

## Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

### A MUCH-ADMIRED HYMN.

THERE WERE NINEITY AND NINE.

BY THE REV. D. MORRISON, M.A. OWEN SOUND, ONT.

(Concluded.)

The authoress, Miss Elizabeth C. Clephane, Melrose, Scotland, died about two years ago. Her father, once sheriff of Fife, and the owner of a goodly estate, was born near Lochleven.

A brother, Colonel Clephane, of the 79th Highlanders, present with his regiment at the Crimea, in all the engagements, died only a few months ago, leaving a widow and three children.

She lost both her parents in early life, and she herself, long an invalid, came to her quiet rest about two years ago. Two of her sisters still reside in that loveliest of Scottish towns, Melrose, famous as the seat of a monastery and abbey, concerning which the classic pen of Sir W. Scott has given us such interesting details.

Miss Clephane is described as very retiring in her ways, quiet in her disposition, taking pleasure in books and poetry, fond of gathering in little forlorn children that she might teach them and talk to them of Jesus and His love. Among the sick and the sorrowing, and even the fallen, she spent much of her time, and by her cheerful spirit and open hand won for herself the name of "Sunbeam." Such was Elizabeth C. Clephane, pure in heart, preferring retirement rather than the garish day, lovely in her life, serene in death, for her eye was upon a far-off home, bright with the hope that is full of immortality.

It has been the privilege of the writer to look into her book—consisting of forty poems—which has been printed since her death for private circulation. They are of a very high order, with a sort of melancholy tenor running through them all, as if the weight of some great calamity had been upon her heart, or was written in the near prospect of death. They reveal a sense of loneliness and isolation, which seems strange in one so young, so gifted and situated in the midst of such fair surroundings. Moreover, there is a sympathy with Nature in her more solemn aspects that reminds us of Wordsworth and Tennyson, with not a little of the rhythmic power of those great masters of English verse. Those forty poems must be greatly prized in the little circle in which she lived and moved and had her being. Many a tear, doubtless, has fallen upon the page, for they are all apples of gold, set in pictures of silver, a life covered with the beauty of holiness. I fancy that she must have been a lonely bird, pondering over many thoughts in silence that she did not care to reveal, feeling the weight of her sickness, as well as the sickness which comes from hope deferred, and writing at times as if smitten with a great sorrow, the sigh of which no one ever heard but the ear of the Eternal; but, whether or no, hers was a divine life and hers the spirit of resignation which says in the dark hour, Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight. Hear how she speaks:

Not always in the sun  
Ye find the heavenly way,  
There is many a downward road  
That leadeth straight to God.

The child that alleth most,  
The mother loves the best,  
The tender little bird  
Stays closest to the nest.

The weakling of the fold  
Is safest far from harms,  
Because the shepherd loves  
To keep it in his arms.

The snowdrop in the shade  
Hath still the purest white,  
The sweetest bird that sings  
Sings loudest in the night.

And in the sunny spring  
Does many a flower blow,  
That had not blossomed then  
But for the winter's snow.

So, Lord, I am content  
Knowing myself so frail,  
To take the shady path  
That leadeth through the vale.

Safe from the mountain's storms  
And sheltered from the heat—  
Until in heaven I sit  
Down at my Saviour's feet.

This is one of the forty, chosen not because it is the best, but because so expressive of her resignation. We had laid out extracts from others of a higher style, but space forbids. Suffice it to say that the hymn under consideration is the one after all on which her fame will rest, though by no means superior to some of those forty. This is the one that God has honoured and that the people delight to honour. Strange that the hymns that have taken possession of Christendom—that are heard in the homes of the people—in the private walks of life, and in all the Churches throughout the world—are not the hymns of the great masters of English verse, such as Milton, Dryden, Spencer, Ben Jonson, Withers or even George Herri-  
rick. Those gifted men all wrote hymns, intellectual hymns, artificial hymns—hymns enriched with deep thought and classical allusion, but somehow they never took hold of the people. To-day they are as dry as dust, seldom mentioned, removed into a corner and hardly ever looked at except by the curious. It is not so with the more gifted of the Latin hymnists.

*Veni Creator Spiritus*, after the lapse of a thousand years, is still a power in the Church; and "Jerusalem the Golden" will evoke a response as grand from the congregation of to-day as it did in the twelfth century in France's greatest cathedral. We seem to be out of touch with the great English masters. Their hymns are strangely aloof from the religious life of our day, and it is hard to conceive of them ever meeting with much favour save on the part of the educated few, the little circle that delighted in pretty thoughts and fantastic metres and figures. Ken and Wall and Doddridge and Toplady and Charles Wesley put an end to all that nonsense, addressed the hearts as well as the heads of men, broke open the fountains of the great deep, and forthwith there gushed forth the pent-up feelings and affections of the many thousands of Israel. It is to such that the Church has decreed the crown of sacred song. Theirs are the hymns that make our church roofs ring, our prodigals open their hearts to a love passing the love of woman, our invalids, whether princes or peasants, failing, take heart again. Such are the great leaders of the Church's minstrelsy—the high priests anointed for their mission. The Lord gave the word to them, touched their lips with a live coal, and great has been the company that followed in their train, and among them the gifted authoress of the "Ninety and Nine." Little thought had she in yielding to the request of the publishers of the *Children's Hour*, that she was about to do a great thing—about to take rank with the foremost hymnists of this or any age. Little thought had she that in handing the promised contribution to the editor of the *Children's Hour* she was putting forth such a far-reaching power—that God would own and bless it to such an extent. This has been the case to a wonderful degree, and when He counts up the people, when He writes the story of His Church, and how this man and that man were born there, it will be seen that the mission of this tender lay was divine!

#### LATIN TRANSLATION.

(Same measure as in the English.)

Nonaginta novemque erant tuta  
In umbra ovilis, oves;  
Sed peritus una errabat agra  
In cultibus et tenebris,  
Teneri pastoris curæ carens—  
Lumenisque portis aberrans.

Nonaginta novem tibi sunt  
O domine, an satis hi?  
Deinde respondens pastor, inquit,  
Hæc tamen querendum est mi,  
Via quamvis periculosa, ovem  
Nunc abibo ut mihi queram.

Sin nemo transit a sunt lumina  
Invenire unquam poterit;  
Vel quam diu nox et horrida,  
Quâ dominus reperit;  
Audiuit suam deserto ovem  
Morituram, agramque solam.

O domine unde cruor, cruor!  
Unde guttae tota via  
Sic profuse? Tum inquit pastor:  
"Quo redempta esset ista  
Cruor; laniare prohac manus—  
Et perfosce per multis spinis."

Tum fulmene per montes fissos  
Scopulosa atque loci,  
Auditæ lætæ pastoris voces:—  
"Lætamini mecum, cœli!"  
Sic cunctis celestibus est gaudium  
Quam Dominus adfert suos domum.

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### BRING THE CHILDREN TO CHRIST.

How can we best bring our children to Christ? is a question over which there is much discussion at the present time. The first question to be decided is, What is the spiritual condition of children? Are they in or out of Christ? Do the benefits of Christ's death and His imputed righteousness extend to children, or do they not? If they do not, then hell is the portion of all children who die before they are old enough to renounce the devil and his works, and profess Christ for themselves.

Do we shrink from a conclusion? If so, there is only the alternative.

The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness extends to our children as well as ourselves. They are heirs of God and with ourselves joint heirs with Christ. Our Saviour says: "Of such is the kingdom of God." They are now in the kingdom, and it is our business to keep them there. In order to do so we must keep this truth constantly before them, that they are now the children of God; and we must treat them as such from the earliest dawn of their intelligence. When they are first taught to kneel at their parents' knees, and say, "Our Father, who art in heaven," they should be impressed with the thought that their heavenly Father does actually hear, and grants their request. As they become a little older, and are required to kneel before their companions, they should be taught that this simple exercise is preaching as well as praying, that it is confessing Christ before men, and that to be ashamed to do so is denying Him before the world.

Parents should carefully avoid allowing their children to spend a night in the companionship of those who do not in this way confess Christ. If they should be exposed to this temptation, the parents should lose no time in learning whether they have stood the test, or yielded to temptation. This has been the turning point, and the first step downward in the history of the greater number of the children of pious parents who have forsaken God. This is the point which should be most carefully guarded by parents.

There is no surer way of sending our children to the devil than to teach them that they are now his, and cannot become the children of God till after they have come to years of maturity and have experienced an extraordinary operation of God's Spirit, which He has never promised to give. God has promised to give His Spirit, and does give it to all who ask, but not in the way we may prescribe.

Children are the subjects of His gracious influences as well as adults. If we wish to bring up our children as Christians, we must recognize the fact that they are now the children of God, treat them as such, and by the grace of God train them as such, and few of them will wander from the fold of God. D. MCN.

#### MAKING CHILDREN HAPPY.

"I try so hard to make my children happy," said a wearied mother, with a deep sigh, one day in despair at her efforts. "Stop trying," exclaimed a practical friend at her elbow, "and do as a neighbour of mine does." "And how is that?" she added dolefully. "Why, she simply lets her children grow and develop naturally, only directing their growth properly. She always throws them, as far as practicable upon their own resources, taught them to wait upon themselves, no matter how many servants she had, and to construct their own playthings. When she returns home from an absence they await but one thing—their mother's kiss. Whatever has been bought for them is bestowed when the needed time comes. Nothing exciting is allowed to them at night, and they go to bed and to sleep in a wholesome mental state, that insures restful slumber. They are taught to love Nature, and to feel that there is nothing arrayed so finely as the lily of the field, the bees and the butterflies; that there is nothing so mean as a lie, nor anything so miserable as disobedience; that it is a disgrace to be sick, and that good-health, good teeth and good-temper comes from plain food, plenty of sleep and being good." In order to thrift, children require a certain amount of "letting alone." Supreme faith in the mother, few toys, no finery, plain food, no drugs and early to bed are the best things for making them happy.

THOSE who have great faith need not fear. Even death will not be to them an object of fear.