

## Pastor and People.

### THE LAW OF RECOMPENSE.

There is no wrong by any one committed,  
But will recoil;  
Its sure return, with double ill repeated,  
No skill can foil.

As on the earth the mists it yields to heaven  
Descend in rain;  
So, on his head who e'er has evil given,  
It falls again.

No soul that ever takes undue advantage  
But reaps a loss;  
There is a Nemesis that will not languish  
His path to cross.

It is the law of life that retribution  
Shall follow wrong;  
It never fails although the execution  
May tarry long.

Then let us be with unrelaxed endeavour,  
Just, true and tight;  
That the great law of recompense may ever  
Our hearts delight.

—J. E. Dickenga in the Christian Index.

### THE DOOR THAT OPENS ON THE PATH OF GLORY.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

However good and fair men may be by nature; however noble and true and generous and unselfish; however many beautiful graces may cluster thick upon them, yet they need that they may be right, right with God and right with His law—to be born from above. The natural birth may endow them with many excellent qualities and many lovely virtues but, they are as one of our old Scotch divines puts it, born with their backs towards God. And living without any change they are departing from God. Going away from Him, away, not into the light, but into the darkness.

To be right therefore they must turn themselves about, they must be converted. This is what Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Conversion is the door that opens on the path of glory.

Very many are greatly puzzled about this, they cannot understand it. Can we make it plain? We think that it may be made so plain as to be level with every one's understanding. What is conversion? It is just turning round. Ceasing to go in one way and setting out on another. The call of God in the Old Testament when they were forgetting Him and as a necessary result wandering into and by forbidden paths, was "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel? Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thought, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." That is conversion. It is entering on a course of life in which respect is had to God and to His commandments. It is beginning to fear God, and to obey Him with conscientious regard to all that He enjoins. But can a man do this of himself? No. No more than the leopard can change his spots. The history of every genuine conversion of which men are conscious is that there is going before it a sense of unrest and dissatisfaction with one's condition, and hence a looking beyond one's self for help. There is a consciousness of being not right, and a desire to be put right; and so there is a burden on the conscience that causes heaviness and forbodes woe, and a longing for relief and peace. This condition obtains in all men in some measure, but where serious thoughtfulness begins it is intensified and deepened till it becomes unbearable. The conviction of sin slays the man—kills him that he may be made alive. Then it is that the Gospel is indeed a joyful sound, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." This is the invitation of Jesus, who is mighty to save, who saves those who trust in Him from their sins, and who becomes to them the power of a new life. Without Him we can do nothing pleasing to God. Without Him we are lost. We must therefore come unto Him, and trust in Him, and live by the grace He gives. We enjoy the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. He of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In doing this we cease from self trust, which is the rock on which so many are wrecked, and we trust henceforth in the Lord.

The passage through this door is made in many ways. There is no one stereotyped form to which all must agree. God's spirit who moves upon the soul leading it to action is not bound to one set form or to any particular mode.

Cæsar Malan used to say that his conversion to the Lord Jesus might, with propriety, be compared to a mother rousing an infant with a kiss. He was spared the doubts, terrors and perplexities through which so many souls have passed e'er they tasted the joy and peace in believing. His own account of this experience is given in these words: "One afternoon while I was reading the New Testament at my desk, while my pupils were preparing their next lesson, I turned to the second chapter of Ephesians, when I came to the words, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," the message seemed to shine out before my eyes. I was so deeply moved by it that I was compelled to leave the room and take a turn in the courtyard, where I walked up and down exclaiming with intensest feeling, 'I am saved, I am saved.'"

This was the starting point of his spiritual career. The passage of Captain H. Vicars through the door was equally an act of simple faith without any terrifying experience. This is what Miss Marsh tells us: "It was in the month of November, 1851, that while awaiting the return of a brother officer to his room, he idly turned over the leaves of a Bible which lay on his table. The words caught his eye, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Closing the book he said: 'If this be true for me, henceforth I will live, by the grace of God, as a man should live who has been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.' That night he scarcely slept, pondering in his heart whether it were presumptuous or not to claim an interest in these words. During those wakeful hours, he was watched, we cannot doubt, with deep and loving interest, by One who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, and it was said of Him in Heaven, 'Behold, He prayeth.'"

In answer to those prayers, he was enabled to believe, as he arose in the morning, that the message of peace "was for him"—"a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance." The past then, he said, is blotted out. "What I have to do is to go forward. I cannot return to the sins from which my Saviour has cleansed me with His own blood." From this time forth Hedley Vicars was known as a soldier of the Heavenly King.

Francis Ridley Havergal could not tell the time when she was converted, but of the fact, she had no doubt. And so it is with a great multitude of consecrated souls. She gives us this interesting account: "One evening I was sitting on the drawing room sofa with her (Miss Cook) and told her again how I longed to know that I was forgiven. She asked me a question which led to the hearty answer that I was sure I desired it above everything on earth, that even my precious papa was nothing in comparison—brothers and sisters, and all I loved, I could lose everything were it but to attain this. She paused, and then said slowly, 'Then Fanny, I think I am sure it will not be very long before your desire is granted, your hope fulfilled.' After a few more words she said, 'Why cannot you trust yourself to your Saviour at once? Supposing that now, at this moment, Christ were to come in the clouds of heaven, and take up His redeemed, could you not trust Him? Would not His call, His promise be enough for you? Could not you commit your soul to Him, to your Saviour, Jesus?' Then came a flash of hope across me which made me feel literally breathless. I remember how my heart beat. I could, surely, was my response; and I left her suddenly and ran upstairs to think it out. I flung myself on my knees in my room, and strove to realize the sudden hope. I was very happy at last. I could commit my soul to Jesus. I did not, and need not fear His coming. I could trust Him with my all for eternity. It was so utterly new to have any bright thoughts about religion that I could hardly believe it could be so, that I had really gained such a step. Then and there, I committed my soul to the Saviour, I do not mean to say without any trembling or fear, but I did—and earth and heaven seemed bright from that moment—I did trust the Lord Jesus."

Bunyan's experience was very different, it was full of temptations and bitter agonies and so his advice to anxious souls is "O friends! cry to God to reveal Jesus Christ unto you; there is none teacheth like Him."

It is the acceptance of Jesus as our sin-bearer that is the going through the door. The embracing of Him and the love and obedience of Him is our life eternal. The great question touching conversion therefore is not, Have you had this or that experience? but, Do you now trust in Christ and live by Him as your Saviour? Do you now acknowledge Him as your Lord? That is the one, supreme, satisfying evidence of genuine conversion. The ways that lead up to the door lie wide apart and are very different in character, but the door is the same to all—a way of escape from the power and the guilt and the condemnation of sin—a way into the blessedness of a new life. It opens on the path of glory. Glory in the heart, glory on the head and glory on the way. All the way to heaven is heaven. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The converted man has within himself the evidence of divine interposition on his behalf. He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. His conversion is the result and the manifestation of His regeneration. He is born of the Spirit—born from above. And his supernatural birth endows him with qualities that enable him to hold converse with the unseen Holy, and to delight himself in the spiritual realities that lie open to his quickened soul—central among which is Jesus, the one great object of contemplation—"We see Jesus," and the one source of strength and joy and progress.

### COURTESY IN THE FAMILY.

There is nothing so necessary to gain perfect order as kindness. It must predominate. The home which is governed by harshness could never become an ideal home. In homes where true courtesy prevails it seems to meet one on the threshold.

The kindly welcome is felt on entering. It is beautifully expressed. "Kind words are the music of the world." Hard words, on the other hand, "are like hailstones in summer, beating down and destroying what they would nourish were they melted into drops of rain." Life without love would be a world without a sun; without one blossom of delight, of feeling, or of taste.

### GET READY FOR WORK.

By a new consecration.  
By leaving Grumblers Alley.  
By broad Christian liberality.  
By looking on the bright side.  
By rebuilding the family altar.  
By forgiving all your enemies.  
By speaking well of the parson.  
By loyalty to the prayer meeting.  
By planning large revival results.  
By parting company with the devil.  
By moving into Thanksgiving Street.  
By harmonizing churchly differences.  
By getting cured of irreligious dyspepsia.  
By taking an allopathic dose of sunshine.  
By warmly greeting the stranger at church.  
By being charitable toward the crooked stick.  
By taking a short cut to every field of usefulness.  
By keeping your bump of self-esteem well poulticed.  
By planning liberal things for the church benevolences.  
By going to church Sunday evening as well as the morning.  
By hearty co-operation in all the legitimate churchly doings.  
By paying in advance a liberal instalment of the pastoral stipend.  
By showing a warm side to the fine Sunday school of your Church.  
By refusing to criticise the pastor in the presence of your family.  
By praying and paying in proper proportion and with due regularity.  
By making a large allowance for the idiosyncrasies of your brethren.  
By calling to see the new minister, and not waiting for him to find you.  
By seeing that the parsonage flour barrel contains a few measures of meal.  
By being willing to do service in the ranks, if the Church does not see fit to make you a major-general.—*Exchange*.

### ALL THINGS FOR GOOD.

"Really no one understands about it, and I have no one to talk with but God Himself."

For the moment it seems to us a hard experience for the earnest woman who uttered these words, with tears in her eyes; but upon second thought we know that it was one of the blessed "all things" working "for good." We know it not as a matter of theory, nor even of faith, for it impressed itself in the face and tone, and in the evidently maturing character of the speaker.

We get our best things directly from God. Human friendships, the communion of saints, and the stimulus to spiritual life which comes from association are greatly to be valued; but we learn best as private pupils in personal intercourse with the divine Teacher. It is said of Mary that she "sat at Jesus' feet, and kept listening to His word." Doubtless she often repeated to her sister Martha the things she heard, but they could never come to her with the force and stimulus with which they fell upon Mary's ear directly from the lips of Jesus. It is not so much in the great events of life that we learn this precious lesson of companionship with God. There are sorrows in some lives which are like lonely mountain fastnesses where, in hours "apart" with him, the soul has had unutterable revelations. But the daily routine, "the common round," has its lonely places too, where God only "understands." If we should speak of the trial to another, the reply might come, "Why do you care? Such things do not trouble me." "True, but you are different. I see you cannot understand," and we turn away disappointed. But if to the Friend unfailing we have learned to go, and

"Tell Him everything  
As it rises,  
And at once to Him to bring  
All surprises,

how soon we find He does "understand," and His peace keeps heart and mind as in a strong fortress.

Nor does this feeling of being understood by God lead to a misanthropic spirit. It does not recoil, like the sensitive plant, from all human touch, but rather from the divine companionship it learns the charity which "never faileth, hopeth all things, believeth all things, suffers long, and is kind." Taking daily experiences in this way, we may truly "in everything give thanks."

### HOW FAITH COMES.

It is a gift of God, but it usually comes in a certain way. Thinking of Jesus, and meditating upon Jesus will bring faith in Jesus. I was struck with what one said the other day of a certain preacher. The hearer was in deep concern of soul and the minister preached a very pretty sermon indeed, but his poor soul, under a sense of sin, said:

"There was too much landscape, sir. I did not want landscape; I wanted salvation."

Dear friend, never crave word painting when you attend a sermon, but crave Christ. You must have Christ to be your own by faith, or you are a lost man. When I was seeking the Saviour, I well remember hearing a very good doctrinal sermon but when it was over I longed to tell the minister that there was a poor lad there that wanted to know how he could get saved.—*Spurgeon*.