

WHAT CHILDREN OWE TO CHRIST.

(By Rev. R. P. MacKay, D.D.)

Palestine is a small country, and, for centuries before the days of Christ upon the earth, was surrounded by the most powerful nations in the world. Greece, Rome, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, were great military powers and figured largely in the world's history. Yet the Hebrews who lived in Palestine, a mere handful, were the only people in the world who had reverence for childhood. Roman law authorized the father either to abandon or kill his children, if he did not care to rear them. The children who were retained in the home were nursed by slaves, and from them learned all manner of cruelty and vice. The Hebrew mothers nursed their own children, and carefully trained them in the history and religion of their own people.

In Greece, children who were sickly or weak in body were placed in a cave to be torn by wild beasts, or to die of hunger or exposure. The Hebrew regarded all children as the heritage of the Lord. When children were born, they were presented to the Lord in the temple, with thank-offerings, and the day of their birth was commemorated in the family as a glad event.

Greek and Roman philosophers and orators, such as Cicero and Plato and Aristotle, said that if a child died young, it was no cause for grief; if it died in the cradle, it was no cause for concern. A child, they said, belonged more to the state than to the parents, and if it did not give promise of being strong enough to serve the state, it might be destroyed. On the other hand, the most touching passages in Hebrew literature are those relating to the grief of parents in the loss of their children. Their idea of a prosperous and happy city was to have many boys and girls playing in the streets. How did the Hebrews come to be so far in advance of all the other nations? Because the Spirit of Christ was the Spirit of the Old Testament prophets.

But the best had not yet come. The New Testament grew out of the Old, and surpasses it in the appreciation of children as in all else. Jesus came as a child, and the angels announced His coming. Wise men came from the East, with gold and other treasures, and worshipped Him in the manger. When Jesus grew up, He took children into His arms and blessed them. He identified himself with the children, and said, "whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me." He placed a little child in the midst of the disciples and said, "Ye must become as a little child." This was the coronation of children. From that day to this, wherever the gospel is preached, the children are blessed. Laws are made to protect them, schools are opened to teach them, books and papers and pictures are prepared to entertain and instruct them, parents and all grown up people are instructed to love them. All this has come from Jesus Christ, who was Himself a Child and is still the Friend of Children. No prayers are offered which He more tenderly regards than the prayers of children. No praises are sung that please Him more than the praises of the little ones He came to save.

Make it a rule and pray to God to help you to keep it, never, if possible, to lie down at night without being able to say: "I have made one human being, at least, a little wiser, a little happier, or a little better this day."—Charles Kingsley.

We are very foolish to attempt to entertain two guests so hostile to one another as Christ and Satan. Christ will not live in the parlor of our hearts, if we entertain the devil in the cellar of our thoughts.—C. H. Spurgeon.

BE CHARITABLE.

The little that I have seen of the world and know of the history of mankind teaches me to look upon their errors in sorrow, not in anger. When I take the history of one poor heart that has sinned and sulked, and represent to myself the struggles and temptations it passed through—the brief pulsations of joy, the tears of regret, the icebleness of purpose, the scorn of the world—that has little charity—the desolation of the soul's sanctuary, and threatening words within, health gone, happiness gone—I would fain leave the erring soul of my fellowman with him from whose hands it came.—Dr. Chalmers.

Love does not entitle us to treat those we love with a roughness we would not use to strangers. And yet many people act as though love did justify any ugliness of temper or speech. Brothers and sisters often quarrel among themselves over things about which they would not quarrel with other children. Parents sometimes speak roughly to their own children for offenses which they would view leniently in other people's children. We are constantly taking liberties with those we love. But what sort of love is this that makes us less rather than more considerate? Bad temper is justified toward no one, least of all toward loved ones.—Forward.

OUR THREE FOLD SECURITY.

(By Bennie Brae, Ottawa.)

Kept by God, our Heavenly Father,
Over shadowed by His love,
Storms may come, and clouds may gather,
God is on His throne above,—
And His mighty boundless power,
Keeps and guards us every hour.

Everlasting life is given
Each believing trusting one,
We shall reach our home in Heaven,
Kept by Jesus, God's dear Son.
Heirs with Christ, complete we stand,
And none shall pluck us from His hand.

Great temptations may attend us,
Enemies rise like a flood;
Still trust on, He will defend us
By the Spirit of our God,
'Gainst foes a standard He will raise
To keep us safe, and guide our ways.

Kept by Father, Son and Spirit,
None can hurt us, naught alarm,
Peace and safety we inherit,
Sure defence from every storm.
Bound by bands which none can sever,
We are safe, now and forever.

THE HARDEST FIGHT.

This grace of silence under trial is one of the most rare and difficult graces; but it is one of the most pleasing to God and most conducive to strength and beauty of Christian character. None of us loves to suffer and we all shudder at the sight of the probe or the amputating-knife. But when the infinite love is engaged in cutting out a selfish lust or cutting off a diseased limb, our duty is to submit. Ah! the battlefield often requires less courage than the hospital! The onset of service, with drums beating and bugles sounding, does not so test the mettle of our graces as to be thrown down wounded, or to be commanded to lie still and suffer. To shout a battle-cry at the mouth of the cannon is easier than to put our hands on our mouths and be silent as to explanations of trying probations because "God did it." If He vouchsafes, let us be silent in our final submission. God knows what is best for us; that is enough.—Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler.

FORGIVENESS.

Some Bible Hints.

If a man prays the Lord's Prayer with an unforgiving heart, he prays that he may not be forgiven (v. 12.)

Those that say "I'll forgive, but I will not forget," never forgive (v. 14)

Why does God's forgiveness of us follow our forgiveness of others? Because the humble and loving may safely be pardoned (v. 14).

Why cannot God forgive those that do not forgive others? Because they cannot receive a blessing they know nothing about (v. 15).

Suggestive Thought.

It takes two to make a quarrel but not to make a forgiveness.

Never be satisfied with your own way of forgiving until you would be satisfied if God should adopt it toward you.

Those that are themselves most inclined to certain sins often seek to atone for it by bitterly condemning others for the same sin.

It is easy to forgive the wrongs done you, but hard to forgive the wrongs done God, you are safe in this matter.

A few illustrations.

A forgiveness that does not forget is like those half erasures that render the error more conspicuous.

A Christlike mind is like the ocean, that closes over a cannon ball, and as if it had never fallen there.

Some men are mirrors to an insult, and reflect it back; others are sensitive plates, and record it in a permanent photograph; others are fluorescent plants, and are merely excited to radiance.

Forgiveness that covers only part of the wrong is like two fingers given in a handshake.

To Think About.

Is there any one whom I have not forgiven?

Has God been able to forgive all my sins?

Am I finding it easier or harder to forgive those that wrong me?

A Cluster of Quotations.

May I tell you why it seems to me a good thing for us to remember a wrong that has been done us? That we may forgive it.—Charles Dickens.

Only the brave know how to forgive; it is the most refined and generous pitch of virtue human nature can arrive at.—Laurence Sterne.

Let no one despair of God's mercies to forgive him, unless he be sure that his sins be greater than God's mercies.—Jeremy Taylor.

"He does well who does good
To those of his own brotherhood;
He does better who does bless;
The stranger in his wretchedness;
Yet best, of all, best of all doth he
Who helps a fallen enemy."

DAILY READINGS.

M., July 2. Practical forgiveness. Prov. 25: 21-28.
T., July 3. Heart forgiveness. Prov. 24: 17, 18, 28, 29.
W., July 4. The unforgiving servant. Matt. 18: 21-35.
T., July 5. Our divine example. Luke 6: 31-37.
F., July 6. Without limit. Luke 17: 1-4.
S., July 7. Of one mind. 1 Pet. 3: 8-11.
S., July 8. Topic—Forgiving and being forgiven. Matt. 6: 14, 15.

Take Christ for your strength, dear soul, He will give you power. Power to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil; power to crucify every besetting sin, passion, lust; power to shout in triumph over every trouble and temptation of your life; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—D. L. Moody.