

## BE COMFORTED.

WHOEVER has hung over a grave's mouth, and heard the dull rattle of the earth as it fell and covered up the remains of a beloved relative, can comprehend the need of consolation at such a painful moment. Ah, there I have seen a strong man weep who never wept before; and when all was over, and it was needful to return to the desolate hearth, what a bitterness was life, bereft of all that could render it a joy! At such an hour there is only one instrument of music that can be endured—only one that can dispel the horror of great darkness brooding over the soul—it is the chime of bells on Christ's garment, speaking of immortality and resurrection and the glory of the redeemed. Harken to the symphony: "Thy brother, thy sister, thy father, thy mother, thy wife, thy husband, thy son, thy daughter, shall rise again. I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death, and of the unseen world. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither doth the sun light on them, nor any heat. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

As the heart listens to this sweet melody, its pain is soothed, its empty aching removed. The thought of the happiness of the departed becomes a comfort to the one left behind. Murmuring is changed into resignation; the bitterness of parting into the anticipations of a joyful re-union; and the traveller bids himself again for his journey heavenward—lonely somewhat, but not without consolation, because of the cheering notes which fall from the fringe of the great Intercessor's robe.

It was the sounding of these bells, telling of immortality and unfading joys, which led one to say, as he gazed on the cold, marble-like face of his dearest earthly friend, "Though the turning of a straw would recall him to life on earth, I would not turn that straw." Another declared that the delight which he experienced, as he listened to those bells on the morning after a dear son had breathed his last, was so great, that if he had had children to lose, he would willingly have parted with one every week to obtain such heavenly comfort. And assuredly if faith's ear were unstopped, and on the alert to catch the notes, how often would the bereaved Christian be like the Highland mother, who, singing the high praises of God, helped to carry the body of her drowned boy into her now childless home!—From "The Highway of Salvation."

## SINCERITY.

BY sincerity I mean very much more than truth-telling. I know people whose word can always be trusted, and who never break a promise, yet who are not through and through sincere. Sincerity in character is like transparency in crystal. It is character without a flaw to hide, with no desire to appear better than it is, and it is not afraid to let itself be open as the day, for the day to shine through.

Absolute, rigid, uncompromising principle in all essentials is the rule of the sincere. Courteous consideration, generous self-forgetfulness, and kind approbation, is equally the rule of the sincere. I cannot refrain from warning my readers against gushing. Think when you are writing that letter to that beloved friend whether you mean all you say. Say nothing you do not feel sure you mean. Too many ardent intimacies burn themselves out; too many life-long friendships grow cold through the fierceness and fervour of the sentiment on which they are built. They are like fires of chips or brambles, not like deep, smouldering furnace-heats.

"Faithful," says the Holy Book, "are the wounds of a friend." It is the kiss of an enemy that is deceitful. I believe that between the best friends there are times when plain-speaking is necessary; but when there is a solid foundation of mutual trust, it will never give offence.

"Sine cera—without wax. Being in reality what it seems to be—not hypocritical or pretended, nor simulated." So says the lexicon. Please look up the word for yourself, with all its synonyms.—*Sunday school Times.*

## THE DEBT TO MOTHER.

MOTHERS live for their children, make self sacrifices for them, and manifest their tenderness and love so freely, that the name mother is the sweetest in human language. And yet sons, youthful and aged, know but little of the anxiety, the nights of sleepless and painful solicitude which their mothers have spent over their thoughtless waywardness. Those loving hearts go down to their graves with those hours of secret agony untold. As the mother watches by night, or prays in the privacy of her closet, she weighs well the words which she will address to her son in order to lead him to a manhood of honour and usefulness. She will not tell him all the griefs and deadly fears which beset her soul. She warns him with trembling, lest she say overmuch. She tries to charm him with cheery love while her heart is bleeding. No worthy and successful man ever yet knew the breadth and depth of the great obligation which he is under to the mother who guided his heedless steps at the time when his character for virtue and purity was so narrowly balanced against a course of vice and ignominy. Let the dutiful son do his utmost to smooth his mother's pathway, let him obey as implicitly as he can her wishes and advice, let him omit nothing that will contribute to her peace, rest, and happiness, and yet he will part from her at the tomb with debt to her not half discharged.

## "I'VE GOT HOME."

"I'VE got home," said my little two-year-old sister, as she returned from having spent the day away, that her innocent prattle and baby noise might not disturb our sick mother. She came running to her bedside, and exclaimed, with eager delight, "I've got home!" The joy that filled her little heart burst forth, as going from one to another, she repeated the words, "I've got home."

How those words, coming from that childish voice, have echoed in my ears since. Often, when tossed about on the billows of life, I have longed to step inside this loved retreat, this family Bethel, and breathe from an overflowing heart, "I've got home!" These words speak of dangers passed, of hardships endured, of wanderings ended. We can rest now. We can put off the travel-soiled garments, the robes of formality, the restraints of society; the masks of worldly policy are out of place here; conventional garbs are unnecessary; the atmosphere is unsuited to them; the warm genial breeze of love and peace bespeak another climate. Cares and anxieties are for the present put away. Our lives seem revolutionised. The benign influences of home shed a halo of joy around our hearts.

Hark! I seem in fancy to hear the weary Christian as he shall step inside the pearly gates of the "New Jerusalem," say, "I've got home!" The burdens of life are laid down, the hardships overcome, the warfare ended, the victory gained, the battle of life over. The tossing to and fro on the tempestuous sea of doubt and uncertainty is at an end. He has long been looking "through a glass darkly," but now the "many mansions" in his Father's house burst upon his enraptured vision. He has reached the haven and moored his storm-beaten barque. The quicksands and shoals are far out of sight. He is at home. The narrow way in which he has walked has been exchanged for the "highway of holiness" in the kingdom of his God. The redeemed who are to walk there will be his companions throughout the endless ages of eternity.

It is joy to return to an earthly home after months or years of absence; to a home even that is but temporary and fleeting; but what will be our emotions of joy when we enter our eternal home? No more going out from the parental care. The light of the Father's smile ever beaming upon us. The tender welcome of our elder brother. Ah! shall we not exclaim with infinite joy and satisfaction, "I've got home"? "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Mount Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—*Mattie L. Barnett.*

Carnal pleasures are the sins of youth, ambition and the love of power the sins of middle age; covetousness and carking cares the crimes of old-age.