

"Why not go to live in that house now? The window's open," and she flew in at once. The robin was more cautious. He lighted on the window sill and peeked around.

"I don't see any place for a nest."

"Pshaw! You don't need a nest in a house," said his gay little friend.

So Master Robin flew in, and perched on the first thing he found, which was a book, but he looked homesick. Miss Butterfly fluttered to a quill pen, and made believe it was a flower.

Pretty soon there were sounds, and robin listened as hard as he could.

"Oh, papa!" a child's voice said; "Look there! Sh-sh! Keep still! You'll scare them! What a beautiful butterfly for your collection! And, papa, mayn't I have the bird in a cage? I'd like a robin with my canary."

A man's voice answered low.

"Run around outside, then, dearie, and close the window softly, so they can't get out."

Master Robin's brains were wide awake now. He spoke quickly.

"That man's an en-ento—well, I can't say it; but he's crazy on insects, and he's stuck a pin through you, my lady. And that girl thinks she'll put me in a cage! I guess not! Let's fly!"

Out they flew, just as the little maid's hand touched the sash. They heard her cry of disappointment as they dashed by her.

"Oh, papa, they just went out like a flash, and they're both gone!"

But Master Robin and Miss Butterfly laughed happily to be out again in the free air. The black cloud was gone, and the warm spring sun was shining on the garden beds of roses and hyacinth. How beautiful it was out of doors! Living in a house was not to be compared to it.

"Better be content where our Maker meant us to live," said Miss Butterfly, a wise afterthought of the high-tighty little creature!—Sunbeam.

Brown-Tail and Prickles.

Mr. and Mrs. Rat had gone house-hunting, and Brown-tail was left at home alone. The larder was empty, so he started on a voyage of discovery.

"If I could only get an egg!" he thought.

It ran along his tunnel, but at a turning suddenly drew back; for something pricked him sharply on the nose.

"Dear me!" he said. "What can that be?" He licked his nose, and listened. Then he heard little paws busily at work, burrowing.

"It must be some of our family," he said. "There are no others that can burrow." And he went on again carefully. Again his nose was pricked, so badly that he could not help crying out.

"Is there any one there?" said a small voice; and a funny little dark head appeared at the end of the tunnel.

"Yes," said Brown-tail. "I was trying to find my way to the hen-roost."

"Ah!" said Prickles. "That is the place I am bound for. I heard the hens cackling, and I know I shall have a feast."

"I'm awfully hungry," said Brown-tail, feeling rather sulky.

"Wait a bit. There will be enough for you and me, too; only you had better not come too close."

"Was it you who pricked my nose?" said Brown-tail.

"Yes," answered the hedgehog. "I'm very sorry. I can't help it. I'm made that way."

Brown-tail sat down, and waited, licking his lips now and then, and thinking how funny it must be to stick prickles into your friends, if they came too close.

At last Prickles reached the roost. A board was pushed aside; and he got in, after calling to Brown-tail to follow.

They had a fine feast, and Brown-tail slipped away; but Prickles, being tired with his hard work, curled up in a nest and went to sleep.

A few days later, as Brown-tail was running round the garden in the early morning, he heard a queer noise.

He was a brave little fellow, so he crept softly up to see what it was.

"Is that you, Brown-tail? And a black nose and two little bright eyes appeared over the edge of a large box.

"What is it?" said Brown-tail.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Prickles. "I went to sleep in the hen-roost; and the master came and dragged me out, and gave me to the children here."

"Don't they treat you well?" said Brown-tail. "You should prick them."

"They are as kind as kind can be, but I don't like being shut up. If I could only get out a little while sometimes, I shouldn't mind."

So Brown-tail began to nibble; and every night, as soon as it was dark, he came back and nibbled; until he had made a hole big enough for Prickles to get out.

"Thank you so much," said Prickles, as he scrambled through.

"One good turn deserves another," said Brown-tail.

"Good-by." And away he ran.—Cassell's Little Folks.

A holy life has a voice. It speaks when the tongue is silent, and is either a constant attraction or a constant reproof.—Hinton.

One secret act of self-denial, one sacrifice of inclination to duty, is worth all the mere good thoughts, warm feelings, passionate prayers, in which idle people indulge themselves.—J. H. Newman.

* The Young People *

EDITOR,

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Prayer Meeting Topic.

B. Y. P. U. Topic.—Conquest Meeting. Baptist Missionary Societies (Foreign).
Alternate Topic.—The glory of obedience. Matt. 21: 28-32.

Daily Bible Readings.

Monday, February 26.—Deuteronomy 2. Time consumed the rebellious (vs. 14-16). Compare Heb. 3: 16-18.

Tuesday, February 27.—Deuteronomy 3. God fighting for Israel (vs. 2). Compare Deut. 1: 30.

Wednesday, February 28.—Deuteronomy 4: 1-40, (41-49). God nigh to Israel (vs. 7). Compare James 4: 8.

Thursday, March 1.—Deuteronomy 5. The fundamentals of the law. Compare Deut. 4: 11-14.

Friday, March 2.—Deuteronomy 6. Duty of teaching this law (vs. 6, 7). Compare Deut. 11: 18-20.

Saturday, March 3.—Deuteronomy 7. Duty of executing the requirements of this law (vs. 2-5). Compare Ex. 34: 12, 13.

Prayer Meeting Topic.—February 25.

The Strength of Humility. Luke 18: 9-14.

The Master has just been exhorting the disciples to perseverance in prayer, and now proceeds to safeguard that exhortation by deterring rash and self-confident persons, who trust in their own merits and not in the grace of God when praying, and to show, by the parable before us, wherein the righteousness in prayer consists.

A CONTRAST.

The suppliants are before us. The self-confident one "stationed himself." The self-abased one simply "stood." Their attitudes seem to reflect their spiritual states. True, the Pharisee had much to be thankful for; everything that he mentions in his address is worthy of gratitude, but instead of manifesting the devout spirit that such things should inspire, he is intoxicated with pride. He arrogantly separates himself from the rest of mankind as being quite superior to them and with a look of contempt upon the poor publican, he thanks God that he has not to stand afar off and hang his head and smite his breast. Why he is not praying at all, he is only talking to himself! Why should he pray anyway? Was he not absolutely satisfied—with himself? There is nothing of prayer in his address, no word of supplication, or request, no one of his vaunted excellencies is ascribed to God's help, for he enumerates all as though they were the natural growth of his unaided nature. "Why, Lord I am not as bad, even as, yonder publican, to say nothing of extortioners." A little distant stands the other man, of sad countenance with heart melted into contrition; a man "angered with himself,"—the chief of sinners, who can only groan "Oh God be merciful to me the sinner." Here is an example of

GODLY HUMILITY.

There is a humility that is not of the Lord. For example when a criminal is discovered in his crime, he may seem to be humble—very humble—and yet all his sorrow be because he is "found out." He does not loath the sin but rather the penalty which it brings. There are many things in life that develop this type of humility, but it works no genuine repentance, for when the occasion of the distress is removed sin goes on just as before. Where godly humility is, there sin is hated in every form because of its "exceeding sinfulness." In John 16: 8 we learn that this conviction of sin is from the Holy Spirit, and must precede the joy of justification. Is not this the state of heart referred to by the Master in Matt. 5: 3?

The publican saw within himself all of the evil that the Pharisee beheld alone in other men. So great was his own sin that all other sinners were lost to him, and he alone is left—the sinner. With this feeling there came upon him a sense of his utter helplessness to make his condition any better. He is in unspeakable anguish, and can only plead "God be merciful." Immediately he knew the joy of being at peace with his God, and he went away strong in the

STRENGTH THAT COMES IN HUMILITY.

It could not be otherwise. Such a prayer moves the heart of the Almighty. Jacob came to a crisis in his life. He feared to meet his brother Esau. Like the publican he too had been a great sinner and was not worthy so much as to lift his eyes to heaven, but in his humiliation he retired into solitude to weep and pray. What else could he do? In desperation he wrestled with the Holy One crying, "I will not let thee go" and anon as he wrestled the darkness rolled away and the "joy of salvation" was the crown of "strength" with which he was crowned in humility. It has always been so, when "they cried unto Him in their trouble He delivered them from all their fears."

Has it not been so in your case and in mine? Did we not spurn His offered blessing many times, and when there was "no eye to pity and no arm to save" He delivered us?

Let us not forget that Jesus is a refuge in every form and time of distress, not that we might presume upon His mercy—God forbid that we should any longer abide in our sin, but rather strive to exercise the grace of humility each day and not only when we are forced to be humble through some deep trouble, for as we observe to walk humbly before Him we shall know by blessed assurance that He will be our guide even unto death.

"If earthly parents hear
Their children when they cry;
If they, with love sincere,
Their children's wants supply;
Much more wilt Thou Thy love display
And answer when Thy people pray."

—M. G. ESTABROOK.

With the Psalmist in Prayer.

The element of prayer is the predominating one in the psalter. "I give myself unto prayer," or "I am prayer," is an expression of the prevailing thought. All the elements of prayer are found here: adoration, thanksgiving, petition, confession, importunity.

Most of the Psalms are purely prayers; but in some of them the writer begins with meditation, as in the 73rd, "Truly God is good to Israel," &c., and keeps this up about half way through; but at the 17th verse he slides out of this mood into direct address to God, "Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places," and continues to the end communing with heaven. This is the proper outcome of reflection on the problems of the soul. When we are weary with the contemplation of the puzzles of life, like that of the poverty of the saint, and the prosperity of the sinner; when we by our own reasonings cannot find the answer, our resource is here:

"I went into the sanctuary of God,

And considered their latter end."

Then the light comes. The prosperity is but for a moment; the lurid flash of divine displeasure gleams above the gilded show of the ungodly, while the guidance and the strength, and the smile of omnipotence are the sure possession of the man who trusts in the Lord. At another time, as in psalm 52, David pours out a torrent of invectives against the tatter'd Doeg, but turns off into strains of confidence that God will bring all things out right, only at the last verse, breaking out into direct address to God:

"I will give Thee thanks forever,

Because Thou hast done it;

And I will wait on Thy name,

For it is good, in the presence of Thy saints."

All the Doegs in the land will not really harm the man who can say:

"I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever."

This confidence in a present, listening, sympathizing, helping Deity, is what we need most of all to catch God, my God, is near. He hears me, He will save me, is the trustful asseveration in this wonderful collection of the soul's outpourings. Our Lord and Exemplar, though full of original expressions, made use of these finely minted ones. We can imagine nothing more appropriate to His mood when He poured out His soul with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death; than the words of the 22nd psalm. The plaintive utterances of the anonymous 71st psalm—the cry of failing flesh and heart—are not wasted on the air. Unlike the querulous strains we have had some times to listen to, this heaven-taught, grey haired lyrist, with placid countenance, repeats his life-long lesson:

"Thou art my hope, O Lord God;

Thou art my trust from my youth.

Cast me not off in the time of old age;

Forsake me not when my strength faileth."

The note is prolonged like that of some trained singer, the sweet melancholy lingering with us:

"Yea, even when I am old and grey headed,

O God, forsake me not,

Until I have declared Thy strength unto the

next generation,

Thy might to every one that is to come."

Old men love the psalter, for it is their prayer book. These saints of the olden time felt their direct dependence upon God, and expressed it. They knew little, and cried "Teach me!" They were bewildered, and besought guidance: "Lead me in a plain path." They were in danger and looked to the omnipotent for deliverance:

"Deliver my soul from the sword,

From the horns of the wild oxen Thou hast

answered me."

The last expression is fearfully graphic; there is not much hope for one in such a position; but sometimes there is an intensity of peril in their strains:

"Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest pit."

Death itself was no obstacle to their God.

"Lighten mine eyes, but I sleep the sleep of death."

They were transgressors of the holy law, and seemed intuitively to bear their sins to the holy one Himself, anticipating the New Testament by a thousand years. For without sacrifice or priest, they confessed to God alone; constantly they did this:

"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid;

I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;

And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

So that their joyous exclamation was:

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

Moreover, they felt that there awaited them a magnificent after-life, and sighed after it, as we do now, and besought their God to guide them into it.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life,

In thy presence is fulness of joy;

In thy right hand are pleasures forevermore."

While we need not to read into the Psalms that which only the gospel makes clear, we must not shut our eyes to the light that is in them, and must beware of the thought that the Holy One of Israel could not, nor did not, impart to the poets and seers of the old covenant most wondrous prospects of coming glory. As a matter of plain words, where is there any more spiritual forecast than this:

"As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness,

I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness,"

that is, when I see thee as thou art.

This serves as a climax to all we have been saying concerning the Psalms we leave our readers at the gate of heaven. The odors of the spice gardens come floating to those who wait at His gates. We are in the world, bowed down with its burden, yet, as we try the old method of sighing towards God, of dropping a tear of gratitude mingled with hope, we are led to understand a little more of the meaning of the words:

"Now know I that the Lord saveth His anointed,

He will answer him from His holy heaven

With the saving strength of His right hand."

Barewood, Feb. 1900.

D. A. S.