

Church Observer

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Poetry.

THE INVITATION.

"Draw near with faith, and take thy holy-sacrament to your comfort."—Office of the Holy Communion.

Draw near with faith; behold the Saviour stands, With tender, yearning heart and outstretched hands;

With pleading voice He meekly deigns to crave, Ready to hear, to pity and to save.

Draw near with faith; leave all thy doubts behind, Distrust Him not who is so true and kind.

Draw near, and see thy timid fears grow less— He greets with love; He only wants to bless.

Draw near with faith. Unworthy though thou art, Offer to Him—'tis all he asks—thy heart;

Not here He stands to call the righteous home; He calls the sinner. As a sinner, come,

Come with repentance, earnest deep and true; With love to Him to whom all love is due; Forgiving, as thou art of God forgiven; At peace with men, with conscience and with Heaven.

Draw near with faith; bring all thy heavy care, Thou hast no burden which He will not bear, He knows thy grief, He feels thy bitterest woe, Himself hath walked the weary path below.

Draw near with faith; dost thou not sorely need Comfort and strength thy fainting soul to speed? Draw near, and see how true, how strong His heart, And find the power He only can impart.

Draw near with faith. O! can that voice of love One cold or careless spirit fail to move? Turn not away; this pleading call may be The last thou canst reject—the last for thee.

Selections.

OUR FATHER.—That hallowed word is beautifully represented by the prophet Jeremiah, as forming the passport to the children of God—at the gate of heaven—its utterance, in the case of those destitute of all personal claims to admission, unlocking the golden portals, and conferring right of entrance. How different our Father's house on high, from the Father's home on earth! As years roll on, how sad and mournful the family blanks. The empty arm-chair, where the venerable parent used to sit, tells of one vacancy; the closed book-case, with the dust-covered school volumes, tells of another; the unused toy (most touching of all) tells of another; that portrait on the wall, on which ever and again a tearful glance is cast, tells of another; the once joyous register in the old family bible is blotted and saddened with many a mournful entry—or rather, these are transferred to the marble memorials of buried affection, crowding the silent land of forgetfulness, but not so in "our Father's" home. There there will be no blanks—no missing names—no harrowing separations—no memories of buried love. But if you would enjoy its privileges and immunities, you must "strive to enter in." The processes in the kingdom of grace, as in the kingdom of nature, are developed and matured by the diligent use of appointed means. Indeed, the commonest occurrences and transactions of every-day life remind us that we are under an economy of means, and that by foregoing or rejecting the employment of these, we are sure to forfeit the end. A rope will save a drowning man, but he must stretch out his hand to grasp it, otherwise he is lost. The fire-escape will save a man enveloped in the flames—the iron ladder is shot up by the side of the burning pile, and the sleeper, aroused by the crackling fire, is told to rush to the provided means of safety; but saved he cannot be if he fold his arms in indifference and resign himself to his fate. God puts us, like Jacob, at the ladder's base, and says—"There is the ladder of salvation, but if you would reach heaven, you must climb

it." In providing a Zoar for Lot, He could easily have commissioned the angels to bear him miraculously through the air, and deposit him in safety on the adjoining hill; but he tells him to arise, and, staff in hand, to climb to the refuge.—Hast thou thee, flee for thy life." Reader, be up and doing, while the gift of the kingdom is God's. Yet, in one sense it rests with ourselves whether we are crowned or beggared, the throne of that kingdom "Our Father" promises only "to him that cometh."

IN THE WORLD, AND YET NOT OF IT.—Many would have condemned Nero in Nero's household as being in his place and sphere while remaining in that godless palace. "Wrong as it is," many would have said, "for those who continue in the midst of worldly pleasures, Christians to be under the roof of a heathen master, whose sceptre and sceptre cannot add to their villainy and crime, let them come out forthwith, and be separate and touch not the unclean thing." Not so thought Paul. He sends his "christ" greetings to these very saints. Noble was it, in subsequent years, to bear the bands of devoted believers, shut up in the Roman catacombs, singing hymns of faith and hope in subterranean dungeons, but equally noble and saintly is the spectacle of these early Christians, retaining their unflinching fidelity to a higher Power while resident within the palace of the Quirinal, sending to Caesar the things that were Caesar's, while they rendered to God the things that were God's. Paul was not slow to send homed words, unmeaning and unimportant salutations. His bold and honest tongue would have been the first to denounce to these converts

of the Roman palace their adherence to place and pay, if this was inconsistent, or incompatible with the profession and practice of the religion of Jesus; but from the very warmth and speciality of his greetings, he would seem to assure them, that if faithful to their great principles, theirs was Christianity in its loftiest type and form. "In the world, and yet not of it,"—Caesar's servants, but the uncompromising haters of Caesar's sins! Whatever our worldly callings may be, let us not be guilty of uttering the vain and futile wish—"If my lot had been cast otherwise, I would have better served my God." Serve Him where you are. Show how your Christian graces and principles can grow and flourish despite of all difficulties and temptations,—the soldier to remain the soldier still,—earth's noblest specimen of generous self-sacrifice for the good and safety of others;—but to show by purity of conduct, loftiness of principle, kindness and forgiveness, that he is a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The shopkeeper to remain behind his counter still, but to show the power of gospel motives in determined hate of underhand dealings, equivocal ways, immoral bargains, illicit trade, knavish practices. All professions may thus be hallowed and consecrated,—"Let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God;" and this is religion's loftiest manifestation—its most difficult triumph—to maintain it, may be, in the midst of an ungodly circle of worthless associates, a holy, pure, upright, heavenly life.

—We are (or ought to be) divine artists, making the character of the Redeemer our study, seeking to transfer, with scrupulous fidelity to our hearts and lives, a copy—imperfect, indeed, at best it must be—of the glorious original. The four Gospels are the four corridors of a great picture-gallery opening into one another. Their walls are crowded and frescoed with delineations from the story of His life on earth,—scenes illustrative of the divine virtues of the Shepherd of Israel for our imitation and example. Here is one picture of matchless humanity,—He is washing His disciples' feet. Another,—He is weeping with a group of mourners in a Jewish grave-yard. Another,—He is bearing unmerited indignities in meek, uncomplaining

silence. Another,—He commends in His dying hour, His sorrowing heart to the care of a trusted friend. Another,—He stretches out the hand of forgiveness to that ungrateful rebel who had forsaken Him upward, by the way of the cross. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the left. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the right. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the rear. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the front. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the back. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the side. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the top. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bottom. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the middle. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the center. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the periphery. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the circumference. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the diameter. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the radius. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the chord. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the arc. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the segment. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the sector. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the annulus. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the disk. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the ring. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the band. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the hoop. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the wreath. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the crown. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the tiara. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the mitre. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the hat. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the cap. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the hood. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the veil. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the shawl. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the cloak. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the robe. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the gown. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the dress. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the suit. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the costume. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the attire. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the apparel. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the wardrobe. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the closet. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the chest. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the trunk. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the valise. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the satchel. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bag. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bundle. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the parcel. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the package. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the box. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the case. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the container. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the receptacle. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the vessel. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the jar. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the can. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bottle. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the flask. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the jug. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bucket. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the pail. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the tub. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the basin. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the sink. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bath. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the shower. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the tub. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bath. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the shower. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the tub. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the bath. His arms are outstretched to embrace the traitor who had forsaken Him to the shower.

So they laid them down on the mat at the door, While the old woman finished sweeping the floor. Then they crept in as quiet as mice, All wet with snow and as cold as ice, For they found it was better that stormy night, To lie down and sleep than to quarrel and fight.

THE BUILDERS.

A couple of young robins got married, and wanted to go to housekeeping. It is a singular fact that robins never buy houses, nor hire them. They always build them. They always build them themselves, without any help. Why they are so particular, I don't know, but the fact is that they will not live in a house that any one else has lived in, or that has been built by any claws and beaks but their own. They always build their houses after the same pattern, and of the same materials. One would think that among the great numbers who build every spring, some would desire to build their houses a little different from others, but they will build just alike.

Another singular thing about robins is that they must have a new house every spring, and move into it. But you had rather hear about the robins than about houses.

Two young robins, as I said, got married, and wanted to go to housekeeping. The first thing they had to do was to select a place for building. "I think," said Mr. Robin, "that we had better go away off into the woods where the trees are thick and large. We shall be out of the way of boys and cats. Boys and cats are very bad things for robins. They both can climb up to our houses, and they both catch and eat young robins when they are learning to fly. I wish there were no boys and cats."

"I don't like to live away off in the woods," said Mrs. Robin, "it will be so gloomy and lonesome. The sun don't shine brightly there, and when it rains, it takes so long to dry."

Mr. Robin was about to say, "Just like women who are governed by feeling instead of judgment," but he remembered that he was just married, and that persons who are just married always wait awhile before they speak cross to their wives.

"Well, where would you like to build?" said he, very pleasantly.

"I think we had better build near some farmers," said she.

"And have boys and cats plaguing us all the time?"

"I know a place where there are no boys, and where the cat is the most amiable creature in the world. The prospect is very pleasant, and there are plenty of worms on the currant bushes and grape vines in the garden."

"Well, let us go and see the place."

So they flew away to Mr. Barclay's farm-house. There was a row of trees in front of the house. In a nest on one of these trees Mrs. Robin had been hatched out and reared. It was natural that she should desire to return to her native place.

Mr. Robin was pleased with the situation. He saw that it offered many advantages. There was safety from the hawks and owls to which they were exposed in the forest.

A view of these advantages decided him to build on one of these trees, but like some other folks, he pretended that he was governed wholly by the wishes of his wife.

"If you prefer to build here, my dear, I shall make no objection. I am willing that you should have your own way in the matter."

Mrs. Robin was greatly pleased that she had a husband who was so ready to yield to her wishes in regard to the place of building. She felt that she ought to yield to his wishes in every thing else, which she did.

They selected a branch on which to build, and without delay proceeded to collect and put in order materials for building. They worked very hard, and were soon ready to move into their new house. They needed no furniture except a bed. This was soon made of hair and of the softest wool that could be found sticking on the bushes where the sheep had wandered.

In a few days there were three or four blue eggs in the nest, and not long after, three or four featherless birds, whose eyes were shut, but whose mouths were open very wide, whenever they heard anything come near their nest.

"Don't you think we have a fine family?" said Mrs. Robin to her husband.

"They look rather scrawny, just now," said he. "But you wait till they get their feathers on and then you'll see. I don't believe there was ever a finer set of robins hatched."

This brief conversation was held while they were seated on a limb over their nest. They never stopped long to talk, for it took them nearly all the time to get food enough for their babies.

Just as they were about to start off for more food, a large kite lodged in the tree at some distance above the nest. They did not know what it was. At first they thought that it was a great bird—some new kind of hawk, and they were very much frightened. Mrs. Robin did not take any pains to conceal her fear, which was not for herself, but for her babies. Mr. Robin was quite as much frightened on his own account as Mrs. Robin was on account of her children. He flew to the next tree under pretence of getting a better view of the strange object, but in reality to be further away from it. He was a robin of some sense, and soon saw that, whatever it was, it was not alive. So he flew back to his wife, and told her that it would not hurt them—that they must hurry and get some food for their children. I suspect he was in a hurry to get out of sight of the kite.

While they were gone, the boy to whom the kite belonged climbed up into the tree after it. In so doing he discovered the robin's nest. "Good," said he, "I am glad my kite-string broke; it has given me a nest of young robins. I'll watch you, my lads, and when you get your coats on I will take possession of you."

He visited the nest every few days, and the old birds saw him. They guessed