

The Christian's Anticipation of Future Happiness.

Have we not all felt that the *thought of anticipated happiness* may blend itself with the work of our busiest hours? The laborer's return, released from toil—the schoolboy's coming holiday, or the hard-wrought business man's approaching season of relaxation—the expected return of a long absent and much loved friend; is not the thought of these, or similar joyous events, one, which often intermingles without interrupting our common work? When a father goes forth to his "labour till the evening," perhaps often, very often, in the thick of his toils the thought of home may start up to cheer him. The smile that is to welcome him, as he crosses his lowly threshold when the work of the day is over, the glad faces and merry voices, and sweet caresses of little ones, as they shall gather round him in the quiet evening hours, the thought of all this may dwell, a latent joy, a hidden motive, deep down in the heart of hearts, may come rushing in a sweet solace at every pause of exertion, and act like a secret oil to smooth the wheels of labour. The heart has a secret treasury, where our hopes and joys are often garnered, too precious to be parted with, even for a moment.

And why may not the highest of all hopes and joys possess the same all-pervading influence? Have we, if our religion is real, no anticipation of happiness in the glorious future? Is there no "rest that remaineth for the people of God," no home and loving heart awaiting us when the toils of our hurried day of life are ended? What is earthly rest or relaxation, what the release from toil after which we so often sigh, but the faint shadow of the saint's everlasting rest—the rest of the soul in God? What visions of earthly bliss can ever, if our Christian faith be not a form, compare with "the glory soon to be revealed?" What glory of earthly reunion with the rapture of that hour when the heavens shall yield an absent Lord to our embrace, to be parted no more from us for ever? And if all this be most sober truth, what is there to except this joyful truth from the law to which in all other deep joys our minds are subject? Why may we not, in this case too, think often, amidst our worldly work, of the House to which we are going, of the true and loving Heart that beats for us, and of the sweet and joyous welcome that awaits us there? And even when we make them not, of set purpose, the subject of our thoughts, is there not enough of grandeur in the objects of a believer's hope to pervade his spirit at all times with a calm and reverential joy? Do not think all this strange, fanatical, impossible. If it do seem so, it can only be because your heart is in the earthly, but not in the higher and holier

hopes. No, my friends! the strange thing is, not that amidst the world's work we should be able to think of our House, but that we should be able ever to forget it; and the stranger, sadder still, that while the little day of life is passing—morning, noontide, evening—each stage more rapid than the last—while to many the shadows are already fast lengthening, and the declining sun warns them that "the night is at hand, wherein no man can work," there should be those amongst us whose whole thoughts are absorbed in the business of the world, and to whom the reflection never occurs, that soon they must go out into eternity, without a friend, without a home.—*Caird.*

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