

Sunday Reading

The Two Streets.

Two streets there are—in many towns—
A hot one and a fair;

In one the sweetest peace abounds,
In one a stark despair;

In one the light of love is shed,
In one a gloom's bitter tear;

The name of one of these is "Broad,"
The name of one is "Beet."

In Broad street there are many men,
And happy homes and wives;

In Beet street the degraded den,
And sad and broken lives.

In Broad street Plenty sings her song,
And Labor chants his rime;

In Beet street woe is joined with wrong
And filthiness with crime.

O men and mothers! strive to do
The work you can to make

The children clean the ones who brew
But love the ones who bake;

There is a street that they should tread,
And one their feet should fear—

The name of one of these is "Broad,"
The name of one is "Beet."

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peaks and prophesy continually broke forth into the anticipation of a world-wide prevalence of truth. And when the fullness of time came, there appeared what never was seen elsewhere before or since, a religion suited to all ages, all climes, all conditions the world over. To-day, every quarter of the globe gives token of stir and movement in preparation for the final and universal reign of truth. And this reign, once inaugurated, may be so protracted as that its dominion shall bear some proportion to the long night which has hitherto brooded over the greater part of world. Under such happy auspices there must needs be a vast and rapid increase of the children of God, and so the present scale of proportion will be reversed. Discrepancy will be the rule, and unbelief the exception.' [Rev. Dr. T. W. Chambers.]

'The whole tone of the Bible,' says Drummond, 'when it speaks of the final results of the world's history, is one of jubilee and triumph; never of sorrow and despondency.' In the estimation of the late Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge, the relative proportion of the lost and saved at the day of reckoning will be that of persons now in prison to the rest of the community. The Rev. J. H. Livingston graphically puts the case thus: 'When our blessed Redeemer shall present his people to his Father, they will compose an immense number which no man can count, exceeding in number in no great degree those who shall be finally lost that the God of this world will retire with his victims covered with shame, while the shout of the redeemed will proclaim the extent as well as the nature of the Saviour's victory.'

The statements of these writers are strongly buttressed by statistics. The army of the cross is rapidly winning recruits from the world. The gains for the current century exceed those for the previous eighteen centuries. In 1790, the population of these United States was under 4,000,000. Now the Methodist denomination alone has a membership of 5,663,289; and the regular Baptists sum up 8,860,666. The combined membership of the varied Evangelical Protestant churches in these United States is about 17,000,000; and the average daily accessions to these churches is estimated at more than 1000. Marvelous has been the growth of population in these United States; but the percentage of the Church gains has been more marvelous. In 1800, there was but one evangelical communicant to each 14.5 inhabitants. In 1890, the proportion was one in every 4.7; and now it is about one in every 4.2.

In spite of the fact that multitudes who profess and call themselves Christians, 'take no stock in foreign missions,' there was an increase of communicants during 1896 of about 64,000, a Pentecost among the heathen every other week in the year. Doors to missionary endeavor are now open in almost every part of the earth. The petition for the upraising of missionary workers has become antiquated. Five thousand students have volunteered their services, 'and have already sent at least ten per cent of their number to the field.' The Church Missionary Society, which, upon its organization, long sought workers for the foreign field, and ultimately got them from another fold, sent abroad 184 workers last fall, and 'has more than sixty missionaries that give their services to the cause' of Christ.

'He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat; He is sitting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat; Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him, be jubilant, my feet. Our God is marching on.'

Our gracious Father who 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,' took into consideration his glory and our unmistakable good in permitting the fall of our first parents. From the first Adam we inherit a deprived and depraved nature; but through faith in the second Adam we are recreated in 'righteousness and true holiness.' Through that first trespass we lost the divine image; but whole souled believers 'with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' Our first parents were evicted from the earthly paradise; but by giving on our part all diligence in making calling and election sure, we certify for ourselves a glorious entrance into the paradise of God. Had Adam and Eve resisted Satan steadfastly, the train would be alone happy; but out of their willful transgression shall be wrought a fuller happiness for themselves and for countless descendants.

Heavenly-mindedness. George Eliot brought against Christianity the charge of what she called 'other-worldliness,' or the neglect of this world in the supreme importance attached to another life. A noted skeptical writer has declared that the Christian religion has done great harm to mankind by directing

their attention to a future life, thus leading them to neglect and despise the present world.

There is but little peril from this source at the present time. The tendency now, even in church work, is toward the outward and the material. We are, in the multiplied agencies employed, and the excessive tendency to organization and formalism, in danger of losing our spiritual power. We should ever bear in mind that Christianity is spiritual or it is nothing.

The attitude of the New Testament Christians toward the world was one of supreme indifference if not contempt. Its fashion passes away like the shifting scenes upon the stage. Things seen are temporal. The spiritual alone abides. The supremacy of the spiritual is the plain teaching of the Word of God from cover to cover. The material is constantly changing. Matter may be a solid one day, a liquid the next, and the day following a gas or vapor. The body is the garment woven by the Spirit, and many times in the course of a prolonged human life does the Spirit discard the old body and weave itself another; yet our personal identity remains. The spiritual dominates the material. See yonder field, overrun with weeds and briars—a very wilderness. An intelligent farmer purchases this field, clear away the briars and weeds, upturns the soil, sows good seed, and lo! what was formerly a wilderness now smiles in beauty; and where once the venomous serpent glided through the tangled thicket, the bending harvest awaits the reaper's sickle. But what was back of these? The skilled hand? An intelligent will, spirit. It was really a spiritual force that turned the wild, unsightly thicket into a fruitful field.

Behold a shapeless block of marble. The sculptor sees in it possibilities of beauty, has it removed to his studio, and upon out of this marble block carves a form of such life and loveliness that it fairly seems to breathe. Did the chisel effect this transformation, and awake all this sleeping beauty? No, you exclaim, the skillful hand of the artist wrought it; the chisel was but the unconscious instrument. But, as in the former case, behind the skillful hand was the intelligent will, spirit—a spirit filled with love of the beautiful. The chisel was the instrument in the hand of the artist was the instrument of an immortal spirit. Spirit called this beautiful statue to emerge from the cold, unconscious marble.

We should attach supreme importance to the spiritual, set our affections on things above, lay up treasures in heaven, because the things of this world do not last. What is there of earthly good that moth cannot corrupt, the rust corrode, or thieves break through and steal?

Youth turns to the serene and yellow leaf of age, beauty fades, the wreath of fame withers, pleasures pall upon the jaded senses. Even much of earthly knowledge will pass away. Beyond all this, the things of earth cannot satisfy. Nothing short of God can satisfy the craving and want of an immortal spirit.

'The World can never give,
The bliss for which we sigh.'

is the ceaseless confession and lament of those who seek to quench the thirst of an immortal nature from cisterns dug in earth rather than from the fountain of living waters.

To be spiritually-minded—that is to recognize the supreme importance of the spiritual, to live for heaven and eternity—is to possess life and peace. It gives poise and serenity to the soul. Such a one is not unduly elated by prosperity, nor cast down by adversity. Heaven assumes a reality that makes death a sweet home-coming. The heavenly life is not vague and misty, but to the eye of faith

becomes as real as the hills and plains of earth. That is what Charles Wesley meant when he sang, 'We feel our resurrection near.' This heavenly mindedness throws around the life a sweet and precious influence, and gives a refinement to the manners and spirit as different from cant and professional piety as the fragrance of violets is from the artificial perfume of the drug store.

God's Army.

We all know the duties of a soldier. Whether in camp or on the march he is under orders, and is expected to perform good service. Many of the young men in our land have had a recent practical illustration of what it means to belong to an army, and to be called to 'endure hardness as a good soldier,' and 'understand the jubilation of triumph and victory. The outcome of the late warfare has compensated for every hardship and privation they may have borne.

All combats, however, are not so speedily and victoriously won. The veteran knows of long periods of waiting and inaction in camp, subject to the most rigid and stern military discipline, and of disappointment and defeat when a battle seems to be losing ground, and realizes that is but part of the soldier's training—and he knows, too, that faithful service alone, whether in the heat of conflict or in the interval of rest from hostilities, commands him to his captain and marks him a loyal soldier.

In our topic this week we are given the army idea as a basis for reflection, and the Scripture passages point out the requirements for acceptable Christian service and the victorious results which will follow if we are fighting on God's side. God's army includes every one who is willing to enlist under his banner, and when a soldier of Christ enlists he enlists for life. There can be no turning in this war. Whatever may be the case with other armies, and however doubtful their success, the final triumph of this army is sure; for God's army will always win.

The Christian soldier has therefore this advantage over others, that there is no uncertainty or doubt regarding his final triumph. His great Captain and Commander-in-chief has never lost a battle, he does not even depend for his success upon the efforts of his soldiers, like ordinary generals, he is able by his own almighty power to achieve victory and bring about success without the aid of his followers. To be a soldier under such a Commander, and even to endure hardships, should be regarded rather as a privilege than a duty.

The Christian soldier, therefore, is serving for his own personal welfare as well as for the good of the cause he represents. Men are sometimes obliged to leave their business and make great personal sacrifices for the good of their country or the cause in which they have enlisted. Not so with the Christian soldier; his sacrifices all redound to his own personal good, for he is assured of this by no less an authority than the great Leader himself. God's banner over us is love, and if we are marching under it we are surely upon the right side. If God is with us who can be against us?

Wild With Delight.

If, from your babyhood, you were not permitted to use your feet, but on attaining full age were suddenly told to walk, what would happen? We are not aware that the experiment has been tried, but a naturalist has attempted something akin to it.

'I obtained,' he says, 'a young kittiwake gull and kept it in my house until the bird was fully grown. Its native cliffs, sea and sky were quite unknown to it.

'At length I took it to the door of the house and threw it gently from an elevation of ten feet. Instead of flying slowly to the ground, as I had anticipated, the bird sailed off a hundred feet at least, turned, flew back over the house and through the trees, avoiding obstacles, and soaring with perfect ease and very swift motion round and round the area of the house.

'Very soon, however, he began to approach close to me and scream as if in distress. It was evident that he was tired, but did not know how to stop.

'Finally, by suddenly throwing up my arms as he came towards me, I succeeded in arresting him. His excitement was very great, and he would have started again if his own accord, if I had not held and quieted. He was wild with delight.

Next the Examiner.

It is a narrow border-line which divides smartness from ridicule, as a certain examiner found to his cost.

This astute individual was examining a class of students, and his hawk-like eye never ceased to glance from one candidate to another with a view to the detection of unlawful copying.

At last he saw a man, after looking from side to side to satisfy himself that he was not observed, plunge his hand in his breast pocket and draw something out. The student looked at it long and stead-

fastly, then hastily replaced it, resumed his pen, and wrote with increased energy.

The examiner, pretending not to notice this, rose from his seat, strolled round the room, came up behind the student, and, after waiting a time, saw the student again draw something from his breast pocket.

'Sir,' said the examiner, grasping the student's hand, 'this is the second time I have seen you doing this! What have you in your hand?'

The man's hesitation confirmed the examiner's suspicions.

'Sir,' said he, 'I must insist on seeing what it is you have in your hand.'

The student reluctantly drew his hand from his pocket and presented to the examiner the photograph of—a remarkably pretty young lady. It had been his hidden source of inspiration and the secret of his freshened energy.

The examiner beat a discomfited retreat.

A MISUNDERSTANDING AGREED.

It Came Near Being Serious but Ended Happily.

The engineer who lays out a railroad dislikes to move a stake when it has once been driven. If he thinks he is right he will fight or quit, but he hates to compromise. In 'The Story of the Railroad' Cy Warman cites a characteristic anecdote.

Once when the present chief engineer of a Western railroad was locating a line in Missouri, he was asked to change the stakes, and refused. After the stakes had been set, a young unshaven man appeared and asked that the road be 'moved over a bit.'

'The road cannot be changed,' promptly returned the engineer; this is the best place for it.'

The man went into the house, got a rifle came out, and pulled up the stakes. The indignant engineer started toward him, but was intercepted by an elderly woman.

'Can't you move your road over a little piece, mister?' she asked.

'I don't see why I should,' responded the engineer. 'My business is to locate the line, and you can call on the company for damages. What does that young blackguard mean by sitting there on a stump with a gun?' he angrily demanded.

'That's Nip—he ain't no blackguard. That's Nip, my son.'

'Well, I'll nip him if he gets funny.'

'Oh, no, you wont. I ain't afraid o' that,' said the woman. 'What come over me when I seen you starting for Nip was that praps you had a mother, and how bad she'd feel to have you come home that way.'

'What way?'

'Well, if you persist in driving them stakes there, you'll go home dead.'

'Look here, do you think I'm to be bluffed by that ruffian?'

'Nip ain't no ruffian,' said the woman. 'You see, we've always lived here—Nip was born here, an' when the grizzlies came an' called out paw an' shot him, we buried him jist whar he fell, an' we've always kept it as a reservation, an' Nip he's determined you shan't disturb it, that's all.'

'Then you don't object to the railroad?'

'Lord o' mercy, no! I want the road, but we don't want to disturb paw's grave.'

'Come,' said the engineer, 'let's go and see Nip.'