

PLEASANT HOURS.

The Dawn of Easter.

Forth from heaven there passed two angels,
Down to earth on swift wing sped,
Bearing unto men glad tidings,
"Christ is risen from the dead!"

When the first faint beams of morning
Touched the eastern sky with gold,
They had hastened to the garden.
From the tomb the stone back rolled.

And when Christ came forth triumphant,
Nevermore with death to bide
He who lowly stooped to suffer
Now for ever glorified—

Then within they watched and waited
For the coming, sad and worn,
Of the friends who, bringing spices,
Sought the Saviour's tomb at morn.

How they soothed their fear and trouble,
Bade them spread the word of cheer,
"Christ is held of death no longer!
Seek him not, he is not here!"

And to us, through ages ringing,
Have the blessed tidings sped,
"Fear ye not, the grave is conquered!
Christ is risen from the dead!"

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Methodist Book and Publishing House, Toronto.

C. W. Coates, 2176 St. Catherine St., Montreal.

S. F. Hunter, Wesleyan Book Room, Halifax, N.S.

Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, APRIL 10, 1897.

"HE IS NOT HERE."

How unexpected was this announcement to the women who were still seeking to show regard for their dear Saviour. They could scarcely wait until day-break, but hurried on through the twilight to bear precious spices to the Saviour's tomb. They still expected to find the body of Christ where Joseph had laid him. Their mission was that of unfeigned love. What startling news when the angel said, "He is not here, he is risen." At first their minds were confused and could not be satisfied. They feared that he had been stolen from the grave, but still they felt that he had power over death and the grave. So he had. He came forth from his narrow prison. He arose the first fruits. He triumphed. He thus subdued his enemies. He put to confusion the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. He was no longer the mean, contemptible Nazarene of former days. He now is the wonder of wonders. Nature seemed to be in close harmony with the spiritual. Jesus the spiritual sun shed his glory o'er a darkened world. He broke the power of reigning sin. "He is not here" indicated that he was somewhere. He was not overcome, neither disqualified for the greatest trials. He triumphed after all human vengeance had been expended.

EASTER JOYS.

What especially has afforded the world joy and peace? It was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. There was joy on his advent, and angels joined in the glad refrain, "Glory to God in the highest." There is real joy also after Jesus suffered the agonies of the cross to see him come forth victor over death and the grave. How sad were all his disciples and friends to see him suffer and die! How dark the world was

the Son of man expired on the cross! What a solemn stillness brooded over the holy city as Joseph took him down, and laid him in his rock-hewn tomb! With what sadness all who loved him spent that night and the succeeding day! Grief had settled down on many hearts who had learned to love the Prince of Peace. But, oh, the joy, when it is announced on the morning of the third day that "He is not here, he is risen." Though doubts were mingled with fears, yet how great the joy when the fact is fully declared! Then the darkness fades before the rising light. Then gloom departs like mist before the sun. Then sorrow flies from despondent hearts, and joy and peace begin their loud acclaim, "All hail, all hail!" Oh, what a load is lifted from the despondent friend to know that Christ the Lord is risen from the dead, and has conquered the powers of eternal darkness and woe.

It is joy even to-day. The Christian rejoices in such a Saviour. The Christian Church hails this day with anthems of praise, for it declares her victory over the great enemy of sin. It makes the demon of despair rage and quake at this strong potentate, who fears neither death nor the grave. With what joy we should celebrate this festival. How appropriate to consecrate one's self to his service as an offering of joy for his salvation.

AN EASTER MESSAGE FOR THE YOUNG.

BY MRS. LILIAN KELLYN (L.A.D.)

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." —Isaiah 53: 5.

Easter Day seems to me the very gladdest of our Christian festivals. I think it is like passing out of the gloom and darkness of a dreary winter's night into the soft, clear brightness of a beautiful spring day, when bird and tree and flower are glad and gay together. Yes; but there is more than earthly sunshine to make our Easter Day so bright. You know Easter is kept in memory of the greatest day our world has known, and though nearly nineteen hundred years have passed since the first Easter Day, yet the wonderful story of what happened then is as fresh as ever.

We have just been specially remembering a very sad event in the life of that precious Saviour whose birth into our world we were celebrating with thankful hearts at Christmas. Ah, what a wonderfully loving life his was! Not a very long one, though to some of you who are only nine or ten years old, thirty-three years may seem a very long time. But how much of sorrow and suffering there was in it! And why? You know, don't you, why it all was? Our text tells us. Shall we read the whole of it? It is one verse out of many lovely ones in the same chapter—verses which are full of hope and encouragement and glad thanksgiving for you, as you sadly think of all the wrong things in the past, and wonder how you may come to God and be forgiven. You may come through this Jesus, of whom the whole chapter is full. It is just for his sake that God will receive you, and send into your hearts the sweet sense of his favour and forgiveness. I cannot tell you with what pleased readiness the great Father's ear catches the faintest whisper of his dear Son's name from the lips of any who are really wanting his help. But now let us read the whole verse, and see what it teaches us.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Surely this is good news! You could not have thought of anything so good if God had not written it down in his own book. Here is one who has stood in your place, and borne the penalty of your sin. Think of it! And that one is God's dear and only Son. Yes, he has suffered instead of you; for the next verse tells us that we have all "gone astray" like poor wandering sheep. Instead of following in the steps of our Good Shepherd, we have gone on in our own wrong way. Do you not feel that this has been often true of you? And so, because we cannot save ourselves, or make an atonement for sin, "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

There is a sense in which these words are true of everybody. It is quite true that Christ died for all—but everybody is not saved. Perhaps some of you are not, as you read these lines. These precious words cannot be a glad message to you until you take the Lord Jesus to be your own Saviour. Will you not do it now? God has laid your iniquity upon him. Remember the precious Saviour was "wounded" and "bruised"

and "charred" for you during those terrible hours in the garden of Gethsemane, when "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood." Ah, you can never tell how much he suffered there! but it was almost more than even he—the divine Saviour—could bear. Well may you love him with your whole heart's love for what he has done for you. Picture him climbing slowly and sadly the slopes of Mount Olivet, and submitting to all the shame of a death on the cross in order that he might save you. And now, if you are truly sorry for the wrong things in your hearts and lives, which have so often wounded the Saviour afresh, God says you may each of you put the little words "my" and "I" into the verse. Let us do it now: "He was bruised for my iniquities, the chastisement of my peace was upon him; and with his stripes I am healed." Yes, even I, a poor little sinful child—"with his stripes I am healed." Oh, if you can say this, you will indeed have a glad Easter-tide!

You can bring no thank-offering this Easter to the Lord Jesus so acceptable as yourselves; and then you may bring all sorts of loving deeds done to everybody you can, as grateful thank-offerings to the love which has saved you. I heard some pretty words the other day which I think I must tell you, and I should like all of you who have already given yourselves to Jesus to remember them every day:

"Loving deeds, for Jesus' sake,
Now our best thank-offering make."

God bless you all, dear little ones, and give to each a joyous Easter-tide!

A BOY'S MANNERS.

"His manner is worth a hundred thousand dollars to him!" This is what one of the chief men of the nation lately said about a boy. "It wouldn't be worth so much to one who meant to be a farmer, or one who had no opportunities, but to a young college student with ambitions, it is worth at least a hundred thousand."

The boy was a distant relative of the man, and had been brought up by careful parents in a far-off city. Among other things he had been taught to be friendly, and to think of other persons before himself. The boy was on a visit to the town where the man lived. They met on the street, and the younger, recognizing the elder, promptly went to his side and spoke to him in his cordial, happy, yet respectful way. Of course the man was pleased, and knew that anybody would have been pleased. The sentence above was the outcome of it. A little later the boy came in the room just as the man was struggling into his overcoat. The boy hurried to him, pulled it up by the collar, and drew down the wrinkled coat beneath. He would have done it for any man, the haughtiest to the poorest.

The boy has not been in society a great deal. He has not learned orthodox selfishness. He positively can't be easy at the table until his neighbours are waited on; a chair is torture if he thinks anyone else is less comfortably seated. He wouldn't interrupt to let loose the wittiest or most timely remarks ever thought of. He may learn to do so some day—after he has earned his hundred thousand—but it is doubtful. The expression of his kindness may become conformed to popular usage, modified, refined, but the spirit which prompts the expression will only grow with his years.

Do not misunderstand, boys. You may wish to do things for others, and yet feel that you do not know how. The only way to learn is to try; to hesitate for no feeling of bashfulness or awkwardness, but to put into direct and instantaneous practice whatever kind, helpful thoughts occur to you.

EASTER EGGS.

When I was little, like most of you, my pets, it was always a great mystery to me why eggs were used so freely on Easter Sunday. When you break an egg at breakfast on Easter, you are doing just what Roman boys and girls did centuries ago, for they began the first meal of the day with eggs, and the egg was looked upon as a symbol of the resurrection and the future life. The giving of an egg is considered a mark of friendship, and the preparing of it is always a work of love. The Russian salutes a friend on Easter morning with, "Christ is risen," and offers him his Easter egg, and in some parts of Scotland it is said to be the custom for young people to go out early on Easter morning and search for wild fowls' eggs to be used at breakfast, and it is thought lucky to find them.

The confectioner's windows are full of fancy candy eggs, but far prettier are the ones made and decorated by skillful little fingers. Care should be taken, however, that the designs are tasteful and appropriate, and that no ridiculous groupings are painted on them.—Christian at Work.

The Legend of the Easter Lily.

BY KATHERINE NEWCOMB.

In the gloom of early morning
Which precedes the coming day,
Ere the fuller rays of sunlight
Fade the lingering stars away,
Came the two with spiccs laden,
Perfumes rich and rare and sweet,
Love's last offering brought the Marys,
Love's last gift for His dear feet.

Forth they came in swift confusion,
For the stone was rolled away,
And the empty tomb and graveclothes
Found they where the dear Lord lay.
As they ran to tell his loved ones,
"Christ, the Lord, is risen indeed,"

Mary Magdalene wept softly,
And her tears fell like the seed—

Like the seed along the wayside
Fell her tears upon the sod;
Forthwith sprang the Easter lily,
Lifting high its head to God.
"He is risen!" sang the Marys,
As with flying feet they speed,
And the nodding lilies answer,
"He is risen—is risen indeed."

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

APRIL 18, 1897.

Abraham into Canaan.—Genesis 12, 1-8.

FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL.

Abraham, though born of idolatrous parents, became a most eminent man of piety. God designated him as "My friend." The answers obtained to his prayers were the most remarkable on record. His name at first was Abram, but the change was made to Abraham by command of the Most High. You know the passage of Scripture which says, "Them that honour me, I will honour." Abraham's career is an illustration of the truth of this statement.

DIVINE CALL.

This call was a test of faith and of obedience. Abram was to leave home and go to a strange country, of which he knew nothing. To obey was an act of strong faith. How would any of our juvenile members like to be thus commanded? If you will read the text carefully, you will see how remarkable is the command, and how strong Abram's confidence must have been, to render cheerful obedience. Learn this important lesson, that to obey God is always better than sacrifice, and is moreover sure to receive reward.

THE PROMISE.

Verse 2. Had he remained at home, there was no probability that he would attain to any particular distinction, but now see, he is to be the "father of a great nation." Nothing could be more satisfactory to Abram than the promise now made. God knows what will suit his children best, though he does not always literally grant them their requests, but what he does grant is always for the best, though in some instances it may require strong faith to comprehend the blessing implied in the gift.

SECOND PART OF THE PROMISE.

Verse 2. "I will bless thee." This may mean all manner of blessings. "Godliness is profitable unto all things." "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich." It tendeth to prosperity and long life, and is always a satisfying portion. Nothing else produces contentment. Covet earnestly this best gift.

PROMISE OF GREATNESS.

On leaving his own country, he renounced every prospect of becoming conspicuous, even in his own family. The promise implies that he would receive ample compensation for any sacrifice which he would make in connection with his father's house. Whatever Christians may lay aside, or deny themselves of, God will reward them abundantly. It may be even in this life an hundredfold, and in the world to come life everlasting.

HE WOULD BE A BLESSING.

Every good man is a blessing to the community in which he resides. Religion is not merely for present enjoyment, but to benefit others. His example is to allure all with whom he comes into contact, to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same thing. Thus it was with Abram, and so it should be with us.