

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

ONE OF THE GREAT HYMNS OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE REV. D. MORRISON, M.A., OWEN SOUND.

JESUS, I MY CROSS HAVE TAKEN.

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be!

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure!
Come disaster, scorn and pain!
In Thy service, pain is pleasure;
With Thy favour, loss is gain.

Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.

'Tis not in grief to harm me,
While Thy love is left to me!
O' were not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee!

Take, my soul, thy full salvation;
Rise o'er sin, and fear, and care;
Joy to find, in every station,
Something still to do or bear.

Think what Spirit dwells within Thee!
What a Father's smile is thine!
What a Saviour died to win thee!
Child of heaven, shouldst thou repine?

Haste, then, on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there.

The origin of this hymn is interesting. According to Henry Ward Beecher ("Plymouth Pulpit," page 410), it took its rise from the case of a young woman born to splendour, but disinherited by her father, because of a great offence—her conversion to a faith which he despised, and her quiet but resolute adherence to her profession.

There are parents in a certain sense believers, and profess to be believers. There are many that have just enough of faith to shield their consciences, and save themselves from being counted infidel. They believe in a kind of mutual protective Christianity which takes care of their anxieties and fears—a Christianity which allays all their troubles in this respect, but nothing more. The idea of a perfect manhood, a cleansed conscience, a purified heart, an imagination radiant with heavenly truth—the idea of a great overwhelming affection that like the sun pours its rays down upon all their faculties—the idea, in short, of an entire consecration as the result of such downshedding has never entered their mind. The world, the world, the beautiful world, with its ambitions and its pleasures, is their all. In these circumstances think of a daughter, young, beautiful, opening up in all the graces of early womanhood—one who is the coyest, sweetest thing in the whole neighbourhood—one who has studied in the best schools, and has taken on the most graceful finish they can impart. She is born to splendour, and that was a great day in the noble mansion, when she first saw the light. She is an only child, and many a suitor looks on in her direction. Many a one rises up to call her blessed, for with an open hand she dispenses to the poor, and with an unconscious charm she makes her way to every heart, and, but for some noisy, ranting preacher, might have occupied a grand place in the world. It was vexatious to such parents to see such an one brought under his power, to see the child that was the joy of their hearts and the pride of their life carried away with religious excitement. Their hopes are crushed. The father is in a rage, and the mother is in grief; and they will not have it so. How does the child act during the storm? With simple modesty she is patient but tenacious, and bears the storm that is without by the blessed peace that is within. She is still loving and more obedient than ever, except on this one point. Having tasted the better portion, she will not give it up, and so great, some times, has been the rage of the father, that he has actually driven the child from his door and dispossessed her of every thing. I am here stating the case in a general way. I mean a case of fealty to Christ amid great temptations; and it was really such a case as I have drawn that gave birth to this touching hymn. Returning from a ball, the daughter of a wealthy man in England heard a Methodist service going on. She went in, and by the blessing of God was converted, and when she made known her faith and purpose to her father, and stuck to her purpose against all remonstrance, he cast her off in a rage and dispossessed her of every thing.

This is something like the representation given us by the great Congregational divine, but Dr. Hatfield who has earned the right to speak on

such matters, gives us another version of the genesis of this hymn. He thinks it took its rise from the conversion of the author, the Rev. F. Lyte, then (1825) curate of Taghmon, Ireland. It seems that this distinguished clergyman, to whom we owe so much for his great hymns, such as this hymn and

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,

was called to see a brother minister who was at the point of death, and found himself entirely unprepared for offering to him the consolations of the Gospel. This led him to look into the grounds of his own hope, and he was convinced that his heart had never been savingly renewed. Together they sought and found the Lord. His friend died in peace, and he himself lived to serve the Lord as he had never done before. His was indeed a real consecration. This took place at the time (1825) when the hymn was written, and Dr. Hatfield thinks that probably the poet's conversion was the occasion of its genesis. Still there is nothing inconsistent with all this in the representation which we have cited. Both of these may be perfectly true, and the poet in drawing from his own experience would be in a position to do ample justice to the case of the young woman whose loyalty to the Great King in the circumstances must have touched his poetic sensibility.

I would not here refer to the life of the author, delightful as the theme is, reserving that for another occasion—my annotations on the hymn,

Abide with me,

certainly one of the great hymns of the Church, and having a genesis than which there is nothing more touchingly beautiful in the language. As to its power—the power of the hymn under consideration—the power of awakening the godless to serious thought—as well as the power of stimulating, refreshing, encouraging those that have already taken Christian ground, it has had a wonderful history. It is our one great consecration hymn, and should be used on stated occasions, when consecration is the theme of the preacher. The writer can never forget its power in this respect—how that on one memorable Sabbath evening when specially addressing young women, after pleading with them to take higher ground and consecrate themselves afresh to the Lord, one remained to speak with him and tell him how that under the divine blessing all her scruples had been overcome by the appeal, backed as it was with this, the closing hymn. She had lingered long, hesitated much, but now she could resist no more, hold out no longer, and so she quietly, unostentatiously made herself over to God in a covenant never to be forgotten.

LATIN TRANSLATION (SAME MEASURE).

Sustuli, Salvator, crucem
Ut hinc sequar Te vobum,
Inops, sperna, derelicta,
Hinc Tu mihi omnia.

Abi, Ius humana, nugæ;
O calamitas veni;
Semper mi delicia
Puro munere Christi.

Fatigans vexansque homo
Propriorem me aget;
Suavior quies in celo,
Actus labor, aderit.

Non est doloris nocere,
Tuus amor perfulgens;
Non est gaudii lætari,
Tuus amor non fulgens.

Cape, anima, salutem,
Plenam, liberam, cito;
Supersurge terrestriam
Semper facies Deo.

Et puta dona Spiritus
Cari Patris oculum,
Christum qui est mortuus;
Putaque celo domum!

Ab gratia ad gloriam
Firma fide propera;
Propera dans Deo laudem,
Sæculorum sæcula.

THE VISITING PREACHER.

Let him guard sacredly the name and position of the pastor. He can easily strengthen the pastor, or he can as easily weaken and wound him. Pleasant things spoken of a pastor by an outsider often go a long way with a church. They are the leaven of a precious help, and are often treasured and repeated to the pastor's advantage. It is just as easy to cripple a pastor. He can be criticised or praised so dubiously as to excite suspicion against him. Some ministers have an open ear for picking up ugly reports of a pastor, and then go out and whispering abroad the tale of disaffection and trouble. We know a brother who, after spending a day or two in the congregation of some other preacher, is almost certain to come away with hideous stories of the man's unpopularity and dissatisfaction. He seems to ferret out all the unlovely secrets of the pastor and his people, and to find a wicked joy in spreading them far and wide.

THE NEW THEOLOGY.

There are medical works published with the title, "Every man his own doctor." On the title page of the "New Theology" might be inscribed, "Every man his own Bible."

Here is a man for example—a Christian; we will not say a Presbyterian; but an ordinary Christian—who gets drunk and abuses his wife. You remonstrate with him. You tell him that the Bible says that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God, and that it enjoins upon husbands to love their wives. Yes, the man replies, that is very true; the Bible so teaches. But I have thought over the matter, and my "consciousness" has decided that under certain kinds of mental pressure it is not a sin (*per se*) for a man to become intoxicated or abuse his wife; so I have eliminated that from my Bible.

But your reply, perhaps, "that the man is not in possession of a Christian consciousness, and my answer is: "What right have you to say so? Where is your standard of judgment, a standard that he is bound to respect, if you are a disciple of the new school of theology, and accept its fundamental principles?" I have a right to condemn the man because I have an objective and unchangeable standard of divine truth, viz. the Word of the living God.

Now, I admit that this is an extreme case—one that, under the present condition of the Christian communion, is not likely to present itself; but I hold that a theology that cannot cover such cases is radically defective—dangerous not only to the spiritual life, but also to the morals of society.

There is not a defender of the "New Theology" who would not, I presume, indignantly reject the doctrine of Papal infallibility, and yet the only perceptible difference between it and the doctrine in question is, as it seems to me, simply a matter of multiplication, the resultant of which is manifestly in favour of the Pope.

The "New Theology" may have a mission to perform—in fact, we have no doubt but it has. It will serve to quicken a deeper interest in the science of theology—the greatest of all the sciences, and yet a science which has been woefully neglected during the past quarter of a century or more. The result is that our present-day Christianity lacks backbone. It is of a molluscous nature, and can be easily "flattened out." We need a keying up in doctrinal religion—some people, at least need it. I believe the issue will come to be so sharply defined that men, and especially public teachers, cannot longer "straddle the fence," to use a political phrase. They will be compelled to come out squarely for or against the truth.

As for myself, I believe in the "Old Theology," so far as its essential principles are concerned. I believe in it, because it recognizes the Word of God as the ultimate source of appeal in the settlement of what is and what is not divine truth. I do not claim perfection for it in all its details, but I do claim that it honours the Bible and fairly sets forth its teachings on all vital matters pertaining to the salvation of the human soul, and the building up of God's kingdom in the world. In short, I believe the "Old Theology," because I believe the Bible, and I am not ashamed of it, either. If I didn't believe this Bible in its totality, and in all its parts, to be an inspired book, I would be an out-and-out infidel. I respect an honest infidel, but I have the utmost contempt for a trimmer, either in politics or religion. Christianity, while any thing, is every thing. When it becomes refined, modified, relaxed, it ceases to exist except as a mere form without power. It becomes simply the quintessence of nothingness, upon which the soul can never be nourished. There can be no middle ground between taking the Gospel in all its original authority, as containing the only ground of pardon, the only means of sanctification and the only passport to heaven for mankind, and absolute infidelity. If the sinner expects to be saved on the ground of the Gospel, all the conversion, all the penitence, and all the holiness of character which were necessary when Peter or Paul preached are now necessary for him, without the least modification or abatement. It is equally true that there ever has been, is now, and ever will be to the end of the world, one and the same standard of Christian character. Every particle of self-denial, of devotion to Christ, of willingness to labour and suffer in His cause which were demanded in the days of the Apostles and martyrs are demanded now, upon the part of every believer. There is no change in the covenant God made with man; no lowering of the claims of divine law. The appeal today is and always has been, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord who will have mercy upon him, and unto our God who will abundantly pardon." These are the unchanging and unchangeable conditions of mercy and pardon and peace, and finally of entrance into those mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for His own people.—*Rev. Dr. Sutherland, Rockford, Illinois.*

HONESTY is the best policy, but he who acts on that principle is not an honest man.