

## HEARING THE GOSPEL.

THE Gospel is one of the greatest blessings we possess, and to hear it explained, illustrated, and enforced, ought to be deemed one of our most pleasant duties and sacred privileges. Yet, alas! how many there are who entirely neglect this duty, disregard the blessing, and utterly despise the privilege; while many who profess to understand the value of the Gospel, and from their regular attendance at the house of God seem rightly to estimate the privilege of hearing His word preached, yet will never, we fear, be greatly benefited by the observance of these divine and precious ordinances. Nay, instead of these rites becoming the means of their being justified by faith, and attaining unto holiness in the fear of the Lord, they will increase their iniquity and condemnation; instead of their becoming a blessing, through their improper observance or abuse, they will become a curse. Solomon's advice was, "Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools"; and a greater than Solomon said when preaching was not anything like so general as now, "Take heed how ye hear"; and from heaven Abraham informed his son in perdition, respecting his brethren still on earth, that if they refused to hear "Moses and the prophets," neither would they be persuaded by the preaching of "one risen from the dead": while Paul, with his keen philosophical insight into spiritual and material phenomena, and thorough practical earnestness, reminds us that, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." To be savingly benefited by attending the house of God, does not depend so much upon the number of times we are present, as upon the spirit and manner in which we conduct ourselves while there. It is not the number of sermons we hear, but how we hear them. It is not the amount of truth we listen to, but the quantity we understand, love, and practise, that will benefit and save us. To be acceptable worshippers of the Most High depends more upon the state of the soul, than upon the attitude of the body. We may be near Jehovah's throne, in His house, under His all-scrutinising eye, listening to His word, taking part in its Divine service, prominent members of the Church, and liberal supporters of its funds, and yet our conduct while professedly engaged in serving Him highly reprehensible, our presence most offensive, our spirit antagonistic to the principles of truth, inasmuch as our thoughts and desires are far from Him. What does the devil, too, care about our bodies being in the sanctuary dedicated for Divine worship, if he can only captivate our attention, and lead our thoughts away from the proper object of all true worship. The greater portion of our time might be spent there without incurring the displeasure of Satan, provided he can only engage our attention; and to accomplish such malignant purposes, he is most regular in his attendance upon the ordinances of God's house. Satan knows full well, however much time we may spend therein, we shall fail totally in getting any spiritual good, or offering acceptable worship, so long as he occupies our thoughts. To hold communion with the High and Holy One is the chief joy of the glorified in the temple above, and the special object of all the ordinances of His house on earth. We should, therefore, repair to His sanctuary, and conduct ourselves while there in the most devout, humble, and earnest manner possible. How many insult Jehovah in His own house, by their careless and irreverent manner therein. Most people profess to go to God's house to worship Him; to hear and understand His Word, and yet after months—yes, even years' observance of these things, how little of that Word do some know or practise. And this worse than waste of time and means is the result of the manner in which these valuable and precious Christian ordinances have been observed. Many cannot remember the text, and others but little of the sermon, when they reach home, through the careless manner in which they listened to the Word of Life while in God's house. Well would it be for humanity if in all religious assemblies there were more like a good man who once heard Rowland Hill preach, and could remember at the end of sixty-five years the text and a considerable portion of the sermon. Having occasion to visit an old friend a few years before he died, Rowland Hill was much interested in the following conversation addressed to him:—"Mr. Hill, it is just sixty-five years since I first heard you preach, and I remember your text and part of your sermon. You told us that some people were very aqueamish about the delivery of different ministers who preached the Gospel. You said, 'Supposing you were attending to hear a will read, where you expected a legacy to be left you, would

you employ the time when it was being read in criticising the manner in which the lawyer read it? No; you would be all ear to hear if anything was left you, and how much it was. That is the way I would advise you to hear the Gospel." This excellent advice, given by the quaint Rowland Hill, and remembered so long by one of his hearers, may be profitably remembered by each one of us. Then we shall not only look into the perfect law of liberty, but continue therein, and not being forgetful hearers, but doers of the Word, we shall be blest in our deed.—From "Short Sketches on Important Subjects," By Rev. J. Hawkins.

## THE MISSION OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

BY REV. J. H. M<sup>C</sup>CARTY, M.A.

BETWEEN the beautiful and the true there is a necessary relation. That which is not true cannot be beautiful, in any exact sense. The monk who painted a picture of the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, with the wall of waters on either side, and the noble figure of Moses in the foreground—and Miriam, with her timbrel and maidens, and the long procession following—made a very artistic picture; but then he spoiled it by putting muskets upon the shoulders of the Israelitish warriors! The picture was not truthful; and, hence, was not really beautiful. Ruskin, that peerless art critic, would carry out the principle of truth so far as to carve the unseen part of a column as carefully as the portion falling under the eye; and thus spare the beholder the unpleasant sensation which is produced in the mind by a consciousness of deception.

But there is a very marked difference between simple admiration and love. We admire some things we do not love. We look with admiration upon the heroic among mankind, even in the deeds of enemies. The daring and skill of the robber may be of a kind to excite in us this sentiment, considered aside from the crime.

The mistake men have made in reference to Christ is, that they have only admired where they should have loved. Admiration draws us to the cross, where we stand and look and cry out, "Surely, this was the Son of God"; but love will prostrate us at the feet of Jesus, and cause us to exclaim, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" Admiration will impel us forward, until we shall say, "Surely, thou art a teacher come from God"; but love will bathe His feet with tears, and wipe them with the hair of the head. Admiration exclaims, "Master!" love cries out, "My Lord and my God!" Admiration will draw men up to the very gates of heaven; love will take them in. And the beauty of your life will not be seen until you have come into this loving and beautiful relation, in which Christ dwells within you, "the hope of glory."

Go and be a true man, a true woman. Open your ears to all the sounds and harmonies which come to you; open your eyes to feast on the beauties your father has spread out everywhere; open your heart to receive a heavenly inspiration—and then go forth on a life mission of goodness. Let us know well that a wonderful destiny is before us; a universe to explore, and an eternity in which to explore it. We shall live on, even though death smite us. The line of beauty is where the visible passes into the invisible. The distant curve in the line of vision is suggestive of some world beyond, where others are, whom we had loved here; and where we hope to dwell. So that there is beauty even in death, with its coldness and its stillness.

For, what would life be without its shadows? It was Moore who said:—

"Then sorrow, touched by him, grows bright  
With more than rapture's ray;  
As darkness shows us worlds of light  
We never saw by day."

DARE TO DO RIGHT.—"All men forsook me," in Paul's own account of himself, "but the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." Here is a golden hint for the young who are put to their mettle in refusing a sinful fashion, or in bearing a jibe at their conscientious scruples. The young man who can be laughed into a glass of wine, or a game of cards, or a ball-room, may set himself down as a pitiable coward who can be pushed back by a straw. If he is more afraid of a companion's sneer than of God's frown, he is doomed.—*Rev. Theo. Cuyler.*