

Churches of Asia, Rev. ii, iii, failed in 'godliness,' and so fell a prey to many adversities. 'Godliness' profitable even in this life, 1 Tim. iv, 8; also 1 Tim. vi, 6. 'Godliness . . . is great gain.' Godliness, security, devotion, the key-words of the great common prayer of this Sunday. Godliness leads to security, and security, under the Divine Hand, to devout and fruitful service in 'good works' to the glory of God's Name.

The connection between Collect and *Epistle* is unusually close. The bond which unites all the members of God's 'household, the Church,' is 'their fellowship in the Gospel'—its blessings and its hopes. An assurance that God will 'keep it in continual godliness' is found in the Apostle's words. 'Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' The love which actuates God's household, and is a mark of a man's *continuing* in godliness, is illustrated by the Apostle's great longing after each one of his Philippian converts. The echo of the prayer for devotion of service—'this I pray that ye may be filled with the fruits of righteousness.' The *Epistle* teaches the duty of intercession for other, when outward things with ourselves may be cheerless and discouraging. The faith of the Apostle shines out in the midst of gloom, 'being confident of this very thing.' 'Thy household the Church,' 'being partakers of my grace' Sincerity of motive and innocency of life the proofs of true 'fellowship' in the Gospel. Tender solicitude for others. God's glory in Christ's Jesus the end of all.

The *Gospel* contains an illustration of what is meant by 'godliness.' The servant's duty in the parable was to *act as his master had acted*, and grow up (as it were) into his likeness by becoming compassionate and forgiving. His master's merciful act had failed to touch his grasping, selfish soul: hence his punishment. The servant's behaviour to his fellow-servant is a perfect contrast to that of the king to him. The common tie of fellow-service in the royal 'household' did not move the pity of the man who had been already forgiven by the royal bounty of a large indebtedness because he 'had not to pay.' The severity which in his own case he so strenuously deprecated, he now applies without remorse to his petitioner: so great are the inconsistencies of human nature. To forgive others is essential to our being partakers of God's pardon and mercy hereafter.

The *First Morning Lesson*, Daniel vi, reveals the Providence of God protecting his 'household,' of which Daniel was one, and keeping him in 'continual godliness' in the face of terrible trials of his integrity and faithfulness. This saint was always given to good works, e.g., prayer, regular, fearless, v. 10. Trusted in promises. 'He opened his windows towards Jerusalem.' God glorified by the service of his prophet: see verse 26; testimony of Darius, 'He is the living God.'

The *Second Morning Lesson*, II Thess. I.—A 'household' or Church kept in 'continual godliness' is here shown to us. The prayer of the *Collect* given, v. ii, in another form. Faith, charity, patience under affliction, v. 3, 4, specially commended by the Apostle. Persecutions, tribulations, suffering all met and endured for the sake of the Kingdom of God. 'Rest,' v. 7, for the troubled in the revelation of 'Jesus Christ from heaven with the mighty angels.'

The *First Evening Lesson*, Dan. vii, v. 9.—The Vision of God, and of His Kingdom or 'household.' The final victory of 'godliness,' v. 18-27. The overthrow of evil. The history of the world contained in these few verses, but in enigma. Material forces,—the four thrones or beasts,—the glory of the ancient monarchies, their temporary triumphs eclipsed and

their power broken by 'the Kingdom which is everlasting: which is given to the people of the saints of the Most High,' v. 27.

The *Second Evening Lesson*, St. Luke xv, v. ii.—The 'household' of God—the Father and Son. The house, the servants, the property, the service, all the details of 'home life' here given. The younger son falls away from 'continual godliness'; 'adversity' befalls him, and he lives in 'evil works,' v. 13. The elder brother, the soul continually abiding in 'godliness.' God's children recognize the claims of the 'household,'—the rules of the home, the duty of service. To leave the shelter of the Church is to expose ourselves to 'adversities.' The love of the Father, v. 31-32, accepts the claim of membership in the 'household.' 'This thy brother was lost and is found.' The Fatherhood of God the characteristic Truth of Christian Revelation. Our Sonship in Christ follows upon this. The brotherhood of man—the solidarity of the race based upon this oneness in Jesus Christ. Members of Christ,—members one of another.

THE BUSINESS OF GETTING MARRIED

By the Rev. T. S. MILLINGTON, M. A., Vicar of Woodhouse Eaves.

"For better or for worse; for richer for poorer; till death us do part." Weighty, solemn words are these, worthy of all the consideration that we can give them. Our happiness for time, and to a certain extent our welfare for eternity, may be said to depend upon the choice we make of our life-companion. Yet how often are courtships carelessly begun and rashly ended; how quickly are engagements made which are to be so close, so intimate, and so enduring! The whole thing is too frequently treated as a joke, an affair of cupids and valentines, and sheep's eyes and sheep's hearts—not real, but painted. From the time that a young couple are attracted towards each other, they find themselves exposed to a certain amount of ridicule and banter.

Down in a vale,
Carrying a pail,
Cicely was met by her true love, Harry;
First they kiss't,
Then shook fist,
And looked like two fools just going to marry.

But is there anything ridiculous in true love? May not a young couple think or speak of marriage without being set down as two fools? Even at the wedding breakfast the greater part of the speeches are of a facetious and quizzical kind, or meant to be so. A telegram is sent to friends at a distance to announce the conclusion of the ceremony in some such form as this: "The trap is down," or "Sorrow begins." The man is looked upon as a kind of victim—a wild elephant let into captivity by the allurements of a female, or a fox that has lost its tail. The woman also has sympathisers, through she is generally supposed to have got the best of it; masculine philosophy alone knows why! Of course, this manner of jesting is mere surface merriment, and generally means nothing; but is it not a little out of place? Does it not lead young people to think less seriously than they ought of the bonds and obligations which accompany marriage? A well-considered and convenient wedding—a real "match"—ought, indeed to be celebrated with joyfulness. The married life is the most natural and the happiest life, or ought to be so. Among all nations, and especially among the Jews, a state of "single blessedness," as it is now sometimes called, was always regarded as a state, not only of misfortune, but of disgrace.

The terms Bachelor and Spinster

are significant; and if the conditions which those two words imply were literally fulfilled in those who marry, there would be the better prospect of happiness for them after they are man and wife. Bachelors are supposed to be *Baccalaurii*—i.e., crowned with a wreath of laurel berries, as the reward of diligence and application in the schools of learning. Our bachelors do not present themselves with this ornament upon their brow in the present day, or it might be interesting to observe how many of them deserved it. The laurel berries are to be exchanged in wedlock for olive branches, and academic honours for social duties; and the same qualifications which have gained success in early years may be trusted to secure the same in after-life. The word has also been derived from *Battalarius*, one who has distinguished himself in arms; such a bachelor as this would be competent to defend his wife and children in troublous times—or, in a figurative sense, to fight against adversity. We would suggest, however, a better and more practical definition of the word, requiring only the change of a vowel—viz., *battalarius*, a good batteler, or batman; one who knows how to provide battels baits or bites for his household; a man of industrious and steady habits, who can earn a good living and support his family in comfort. Above all, let him not be bottle-arius, a great drinker, for then the future prospect would be bad indeed.

The Word Spinster

speaks for itself: one who spins. Alfred the Great, in his will, calls the female part of his family the spindle-side. Spellman mentions one who had sculptured on his tomb eleven sons bearing swords (*Battalarii*) and eleven daughters with spindles (*spinsters*)—a goodly family to rise up and call him blessed. The word wife also betokens industry, being derived from "weave." The Anglo-Saxon version of Matthew xix. 4 is, "He worhte wæpman an wifeman"—i.e., He wrought them weapon-man and woof-man, *man* being the common name of either sex, and the weapon or the woot, the distinctive term by which the occupation of each is described. In the Book of Proverbs, the industry of a good wife is thus noticed—"She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." "She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff" (Prov. xxxi.). This was an occupation that even the highest of the dames of ancient times did not despise. Hector going to battle direct *Andromache*—

Hasten to thy tasks at home,
There guide the distaff and direct the loom,

A dispute arising among some of the Roman nobles as to the relative merits of their wives, they agreed to visit them by surprise, and to judge of them by the manner in which they should be found employed. *Lucretia*, the wife of *Tarquin*, was discovered busily engaged with her wool, though at a late hour, sitting in the midst of her house, with her maids at work around her—a true spinster! It was a custom among the Romans, when a bride was led home, to make her sit upon a fleece of wool and to put the distaff and spindle into her hand. If all the bachelors and spinsters whose banns or obligations are published, were as well qualified to fulfil them as these names imply, one element, at least, of future happiness would be tolerably secure—there would not be much to fear from idleness, nor from poverty, its natural consequence. The bachelor would provide, and the spinster rule the house wisely, like a good chancellor, from the domestic woollack, and the disagreeable old proverb would be but rarely fulfilled,

"When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window."

Further prospects may in most instances be

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