

Little Hymn Studies—II.

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[It is suggested that five minutes be given each Sunday to the simplifying and singing of the verse for the day, reviewing the preceding verse or verses as the weeks go by.]

THE PILGRIM'S SONG.

"Children of the heavenly King,
As we journey let us sing;
Sing our Saviour's worthy praise,
Glorious in his works and ways."

John Cennick, who died nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, wrote a song for Christian pilgrims which has been sung by them ever since. You have heard of the old crusaders and pilgrims, who used to make long journeys to the Holy Land, thinking that it pleased God to have them do so, even though it left them and their families in want. True Christian pilgrims do not take such journeys now. They know that "the Lord looketh on the heart," and that living the Christian life, and trying to make it like that of our Saviour, is the real pilgrimage, and is the one that Christ, our Captain, would have us take. We do not need to go to see his birthplace and his tomb to please him, though we may do it to please ourselves, if we can afford it. But he would have us look to him through his word and in prayer, and then joyfully and bravely try to live like him every day. Every day that we try to be like Jesus is a day's march on our pilgrimage, and after a while we shall find ourselves at the end of it, and at home with him in heaven.

"We are traveling home to God,
In the way our fathers trod;
They are happy now, and we
Soon their happiness shall see."

The pilgrims who once went in companies to Palestine used to sing as they walked to make the rough way pleasanter, and they often thought of other pilgrims who had gone over the same road before them. So in the true pilgrimage, the following of Jesus in the Christian life, it is good to sing hymns and songs of praise, and remember those who have lived the life before us, and have entered into the promised land of heaven. They had their trials, and fears, and fights with the enemy of all souls, but they also had their joys. They had eyes of faith within that looked above this life to be placed where Jesus, their Captain, stood, saying, "Follow me," "Because I live ye shall live also;" "I go to prepare a place for you;" "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Jesus did for them all he had promised, and now they are at the end of their

journey, forever with their Lord. Some day we also, if we are faithful to him, shall enter into rest and joy with him and with them.

"Fear not, brethren, joyful stand
On the borders of our land;
Jesus Christ, our Father's Son,
Bids us undismayed go on."

Where does the Christian pilgrim learn his songs? The Bible is full of the songs of pilgrims who passed through this life long ago and are now with their Lord. Some of them, like David, wrote the songs that the Lord gave them, and they are used by thousands and millions all around the world. David said, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage," and "He giveth songs in the night." Singing the word of God and trusting in him makes the heart strong and brave. The old Israelites began to be afraid when they reached the borders of the promised land—Canaan; but the Lord told their captain, Joshua, to "be strong and of a good courage," "for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." And they went on a dry road over the river Jordan, and all the land before them became theirs. The Lord made this very picture in history to show us, and all people of all ages and nations, that the Christian pilgrim may go bravely and joyfully toward the promised land of heaven, and nothing shall dismay or make him afraid.

"Lord, obediently we'll go,
Gladly leaving all below;
Only thou our Leader be,
And we still will follow thee."

A good little motto for every Christian child who would be a pilgrim on the King's highway is, "Trust and obey." It is hard to obey a person whom we cannot trust. Your mother has told you that you must not trust a stranger, who might do you harm, but you do not find it hard to trust your mother; and if you trust her you ought surely to obey her, even when you cannot understand why she asks you to do or not to do certain things. She is older and wiser than you, and she loves you, so you will do well to obey her, as well as your father, in all they ask of you. God gave us fathers and mothers to trust and to obey, that we might so learn how to act toward the Father in heaven whom we cannot see. If your father or mother should ask you to give away your dolls, or your toys, they would probably have a purpose of love in their hearts to give you something better. So when our heavenly Father takes away earthly things it is to give us heavenly things, which are far better. Can you trust him?