

MARY, OR THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

(From Burn's Magazine for the Young.)

The sun was just setting on the afternoon of the 31st of October. The sky was perfectly clear, and the deep red glow in the west shaded softly and beautifully into the pale cold blue above.

Mrs. Ormond and her children sat at the window of the village parsonage, in front of which the garden sloped down rather a deep descent. A row of fine elms stood just below the garden, and through these, and almost close behind them, was seen the tower of the church. The village was a little beyond, extending into the valley beneath, and the view was bounded by woody hills. The weather had been so calm, that the trees were still almost full of leaves, brilliant with every variety of autumnal colour, but ready to fall with the first breath of wind that might blow.

The party at the parsonage window had sat silent for some time, looking at the lovely prospect, and the bright calm sun-set. Upon Mrs. Ormond's lap lay an infant of a few weeks old, asleep. Her eldest daughter, Lucy, a girl of fourteen, Matilda, about two years younger, and Theodore, whose age was nearly eleven, formed the rest of the circle; two younger little ones were playing in another part of the room.

The silence was broken by the awaking of the baby, and Matilda, stooping to kiss it, said, "Mamma, what is baby's name to be? You have always said it was not fixed yet, but is she not to be baptised to-morrow?"

"She is," said Mrs. Ormond; "and what would you like her name to be?"

Matilda did not answer; but the colour rose in her cheek, and she stooped her face again to that of the baby.

Lucy knew what Matilda was thinking, and she said, "Aunt Sophia is to be one of its godmothers, and you thought you would call it Sophia, did not you, mamma?"

Before Mrs. Ormond could answer, Theodore said, "O mamma, do let it be Mary; there is no name so nice as that; we should all like it so."

Matilda at the same time looked up with tears in her soft dark eyes, and her mamma at once knew why she had not answered her question. It was a few moments before Mrs. Ormond spoke, but at length she said quietly,—

"I did mean to have her called Sophia, for you know that was the name of your papa's mother, as well as his sister; and when I asked your dear aunt to be her godmother, I said I would give her name to her little godchild. But I have a letter from her, to tell us that she and your uncle will be there this evening, and she says she is sure that it would comfort us to have another Mary amongst us, and that she herself can love no name better; indeed she makes it her own request, that we will call her so. And therefore your papa and I have settled that it shall be Mary."

"Oh, how kind of Aunt Sophia to think of it! how very kind!" said Lucy, her eyes sparkling; "it will make us all so happy!"

Matilda could not speak, but she gently lifted the baby from her mamma's lap to her own, and thought she should love to have her better than ever.

Mrs. Ormond meanwhile was hoping and praying, that her second little Mary might be like her first; not only as she ardently promised to be, in her sweet fair face, and dark blue eyes, but in that made her so lovely and so deeply lamented. Two years had scarcely passed, since, at the age of fifteen, their fairest flower had been taken from among them, and Lucy, Matilda, and Theodore, had remembered her with a strength of affection and sorrow not often retained so long at that early age.

Mrs. Ormond said, after a pause, "We must thank God that He has been pleased to give us another Mary, and pray that she may grow up like her dear sister, obedient and gentle, full of love to us all, and striving always to please God, and to learn to do His will."

FATHER, I PRAISE THEE!

This is no battle for earthly possessions, Holiest things we defend with the sword; Falling or conquering, therefore I praise Thee, God, I give myself to Thee.

When the thunders of death salute me, When the blood flows from my wounded veins, To Thee, my God, to Thee I give myself, Father, I call on Thee!

Theodore and his sisters all exclaimed how very much they liked these lines, and Mrs. Ormond said, "I saw them lately in a little book containing a selection of short pieces of German poetry, with a very short account of each of the authors. The description of Theodore Korner though it was in so few words, will help to make you like him, and the name of Theodore. Theodore Korner, born at Dresden, died a hero's death in the holy war. He was of fair and stately form, a youth of but one and twenty years, full of the pious strength of a true knight."

Lucy.—I remember the history of that holy war; how nobly the Prussians rose up to help their king, and fight for their country, and how the ladies gave their jewels—and about the poor Queen Louisa, whom they loved so much, who died of a broken heart.

Mrs. O.—The subject of one of Theodore Korner's poems is the statue of Queen Louisa upon her tomb; it is a beautiful likeness of her, lying as if asleep. Your papa said it when he was abroad.

Matilda.—I hope you will sometimes read that poem to us too.

Mrs. O.—What we have been talking of reminds me of a letter I lately saw from a German count; he was telling of the birth of a son, his ninth child. He said he scarcely knew what name to give his little boy; but he did not think it of no consequence what it was, for he thought that any thing which formed so much, as it were, a part of ourselves as our Christian name, must have some kind of effect upon the character.—So he thought we ought to choose names for our children which might be always associated with some holy example, or some good and pleasant thought.

Lucy.—I suppose he thought of the apostle St. Paul. But who was Siegfried? It is an odd name.

Mrs. O.—Siegfried is a very ancient name in Germany and the northern countries of Europe. There are many old songs and stories relating to a hero of this name, and he might very likely have been a brave and noble character. But it appeared to be the meaning of the name which made the count think of it for his child; it is composed of two words which mean in German victory and peace; and these words might bring to us the many good and pleasant thoughts, and the count spoke of some of them in his letter. However, there is one way in which our Christian names may be of use to us all, whatever they may be—what do you think it is Matilda?

Matilda.—Do you mean because they are our Christian names?

Mrs. O.—Yes, I mean, that we may all be reminded of the same things as we repeat when we answer the question in the Catechism, "Who gave you this name?" I have read of a native of India, who became a Christian, and when he was to be baptised, he did not wish to be called by his former name. He said, "Give me a new name, that with the help of God it may remind me of my baptism, and my profession as a Christian."

A pause followed, and Lucy and Matilda, who both delighted in hearing their mamma talk to them, sat still beside her, Matilda hushing the baby to sleep again. Theodore went to the other end of the room, to play with little Edward and Charlotte.

In the mean time the last streak of light had almost faded from the sky, but Lucy and Matilda had begged that the candles might not be lighted yet, for they were anxious both to prolong the pleasant talk, and to watch for the arrival of the kind aunt and uncle whom they were expecting that evening. After being silent for some time, Lucy said,—

"I am so very glad, mamma, that little Mary is to be baptized to-morrow, because of its being the 1st of November, All Saints' day, you know. I think there was almost no day in the whole year that one would have liked so well. Did papa and you fix it on purpose, mamma?"

Mrs. O.—No we did not exactly fix it on purpose, because many circumstances happened to make it desirable that it should be to-morrow; but I feel as glad as you can do, Lucy, that it is so, especially since our dear baby is to be called after her darling sister. It does seem, as you say, as if no day could have been so suitable for bringing into the Church of Christ the little one who has been given us in her place.

Matilda.—I think I understand you, mamma. For this afternoon, when we walked with papa through Burnley Wood, he was talking to us about to-morrow, and telling us what it was meant to remind us of.

words from them: he said, "The calm leaves float each to its rest." I think one likes so much to find that another person is thinking of just the same things that we are. I mean when they are things which one likes, things of this kind.

Mrs. O.—It is very pleasant indeed; and it will very often happen, when people are taught in the same way, and have the same ideas associated with the things they see. And it is more than pleasant; our own feelings are made stronger by this kind of sympathy, and it increases, too, our love to one another. And this is one of the good and happy consequences which we find in following the course of thought which the Church leads us through as the year goes on. We know that we, in our own home, and members in the Church every where, are thinking of the same things, and that so many who are gone have learned the same lessons as we are doing, at the same times of the year. And all this helps to bind us together, and to make us feel, as well as believe in, "the communion of saints," which we are so especially to think of to-morrow.

Matilda.—Dear mamma, I did not think, when I asked about sweet little baby's name, that it would have led to so much. Perhaps some time or some evening like this we shall be telling her about it, and about the things you have been saying to us.

Matilda had scarcely finished speaking, when the sound of the carriage wheels was plainly heard passing along at the foot of the hill, and then the shutting of the gate as the carriage turned into the garden, and the children all hastened to the hall-door to welcome the friends who were coming to the christening of little Mary.

The Garner.

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION. In the various allurances presented to our Lord, we see but too faithful a picture of those we are to expect ourselves in our progress through life. Our Lord's temptations were sensual gratifications, incitements to vanity and ostentation, and the charms of wealth, power, rank, and splendour. All these will in the different stages of our existence successively rise up to seduce us, to oppose our progress to heaven, and bring us into captivity to sin and misery. Pleasure, interest, business, honours, glory, fame, all the follies and all the corruptions of the world, will each in their turn assault our feeble nature; and through these we must manfully fight our way to the great end we have in view. But the difficulty and the pain of this contest will be considerably lessened by a resolute and vigorous exertion of our powers and our resources at our first setting out in life. If we strenuously resist those enemies of our salvation that present themselves to us at that most critical and dangerous period, all the rest that follow in our maturer age will be an easy conquest. On him who in the beginning of life has preserved himself unspotted from the world, all its consequent attractions and allurements, and its magnificence, wealth and splendour, will make little or no impression. A mind that has been long habituated to discipline and self-government amidst far more powerful temptations, will have nothing to apprehend from such assaults as these. But after all, our greatest security is assistance from above, which will never be denied to those who fervently apply for it. And with the power of divine grace to support us, with the example of our Lord in the wilderness to animate us, and an eternity of happiness to reward us, what is there that can shake our constancy or corrupt our fidelity. —Bishop Porteus.

ADVANTAGES OF FASTING. Besides the good effects it may have, as a strong outward mark of repentance, it may be a cause, by its physical effects, of our feeling greater degrees of inward conviction. The faculties of many persons are overclouded by continual excess, the corruptible body presseth down the soul; nor can it exert itself, till the burden upon it is lightened. And without what is commonly called excess, a constant course of high or full living habit, and the tendency to immerse our thoughts in worldly objects, and make us, both indolent as to our eternal interests, and fearless of the consequences of such indolence; that all who pass their days in the free enjoyment of plenty, have need frequently to interrupt their indulgence, however lawful in their nature; to admonish themselves, by so doing, that they have more important concerns, than the gratification of sense and ease; and to view the state of their souls with attentive thoughtfulness, which abstinence, and its proper companion retirement, would beget. Assuredly numbers of them would then see their condition in respect of God, and a future life, in a very different light, from that, which warm blood, gay spirits, and presumptuous imaginations place it in. And for want of such views it is, that so many are grossly wicked, and so many more very imperfectly and insufficiently good; who have a habit of considerable self-restraint would render by degrees indifferent to earthly enjoyments, and solicitous for those of a better world. Nay, even single acts of such restraint will usually, for the time lower our passions into some good measure of composure, and make our sorrow for sin humbler and deeper; on both which accounts fasting is called in Scripture, affliction of the soul. For it mortifies the desires of the sensitive part, and enlivens the remorse of the rational. —Archbishop Secker.

GODLY SORROW. To grieve merely for fear of punishment, is what the most carnal and worldly mind is capable of. Almost every common man feels thus much, when the scourge of the gibbet comes in sight; but that the villainy of the fact, and concern for justice, have no part in that sorrow, the frequent examples of wretches, spared in the very article of death, and continuing still incorrigible, too plainly demonstrate. And I know not to what else we should impute the many fruitless remorse, and broken vows of affliction and sick beds, than that proceeding purely from the smart of the rod, and designing to get quit of present fear and pain; the cause no sooner ceases, but the effects of their sorrow vanish with it. Such sorrow proves we love ourselves, not that we love God; but he that turns with his whole heart most love God; and love God he cannot, without a persuasion of his goodness; goodness in his own nature, goodness to him in particular. These attributes, then, are so many charms to attract our hearts; the greater sense we have of them, the more we shall love ourselves, for having led so disingenuously and unworthily heretofore. The better we think of him, and the worse of ourselves, the less apt we shall be to relapse; for, though repentance often begins with fear, yet it seems hardly possible to conceive, how it should be perfected and preserve without love. —Dean Stanhope.

THE CHRISTIAN'S PROSPECT. If the pure in spirit among the Israelites of old looked forward in faith to glorious forms, of which they saw but the faint approaching shadows,—if their long line of sacrifices, while it bowed down the heart with the sense of sin, yet spoke of better things to come, and cheered the ear of faith, while it trained their hearts to hold communion with the Father of light,—we also, in this our imperfect state, are under the guidance and training of a Master, whose work with us must be gradual, and slowly prepare our spirits for another and a higher state, where the veil of the flesh, which now dims our vision, being rent in sunder, the spirit of God shall shine upon us with all his brightness. Children as we are in knowledge in this our present temple, all our sacrifices are imperfect—the spirit only half contrite, the will but half resigned,—and all the gifts of God, his grace, his peace and purity, are imperfectly accepted, although these sacrifices have a natural fitness to train us up to heaven, and are offered by our High Priest that sitteth at the right hand of God, and are but the foretaste that them that love him, when that which is in part shall be done away, and we shall know even as we are known! Let us remember, therefore, that while we are passing on from life to death, while we dwell in the world of sense, the house not made with hands, is rising up in regions beyond our ken! But into that house, into that heavenly Jerusalem, none can enter but the Israelite, whose heart has long been fixed upon it in faith—who has learned to see and discern its courts, its altars, its worship and its pleasures in the Church that is below! who has used the things that are seen only as his passage to those that are unseen, and things temporal only as his path to things eternal. —Rev. Henry John Rose.

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