

Family Department.

ADVENT.

HARK the glad sound! the Saviour comes,  
The Saviour promised long;  
Let every heart prepare a throne,  
And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoners to release,  
In Satan's bondage held;  
The gates of brass before Him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,  
The bleeding souls to cure,  
And with the treasures of His grace,  
To bless the humble poor.

Our glad Hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
Thy welcome shall proclaim,  
And Heaven's eternal arches ring  
With Thy beloved name.

—DR. DODDRIDGE.

"NOT MY WAY."

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

By T. M. B.

[Continued]

On the morning following his stroll with Percy in the 'Lime Walk,' John had left Oxford by the earliest train, and had reached Longmoor before sunset. Never had his noble old home welcomed him, he thought, in greater beauty. The trees in the park were still clothed with russet foliage, on which the setting sun cast a warm and yet tender light; a tame doe trotted gently up to him as he entered the avenue as if to bid him welcome. How sweetly home-like it all was to the young heir of this fair domain. Filled with emotions that were half pleasurable, half sad, he paused to look around him before proceeding to the hall. He had not sent word of his arrival, which he had indeed but determined upon the previous day, and was therefore not expected, and he had preferred walking from the station, which was but a couple of miles distant. Here in the avenue he stood for a while lost in thought; he had taken off his hat to let the home breeze blow upon his forehead. It was a broad, thoughtful forehead and a noble, though not strictly a handsome face; a most unexpected vision to Sybil Barrington, as she, at that moment, entered the avenue from the side of the park which she had traversed on her way from the Rectory to Carruthers Hall.

Surprise made her stand silent for an instant, and then, with a little eager cry of "O John, can it really be you!" she held out both hands to him. A deep flush of sudden joy over-spread John's face as he grasped the little hands in his. "Sybil" was all he said, but the gladness was unmistakable; and somehow Sybil realized more fully than she had ever done before that she held a large place in the heart of John Carruthers. Her colour deepened also as they stood thus for a moment hand in hand, and John felt with a swift thrill of delight that his coming had brought the brightness to the beautiful honest eyes and the face which to him was fairer than any on earth. They turned towards the hall together, and many anxious questions were put by each to the other. "I am so glad you have come," said Sybil; "your father has not seemed at all himself of late; O, it will do them both so much good to see you. Dear Nell has been wonderfully well, for her, and tries so hard to cheer him. Indeed, John, she is more an angel than a common mortal." "Yes," said John, with a smile and a sigh, "she has always seemed to me, as far back as I can remember, as though she were all ready for another world and only held here by her love for us."

"And Percy was well, quite well, you said," said Sybil presently; "dear fellow! how I long for Christmas—and, by the bye, John, I hope you will see Mr. Ray while you are here. I have not written half enough about him." "I have but to-morrow

to stay," replied John, "but I must see him if possible. I was more than glad for all our sakes that you were fortunate enough to get him and that the governor gets on with him so well." "You will soon see for yourself how easy it is to do that," rejoined Sybil; "one feels confidence, perfect confidence, in him; trouble of any kind would bind him to you. Yes, we were fortunate indeed. And is not Percy glad? Naughty boy, his letters are so short, he does not half answer mine, but then he has to work so hard." "Of course he is glad," said John, passing over the last part of Sybil's remark; "he must feel, as we all do, about seeing your father's work continue to prosper. The people have thoroughly taken to him, Nell writes me." "Yes indeed, and even the Coomb people, whom dear father never could do much with, seem to be friends with him, but then, you know, what his work in L. was; he has had so much experience among the most hardened." "True, and I thought it might have unfitted him for work of another kind; however, Nell herself and the governor seem to take no less kindly to him."

Arrived at the Hall, Sybil proposed to go in first and break the news of his son's arrival to the Squire. "It might not be well to startle him," she said softly, as with a gesture of her hand she bade John remain in the portico until she called him. "Dennis would be sure to exclaim at sight of his young master, and the library, where the Squire was wont to sit, was within hearing. No need for Sybil to enquire whether Miss Carruthers was visible: the servants at the Hall recognized her as almost a member of the family, and loved her one and all. With a smile and a kindly word of greeting, Sybil glided past the old butler into the library, where the Squire sat in an easy chair drawn up beside a cheery fire; opposite him Nellie's couch had been placed, and Sybil could hear her friend's low, clear voice reading to her father. The well-known tap at the door made her look up, and she welcomed Sybil with one of her bright smiles. "We've been looking for you all day," she said; "father has been feeling a little dull and wanted you as usual. Do you know, Sybil, I am almost tempted to be jealous now and then," she continued, while Sybil went over to shake hands with her old friend. "Only it would not answer to quarrel with you. What makes you look so bright this evening? You know I understand all about faces, and yours has news in it—pleasant news; what is it, Sybilla, wise woman—what do you bring?" "What would you like best to hear?" answered Sybil, looking at the Squire as she spoke; "supposing I brought you news of John? what would you give me, Squire, if I told you that John was coming down to see you?" Mr. Carruthers' face, which of late had grown older and somewhat pinched, brightened with a look of expectation. "I should call you our carrier-dove, the bringer of good tidings," said the old gentleman. "And do you know papa," said Nellie, between whom and Sybil a subtle Freemasonry of signs had passed, "I should not wonder if this sly girl had actually brought him with her and had hidden him somewhere outside." "What! is my dear boy really here!" exclaimed the Squire, rising from his seat. "Yes, sir, he really is; I can produce him at a moment's notice, but I thought I would not let him come in when you were quite unprepared to see him." Then Sybil ran out and, while Dennis stood wondering, returned with John.

Sybil had intended returning home in the twilight, but Nellie insisted now on her remaining. John would walk home with her in the evening and give Mrs. Barrington Percy's messages. It was an evening long remembered. Sybil did not ask herself the reason of the happiness which for the first time since her father's death stirred in her heart, while to John his own feelings had long been clear. There would have been no drawback to the happiness of being again in Sybil's society had it not been that the change in his father's health was, after these few months' absence, painfully apparent to the son, to whom he was inexpressibly dear.

(To be Continued.)

AWAKE thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life—the Lord is at hand.

THOUGHTS FOR FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

XXVI.

"And that knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

The Church's year has opened. She blows the trumpet in Sion, proclaiming the solemn time which has begun, the time of preparation. She sends the note of warning through the world. "The night is far spent," she cries—"The day is at hand." Already the Day Spring from on High begins to kindle the East with the promise of His coming. "Behold the Bridegroom cometh." Let us put on the armour of His children, the armour of Light, and go forth to meet Him. He comes to us first as a little child, a little helpless babe, yet One to whom we are to do lowliest homage, One at whose coming we are to rejoice with joy unspeakable, for this is He whom the Prophets foretold, this is He of whom men of God in all ages longed for with an infinite longing, seeing Him afar off with the eye of Faith. We are to make ready the guest chamber of our hearts to receive this wondrous babe. It must be cleansed of sin, and garnished with Faith and Love, that when he comes, he may be fitly cradled there. The time of Advent is given us for this.—And it is given us for something more than this, for there is coming a time when He whom we look for will come in another guise—not as a helpless babe whom we can unfold, as it were, with our human affections, while at the same time we wonder and adore—but as an infinitely dreadful Judge, before whose face the mountains will flee away, and the earth tremble at the look of Him. Before whose face the unprepared will stand speechless, and will be consumed by the Brightness of His Presence!

The Love and the Severity of God! The Love that brought Him down from the Heaven of Heavens to take upon Him the form of a servant, to be born in the likeness of men, that He might raise men to His Own Likeness—the Love that even now is waiting, it may be, one year more, to see whether, even yet, we may not bring forth fruit to His Glory! The Severity of God.—Justice no longer tempered by compassion, but come as a consuming fire to destroy the adversaries of God. To think of these two Comings day by day—to dwell upon them in humble Faith, is the work for Advent. And if the first Coming fill our hearts with thankful gladness—with adoring love responding to that which "first loved us," then we shall learn to rejoice with great joy, at the thought of that Second Coming, and in the perfect love which casteth out fear, shall pray "Thy Kingdom Come."

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS.

37. Show that there is no inconsistency between salvation by faith and spiritual blessings by Holy Baptism. Rom. iv. 5, taken with Rom. vi. 1-4; Gal. iii. 26, 27.

38. What is meant by "faith," in this passage from Galatians?

39. In the Apostles' days, what faith was required in order to receive the blessings given in Holy Baptism? Acts viii. 37.

40. Show how the Church carries this out in her practice.

41. Give some commands concerning Holy Baptism which include infants. St. Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 38, 39.

42. Give probable instances of infant baptism. Acts xvi. 15, 33; 1 Cor. i. 16.

43. What is the legitimate inference from such passages as Eph. vi. 1; and Col. ii. 12 compared with iii. 20.

44. Answer the objection that infants cannot receive blessings in Holy Baptism because of their unconsciousness of such reception.

45. Mention two Jewish customs, one having reference to Jewish children and the other to proselytes from heathenism, both of which are in favour of infant baptism; and elaborate these customs into arguments.

46. Show, from two instances, that these who demand express statements from Scripture commanding the baptism of infants, do themselves things which the Scriptures do not command.