

with them, to pray for them, is the most that sympathetic and affectionate friends can do in the hour of the aloofness of grief.

Friends and relatives do not always see this necessity of letting the grief stricken remain in the sanctuary. With well-meant, but clumsy, endeavors they force food on those who are not hungry and drink on those who are not athirst. They speak of recreation to those who can think of nothing beyond the desert place in which they must abide till the tender Shepherd Himself find them and lead them into the light. It would be better in most cases to forbear attempts which do little good, and to wait with patience for the healing touch of time and the return of healthy life and vigor. These come when God has done what the sorrow was sent for, and from the sorrow's hour of darkness the sufferer arises, stronger to comfort others, with a new experience of the Divine love, and sometimes with a revelation, never forgotten, of the nearness of Heaven to earth.

Rejecting the Gospel.

BY REV. ADDISON P. FOSTER, D.D.

As the end of Christ's ministry drew near the opposition of His enemies became more pronounced. In consequence and by necessity His teaching passed over from themes of grace to themes of judgment. He spoke with greater distinctness and severity of pressing evils and their results. On one occasion the Pharisees challenged His right to teach in the temple. With a masterly stroke He silenced them by showing them that as on their own confession they were unable to decide concerning the position of John the Baptist, neither were they competent nor had they the right to question His authority. He followed up His advantage by giving three parables, all of them illustrating the different ways in which men sin against Christ by rejecting His message. The parable of the Two Sons shows there is

A REJECTION OF CHRIST, IN SPITE OF PROFESSIONS.

God's kingdom is compared to a vineyard in which grapes are to be gathered and in which work is to be done. In this kingdom God graciously desires the assistance of men. They may be of service in His work. But some are like the Pharisees, ready in promises, abundant in professions, but utterly failing in performance. It is almost as easy to deceive oneself as others in such matters. The outward observance of forms and the reiterated declaration of a right purpose often leads one to suppose he is doing all he ought, when these are merely the shell within which the meat has withered away. Let no man be satisfied with well sounding words, or with church-membership, or with ordinances. We shall be judged for our deeds. Even the defiant refusal to do right, such as comes from flagrant wrong-doers, if followed by repentance and right doing, is far better than the empty professions of Pharisaism.

REJECTION OF CHRIST WITH VIOLENCE,

is another form of this great sin, which Christ sets forth in the parable of the Wicked Husbandman. The history of the Jews is a dreary illustration of the truth of this parable. God's prophets who came to receive the fruits of His Kingdom were successively maltreated and killed, and last of all, the Son of God, who had come on the same errand, was slain on Calvary. Nor is this form of rejecting Christ a Jewish peculiarity. The ten persecutions under the Roman emperors, the horrible record of cruelties in mediæval times against all who sought to worship Christ in simplicity, show the same disposition. And to-day the bitterness often manifested towards those who raise their voice against popular sins evinces the same spirit. "Prophecy unto us smooth things," was the demand of ancient Israel. We hear the same demand to-day. It is not so long since he who lifted up his voice against slavery was mobbed, and in recent years the Salvation Army has suffered many things for Christ's sake. There is no question as to the penalty for this defiant and rebellious rejection of the truth. It means destruction. The Jewish nation for their rejection were scattered and their high privilege as the conservators of religion given to others. To-day all opposers of the truth are crushed by the Divine progress of the Gospel. The stone cut from the mountain without hands shall grind them to powder. In the nature of things it must be so. In the progress of

civilization new truths come to light, great inventions are made, a better way of living is devised, improvements in manufacturing and building are continually made. The result is that business that does not accept the truth thus brought to light fails, that a nation that does not receive such new truth grows weak and falls behind, that individuals that remain stolid and stationary lose all influence. This universal law holds good in religion. Christianity brought in a new and mighty truth. He who fails to receive it is broken to pieces and scattered to dust.

The parable of the Marriage Feast teaches that there may be

A REJECTION OF CHRIST WITH PERSISTENCE AND CONTEMPT.

God loves us so that He invites us repeatedly and even with entreaty. God condescends to set forth the attractions of His feast. "My oxen and fatlings are killed." It is a great occasion, the marriage of the King's son. Come, for this is an honor due your King. It is amazing that an invitation from God urged on grounds like these should be rejected at all, but in fact a great number refuse the invitation repeatedly, and even with scorn. The honor due to God and the privileges He offers men are not felt. Not only are the blessings rejected but indignities are shown those who are sent to offer them.

There can be but one result from all this, a most evil one to those who persistently refuse. Such grow rapidly callous and unworthy, and having deprived themselves of the blessings essential to happiness, have only misery at last.

The incident of the Wedding Garment with which the parable of the Marriage Feast ends shows that there may be

A REJECTION OF CHRIST BY UNWORTHINESS OF CHARACTER.

It is not enough to accept Christ formally. The character must correspond. He is not pleasing to God who heeds the call of Christ, acknowledges Salvation as only through Him, and yet lives an impure life. There must be a robe of righteousness and Christ only can furnish it, while no one really accepts Christ who rejects it. Consistency of conduct is absolutely required to prove one a Christian. There must be harmony among the guests at the wedding feast. Any lack in purity of thought and life would destroy the pleasure of all. He who found himself there in the presence of those of Christly character while his own heart was black, would be unhappy and dislike his surroundings. No wonder that the penalty is written "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness." His lack of sympathy with the saved and the pure makes this inevitable.

Our Conversation—What is it?

BY MISS M. V. WILCOX.

A noted lecturer once said, "To-day conversation is one of the lost arts." Was he right? Look at the facts. Read for yourself the records of society. Gather up the fragments you hear in the street, the store, the office, the school and the home circle, piece them together, then add the polite language of society and tell me what have you. Only babble, do you reply, for surely the language of business, home and social circle were never meant to form models of beauty and eloquence?

I grant you this is true, but where I ask you to look for the training, if the work-shop of language is not to be found in daily life at home and abroad?

What are your every day words but the language of expression the utterances of thought. Ponder well the message they bear, before you decide whether conversation is one of the "lost arts." What so difficult of cultivation as the speech? What blunders the uneducated are constantly making! What restiveness under curb and bit do ignorant persons constantly manifest while seeking a higher education. When, do you ask, will language reflect perfectly the varying shade of thought and feeling? When, do I repeat, will the human soul of another vibrate to your slightest touch, respond to your faintest wish? Never, until the heart of conversation has been restored to its rightful place, as the audible utterance of character, the visible expression of soul.

Have I dimly outlined the meaning of conversation? Would you learn the full lesson that experience would teach you? Study well the marks of violence on your soul made by thoughtless, bitter, unkind, angry words,

*An Exposition based on (Matt. xxi. 23-xxii. 14); in the Bible Study Union Course on "The Teachings of Christ."