



### The Family Circle.

#### TRANSVERSE AND PARALLEL.

My will, dear Lord, from thine doth run  
Too oft a different way.  
'Tis hard to say, "Thy will be done,"  
In every darkened day!  
My heart grows still  
To see thy will  
Turn all life's gold to gray.

My will is set to gather flowers,  
Thine blights them in my hand;  
Mine venches for life's sunny hours,  
Thine leads through shadow land;  
And all my days  
Go in my ways  
I cannot understand.

Yet more and more this truth doth shine  
From failure and from loss,  
The will that runs transverse to thine  
Doth thereby make its cross;  
Thine upright will  
Cuts straight and still  
Through pride, and dream, and dross.

But if in parallel to thine  
My will doth meekly run,  
All things in heaven and earth are mine,  
My will is crossed by none.  
Thou art in me,  
And I in thee—  
Thy will—and mine—are done.

—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

#### JAMES JOHNSON'S OPPORTUNITY.

It was All Saints' Day, and the services of the little Episcopal Church in Springdale had been unusually inspiring. It was one of these beautiful days that sometimes usher in the first of November; the church was dressed with flowers; white and crimson and golden chrysanthemums adorned the altar, making it almost as bright as the painted glass in the windows.

It was evident by the manner in which the rector read the service that the spirit of the festival had deeply entered into him, and his voice trembled with a subdued emotion as he announced his text:

"Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience do inherit the promises."

He spoke of the loveliness of the day, the quiet ease and security in which they had adorned their church with flowers, and assembled there to commemorate the sufferings of the holy saints and martyrs who were now before the throne of God. To us in our peaceful homes and churches this memory of these saints and martyrs, he said, is a lovely poem; but, ah, it was no poem to them. There was no picture, no palms, no glory then; all was bitter, hard, stern reality. He painted before them in vivid, plain words some of the incidents of the primitive persecutions. He described the scene which a great French painter has lately embodied in a picture—the gardens of Nero when the young, gay and fair of old Rome promenaded and chatted amid walks which were lighted up by living human beings, gagged and bound and slowly consuming in cruel fires.

"My brethren," he said, "every one of these men and women who suffered this horrible death might have avoided it. One short sentence, very easy to speak; one little action, very easy to perform, would have redeemed each one of them. It was only to say, 'I renounce Christ,'—it was only to cast a few grains of incense on the altar of Jupiter, and life with its blessings was theirs! Nay, oftentimes, riches, promotion, office were offered to them at this very simple price.

"This was what it was to confess Christ then. Thousands of noble-minded men, of women delicately reared, of young persons and children, chose rather to burn in those lingering fires, to be thrown to the wild beasts, to pass through tortures that we can scarcely bear to read about rather than to speak those few words, or perform that simple action. They would not renounce their Saviour. It was because they were willing thus to suffer that we now are free

to confess Christ without suffering. When we commemorate the 'noble army of martyrs' in the service of the Te Deum, let us not forget what we owe to them; that we are enjoying to-day those religious gifts which they purchased for us with agony and blood.

"It is a solemn question," he said, "what we have given up or borne or endured for Christ. He says whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. That was not said merely of people in those days. He says whosoever, in all time, in all countries, doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be My disciple. There is a cross for every man and woman among us; and if we will not take up that cross and patiently bear it we are not and never can be Christians. The cross is not now in confessing Christ—all Christian society professes in some way to believe in Him. Nobody calls on us now to renounce Christ. Nobody wants us to burn incense to Jupiter. In a general way there is credit and honor in a Christian profession. Where then is the cross? My friends," he said solemnly, "God knows where it is; wherever your obedience to Christ's teaching requires of you some painful sacrifice, there is your cross. There are places where to do a Christian duty requires a sacrifice of money or of reputation or of friends, and he who in those crises of life shrinks from those hard duties denies Christ, as really as those who offered sacrifices to idols. Remember, dear friends, the words of our Lord. He says: 'He that will come after Me let him take up his cross.' Our Lord went before us in the path of pain and self-denial. In every hard place we can see His footsteps in advance marking the path. He bore a cross heavier than we can ever bear, and if we look to Him He will give us strength to bear ours."

The service was over, and as the sweet voices grew fainter and more faint in the distance the audience turned one to another and said, "Isn't it beautiful?" "Haven't we had a lovely time?" "What a glorious sermon!" "What a splendid rector we have!" "Did you ever hear such a sermon?"

But there was one hearer, a plain, unimaginative man, who sat after the services in deep thought. He did not join in the general enthusiasm; he said nothing to anyone, but stood by himself with the air of one who is revolving some perplexity. As nearly all the audience had passed out he joined the rector coming from the vestry.

"Ah, Mr. Johnson, how do you do?" said the rector extending his hand cordially; "I hope you have enjoyed the day."

"Well, sir, it has been a good day, doubtless; but—" he paused and looked troubled.

"But what?" said the rector.

"Why, sir, how can a man in these days know he is a Christian, when there is no opportunity to try us?"

"But you know," said the rector. "I told you 'there's a cross for every one.'"

"Well yes, sir, but what little ones! A man is rather thought the better of for going to church and for being a communicant. We don't have to sacrifice anything for Christ—not to speak of. We have to keep our temper, not speak quick when provoked, put our share into the offertory, do a little good here and there as we get a chance; but if we had to give everything up, all our property, see our wives and children suffer, be willing to be burned alive or thrown to the lions—how many of us would stand that? How many Christians would there be in Springdale if that was the trial?"

"Well, my friend, the martyrs that did this have left the testimony that it was not by their own strength. It was Christ with them and in them giving them strength to do and bear."

"It must have been," said Johnson, thoughtfully; "I don't see anything in myself that could do it, but perhaps if the cross was laid on me I should have strength given."

"Yes, if you sought it; and whether the cross is great or little, it is only by seeking that help that we can bear it."

"Well, they had a great opportunity," said Johnson, thoughtfully, "such as isn't given to us."

"The duty of the hour is our opportunity," said the rector; "and he that is faithful in the least will be faithful also in much;" and here they parted at the gate of a white house with green blinds, embowered in lilac bushes, which Johnson called home.

He stopped for a moment and looked thoughtfully up. It was one of those neat, complete comfortable New England houses that are the outgrowth of an exact, careful, respectable mode of living; industry and frugality embodying itself in the form of home comfort. The deep front door-yard had both its shade trees and flower borders. The late blossoming chrysanthemums still adorned the one and the maples, though fast losing their crimson and gold foliage, still were beautiful shade trees. On one side an ample garden, which all summer long had yielded fruits and vegetables in their season, stood cleared up and waiting for its winter coating of snow.

James Johnson stopped a moment and looked thoughtfully over the whole. It was his home, bought with years of patient and honest toil, the refuge of his advancing age, the shelter of his children, the joy of his wife; and as he thought, a passage came into his mind—"They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." "Ah," he thought, "could I do it? Could I give up my little home, my garden, the home of my wife and children? I don't know how they did it! Yes, it must have been they were helped; it would take something stronger and higher than I am to make me able to do it. May God help me to be faithful in the least, and then perhaps He will help me to be faithful in much."

It will be seen by this that our friend James Johnson was not one of the stony-ground hearers of the Word, nor among those like the hard-trodden wayside, where every chattering fowl of the air lights down and sweeps off the precious seed; that he was among those who receive the seed into the silent shelter of a good and honest heart.

He was by nature exact, conscientious, scrupulously truthful in his words and careful in his dealings, and therefore what had evaporated in emotive talk and expressions of admiration in many others on that day, had turned inward in him in silent self-examination. He had to use a significant common expression, laid it to heart.

"Wife," said James Johnson to his household partner, "the day after to-morrow I am going to Merton. I've had a letter from Pierson at last, and he wants to meet me at Merton to settle up accounts. I'm glad of it; it's quite a time we had paid everybody up. I don't like to keep all these hard-working fellows out of their money; they want it to fix things up for winter, and I believe in paying up prompt; so I am glad Pierson is going to settle up."

"So am I," said his wife, "for to say the truth, I never could trust that man much. He's smart and driving and capable, and keeps a good many irons in the fire; but somehow, I can't say why, I never trusted him. I didn't like your going into business with him much."

Here we must stop to explain that James Johnson had a year or two before become a partner in a provision store kept by this George Pierson in Boston. Johnson was the rural partner; it was his part of the business to travel around in that rich farming country where he was situated and secure and forward to Boston all manner of farm and garden produce. He was known through all the country for a careful, truthful, exact man, and every householder and housewife felt sure that in trusting their butter, eggs and vegetables to him they were putting them into the hands of a careful, conscientious person, who would be sure to render them a just equivalent. In fact, everybody that knew him considered his entering into such a firm as a fortunate thing, ensuring them that they should receive a fair reward for their labor. He would make sure their pay; nobody doubted him.

And for a while everything in the conduct of business had justified their expectations. Produce had been well cared for, punctually forwarded, and the returns had been no less punctual and satisfactory. But of late the remittances from the partner in Boston had been irregular, and Johnson had written letter after letter, both to the partner who delayed to pay and to the creditors who needed the money. He was now going, as he hoped, to have a satisfactory adjustment and bring back money to pay off all arrearages. Merton was a midway stopping-place between Springdale and Boston, where a good deal of forwarding business was done, and it was at Merton therefore, that he hoped for this opportunity of full adjustment.

He arrived an hour before the Boston train was due, and secured a room where they might have full and undisputed opportunity to go over their accounts. His accounts and papers having been put in readiness for a clear settlement, he went down and stood on the platform to await the arrival of the train.

At last it came in, and at last out of it came Pierson, a florid, portly young man, with an alert and jocular manner, a quick step, restless eye and facile tongue.

"Here you are, old fellow," he said, "On time as usual."

"Yes," said Johnson, "and I've got a room engaged close by here where we can be by ourselves, and all my accounts ready, so as not to keep you long."

"Oh yes; don't I know you? Everything on the square and up to time. Well, peg on and fire away," he said, as they walked rapidly up the street.

"I hope the business is going well," said Johnson, by way of conversation as they walked along.

"Oh well, the times are beastly, perfectly beastly; but we'll do pretty well. I'll take care of you anyhow."

"People are pressing hard for their money," began Johnson.

"Oh, of course. I know that people always want their money; that's the old tune. Well, let a fellow get some lunch. We won't talk shop till that's over."

And Pierson called for his lunch and his lager-beer, and seated himself, full spread and jolly, and ate and laughed and joked, and seemed in such abounding spirits that Johnson said to himself; "Well, he's found a way to settle all up; he will make all square."

After lunch he hurried his companion to the room where the accounts were all spread out upon a table.

"There," he said, seating himself eagerly, "here are three months' accounts for provisions forwarded, and here are all these letters. Here's Matthews' for butter, here's the Widow Smith's for eggs and garden vegetables, and here's—"

"Oh well, Johnson," said his partner pushing the books from him, "all that's neither here nor there; that ain't what I came for. The fact is, our firm is going to smash up, and I've just come up to let you know that you may put things well out of sight and save yourself."

Johnson, as we have said, was not an imaginative man—he was slow in receiving ideas, slow in comprehending. He sat back in his chair and regarded his partner with an air of dazed, stupid amazement.

"Smashed up!" he gasped; "what do you mean?"

"Why, smashed up—wound up—or whatever else you call it. We're going to fail, in short. The fact is, we are running at a loss, and shall go the devil if we don't stop. The times are beastly, as I told you. Nothing pays, and we've just got to wind up and save what we have made."

"Oh, I see," said Johnson, "pay up and settle. How here I owe for hay, and for wheat and flour and butter and all; it's run up terribly. I hope you'll let me have money to settle that; here are the figures."

"Not much!" said Pierson, putting his thumb into his button-holes, and sitting back contentedly; "why, you spooney don't you see—we're going to fail!"

"But I got these provisions; they trusted me. I've given our notes for them."

"Well, that's just what I came to tell you: just make over your house and place to your wife and they can't touch it. That's what I've done; they can't touch a thing of mine."

"Why that would be dishonest; it would be no better than stealing; you can't mean that, I'm sure you can't!"

"Pooh, your green—haven't cut your eye teeth. It is what is done constantly; members of the church, deacons, any fellow that has sense looks out to save himself and his family when there is a smash like this coming."

"How dare you tempt me so?" said Johnson, rising indignantly. "How will you answer for it in the judgment day? No; if you leave these debts on me, I shall pay them as far as I can, if I have to sell my house and use every cent I've laid up."

"Well, if you're a mind to be such a fool I can't help it," said Pierson, rising also. "I gave you a fair chance to save yourself."

"A fair chance to steal from hard working farmers and widows," said Johnson, in gathering wrath. "That's what it is. Sam