jewels and bracelets were consecrated to the God of the whole earth. Exodus xxxv. Yea, their hearts were so stirred up, and their spirits made so willing, that at last it was found necessary to cause it to be proclaimed, saying: "Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing." Exodus xxxvi.

These offerings, however, were not made by all whose circumstances would have enabled them to contribute. The contributors are denominated as many as were willing hearted, and all the wise-hearted; implying that there were some who wanted this willingness and wisdom of heart. Scenes something like the following would probably occur among the people:—

The appointed heralds sound the trumpets, the people run to learn the cause; amongst them a young woman listens to the proclamation, and hears with grief that the time for making offerings has expired. Her aged mother lifts up the corner of the curtain of the tent, and sees her daughter returning in tears: she enquires the cause. The young woman answers: "O, mother, you would not allow me to offer these ear-rings yesterday, and now it is too late!" "Comfort, my child," says the mother, "I have a broken bracelet here, which I will send this evening as from you." "Ah, mother, you know that my father Eliezer always said: 'Give unto the Lord the best.' I would give the ear-rings were they a thousand times better, but, alas, it is too late; nothing will now be accepted; they have more than enough for the work." "Is it even so? Then, my child, it is most plain that you ought to be well satisfied. You have your ear-rings, and yet the sanctuary is amply provided." "Alas, this is my grief, that I am shut out, or rather that I have shut out myself from the pleasure of glorifying God with my substance. Oh, that I had remembered sooner another saying of my father's: 'Hast thou a design of doing good, hasten to accomplish it.'"

In another part of the camp a man of the tribe of Manasseh is seen burdened with a load of brass. Meeting a friend, he lets down the load from his shoulders, and stops to talk as follows: "Why," says he, in great anger, "this is intolerable, to issue their orders to-day and to alter their orders to-morrow. As if to be shut out from the whole world in a wilderness were not grievance enough." "To what is it that you refer?" "Why, to the business about the offerings. They ordered us to bring the best of our possessions: and now, after I had brought a load from one end of the camp to the other, they told me they would not take it in." "Nabal, you are wrong," replied Caleb. "You were not ordered to bring an offering; you were only permitted if your heart inclined you." "To be ordered and to be permitted is much the same thing to me in the present state of my family." "Your family is your greatest honour, and ought to be your greatest comfort." "Why, I do not deny that they are comfortable

enough to me in many respects. But ever since the passage of—." "Hold, Nabal, I am afraid that you are going to speak unadvisedly. The fervid devotions and exalted trains of praise, expressed by your wife and her three daughters, after the passage of the Red Sea, were like the inspiration of the Almighty." "Well, as to that I say nothing. But this business of the offerings has been, from first to last, a trouble to me. You know that in Egypt I dealt in brass, and in the whole camp, I may be bold to say, there is not a better judge of brass than I am, and this piece of brass which I was carrying I affirm to be more precious than gold. As soon, then, as the business of the offerings came abroad, my wife and our daughters gave me no rest till I should promise to present it as an offering for the sanctuary. I gave them some evasive answer, and carried another piece of brass to the elders. But, fool as I was, I could not keep my own secret. I told them that the one would answer for the work as well as the other, and that I was still rich in my brass. My wife presently trembled and fainted away. When she came to herself she looked upon me and upbraided me; wept bitterly and said that she was most miserable. I urged her to explain her meaning—she was silent. I besought her—she was still silent. I conjured her in the name of the Lord. She then said: 'O, Nabal, my beloved Nabal, O that this brass of thine had gone down with the Egyptians to the depths of the sea; I have an awful foreboding that it shall prove thy ruin unless it is now offered to the Lord. I am afraid thy soul shall soon be required of thee, for thou hast lied to the Lord God of Israel.' I saw that she was greatly affected, and I promised to contribute this brass also. She and her daughters spent the whole night in prayers, and, from what I overheard, I am persuaded that their affection for me is very strong. In the morning I set out with the offering. I heard by the way that they would accept no further contribution. However, as I greatly wished to be done with it, I went forward and entreated them to accept my offering. They told me that there was one rule for the rich and for the poor, and that they had no power to depart from it." "O, Nabal, what can riches profit in the day of wrath? Thou art not judged worthy to have thy brass laid up in the presence of Jehovah; thou mayest still call it thine; but never shalt thou have another such opportunity of consecrating it. If thy soul is thus shut out from God, ah! what horrors of deep darkness follow."

At the place for receiving the offerings all is confusion. A multitude of all descriptions is collected. There a man is seen with a parcel of rams' skins dyed red. Here there is a woman with blue, purple and scarlet and fine linen. Her neighbour has in one hand a beautiful box of jewels, and in the other a pot of precious spices. And before them stands an old man with his two sons bearing a heavy load of shittim wood. Some are clamorous, some are weeping, one while they speak to each other explaining the hardships of their several conditions in losing the opportunity of offering. Again they address the elders with arguments and entreaties. The answer of the elders is always the same. "We have no power of dispensing with the proclamation."

"Well," says a man as he turns to go away with a bundle of badger skins on his back, "I take you all to witness that I was willing to have offered all these skins, and there are a dozen of them. But if they will not take them, what can I do but carry them home again?"

"Why, I am sure, Esau, thou couldst have brought them some days ago." "Yes, to be sure I could; but if I chose not to bring them till now, what is that to thee?" "Perhaps it is nothing to me," replies the elder, "but it seems to say that thou hast but little reason to complain; for hadst thou been at all anxious thou couldst have made thine offering sooner."

"Was ever anything so unfortunate?" cries a woman in the crowd; "it was always in my mind to bring this yarn, but I thought that there was no need to be in such a haste as some of my neighbours were; and now I shall be the only woman in our six tents whose offering has been rejected." "Daughter," says the old man with the shittim wood, tapping her on the shoulder, "Remember hereafter whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might. For my own part, I only wish that I had offered, all at once, all that I had to offer." "Nay," Father Uzzah, says one of the elders to him, "thou art too covetous of the pleasure of offering. How canst thou blame thyself? Thou hast brought several presents of that wood, and they are found to be of very great use in the work." "Oh," cries the old man, "He is the God of all my mercies; He has redeemed me from all evil; He has led me, and fed me these fourscore years; what can I render unto Him for all His benefits unto me? I wish that I had been here yesterday." "Father," says his elder son, "only remember how you were employed yesterday. To convert a sinner from the error of his way is as acceptable a service as to assist in raising the Holy Place. The Lord knoweth, for He searcheth all hearts, and He it was who taught us: He knoweth that it is in our hearts to offer ourselves, and all that we have to Him."

On the way home Uzzah addressed his sons as follows: "You will observe, my children, that the greater part of this crowd, which is now so noisy, is composed of careless ones, who have often troubled the camp. This is always their way. When an opportunity of doing or of receiving good is offered them, then they slight it, and neglect all counsel. But when the opportunity is withdrawn, then who so anxious as they to regain what is irrecoverable? So men acted in the days of Noah. So have I seen men slight the promise of the

woman's Son—of the Son of Abraham. In sickness they felt their want; their unsupported hearts failed them. I have tried to comfort them by the truth of the Deliverer who shall come, but their hearts were generally barred against it. They were anxiously looking for some comfort, yet the most comfortable light of the promise they could not see. Though I endeavoured to strengthen the light, yet to them all was darkness. Alas! it was too late! Remember, my sons, that whom God calls to any duty, He calls to it now. To delay is to refuse. I saw in the crowd to-day a friend of mine who is a very worthy man in other respects, but he is strangely unwilling to begin to do anything. I am almost glad that he lost the opportunity of making his offering, as I hope that the grief which I am sure he will feel will help to correct his tardiness."

If there is anything of nature and probability in the cases supposed above, the moral which they teach may be easily applied to existing circumstances.

The Lord is strengthening the cords of Zion. The wise and the willing-hearted are allowed to consecrate a part of their gain to the service of the God of the whole earth. Let us see that we do not linger long, as the slothful. Time is too short, and the advance of death too rapid, to allow a mortal creature to be dilatory. He who indulges a disposition to delay will likely leave unaccomplished some good purposes, which he might have overtaken if his zeal had been more fervent.

Perhaps there are not many serious men; who, on the death of some thoughtless connection, have not felt that they have irrecoverably lost opportunities of serving Him?

How many are there in the habit of hearing the Gospel who have only got the length of intending, at some future period, to begin to lay to heart its doctrines?

Alas! they know not, nor will they understand that this is the very rock on which thousands have split. An intention of believing, which is never followed by faith, cannot profit, at present, him who forms it; and hereafter he will find, to his confusion, that when he stands speechless before the Judge, it is too late to begin to attend to the Gospel. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Yet there is room; but anon, it shall be said, the door is shut.—*Rev. George Wright.*

IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE.

I spoke to a lady the other day of her sister-in-law, who is one of my esteemed neighbours. "How well she is managing her four children without any nurse," I exclaimed. "She looks calm and untroubled, and yet I know she is delicate."

"She is a woman of great decision of character," was the answer. "She has a system about the children. She never allows them to question what she says, and you know that saves a great deal of fret and worry."

The next morning I made a short call on the subject of our remarks. The lady came into the parlour, and, after shaking hands with me, turned to take a chair, and found that the two-year-old baby had followed her. "Why, baby, I did not know you were here! Run out to brother." "No, me don't want to!" "Oh, yes!" was the smiling answer. "Brother will play school with you."

The baby retreated slowly until she reached the middle of the room, and there she stood with her finger in her mouth eyeing her mother closely. The mother had turned in her chair away from me, and was watching the baby smilingly. It was evident that the caller was entirely forgotten for the moment; it was of the first importance that the baby should mind. I made a little note of the fact, too, that there was no "prunes and persimmons" expression on the mother's pretty face. She had simply spoken, and now expected the baby to do as she said.

"No," burst from the baby.

"Oh yes," smiled mamma. "Brother is all ready to play with you."

The baby stood a moment longer, finger in her mouth, studying her mother's face, and then ran out of the room. Then, and not till then, did the mother give me her attention.

The incident made such an impression on me that I want to write it for young mothers. I began with the theory that the best way to bring up a child was to reason with him, and in that way teach him obedience. I abandoned that theory long ago, and wish now that I had never held it for a day. When "implicit obedience" was brought to my mind I rejected it, largely because, under my new responsibility, I was newly conscious of my own fallibility.

"How can I," I would say to myself, "always know the right command to enforce?" Now I say to myself. "Be as nearly right as you can, but go ahead." Implicit obedience lovingly enforced is the only way to bring up a child, and "eternal vigilance" is its price.—*Christian Union.*

INCULCATE SELF-RELIANCE.

Let parents, to whom experience has brought wisdom, teach their children to boldly face a difficulty, meet and overcome it. Let them never shrink or steal away from a known duty, however hard, that the strength and self-reliance, so much needed in maturer years, may, by slow but constant growing, be developed in them against the time of need.—*H. T. Conklin.*