

hope of glory. Theirs is "the higher life," the "witness of the Spirit with their spirit," the "peace that passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and the mind," the "joy that is unspeakable and full of glory." "He abideth with you, and shall be in you."—*H. Allen, D.D.*

GOOD HUMOR IN THE FAMILY.

Good humor is rightly reckoned a most valuable aid to happy home life. An equally good and useful faculty is the sense of humor or the capacity to have a little fun along with the humdrum cares and works of life.

We all know how it brightens up things generally to have a lively, witty companion who sees the ridiculous points of things, and can turn an annoyance into an occasion for laughter. It does a great deal better to laugh over some domestic mishaps than to cry or scold over them. Many homes and lives are dull because they are allowed to become too deeply impressed with a sense of the cares and responsibilities of life to recognize its bright and especially its mirthful side. Into such a household, good but dull, the advent of a genial, humorous friend is like sunshine on a cloudy day.

While it is always oppressive to hear persons constantly striving to say funny things, it is comfortable, seeing what a brightener a little fun is, to make an effort to have some at home. It is well to turn off an impatient question sometimes, and to regard it from a humorous point of view instead of being irritated about it. "Wife, what is the reason I never can find a clean shirt?" exclaimed a good but rather impatient husband, after rummaging all through the wrong drawer. His wife looked at him steadily for a moment, half inclined to be provoked; then, with a comical look, she said: "I never could guess conundrums, I give it up." Then he laughed, and they both laughed, and she went and got his shirt, and he felt ashamed of himself and kissed her, and then she felt happy; and so what might have been an occasion for hard words and unkind feelings became just the contrary, all through the little vein of humor that cropped out to the surface.

Some people have a peculiar faculty for giving a humorous turn to things when they are reprovved. It does just as well oftentimes to laugh things off as to scold them off. Laughter is better than tears. Let us have a little more of it at home.

THE POWER OF A GODLY LIFE.

The manifestations of a risen Saviour in the lives of His followers is a witness for Him before all people. The Living God is seen and known by His wonders, His faithfulness, and His love, and the world will discern that there is something among a people who love and follow a Living God which is not among those who serve and honor Him not. Laban would fain have retained Jacob in his service: "I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry; for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." This witness is still called forth by many a godly servant in an ungodly household, by many an upright clerk in a warehouse, by many a steward over the estate of his earthly master, by many a soldier over his dissolute companions, by many a converted child in a family at war with the "blessed of the Lord."

I asked a navy, lately converted, if the Holy Ghost had consciously dealt with him before the time he was outwardly changed.

He answered, "Yes. I lived with a relative, a farmer; he was a timid man, and never spoke to me directly of my soul's salvation, but I saw he was not like other men, and that he was a praying man. I heard him pray once when he did not know any one was near. I listened, and thought to myself, 'If this man, who seems to have nothing to repent of, can be mourning and crying for pardon of sin, what will become of me who do nothing but sin?' I was left in his service till his death, and then I saw him die; and this man, who bemoaned his sins, died with a smile on his lips—such a smile I

never saw before nor since—believing his sins forgiven. I said, 'This is the end of a Christian. Could I die with such a smile on my face?' Why, it was heavenly."—*The Promise and the Promiser.*

UNDEMONSTRATIVE PEOPLE.

A charming smile is a pretty certain indication of some charming personal quality or qualities, but its absence from certain faces does not denote the lack of such qualities; for there are persons who have not had the fortune to be born with the same mobile features as others, fitted to express the emotions of their souls. The emotions are there in strength and abundance, but they cannot come forth and show themselves in the radiance of the eye and the play of flexible lips. So the most genial of people may sometimes appear the least so to the eye, which, after all, can only take in appearance, and needs the corroborating witness of the ear.

I know a person who, it is no exaggeration to say, fascinates on first acquaintance men and women alike; and when he meets you there is that in his look and tone, his smile and hand-grip, that carries you away and makes you fancy you are sharing his ardor of delight. He is thoroughly sincere, and yet, after a little, you are apt to become a bit *disillusionné* about that glance and smile of his, and you admit that there is no more real warmth of feeling behind them than you have found to lie in the simple quiet greeting of some less demonstrative friend.—*Atlantic.*

THE MASTER AND HIS SLAVES.

2 Peter ii. 1.—Denying the Lord that bought them.

There were three great stains on the civilization of the world into which Christianity came; war, the position of woman, and slavery. With the first two of these we have nothing to do at present, but the relation of the New Testament to the last of these great evils naturally connects itself with the words before us. That relation is at first sight very singular. There can be no doubt that the atrocious system of slavery is utterly irreconcilable with the principles and spirit of the Gospel. It dies in the light of Christianity, like some foul fungus that can only grow in the dark. And yet there is not a word of condemnation of it in the book. The writers of the New Testament found that evil institution which makes the slaves chattels and their masters fiends in full force, and they said nothing against it. Paul recognizes it in several of his letters, regulates it, gives counsels to Christians standing to each other in the extraordinary relation of owner and slave; sends back the runaway Onesimus to his master, and shows no consciousness of the revolutionary force of his own words, "In Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free." Whether he foresaw the effect of the gospel in breaking every yoke or no, the fact remains that Christianity at its beginning ran no tilt against even the most execrable social iniquities, but was guided by the wisdom which said, "Make the tree good, and its fruit good." The only way to mend institutions is by mending individuals. Elevate the tone of society by lifting the moral nature of the units, and evil things will drop away and become impossible. Other ways are revolutionary and imperfect.

In like manner, this same wicked thing, slavery, is used as an illustration of the highest, sacredest, noblest relationship possible to men—their submission to Jesus Christ. With all its vileness, it is not too vile to be lifted from the mud, and to stand as a picture of the purest and loftiest tie that can bind the soul. The apostles glory in calling themselves "slaves of Jesus Christ." That title of honour heads each epistle. And here in this text we have the same figure expressed with Peter's own energy, and carried out in detail. The word in our text for "Lord," is an unusual one, selected to put the idea in the roughest, most absolute form. It is the root of our word "despot," and conveys, at any rate, the notion of unlimited, irresponsible authority. We might read "owner" with some approach to the force of the word.

Nor is this all. One of the worst and ugliest features of slavery is that of the market, where men and women and children are sold like cattle. And that has its parallel too, for this Owner has bought men for His.

Nor is this all; for as there are fugitive slaves, who "break every man away from his master," and when questioned will not acknowledge that they are his, so men flee from this Lord and owner, and by words and

deeds assert that they owe Him no obedience, and were never in bondage to Him.

So, then, there are these three points brought out in the words before us: Christ's absolute ownership of men; the purchase on which it depends; and the fugitives who deny his authority.

I. The strong expression of the text asserts Christ's absolute ownership. If a word had been sought to convey the hardest possible representation of irresponsible, unlimited authority, bound by no law but its own will, the word in our text would have been chosen. Such authority can never be really exercised by men over men, for thought and will are ever free. To claim it would be blasphemy, to allow it would be degradation. But such an authority, in comparison with which the most absolute that man can exercise over man is slight and superficial, this peasant of Nazareth claims, and not in vain. Proud hearts have bowed to his authority, and through the centuries the whole being of thousands upon thousands has gloried in submission—utter and all-embracing—to Him. "What manner of man is this," it was said of old, "that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" But the question opens a deeper depth of wonder, and a higher stretch of power; "What manner of man is this that even the hearts and wills of men obey Him?" His autocratic lips spake, and it was done; when He was here on earth, rebuking disease, and it fled; the wild storm, and there was a great calm; demons, and they came out; death itself, and its dull cold ear heard, and Lazarus came forth. To material things and forces He spake as their great Imperator and Commander, saying to this one, "Go," and he went, and showing His Divinity, as even the pagan centurion had learned, by the power of His word, the bare utterance of His will.

But His rule in the region of man's spirit is as absolute and authoritative, and there too "His word is with power." The correlative of Christ's ownership is our entire submission of will, our complete acceptance of the law of His lips, our practical recognition that we are not our own. Loyola demanded from his black-robed militia obedience to the general of the order so complete that they were to be "just like a corpse," or "a staff in a blind man's hand." Such a requirement made by a man is, of course, the crushing of the will, and the emasculation of the whole nature. But such a demand yielded to from Christ is the vitalising of the will and the ennobling of the spirit. To give myself up to Him is to become not "like a corpse"—but to be as alive from the dead. We then first find our lives when we surrender them to Him.

The owner of the slave could set him to any work he thought fit. So our owner gives all His slaves their several tasks. As in some despotic eastern monarchy the sultan's mere pleasure makes of one slave his vizier, and of another his slipper-bearer, our King chooses one man to a post of honour, and another to a lowly place; and none have a right to question the allocation of work. What corresponds on our part to that sovereign freedom of appointment? Cheerful acceptance of our task, whatever it be. What does it matter whether we are set to do things which the vulgar world calls "great," or things which the blind world calls "small?" They are equally set us by Him to whom all service is alike that is done from the same motive, and all that we need care about is to give glad obedience and un murmuring honest work. Nobody knows what is important service, and what not. We have to wait till another day far ahead, before we can tell that. All work that contributes to a great end is great; as the old rhyme has it, "for the want of a nail a kingdom was lost." So, whatever our tasks, let us say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The slave's hut, and little patch of garden ground, and few bits of furniture, whose were they—his or his master's?—If he was not his own, nothing else could be his own. And whose are our possessions? If we have no property in ourselves, still less can we have property in our property. These things were His before, and are His still. The first claim on them is our Master's, not ours. We have not the right to do what we like with our own. So, if we rightly understand our position, we shall feel that we are as trustees, not possessors. When, like prodigal sons, we "waste our substance," we are unfaithful stewards, also, "wasting our Lord's goods."

Such absolute submission of will, and recognition of Christ's absolute authority over us, our destiny, work and possessions, is ennobling and blessed. So to bow before a man would be degrading, were it possible, but so to bow before Him is our highest honour, and liberates us from all other submission. The king's servant is every other person's master. We learn from historians that the origin of nobility in some Teutonic nations is supposed to have been the dignities enjoyed by the king's household—of which you find traces still. The king's master of the horse, or chamberlain, or cupbearer, becomes noble. Christ's servants are lords, free