

of their structure. The former will develop thick and fleshy leaves; these organs, in the latter case, appearing as thin, dried structures. The nature of the soil has influenced the growth of the plants, and the development in either case presents us with an index of the principle of close reaction upon and adaptation of the living form to its surroundings. The animal which possesses in a temperate climate a thin covering of hair, becomes covered with a woolly coat in a colder region. The bird which possesses a powerful flight in a wild state, deteriorates as regards the extent of its flying powers when domesticated by man. Whilst conversely the domesticated birds, more accustomed to a terrestrial life than their wild neighbors, exhibit a special development of the leg-bones—facts well illustrated by the comparison of wild with domesticated ducks, and with other birds brought under the influence of man.—*Good Words*.

A LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF JUDAS.

Ages ago died the most unfortunate of all human beings, a man on whom fell a fate so unspeakable in its horror, that his memory has come down through time guarded by a strange and terrible silence. It is that Hebrew, that friend and follower of Jesus, who gave him up to death. Men have shown a keen interest in dissecting the motives and character of all other moral monsters. They have, apparently, not even curiosity about Judas. Nero and the Borgia had their analysts; even Satan himself is not without his apologists. But from this man humanity has turned away without a word. His name has become the synonym for treachery. For his sake his whole nation has been held accursed for generations.

Yet Judas, like the rest of us, was a baby once upon his mother's knee; a boy with boyish impulses and affections. There is no record of any abnormal development of vice or cruelty in him while he was the daily companion of the Lord and his friends. He had, as far as we can learn, but one besetting sin—the greed for money. He was neither sensualist, murderer, nor brutal—he was a thief. He held the bag as they journeyed, and the fingering of the few poor coins had the effect upon him of that deadly poison, the touch of which kills by paralysis. He was benumbed in heart and soul. He rose up and sat down with the spirit of all good, and he thought only of his bag. He touched every hour the Elder Brother of mankind. He saw the multitudes crowding about him, moved by a mighty faith; the blind saw, the dying were healed, the dead were brought back from the grave. The whole world stood waiting to know if this were the Saviour for whom it had tarried so many ages; and this poor creature turned his back on it all—to count his money. The man must have known he would die some day. The most vicious of us know that, and struggle madly for a vague chance of existence hereafter. Beside Judas, visible, tangible, stood the Divine Helper—the way to unending life; a word from his lips would have made certain eternity for this his follower. For thirty coins he gave up this chance forever; he put out this light which shone for him and for the world. When the Son of God hung upon the cross, when the earth shook and the sun hid its face, and the dead rose in horror from their graves, this Hebrew began to see the real value of his money. He understood now the misuse he had made of his mean life, and creeping outside of the darkened city, over which lay the shadow from Calvary, he put an end to it. Where he has gone no curious eye can follow. Near Jerusalem to this day is shown a ghastly gray abyss—the Potters' Field—heaped for ages with the bones of the dead. It seems fitting that the thirty pieces of silver should be thus sunk into eternal decay and corruption.

Now, there is no man living to-day so vicious that his worst enemy would accuse him of a likeness to Judas. And yet, is not the Saviour alive and at work in the streets of New York, as then in Jerusalem? Who is the helper now of the lame, the blind, the dying? Who calls our dead out of the grave to life again? When we go to church, or sit in our house or office, is not the Spirit of all good, of honour, truth, love, the guide to sure high life beyond death, beside us, close at hand? The very miracle of the spring, the rain, the sun, tell us of his presence. Since we were children, have we not heard his secret voice begging us to come to him? We are blind and deaf and indifferent to it. Why? The stocks, the fee, the invoice of goods to which we give our waking thoughts

—what are they but the money which Judas made his god? We, too, carry the bag. We finger the coins greedily. Let God go on with his miracles, let the poor crowd about him; the bag is our business. We, being disciples, see that our Master is being thrust out of the Church, out of society, out of literature. We pay him formal homage in church, and go out to barter honour and honesty for the thirty pieces of silver on which we have set our hopes. Judas also did not forget to kiss the Master before he betrayed him to his enemies.—*New York Tribune*.

BEHOLD I KNOCK.

FROM THE GEMMAN.

Behold I knock! 'Tis piercing cold abroad
This bitter winter-time;
The ice upon the dark pines has not thawed,
The earth is white with rime;
O human hearts! are ye all frozen too,
That at closed doors I vainly call to you?
Is there not one will open to his Lord?
Behold I knock!

Behold I knock! The evening shadows lie
So peaceful near and far;
Earth sleepeth, but in yonder cloudless sky
Glimmers the evening star;
'Tis in such holy twilight time, that oft
Full many a stony heart hath waxed soft,
Like Nicodemus, in the dark drawn night,
Behold I knock!

Behold I knock! O soul, art thou at home?
For thy Beloved's here;
Hast thou made ready flowers ere he should come?
Is thy lamp burning clear?
Know'st thou how such a Friend received should be?
Art thou in bridal garments dressed for me?
Decked with thy jewels as for guests most dear?
Behold I knock!

Behold I knock! Say not, "Tis zephyr mild
Which rustles the dead leaf."
It is thy Saviour, 'tis thy God, my child,
Let not thine ear be deaf;
If I come now in breezes soft and warm,
I may return again upon the storm;
'Tis no light fancy—firm be thy belief;
Behold I knock!

Behold I knock! As yet I am thy guest,
Waiting without for thee;
The time shall come when homeless and distressed,
Thou, soul, shalt knock for me;
To those who heard my voice ere 'twas too late
I open in that hour my peaceful gate;
To those who scorned, a closed door will it be.
Behold I knock!

FIFTY YEARS OF MISSIONS.

Japan was sealed from the Gospel fifty-one years ago; Dr. Morrison was allowed to enter China, but as a servant of the East India Company, and there was no missionary besides; Judson and his wife were prisoners in Burmah, where there were only eighteen native Christians. In India, even Heber was compelled to decline baptizing a native convert, lest he might "excite the jealousy of those whom it was desirable to conciliate. From India to Syria there was not a missionary of the Cross; Turkey was without a missionary, and the Sultan had issued an anathema against all Christian books; two or three missionaries were along the West coast of Africa, and two or three more in the South; Madagascar had scarcely been entered; the Church Missionary Society was rejoicing over its first convert in New Zealand; and only the first fruits were being slowly gathered in the South Seas. Outside of Guiana and the West Indies, there were not 6,000 Christians in the whole heathen world.

What changes have been wrought for the last fifty years! In China, to-day, there are thirty Christian Churches at work, and the number of Christians is increasing sixfold every ten years. Japan welcomes every Christian teacher, and proclaims the Sabbath as the weekly festival. For every convert there was in Burmah there are now a thousand; there are 350 churches, and nine-tenths of the work is done by native missionaries. There are 2,500 missionary stations in India, and near 2,000 of them manned by native laborers, while Christians are increasing by more than a hundred thousand in ten years. There are self-supporting Christian congregations in Persia, and on the Black Sea; there are 5,000 communicants gathered into the mission Churches of Syria. Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia have large Christian communities, aggressive upon the neighboring heathen with the aggression of the Gospel. There are 40,000 communicants in the churches of South Africa, and 45,000 children in the schools. Moffat waited for years

for a single conversion, and he left behind him populations that cultivate the habits of civilized life, and read the Bible in their own tongue. There are 70,000 gathered into the Churches of Madagascar; Polynesia is almost entirely Christian. There are not less than two millions connected with the Christian settlements in heathen lands, where 2,300 missionaries labor—and all this has been accomplished within fifty years!

PSALM AND SONG.

The richness and breadth of the Psalms are a striking contrast to the poverty and narrowness of most of our modern hymns. The latter usually affect us painfully by their exaggeration of incidental, and ignoring of principal truths. They anthropomorphise—make divine things human things. They are often songs about the strictly human side of religion and of Christ. David would have starved to death upon such psalmody. His songs are of God; that is their most striking attribute. They make God great, glorious, eternal, in the mind of the singer or listener. They range the skies and scale the mountains to find poetic suggestions of the magnificence of Jehovah. And is it possible that we moderns do not "like to retain God in our thoughts?" that we have fallen into lackadaisical religious poetry because we lack both moral and doctrinal backbone? However that may be, it is, we think, the first of our religious needs to get hymns that are modelled as their substance upon the Psalms, and to throw away fifty or more volumes of song that are only a kind of sentimental rose-water. Our objections to these hymns would not be made if it were not seriously proposed to fasten them upon us. As expressions of shades of feeling, as ministering to a very narrow side of experience (one full of danger, by the way) some of these hymns have their use. A half-dozen are of a little wider value. But they are backboneless. One may sing most of them with great happiness, and break every one of the Ten Commandments the next instant without any sense of falling away. There is nothing in most of them that is inconsistent with lying or stealing; no moral pulse in them; no moral atmosphere about them. One who has a wider experience in hymns may find a temporary use in these songs; but what about them as a staple dish all the year round? What about the probable moral character of children who grow up with no other sacred music?

The one thing that cannot be dispensed with in any hymn to be sung by a congregation is the moral and holy character and law of God. This is the key-note of the Psalms. On whatever plane they begin, they rise to this, and all below is bound under law by this highest music. Very many persons enjoy a class of hymns, because they are sweet, plaintive, tender; but nothing in them suggests the law of duty or the peril of eternal death. They do not reach the religious region in experience. They are concerned with sentiments, not with religion. They may be useful in a narrow field; we seriously fear that they are being pushed into the place of real religious music, and that large numbers of children are growing up in a kind of sentimental heathenism.—*Christian Banner*.

GREAT WEALTH A GREAT MOCKERY.

If you are ever tempted to purchase a very large pear, decline the investment, or reckon upon a disappointment. You will probably find it woolly, almost tasteless, and more like a turnip than a pear. We know, for we have made the experiment in the land where the gigantic pears are grown. Overgrown fruits never seem to us to have the delicate sweetness which may be found in those of the usual dimensions. What is gained in quantity is more than lost in quality. In the same manner great wealth, great honor, and great rank, generally turn out to be great shams. Besides the counteracting influences of great care and great temptation, there is the inevitable satiety in too much of anything which soon renders it tasteless. For sweetness prefer competence to enormous fortune, the esteem of a few to the homage of a multitude, and a quiet condition to a position of eminence and splendor. There is more flavor in enough than in too much. Solomon's proverb bids us prefer the dinner of herbs eaten in peace to the stalled ox consumed amid contention; and his remark is the more practical when we consider how often the fat ox seems of necessity to involve contention, while the herbs are not thought to be worth fighting over. He chose wisely, who said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches;" he took the smaller and the sweeter pear. After all it is better to have no choice, but leave it all with our heavenly Father.—*Spurgeon*.