

"LIKE AS A FATHER."

Dr. Wayland Hoyt, in his "Walks and Talks with Spurgeon," relates a story, which has partly been told before, but is well worth repetition. He was riding with Mr. Spurgeon one day, when he mentioned the account he had seen in the papers about his praying for a ring, and getting it, and inquired if this was true. "Oh, no," said Mr. Spurgeon, "let me tell you the whole story;" which he did, and which Dr. Hoyt reproduces as nearly as possible as follows:

"Mrs. Spurgeon had been very sick, and for the benefit of the sea air he had taken her to Brighton. Leaving her on Thursday morning, when he must go to London to preach, as his wont was always to be in the Tabernacle on the evening of that day, he asked her if he could not bring her something which would relieve a little the tedium of her sickness. At first nothing seemed to come to her. In sportive mood, she at last said that she would like an opal ring and a piping goldfinch. Lovingly, and yet laughingly, he declared it was quite impossible for him to bring her such things as these. But when he had reached London, and the moon came in, and he was opening it as he was sitting at his luncheon, in the mail there was a little box; and tearing it open, he saw flashing up from it the sheen of an opal ring. Some friend had sent it, with a most kindly note, asking Mrs. Spurgeon's acceptance of it, with the hope that its luster might fling a little light into the gloom of her sick chamber."

"What I thought," he said, "when that ring flashed on me, of God's care and goodness, it would be impossible for me to tell." Carefully it was laid away in his pocket, that its brightness might dash pleasure to Mrs. Spurgeon when he should have a chance to carry it to her. The very afternoon, as he went on to tell me, he was obliged to visit a gentleman who was very sick—so sick that it was utterly impossible for him to speak aloud, and with whom communication could be had only by writing on a slate. The visit was over, and the prayer offered, and then, as Mr. Spurgeon rose to leave, the wife of the gentleman said to him:

"Mr. Spurgeon, for some years I have made a pet of a piping goldfinch. The only person in the world to whom I would give it is yourself. But the bird makes too much noise for my husband in his weak state, and won't you accept it?"

"Mr. Spurgeon said he preached that night in the Tabernacle with the ring in his pocket and the little bird sleeping with its head beneath its wing in a room of the Tabernacle; and the next morning Mrs. Spurgeon had her opal ring and her piping goldfinch. Through the weary hours of that long sickness both were a great delight to her. The bird would sit upon her finger and sing its heart out. When she recovered, the little creature finished its ministry and died."

Of course, there are plenty of people who see nothing but "chance" in such a circumstance as this. They may have tenderness in their hearts and in their homes; they may be ready to travel far and take much pains to obtain a toy that would please a sick, suffering child, but they have not yet learned that like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. They have not yet learned the infinite tenderness of the heavenly Father's heart, that which is but faintly expressed in the deep affection which God has implanted in the hearts of all the creatures which He has made, that sympathy and charity which is the bond of perfectness, and without which society would be a wreck, and earth a chaos of darkness and desolation.

"He that planted the eye, shall He not see? He that formed the ear, shall He not hear?" And He that gave to man, and beast and bird and creeping thing the instinct of parental love, does He not feel and know that same impulse in all its fullness and perfection?

Is there not pity in heaven for human suffering and human sorrow? Is there not joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth? Does not the Father's heart yearn after prodigal in far-off lands? And can we not see

the love of God reflected in the sympathies and loves of our own hearts, just as we can see the stars of heaven reflected in the placid waters around us?

Our great difficulty is, we do not recognize the hand of God; we do not know our own Father's voice. A thousand mercies come to us unnoticed; a thousand gifts are received by us unrecognized. But as a trifling and unconsidered thing might become to us exceedingly precious if we should read upon it that it was the gift of a dear and loving friend, "so every good gift and every perfect gift" will come to us with new preciousness and added value, when we learn that it "cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Blessed are they who recognize the heavenly Father's voice, who know His compassion and His grace, and who find comfort in His providence, consolation in His sympathy, and abiding peace in the fullness of His everlasting love.—H. L. Hastings, in the Boston Christian.

A PRAYER.

Lord, not for light in darkness do we pray.

Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes.

Nor that the slow ascension of our day be otherwise.

Not for a clearer vision of the things whereof the fashioning shall make us great.

Not for remission of the peril and stings

Of time and fate.

Not for a fuller knowledge of the end whereto we travel, bruised yet unafraid.

Nor that the little healing that we lend shall be repaid.

Not these, O Lord. We would not break the bars

Thy wisdom sets about us; we shall climb

Unfettered to the secrets of the stars

In Thy good time.

We do not crave the high perception

Swift

When to refrain were well, and when fulfill.

Nor yet the understanding strong to sift

The good from ill.

Not these, O Lord. For these Thou hast revealed.

We know the golden season when to reap

The heavy-fruited treasure of the field

The hour to sleep.

Not these. We know the hemlock from the rose.

The pure from stained, the noble from the base.

The tranquil holy light of truth that glows

On Pity's face.

We know that paths wherein our feet should press.

Across our hearts are written Thy decrees.

Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless

With more than these.

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,

Grant us the strength to labor as we know.

Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,

To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent.

But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need.

Give us to build above the deep intent

The deed, the deed.

—John Drinkwater, in the Spectator.

Just as really as Christ was with Peter in the boat, just as Christ sat with John at the table, so really can we have Christ with me.—Andrew Murray.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—"In Him we live," (Acts 17: 22-31).

Tues.—All-present Spirit, (John 4: 21-24).

Wed.—God in the desert, (Gen. 28: 10-17).

Thurs.—With us in Christ, (Matt. 1: 22, 23).

Fri.—God in the heart, (John 14: 17-23).

Sat.—God always (Matt. 18: 20; 28: 20).

GOD IS HERE.*

(By Robert E. Speer.)

The very joy of life is in the assurance of God's presence with us always. This is his blessed promise. "I will not leave you, nor forsake you." The soul comforts itself with the confidence, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." We may forget that God is near, or even deny it, but neither our forgetfulness nor our denial can affect in any way the blessed fact of the Father's presence with us.

"Thou God seest me" is sometimes quoted as a warning. "Beware," we are told, "God is looking and all that you do is naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It is indeed, and if it is a thing of evil he sees it. The thought that God sees ought to suffice to shame us out of all things that he disapproves. But the words are meant to be not a war-heart, God sees. The fidelity in small hardships which no human eyes sees and which we can tell no human heart, God sees. The fidelity in small things which gains no human praise and is often ignored in the admiration poured out upon what is shoddy and tinsel, God marks. All our need God sees and cares for and we can trust him. If we are not to have it met, if we are to do without what we desire, well, we can manage it and it will not amount to anything. God sees it all and what comes to us when we have done all that we could with his help, we shall accept unmurmuringly. He knows. "He knows, my Father knows."

In the presence of God, however, these half sad thoughts are not our thoughts. We are in the joy of companionship and are satisfied, and all the world, what we have and what we do not have, is beautiful as we look upon it in the light of his countenance. "In thy presence," says the Psalmist, "is fullness of joy." Nothing that can abide in that presence looks mean. However simple or lowly, if it can stay there it is made beautiful in the light of God. However splendid and pretentious anything may have been, if it was not true, that light makes it seem mean and it creeps away.

All homely duties take on glory and all lofty things become lowly in the presence of God. Common spots and common deeds are transfigured. "Surely," Jacob said of the place where he had slept, an ordinary bit of desert, "Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not." Every day becomes a heavenly day, one of the days of the Son of man, when we see it as a day of God's presence. Life becomes the good thing it was meant to be, a companionship in life and light and love with the Eternal One. Heaven will be only the unveiling of the eternal reality of such a life. As the ancient poet laureate Whitehead wrote in "The Second Day of Creation":

"I gaze aloof at the tissue roof
Where time and space are the warp
and woof.

Which the King of kings like a curtain flings
O'er the dreadfulness of eternal things.

"But if I could see as in truth they see
The glories which encircle me,
I should lightly hold this tissue fold
With its marvelous curtain of blue
and gold.

"For soon the whole, like a parched scroll
Shall before my amazed eyes uproll,
And without a screen, at one burst be
seen.

The Presence, in which I have always been."

An obedient child delights in the presence of its parent; a disobedient child dreads it. What we think of the omnipresence of God is largely determined by what our moral attitude toward him has been.

*Y. P. Topic, Sunday, April 10, 1910, "God is here." (Psa. 139: 1-12.)