

over, we may all receive at last the welcome, blessed invitation, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." What should our aim be in this world but to die daily, that we may live anew unto Jesus Christ. Our lives on earth are but a span; make up our peace with Christ, that our end may be everlasting life. Live soberly, righteously, and godly, and may the God of peace bless, protect, and guide you in your journey through this vale of tears, is the humble, yet very earnest prayer of your loving and affectionate parents.

P.S.—Read the fourteenth chapter of St. John and the eighth of Romans—the last two chapters I read to you at the family altar—and the following verse

"I go your entrance to secure  
And your abode prepare.  
Regions unknown are safe to you.  
When I, your friend, am there."

Write often and regularly to your dear parents and sisters and brothers. Farewell.

With such a letter in his hand this prodigal seeks his fortune in a strange land. What passion is strong enough to drag him from such parents to the grave of a suicide and drunkard? It is doubtless a dreadful fact that he had often wrung their hearts with anguish before. What days and nights of sorrow they had endured! How many tears and prayers his waywardness had wrung from them, whose gray hairs were going down in sorrow to the grave! The only passion strong enough to tempt a son from such parents to self-destruction is the passion for intoxicating drink! This was his ruin, as it has been and will be of thousands. Across the ocean and into the darkened home of those afflicted parents I send words of sympathy from Christian hearts in America. You are strangers to us, but there is a kinship in sorrow, and we are your friends, praying that the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob may be your God, your strength and consolation.

This deplorable event has brought to my mind the history of

#### PRODIGAL NUMBER TWO.

It was a very hot day in June, before I had left town for the summer. I was just leaving my house for a public religious service, when I read in the morning paper that a young man had committed suicide the night before at a hotel; that he was identified by letters found upon him, and it appeared that he was the son of a distinguished Presbyterian clergyman, whose name was given: a friend of mine a thousand miles away. It was also added that the body had been sent to the morgue, the place to which dead persons are sent who have no friends to take them in charge. It was not possible at that moment for me to go and see to it, but I sent a messenger with a letter to the keeper of the morgue, requesting him to put the body into ice and keep it carefully until he heard from me again, and I would be responsible for all expenses. Then I telegraphed to the father, saying that his son had died suddenly in this city, and asking him what he would wish to have done with his remains. This, I reasoned, was what I would like to have done toward me if one whom I loved were to be found dead in a distant city among strangers. In the course of the day an answer came from the father, saying that he wished the body decently buried, and he would write further by mail. A few friends in the city, who saw the same facts in the paper, came to me, and we carried out the father's wishes, finding a grave in the family cemetery of one of the friends. I soon received a sad letter from the father. It was the old story: a son, well beloved in the sight of his mother, had fallen into evil ways, broken through all the strong bonds of holy love, defied parental authority, joined himself to wicked companions, and had gone away into a far country to waste his substance in riotous living. Exhausted in body, and mind, and means, he had reached New York, and here, in the lonely wretchedness of a midnight hour of remorse and despair, he had killed himself. His parents are both dead now, or I would not tell you this wretched tale.

It is not improbable that a thousand young men are at this moment leading the lives of prodigals in the city of New York! Prodigals with homes blessed with plenty, with religion, and with love. And in all these cases they have been lured away by the use of intoxicating drinks. Other vices have their victims, and often these other vices are the effects of those associations which drinking has induced. This Scotch prodigal son was a young drunkard. My friend's prodigal son was a young drunkard. And there are

Rachels, heart-broken mothers, in all lands, wailing because their sons are prodigal drunkards.

Have the promises failed? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Is there no balm in Gilead, no physician to cure this universal plague?

It is vain to scrutinize the mysteries of God's inscrutable providence. We behold His goodness and His severity too. I cannot tell you why, in His infinite love and power and wisdom He permits evil, or the evil one, to be. It does not help the matter to tell me that

"Behind a frowning Providence  
He hides a smiling face."

It is faith, not evidence, that enables me to say His ways are wonderful in goodness when they seem to be all against the wishes of His saints. Therefore we must bow down, or lie in the dust and adore the sovereignty of Him whose ways are past finding out.

But are God's ways harder to be understood than the cruel wickedness of the degenerate son who pierces his parents' hearts with the base ingratitude and monstrous sinfulness of apostasy and crime? Suicide is awful, but how much worse than self-murder is the sin of him who rends the heartstrings of his father and mother by his own folly and shame.

"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" cried Joseph when he, a young man, was tempted. How can any human being sin against parental love? But of all the prodigal sons now living in misery in New York, many of them—the most of them—have the guilt of parricide on their souls. They have slain the happiness of the parents that bore them.

None of these prodigals will be reached by these reproaches. But in ten thousand homes into which this letter will find its way there are boys yet untouched by the tempter—dear, good, lovely boys, without a thought that they will ever be like the monsters that are now in the horror of intemperance, hastening down to the drunkard's doom. Unto you, O boys, dear boys, to you I write. This Scotch son who came here from the family altar with a prayer in his hand, signed by both his father and his mother, imploring him to be pure and true and good, and then twice murdered himself—this suicide impels me to plead with you to shun his sin and his fate.

The dead boy in the Morgue, the son of my Southern friend, cold, stark, dead in his youthful beauty, in his blood shed by his own hand, is before me as I write, and I hear his voice rising from the marble on which he lay in his nakedness and shame, imploring you, the sons of pious parents, not to come to the place where his miserable career on earth has found its miserable end.—*Irenaeus.*

#### IN MEMORIAM.

Wonder what Jesus ever wrote,  
While the accusers gathered round,  
Was it the sentence, or the crime,  
Or but a name "upon the ground?"

They speak of stoning; to the ground,  
He stoops, and with His holy hand,  
"The Undeiled," who knew it all,  
Writes slowly, something on the sand.

"I would have mercy," "Sin no more,"  
And sin shall soon upon my hand,  
With "pen of iron," indelibly  
Print marks unlike those on the sand.

Our "life's like footprints on the strand,"  
Our friendship's all is never found,  
"A little while," a little mound,  
Perhaps a name "upon the ground."

Port Colborne, Ont.

D. M.

#### THREE-WORD PRAYERS.

"One day," says a lady, "when I was a little girl I did something particularly naughty, and my governess sent me to a back room, quite alone, and gave me a lesson to learn, headed 'A Child's Prayer,' nearly two pages long. When I had by and-by repeated my task she bade me remember to say it over every morning, as I needed very much to pray to be a good child. I am afraid I never did it."

The Lord does not set any such task as this before His children. When He taught His disciples to pray the form was very brief, and when persons came to Him to pray, the prayers which reached His ear were very short and very definite. The prayer of the woman of Canaan was, "Lord, help me;" the prayer of Simon Peter was, "Lord, save me;" the prayer of the penitent malefactor was, "Lord, remember me;"

the prayer of the broken-hearted publican was, "God be merciful to me." Such are the prayers which the Lord has been pleased to hear and answer. Prayers that can be learned in a moment, and which will never be forgotten; prayers that do not need to be learned at all, but which spring spontaneously from the depths of the soul; prayers which can be offered in an instant and which the Lord makes haste to answer. A prayer in three words is much better for ordinary purposes than a prayer stretching over three pages. Let us learn to pray short prayers, and let us use them often.—*The Christian.*

#### YOUNG PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATIONS.

There is power in wise organization. It gives method and system. It kindles enthusiasm. It calls out latent energy. It gives to every one his work. Every church should be thoroughly organized.

The young people of a church compose one of its most important elements. With warm, eager hearts they want to be at work. Unless they have something to do they will lose interest and perhaps drift away. There is no spiritual health without activity. It should be one of the first thoughts of a pastor how to get his young people enlisted in the work of the Church, and then how to direct their energies in the field. In them he has a vast volume of power, which, if he is faithful and wise, he may use for glorious ends.

In many churches the young people are organized into associations, and are doing great good. Especially in towns and cities is there need for such associations. The purposes of organization necessarily vary with the field.

This subject is presented at this time because the autumn is the period of the year at which all such new work should be commenced. There is scarcely a church anywhere in which there are not enough young people to make a strong working band, if they were gathered into one organization and animated by one common impulse of consecrated zeal.

A practical example is always better than a theory. Better, therefore, than an elaborate explanation of the purposes and methods of such an association will be a plan of organization prepared by the writer and now in use. It was made for a particular field. No doubt in almost any other field some modification will be necessary, as no plans are abstractly the best. The character of the place and work must always be studied and the organization adapted thereto. However, this is given as something in the direction desired.—*Westminster Teacher.*

At a meeting of the Aberdeen Free Presbytery, held on the 9th ult., Professor Robertson Smith's name was removed from the roll.

FROM late Scotch papers we find that the Rev. Thomas Scott, M.A., late of Ruthrieston church, has been ordained to the ministry by the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and has been appointed to the chaplaincy of Mhow, in the Presidency of Bombay.

EMPEROR WILLIAM of Germany was recently presented with a curious pen, that supplies itself with ink while writing. The old Kaiser thanked the donor and said, "I should like to own a pen that would write only what is good and true; and then I wish all our journalists and reporters might each have one just like it and use no others."

IN the last forty years one hundred and twenty missionaries on the west coast of Africa have fallen victims to the climate; but this sacrifice of life has not been without its over-payment of reward and blessing, as appears from the fact that the converts to Christianity on the field now number thirty thousand or more, and thirty-three missionary societies are at work now in Africa.

THE annual graduation ceremonial in medicine, law, and science, in connection with Edinburgh University, took place within the United Presbyterian Church College Hall, in presence of a large audience, on the 1st inst., when thirty-five students were presented for the degree of M.D., and 126 for the degrees of M.B. and C.M., in addition to seventeen others, upon whom law and science degrees were conferred. Professor Annandale delivered the usual address, in which he exposed the quackery of both qualified and unqualified practitioners, and gave some wholesome advice to the graduates upon becoming members of the medical profession.