

A ROYAL DWELLING-PLACE.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High" has a royal dwelling-place. This is a bold figure, representing the soul of man drawing very near to God. As one may dwell in a tent or a house, the soul may dwell in God. A man's dwelling-place is the place where he finds shelter from the storm and comfort in the coldest weather, the place where he eats his food and gets nourishment for his body, where he throws off all restraint and reveals himself as he is. It is the place where he pours out the best of his feelings and thoughts of his heart in the ears of those who know him and understand him, the place where he feels perfectly at home because he is at home.

The soul finds in God shelter, protection, comfort, sympathy, life. The soul finds its home in God. The psalmist says, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations."

But man's dwelling-place is something more than a tent or a cottage or a palace. We cannot live in a vacuum. No man can live in the finest house on earth unless he shall dwell in the atmosphere, the element which ministers life to his body. The atmosphere touches us on all sides at all times. We take it into our lungs. It purifies our blood and feeds us with oxygen. We live in the atmosphere and cannot live out of it. In like manner we live in the light of the sun. The sun is many millions of miles away, and yet it is so near that it touches us on every side as the atmosphere does. It enters into the body through the eye and gives us light. It destroys germs of disease, and gives us health. It is the fountain of life, absolutely necessary to our life.

So the soul dwells in God. This is not a mere figure but a glorious reality. The supernatural touches us on every side as the atmosphere and enters into us. When the soul of man is in its proper element it dwells in God. As the rays of the sun beat gently against our bodies the Spirit of the living God throbs about us and enters into us and gives us light and life. He is our vital breath, our native air. "In him we live, move, and have our being." As in a vast ocean of light and love we dwell in God.

My God, my Life, my Love,
My everlasting All;
I've none but Thee in heaven above,
Or on this earthly ball.

Thou art the sea of love
Where all my pleasures roll,
The circle where my passions move,
The centre of my soul.

But God is not a mere element like the atmosphere. He is a living, thinking, loving person of infinite intelligence and power. How can the soul of man dwell in the spirit of a living being? We can understand how a man can dwell in a tent or an atmosphere or the sunlight, but how can one person dwell in another? How can mortal man dwell in the living God? It is, indeed, a mystery; but there are many mysteries which are nevertheless manifest realities.

One human soul can dwell in another human soul. The soul of the mother lives in the soul of her child. They twain are so completely one that if they were separated it would be like taking a plant or a tree out of the ground in which it lives and grows. Two friends may live in each other. They have one mind, one heart and one soul. Their lives are so closely bound up together that when some ill befalls one the other shares the pain, and when one dies the light of the other's life is taken away. They twain are one. Thus we may understand what is meant by being "in Christ." The soul of the Christian is united to Christ by a mystic tie which is stronger than chains of gold. To be a Christian is to abide in Christ. It is not merely a visit to the sanctuary once a week, or drawing near to the throne of graces every day, but dwelling in God continually, by night

and by day, in sorrow and in joy.

Some do not dwell in God, but are far away by wicked works. They are not content nor happy. They are not at home. They are not in their proper element. They are often homesick for God, as the prodigal was homesick for his father when he came to himself. He felt that he was born for something better than the far country.

Do we know what it is to dwell in the secret place of the Most High? Some have lived in this royal dwelling-place. The way is open for us all to enter in and be safe. Let the homesick soul turn to the secret hiding-place to-day, saying:

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.
—New York Christian Advocate.

DECLINING "OPPORTUNITIES."

When the Devil cannot injure a man in any other way, he sometimes does so by persuading him to accept an opportunity for doing good. It is a great mistake to accept a call to do good when we could do better by leaving it alone. This truth is well brought out by a sentence in a letter from one of the most active and efficient Christian laymen in this country. In reply to one who had urged him to render a certain large and needed service to others, he replied, in declining: "I realize what an opportunity I am missing; and yet it seems right to miss even great opportunities for the sake of doing a little more thoroughly a lot of things that I am already committed to and am in danger of doing inadequately." In such a decision lies the secret of many a man's greatest usefulness to God and men.

FREELY GIVE.

"Give and to you shall be given,"
Thus did the Master say;
Scatter the seed of blessing
While it is called to-day,
Pass on the wondrous treasure,
Spare of thy garnered gold;
He that is rich in giving
Shall reap a thousand-fold.

Blessed are they that listen,
Blessed are they that heed
The Master's call to service,
The world's sad cry of need.
The loving heart's devotion
No gift can e'er deny
To Him, the royal Giver,
The Lord of earth and sky.

Vain are the lives of pleasure,
Empty the hearts and cold,
Which, richest stores receiving,
Claim all to have and hold.
Thy debt of love and duty
My soul! How canst thou pay.
Go serve, and I love, and follow,
Begin to live to-day!

THE SIN OF POSTPONED DUTIES.

Deferred duties usually mean neglected duties. In this field, accumulated is the enemy of accomplishment. Accumulated dividends may be a very good thing, but they are never earned by allowing unfinished tasks to pile up on us. When we have to admit that there are a score of duties that have been awaiting our attention for days and weeks or months, and that ought to have had our attention long ago, we may at the same time safely admit that something is wrong with our plan of life. The whole trouble lies in our not doing today what we ought to do today; and that results from two sins: Misusing some of our time, and wasting some of our time. The right selection of our tasks, and the intense concentration on our tasks, will put a stop to the fatal accumulation. No one has any right to stagger along under the burden of unfinished tasks that ought long ago to have been put out of the way.—Selected.

The man who is willing to owe his fellow when he has the ability to pay has reduced stealing to a virtue.

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH GOD.*

By Robert E. Speer.

"And Enoch walked with God," the preacher said. "Yes, he walked with God. He didn't run a spell and then get tired and sit down. He walked right along with God." A great hearty voice in the gallery chuckled aloud at the idea of running a spell with God and then sitting down and letting God go on alone. The preacher was Dr. Cuyler, long years ago, and the man who was so amused was Mr. Sankey. They were both men who walked all the year through with God.

That is the comfortable way. One learns the step of the friend with whom he always walks and keeps it more easily. If we let God's step become unfamiliar to us, we shall not be able so easily to take it up again. If we grow accustomed to it we shall find ourselves unable to do without it or to walk at all when we cannot walk with Him. "It is not as it used to be," thought the old man who walked now alone ways where another had always walked with him. "It is not as it was. The world is not that world any more, and none of the ways are cheered and bright as they once were. I miss a step with me." God forbid that this year's ways should be lonesome and dark to us because we try to walk them alone, without God.

With God no ways are to be feared. The new year's roads are untrodden. No man has laid them out far, and those which he has sought most zealously to prepare will probably never know his footsteps. Some which lie before us are tortuous, some straight and steep, some along dizzy heights with far outlooks and deep perils. We are madmen if we try them alone without the Guide who knows and who wants to walk with us through all the days. No emergency, no late wanderings on the road after nightfall when the day's journey is long, no confusing crossways, no enemies that wait where the road shuts in and the travellers are few need cause us any fear if we are walking with God. We have the everlasting consolation, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

If the thought of God is not yet habitual with us, now, at the year's beginning, is the time to begin to make it so. When we awake, let us say, "I will begin to-day with Thee, O God. Be present in my heart all day. Whenever thou hast no duty for my mind which requires all its attention, be present in my thought. Help me to see that often during the day my one duty is to fix my mind upon Thee. Let all my blessings to-day remind me of Thee, and may each failure and each success only teach me the more clearly that without Thee I am nothing and that with Thee I have everything."

And thus beginning the day, let us put forth effort to keep ourselves through the day in the remembrance of God. We shall find a score, if not a hundred opportunities to say to the Companion who is always there: "Yes, I do not forget that Thou art with me. I will still walk with Thee."

And as we form all our judgments, think all our thoughts, conceive all our desires, speak all our words in the companionship of God, we shall find that the peace of God which passes all understanding shall guard our hearts and minds, and all life will be to us a heavenly comradeship.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—In his work (John 9:1-7).
Tues.—In my labor (Eph. 6:5-20).
Wed.—In my home (Josh. 24:14-24).
Thurs.—In my church (Heb. 10:19-25).
Fri.—With my Bible (Psa. 1).
Sat.—With his Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26).

When a man and his millions are parted by death no tongue can say what will become of either.

*Y. P. Topic: Sunday, January 2, 1910
—Through this year with God. (Num. 9:15-23; 10:10.) A New Year's