

all is over, verse 40. Worry not the Master to take an unnecessary journey. Before there is time for the father to realize the sad news, Jesus, (St. Mark v. 36) overhearing the words, comforts him, verse 50. "Fear not, only believe," etc. Let not unbelief gain the mastery. It matters not to "the Lord and Giver of life" if she is what you call dead. And now they enter the house, what a scene! St. Matt. ix. 23. It was usual to make preparations for the funeral almost immediately, so that probably the hired mourners and the flute players, who played mournful music, had commenced their noisy lamentations, compare 2 Chron. xxxv. 25; Jer. ix. 17, 20; Amos v. 16, but suddenly it turned into mocking laughter, verses 52-53. Jesus saw how speedy was to be the awakening, so He says, "She is not dead but sleepeth." He can wake the dead as easily as we can a sleeper. St. John v. 28; 1 Thos. iv. 15, 16; but "they laugh him to scorn, knowing that she was dead," verse 53.

3. *The Ruler's Daughter Living.* At this exhibition of heartless unbelief, Jesus has the house cleared of all except the bereaved parents and His own chosen three, Peter, James and John, who afterwards were His witnesses at His transfiguration, St. Matt. xvii. 1, and of the agony in the garden, St. Matt. xxvi. 37. With these He enters the chamber of death; He stands by the bed. He gazes at the ruin of His work, wrought by sin, Rom. v. 12, then, St. Mark v. 41, taking the hand of the dead child, He says tenderly, in the very words that her mother may have often roused her in the morning with, "Talitha cumi," which means, "My child get up." Her spirit returns, she rises up off the bed and walks. No wonder they were all "astonished." Jesus bids them give the child some food, and thus is shown the reality and completeness of the miracle. How thankful the parents would be! and naturally be likely to tell all their friends how the Lord had showed mercy on them, but He charges them to keep it quiet. No doubt for a good reason. Now let us see what this miracle reminds us of. (1). *The sleeping of death.* Souls that are drifting on in sin, neither hearing God's voice nor seeing His hand are, as it were, asleep. Happy are they if they hear the call "awake," see 1 Cor. xv. 34; Ephes. v. 14. Again, when the life work of each is done, but sooner or later, we shall be sleeping in our narrow bed. Death is called a sleep, see 1 Thes. iv. 14; Dan. xii. 2. Blessed are those who die in the Lord for they are at rest, see Heb. iv. 9; Rev. xiv. 13, in the paradise of God, but this sleep shall not last forever, there shall be (2) *a great awakening*, when this shall be no one knows, St. Matt. xxiv. 36. Be it ours to watch and be ready, St. Matt. 42-44. On that Resurrection morn all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and the dead shall be raised.

Then O my Lord prepare,
My soul for that great day,
O wash me, cleanse me, in Thy blood
That flowed on Calvary.

Family Reading.

LENT! WHAT IS IT? SHALL WE KEEP IT?

The season of Lent is one which is very precious to Christians. The great struggle of our Master for us is then so evidently set before us.

The Church of Christ on earth has a commission to proclaim, the whole counsel of God. She may not teach one or two truths, however important they may be, and leave others out.

It is for this reason that in the Christian year, the Church has set before her children, in order, the whole work of Christ for man's salvation.

We have been led to the cradle of Bethlehem to rejoice in a Saviour's birth; we have been taught in the guiding star that he came for all people, for the Gentile as well as the Jew; and now the thought of sin is pressed upon us: He came because we are sinners, and the Church asks us to go apart with Him into the wilderness, and see Him wrestling there against sin for us. Surely it is good for us to be there!

But do you say, *Why should we keep Lent?* we ought to think of our sins all the year round. True! no doubt we ought, and the more you do, the more you will feel the value of Lent.

The merchant keeps his accounts all the year round, but he balances up at the end of the year; and, if we follow the example in spiritual things which they set us in worldly things, we shall have a better knowledge of our sins, and go more earnestly to the Cross, and it is through the Cross alone that we can have true Easter joy.

Shall we keep it? Our own sinful hearts say no.

The world laughs at the idea and says no! and many a half hearted would-be Christian holds back and gives an uncertain answer. They have no doubt about keeping *Christmas*; no doubt about keeping *Easter*; but *Lent* is a different thing. They would share in the joy but not in the Cross. Surely the true Christian would answer yes! we will follow Jesus in His Temptation and in His Passion, that we may follow Him in His victory and in His Glory.

But *How shall we keep it?* Look to our Blessed Lord in the wilderness, and try by His help to bear some of the toil of that conflict with Him. Give some time for special *Self-Examination*. Find out whether you are making any real Christian progress and pray more than you have ever done before, for His grace to keep and strengthen you.

Learn to practice Self-Denial. The Church has left her children free to make their own special rules; because, what is *Self-Denial* to one may be luxury to another. Only bear in mind that the object of all *Self-Denial* is "To keep under the body and bring it into subjection," lest the flesh should get the mastery over the spirit.

This should be the great struggle of the Christian life, and in that struggle *Lent* will be a welcome help. The Christian who thinks of his own pleasure and his own comfort before his Master, can never follow Him of whom St. Paul says—"Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

WEE JEEMSIE.

A SCOTTISH STORY, FOUNDED ON FACT.

Wee Jeemsie was one of the little boys that ran about the railway station in Greenock, selling the *Evening Telegraph*. He had a peculiar way—quite his own—of crying, "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" It was familiar to everybody near the station, and to all the regular passengers arriving by the afternoon trains. Many knew the cry who had never observed Wee Jeemsie himself.

He was not much to see. His companions called him "Wee Jeemsie" because he was so very small. He looked the more minute from his tattered habiliments having all belonged to bigger people. His wee, pinched face was almost hidden under an old greasy cap, that might have been thrown away by a railway stoker. From the trousers he wore, the original legs had vanished; but what was left was enough to come down to Wee Jeemsie's knees, where they terminated in a ragged fringe, from under which appeared his spare limbs and little, hacked feet, bespattered with the mud of the dirty causeway. An old jacket—probably his father's once—hung loosely about him, like a ragged coat. Had you tried to button it, the buttonhole would have gone round his shoulder to his back. But probably there was no button anywhere upon it. Here and there it was fastened with bits of string. When the weather was wet, Wee Jeemsie had plenty of room under his ragged jacket to keep the papers dry. And there he always was, running about the entrance to the station on the arrival of the afternoon trains, crying, with his peculiar cry, "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!"

There was a little shop near the station, where Wee Jeemsie ran when he wanted change. The girl behind the counter—Betsey Barr by name—a young damsel, about head and shoulders taller than Wee Jeemsie, was very kind to him, as she saw that he was sometimes cruelly treated by the bigger boys. As Betsey went on Sundays to a mission school, that had been opened in the Vennel, she got Wee Jeemsie to go with her; but he was so restless and mischievous, and made the other boys laugh so much, that after being warned again and again by the superintendent, he was at last dismissed as incorrigible, greatly to Betsey's distress. But, poor boy, he had no one to encourage or train him at home. His mother was dead, and his father was given to drink. Betsey, however, behind the counter of the little shop, was as kind to him as ever.

That was the time when the Greenock 'bus used to run, before the days of the tramway. The guard of the 'bus seemed to have a general aversion to news boys, and a special aversion to Wee Jeemsie. But

when the 'bus was waiting for the train, and the guard was not looking, Jeemsie would dart up, mount the back steps, and cry eagerly in: "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" He seemed to have one eye for business and another eye for the guard; for the moment the guard looked round, Wee Jeemsie was down and off like a shot, flinging up his heels and crying, as he looked back triumphantly, "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" Sometimes, when the guard went into the neighboring public-house, and there was no immediate danger, Jeemsie, when he failed to find any purchaser for his papers used to sing. His favorite performance in this line was a song called "My Cuddie and me," the chorus of which involved the imitation of a donkey's bray, which Jeemsie achieved in so amusing a fashion that the people in the 'bus used to laugh, and sometimes one or two threw out a halfpenny for him.

Jeemsie, however, began to be afflicted with a cough, caught through exposure. His father, when drinking, used to take poor Jeemsie's coppers from him to buy drink. Jeemsie, when he had failed to sell his papers, was afraid to face his father without any money, and would lie out in some close all night. This exposure brought on a severe cold and cough, which became so bad that he became unable to sing his favorite song, the imitation of the donkey provoking the cough and compelling him to stop. Still, however, he plied his trade with the evening papers, though his voice began to lose the cheeriness of its old tone when he cried: "Eve-nan Telegraph a ha'penny!" There was an effort now, and something even of sadness in it.

About this time his friend, Betsey Barr, was taken to Glasgow by her employer for several months. Betsey was more attached to the friendless little boy than she knew till she was away from the daily sight of him and the daily sound of his familiar cry.

When she got back to Greenock, arriving in the afternoon, her first thought on reaching the station was about Wee Jeemsie. Descending the broad steps toward the street, she expected every moment to catch sight of him, or at least to hear his "Eve-nan Telegraph, a ha'penny!" She had a penny ready in her hand, intending, when she saw him, to buy a paper and give him the other half-penny to himself, "for auld lang syne," as she said. But, though she heard the other boys shouting, she watched in vain for the familiar cry of Wee Jeemsie.

Turning up the street with eye and ear on the alert, she at last accosted another boy, whom she had often seen racing with Jeemsie from the news paper offices with fresh editions of the paper to see who would reach the station first. This boy, in answer to her inquiry, said he heard that Wee Jeemsie was ill; "lyin' wi' the cough," he said.

Betsey was concerned at this news, and was about to put some further questions, when the boy, catching sight of a likely customer, darted away.

Betsey felt so anxious about the friendless boy, that she went straight to the place where he lived.

Reaching the dark and miserable close, she saw his father sitting smoking in a back court; and though his face was turned from her, she could see that he had been drinking. Ascending the narrow and dirty stair to the attic, she met Jeemsie's little sister at the top, crying bitterly, and apparently hesitating whether to go up or down.

"What ails you?" said Betsey, in a tone of sympathy. "What's wrong, Gracie? Is Wee Jeemsie here?"

"Ay; he's in there," sobbed the child, pointing, "but, oh! he's far through. Betsey, Betsey," she cried, "what'll I dae! I'm feart to go doon to father; he's awfu' cross; and I'm feart to bide."

All the time she was speaking, Betsey heard a painful coughing in the garret behind. She took the child's hand, and went in.

There in the wretched garret, lying on some straw, lay Wee Jeemsie, wasted away to a skeleton, and evidently dying. His coughing had ceased, and he lay back, utterly exhausted, looking as if he were dead.

Betsey bent over him and said, "Jeemsie!" and again "Jeemsie!"

He raised his head with difficulty, as if to listen, and then sank back again. Betsey knelt down