

Family Department.

ABSENT.

By G. A. HAMMOND.

Though distance divides us, our spirits shall meet, At the foot of the Cross, in communion most sweet. When we pour out our hearts to our Saviour above, And weary and faint, are refreshed by His love. How near to each other, bowed reverently there, At the feet of the same loving Father in prayer: With one heart, one devotional life, making known Kindred wants, to the same great and beautiful Throne. How full of consoling, how glorious the thought! He hears us, will answer, hath loved us, hath bought: Will protect us, will bless; keep us safely as kings, In His fortress of love, 'neath the shade of His wings. What is there can harm us, when God shall defend? We are weak—yet how mighty! on Him we depend. Who shall wrest from His love, what He purposed to keep. When He laid down His life for the least of His sheep? O, then let us frankly and freely confide. Every anxious desire to this Friend fully tried: Let each trembling emotion repose on His love, We shall bless Him on earth, we shall bless Him above.

THE BROKEN MILESTONE.

(Concluded.)

But I was sorrowed to see how worn and old and neglected were most of the mile-stones—and above all, how many were broken down and shattered by the heedless crowd. I turned to my companion and lamented this. "My son," sighed he, "they would none of His counsel: they despised His reproof." I lunged to see what had become of the travellers who had turned back on their journey; and I asked the aged man for tidings of them. A sweet smile lighted up his whole countenance as he said, "Blessed are they that do His commandments; for they shall enter in through the gates into the city!" Then he bade me turn my glass in another direction; and methought I saw plainly a highway, straight and narrow, marked out by mile-stones white and glistening. These also bore inscriptions; but the few travellers who were journeying by this road (which my guide told me was called the King's Highway) had no difficulty in deciphering them: all was written plainly and legibly in letters of gold. The inscription on the first mile-stone was— "This is the way; walk ye in it: turn neither to the right hand nor the left." On each mile-stone, too, a cross was deeply graven; and as I looked, I remembered that "Crosses are ladders that do lead to Heaven." My guide now bade me notice those who travelled along the King's Highway. Some there were young—some old; but unlike those who were journeying by the crossed pathways to the Temple of Self, these were all pressing one way, and all their faces were turned eastwards; many seemed travel-worn and weary—some almost fainting by the way; but such as these were gently helped along by their fellow-travellers. These travellers too bore burdens on their shoulders; but there was a great difference between their burdens and those borne by the other travellers whom I had been watching. As each of the travellers along the King's Highway came near to a mile-stone, it seemed to me that his burden grew smaller—nay, so little did its weight seem to oppress him, that I felt sure some invisible Hand must have helped him. As each traveller came near to a mile-stone, I noticed too that he began to sing; and presently I distinguished the words— "Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee; Even though it be a cross That rests me, Still all my sin shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! Then let my way appear Steepest unto Heaven;

All that Thou sendest me, In mercy give; Angels to beckon me, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!

I listened entranced; but ere long my companion spoke, and bade me turn my glass away from the blissful scene, to contemplate again the hurry and confusion which prevailed amongst the other travellers.

Mournfully I obeyed him, hoping nevertheless, almost against hope, that oil might have been poured on the troubled waters; but alas! the hurry and confusion seemed only to have increased; the restless turmoil was greater; the eager striving for the foremost place was more marked; the devotion of every aim and aspiration of the thronging multitude to the worship of Self was more intense.

But now it seemed to me that since I had gazed on the King's Highway, my sight had become clearer, for I saw clearly towards what an unsubstantial edifice the multitude was hurrying. I seemed to see through, nay, even beyond, the Temple; and shuddered as I saw that what appeared to the travellers a stately temple—a fitting bourn and resting place after their long journey—was in reality naught but an alluring veil, to entice them to the very verge of a ghastly precipice, towering over a fathomless abyss, into which the travellers must inevitably be precipitated!

My eyes filled with tears. I started up, longing to rush to warn, if it were but one of those who were rushing onwards to destruction; but behold, as I rose to my feet, the whole scene changed! The Temple, the awful precipice, the restless travellers by the crossed roads, the King's Highway, with its fair white mile-stones, my kind old guide—all—all had vanished, and I stood alone in the midst of the barren upland, still gazing at the broken mile-stone!

Alas! methought, as I journeyed on my homeward way, gracious warnings, despised, golden opportunities wasted, hidden blessings unused, are so many broken mile-stones left behind us as we run life's journey! Why—why do we despise the warnings and the crosses, sent in mercy, to draw us nearer Heaven!

Melancholy thoughts had arrested my feet by the broken mile-stone; and my heart was sadder still as I turned away from it, with a heartfelt prayer that my footsteps might ever be guided in the King's Highway, far from the frightful precipice that yawned beneath the Temple of Self.

SACRA PRIVATA.

Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven—"This is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. iv. 3.

Thou hast sent us into the world, not to do our own will, but Thine. O subject my will to Thine. May Thy name be honored by the good lives of Christians. O that I may have respect unto all Thy commands. May Thy will revealed unto us in Thy Holy Word be the rule of my will, of my desires, of my words, life and actions.

Give us this day our daily bread.—"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Joh vi. 27.

Give us the bread which came down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Lord, give us evermore this bread. May we never deprive ourselves of this food, which will preserve our souls from death, and restore life unto our bodies. Give us the necessities of life; but, above all, the bread that nourisheth to eternal life.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.—"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Luke vi. 37.

Grant, O Heavenly Father, that I may close with this merciful condition of pardon. Thou hast been all mercy to me, O God; grant that I may be so to all others. Blessed be the Lord, who has put our salvation into our own hands. May Thy grace, O Father, give me a heart every ready to forgive.

THE PLYMOUTH BRETHREN.

"My church has got into trouble," said a good young brother to us the other day. "What is the matter now?" we asked, somewhat vexed that we could not find one minister that was free from trouble. "Why an excellent sister is leading the members astray. She is a Plymouth brother."

"What?" we asked. Having told us she happened to be a Plymouth brother, he said that with her associates she had come to declare that sin was not an evil, that the Law was not binding on us, that the Lord's Day had no sanctity, that the churches are of the Devil, that the ministry should be abolished, that the unconverted should be left to look out for themselves, with sundry unscriptural notions which the sect known as "Plymouth Brethren" have taken up. There are few communities where the heresies of this class of people have not taken root, and where they are not working mischief. They are embraced by a peculiar class of our church members—not the active, faithful workers, not the men and women who have on their hearts the upholding of Christ's kingdom, but the goodies—the quiet, good, excellent do-nothings, people who have nursed their own piety so long that they do not know there is anything else in the world to be taken care of. And when these good people get wrong, it is hard to right them. They are so sure, so conscientious, so self-willed? They are the saints; the earth is theirs, and the Lord runs the universe pretty much on their account. Because they are free from the curse of the Law, they believe themselves under no obligation to obey the commandments. They claim to be above the Law. Carried out fully the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren would lead to the entire disregard of the Christian Sabbath, an abandonment of Christian missions, and in the end to open vice. We are afraid of people who have got above the law.—Watchman. (Baptist.)

WAS IT A DREAM?

Our readers may have seen an allegory not long since. A certain minister (as John Bunyan used to say) "dreamed a dream." He was hitched to a carriage and attempted to pull it. He reached a point not far from the church, when the mud seemed to get deeper and deeper, the carriage drew so heavily that he gasped for breath and almost sank down exhausted. This seems the more inexplicable when, looking back, he saw the entire congregation behind the carriage apparently pushing it along. But the more he tried the harder it became, till finally he was forced to stop and examine the difficulty. He went to the rear, where he supposed was the congregation, but nobody could be found. He called, but no answer. He repeated the call several times, but no answer. By and by a voice called out, "Halloo!" and, looking up, whom should he see but one of the vestrymen looking complacently out of the window, and upon going to the door of the carriage, what was his astonishment to behold the whole congregation sitting quietly inside.

A curious dream, was it not? and yet not all a dream. Many a minister has to pull the whole Church, not a soul giving a helping hand. How is it in the parish you live in? Who is aiding the minister to do good?

The heart of a child is easily won. Love begets love. Love children and they will love you. Let children feel that you care for them, and you are interested in all that interests them, that you sympathize with them in all their sorrows, rejoice with them in all their joys, show you are their friend, and have the key to their hearts. Teachers, do you wish to be loved by your pupils? Love them. Children read hearts intuitively.

"Thou shalt keep me secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues." Not only can the strife of tongues not enter into the sanctuary, but also can it not penetrate the heart that is so imbued with the spirit of the sanctuary as to be always hearkening for the true "music of the spheres," always ready to turn to God, whenever released from immediate and necessary occupation.

"When you are doing, for pure Christian motives, a thing that makes you a great deal of trouble, and gets you no applause, you are trying to live just that unworldly life that the first Christians did. They were called a peculiar people, and whoever acts in the same spirit now-a-days will be called the same."

Let a mother approve of a child's conduct whenever she can. Let her show that his good behavior makes her sincerely happy. Let her reward him for his efforts to please, by smiles and affection. This approbation from his mother is to him a great reward.

Our London Letter.

(From our own Correspondent.)

The Pope has written a letter to the Archbishop of Dublin on the present state of affairs in Ireland. In it he advises his spiritual subjects in language tempered to their condition and susceptibilities.

He holds it to be their absolute duty to use every caution that their fair name for the probity natural to them may continue unsullied, and that they may commit nothing rashly by even ostensible disobedience to legitimate power. After pointing out that the Roman Pontiffs had ever at heart the interests of Ireland, and "to make Irish Catholics follow the Church as their guide and mistress in all things," the Pope refers to the various acts of himself and his predecessors in modern days with a view of directing their aspirations towards improvement, always without violating public order. "We have confidence," he proceeds, "in the equity of those who rule the empire and who are wont to combine experience with prudence in the affairs of Ireland, and therefore will be able with greater certainty and success to attain her ends if, avoiding every cause of offence, she rely on means sanctioned by law. Therefore you, venerable brother, and your colleagues in the episcopate, endeavour that the people in these crises may keep within equity and justice." These words have a double value and significance at the present time. They dispel any remaining doubt as to the attitude assumed by the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church towards the illegal acts now being counselled in Ireland by the agitators. Coming, too, from the highest ecclesiastical dignitary recognized by the majority of the Irish people, the sound and sensible advice now offered to them will bear no suspicion of being dictated by any motive other than a regard for their welfare.

I believe that it is quite on the cards that the full embassy to Rome will be revived, and the Queen's Government placed again in closest relations to the head of the Catholic Church. English action in this matter has been due to Protestant prejudice, which has blinded the eyes of men to the plainest fact. After all, the Pope is a great power, whether we like it or not. It was Pius IX. who shook Mr. Gladstone's Government to its fall in 1873 and those who are in the secret say that had our present Premier sought a word from Rome herself instead of relying upon a compromise with ecclesiastics in England, he would have avoided what turned out to be a great blunder. Doubtless the house would see clearly enough the need for closer communication with the Pope. We have seen he is just now rendering us some service in Ireland. But it is not so very certain that the house would consent to create a place for Sir Henry Layard. Or rather, it is certain that there would be a "big row." So perhaps the Roman scheme will not come off after all.

Bishop Goodwin, in his annual pastoral letter to the clergy of the diocese of Carlisle, refers to the case of the imprisoned Ritualists. He says it is quite certain that every instance of a clergyman being imprisoned by reason of a suit connected with matters of ritual shakes the position of the Church of England, and causes the Church to play into the hands of the Liberation Society. As matters now stand, he is disposed to think that almost any amount of grievance to parishioners is a less evil than the remedy which the law seems to supply. Some persons seem to think that the repeal of the Public Worship Regulation Act would be a cure for their troubles; but it was manifest that these troubles did not begin with that act, and would not end with its repeal. Should such events as we have lately witnessed become common, no reasonable man can doubt that a catastrophe is well nigh certain, and the result would be the triumph of those principles to which the clergymen in question are most opposed, and the Church of England would lose that breath and that spirit of toleration which is now one of her chiefest blessings, and her pride to boast. One of two things may happen if these troubles are not abated. On the one hand, the Church may remain established at the expense of being thoroughly Erastianised; on the other hand, it may be disestablished, and then it will exchange its grand position as the Church of the whole nation, with the breadth and com-

prehensiveness which such a Church must necessarily possess, for the position of a sect, within which only one colour of ritual and doctrine will be tolerated. Great Churches have fallen by pride or wealth, or supposition, or carelessness, from their high state into terrible and apparently hopeless degradation. Therefore, they should do well to consider their present troubles as a solemn call to consider their ways. The imprisonment of several clergymen is a sufficiently distressing fact for the mind of anyone who has an appreciable amount of right feeling; but after all, the fact is like a crack in the wall of an old Church, its chief significance being that it is an indication of impending ruin if the wound be not healed. If he had any influence with the clergymen brought under the hard hand of the law, he would try to persuade them even now to submit to those placed over them in the Lord; submit under protest, if they pleased; submit with a determination to strive for some alteration in the law if they thought right; but anyhow to submit while the storm was raging round the ship, and while her safety depended upon the discipline and concert of her crew.

Mr. De La Bere, the deprived priest of Prestbury, is not going to retire into private life without a struggle. While Mr. Dale and Mr. Eamont are knocking at the door of the Queen's Bench and the Court of Appeal, he takes his case into banquetry. To-morrow Mr. Horace Davey will move the master of the Rolls that Lord Penzance may be deprived of his power of deprivation, and suspended from suspending, because of the incompetency of his court. The points raised will not be precisely the same as those in the Dale case. Mr. Dale is the victim of the Public Worship Regulation Act, but Mr. De La Bere is the martyr of the other law known as the Church Discipline Act. But practically the argument in both cases will come to the same thing. Mr. Davey will again submit that Lord Penzance is the new judge of a new court, exercising a new jurisdiction.

As straws show which way the wind blows so it must be regarded as a sign of the times when the exclusive organ of the privileged classes, both in Church and State, the Morning Post—gives currency to an epigram like the following on the distablistment question:—

Penzance, by Thomson named and Tait, To bind together Church and State By Worship Regulation, Accustomed only to divorce, Is sure to bring, in speedy course, Judicial separation.

Not being able, even with Mr. Gladstone's hearty assistance, to make the deceased wife's sister into a lawful wedded wife, the champions of marital privilege propose to get a resolution out of her. The resolution will probably set forth that, in a parliamentary sense, she is 45 years of age, and ought by this time to be allowed to choose her own mate, and even to be settled comfortably at her brother-in-law's fireside as his wife.

Lord Beaconsfield was not able to entertain his friends on Wednesday night, the reason being attributed to the workmen; but it was no fault of the workmen: it was the extensive nature of the decorations which made it impossible for them to finish in time. His lordship wishes to be surrounded with glory and gilt. He is no patron of the sad art of the modern decorator. He does not care for semitones and demi-semi-tones in wall paints and ceilings. If he has a weakness it is for those florid loves which decorate some of the roofs of the palaces of that Venice where his family first made its mark. He likes florid art; and he has in effect ordered his decorators not to spare gold-leaf and gum. This is a sort of work which, tastefully done, demands time; and since the late Premier sought splendour he has to wait for it to be wrought for him.

Since Cotwayo has been in prison he has learned to write, and now proudly signs his own name in printed characters, which he regards as an artist does a work of his highest science. Bishop Colenso has sent home some of these autographs to the Aborigines' Protection Society. The writing is firm, open, bold and clear. It shows that the august prisoner has hardly yet got beyond the stage of straight lines, and that, like a child, he desires his print to be big and plain. But it is really good writing for one who has been learning for so short a time. The de-throned king, by the way, spells his name Cot-y-wayo.

REPENTANCE without amendment is like pumping out a ship without stopping the leaks.—Palmer.