

THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN

MORAL MYOPIA.

By Rev. W. J. Jordan.

One of the very frequent physical defects is shortsightedness, a defect of vision due to the fact that the images are formed before the retina. It is a common ailment of several eye diseases, and is often accompanied by aching eyes and divergent squint. It is suggestive of the prevalence of Moral Myopia, marked in the materialism of our day, when the thought is fixed wholly upon the present, and the material, upon that which is near, for the man of the world walks by sight and not by faith. Physical Myopia is always aggravated, and may be produced where there is no pre-disposition, by the habitual accommodation of the sight to a short distance. And when a man can see only what is shown the sense, he by constant looking upon the nearby objects, so accustoms himself to this, that he scarcely dreams it possible to see any distance. How many are living as though this were the only world, this the only life, forgetting that God not only made us for another world as well as this, but that he gave us the power to see the other world and the higher life.

The Holy Spirit comes to convince men of another world, that that other world is after all the real world. In it is God, the judgment seat of Christ, heaven, hell, holy spirits and unholy spirits. As he compares world with world this seems transient and that permanent. He begins to live in sight of the everlasting realities of God. Dr. Shedd says: "Knowledge is the union of a fact with a feeling. There may be a stone in the street, but unless I smite it with my foot or with my eye, I have no knowledge of the stone. So too, there is an invisible world, outstanding and awfully impressive; but unless I feel its influences, and stand with awe beneath its shadows, it is as though it were not. Here is an orb that has risen up into the horizon, but all eyes are shut. If an ethereal and holy inhabitant were to go up and down our earth, and witness man's immersion in sense and time, the earthliness of his views and aims, his neglect of spiritual objects and interests, his absorption in this existence, and his forgetfulness of the other, it would be difficult to convince him that he was among beings made in the image of God, and that he was with a race of beings having an immortal destination beyond the grave."

A writer on Myopia says: "In many cases where it is acquired, it might be avoided by a proper knowledge of, and application of the hygiene of the eye." And this is true of the spiritual realm. Do we know much of that spiritual sense which we call faith? Do we know its laws, its power? Do we know that the mind's eye can be accustomed to see clearly objects far distant? Do we forget that the moral atmosphere of the believer should always be clearer than the atmosphere in which the impenitent man of the world lives? Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Physicians of all countries are of the opinion that myopia is on the increase. Is it true as to Moral Myopia? France and Germany several years ago became alarmed at the results of investigation. M. Maurice Perrin said that from one-tenth to one-eighth of the effective force of the French army are disabled by it for many kinds of service, and Dr. Cohn said that seventeen out of every hundred German children have defective sight, that it increases from grade to grade until in the gymnasia of the universities it mounts up to 59 per cent. This is a great hindrance, but is there not a still greater hindrance in the church when we see so many both old and young who limit their vision to the nearest objects? The Church of God must accustom herself to look above and beyond the present. We need men of good vision, men who can see far

into the future. The prophets were good seers. John's visions in Patmos are ever an inspiration. Every preacher, every man, needs a vision for where no vision is, the people perish.

Do the eyes need testing? God the great oculist, can very quickly remedy any defect if the case is but put into his hands. An oculist who had a sunny office, works of fine art on the wall and the latest scientific instruments for his work, was speaking to a mutual friend visiting him, when an old Scotch lady, blinded with cataracts upon her eyes, was led in. He saw that an operation was necessary and must take place immediately. She returned to the office from time to time for attention and the doctor finally removed the bandages one Easter morning, and she could see. She looked at him, at the furnishings of the office, at the sunlight pouring into the room, and exclaimed: "How beautiful; were all these things here that first day I came?" "Yes, Madam." "Were these pictures on the wall?" "Yes, Madam." And the sun as bright that day as today? "Just as bright." And were you as good looking that day as you are today?" she smiling asked. He admitted it. "Then why did you not tell about all these things that day, for I love such things?" "Madam," he replied, "my care was to give you sight; nothing that I could tell you about would be of much importance until you could see them. Now that you have your sight I will talk to you about them as long as you please." So not until man's spiritual eyes are open by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit can he see the beauties and sweet delights there is in the life which is by faith of the Son of God. Jesus well said "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

—Jerseyville, Ill.

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.

"Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray Thee Lord, my soul to keep."
So the baby learned her prayer,
Kneeling by her mother's chair
In her little bed-gown white;
Said it over every night,
Learning in her childish way
How a little child could pray.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,"
Said the child, a maiden grown;
Thinking, with a backward glance,
How the happy past had flown
Since beside her mother's knee,
With a child's humility,
She had said her simple prayer,
Feeling safe in Jesus' care.

"I pray Thee Lord, my soul to keep"—
Yet the words were careless said,
Lightly had the hand of time
Laid his fingers on her head;
In life's golden afternoon
Gay the bells and sweet the tune,
And upon her wedding-day
She had half forgot to pray.

"Now I lay me down to sleep"—
How the words come back again,
With a measure that was born
Half of pleasure, half of pain;
Kneeling by cradle bed,
With a hand upon each head,
Rose the old prayer soft and low
As a brooklet in its flow.

All alone, with bended head,
She had nothing but her dead;
Yet with heart so full of care,
Still her lips repeat the prayer,
Rest at last, O storm-tossed soul,
Safe beyond the breakers' roll;
He, the Lord, her soul shall keep;
Now she lays her down to sleep.

In the midst of our cares and anxieties we shall be as children gathering round the fire on a dreary night. Knowing our Maker's world our home, we shall fear no evil; for where home is, there the heart is satisfied and untroubled.

LIGHT AT EVENTIDE.

The Rev. J. B. Mullan preached his farewell sermon in St. Andrew's Church, Fergus, on July 7th. People had driven long distances to be present and there was a very large gathering. The News Record says that neither men nor women made any pretence of concealing their emotions and representatives from other churches were as deeply affected as regular worshippers. Mr. Mullan's text was "At evening time it shall be light." No matter in what direction he looked, nor at what he looked, the memories of the past were bright. He had been in the ministry 45 years and had passed 36 years in Fergus. During that time he had officiated at 400 weddings and over 300 baptisms. Of those who had begun work with him only eight remained. "Now that I am left almost alone," he proceeded, "I cannot think of any shadow in all these years, except the funerals of the good and pure. Your kindness has been uniform and no congregation could have treated a man better than you have treated me. There is not a thing I would wish to have had different." The confidence shown in him by the Church at large had brought him much joy. So did the outlook on the Twentieth Century with its movements aiming at the abolition of war, the union of the various branches of the Church of Christ, and the evangelization of the world. "Everything cheers me, and I am thankful that God has spared me to see it all. When with the words, 'Farewell, brethren, farewell,' he closed his discourse there was a hush and deep emotion among his hearers.

In the evening a union meeting was held in Melville Church, the pastor of which, the Rev. J. H. MacVicar, paid Mr. Mullan a generous and well deserved tribute, saying in part: "In his popular discussions of special themes everybody knows how full and accurate his information has been, as well as how memorable it has been made by his gift of expressing himself in a style that sparkles with the perpetual effervescence of his own original bent of mind. Things said by Mr. Mullan long years ago are still fresh in the mind as if they had been said only yesterday. This faculty of putting things has given real distinction to his ministry, as well as the fearless, uncompromising, outspoken fidelity he has shown to the cardinal principles and practices of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—a Gospel which he has been in the habit of expounding with a picturesque definiteness, definiteness and directness peculiarly his own. More still, through his large-hearted catholicity of spirit and genuineness as a man among men, Mr. Mullan has endeared himself to us all. His steady advocacy of the Temperance cause, the preservation of the Sabbath, Church Union, and kindred movements have contributed not a little to the durability and value of our social, moral and religious fabric."

Mr. Mullan drew men to him because he had the amplest charity for their faults and the greatest appreciation of their virtues.

The influence that he exerted would be impossible in a short pastorate. It would be a pity if in any scheme of church union no provision should be made for remaining as long as conditions were mutually satisfactory.

What a vast portion of our lives is spent in anxious and useless forebodings concerning the future, either our own or that of our dear ones! Present joys, present blessings slip by and we miss half their sweet flavor, and all for want of faith in him who provides for the tiniest insect in the sunbeam. Oh, when shall we learn the sweet trust in God our little children teach us every day by their confiding faith in us!