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GOOD NEWS.

AN UNDENOMINATIONAL
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THOUGHTS FOR THE LAST SABBATH OF THE YEAR.

By Rev. Patrick Gray, Kingston, C.W.

* See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."—Eph. v. 15, 16.

Last Sabbath of the year! As the last, it stands alone,—Like all the rest it is the Lord's day, made a Sabbath for man, bringing rest from toil and the call to prayer, giving glimpses of heaven and of the True and Living way to the Father there. But, unlike the rest, it closes the series; and, more than any of the rest, it bids us look back on the past and compute the value of these bygone Sabbaths, and see what we have gained of spiritual advantage from them.

It bids us take notice of swift-winged time hurrying us on to the end—to death, and judgment, and righteous retribution. It reminds us of sin and folly; of trifling with the great salvation, and with all the higher interests of the immortal soul—and if, in the memories of the past, it recalls some happy days, and deeds of usefulness and mercy, and heavenward steps in our pilgrimage, and times of real communion with God,—it also recounts the opportunities now gone, in many instances, barren of anything like satisfactory results, and in some cases followed not by a blank but by consequences only deplorable.

Never in history has there been any defined period of human life that was unimportant to the people living then, or to the race. We may over-estimate the significance of events occurring in our own day,—our deeper interest in them magnifying for us their real proportions; we may, on the other hand, undervalue the occurrences transpiring beside us, and fail to perceive or conjecture their far-reaching issues, by reason of their recentness; for, as we can come too near an object to see it, so can we be too near an event to understand it—but, liable to misapprehension as we are, we can hardly err in assigning to the year about to close a place among the more memorable in the record of the ages.

Among the eventful occurrences which mark this time, we naturally give prominence

to the mighty struggle in which the kindred people on this continent is engaged, which has arrested the attention and excited the amazement of the world. That bloody strife, so cruel and so desolating, in which there has mingled from first to last, on all sides, such a heterogeneous medley of principles, motives, and passions as never combined together and acted on masses of men before, is still raging, and what its end shall be is as much hidden from foresight as ever. When we think of the battle fields and thousands slain,—of once happy homes filled with mourners,—of widows and orphans destitute, men disabled, heart-breaking and weeping in countless families,—(and of ministers of the gospel firing the flagging zeal of the judgment-stricken people, and hounding them on to new deeds of slaughter,) we may well cry, "O Lord, how long? how long shall the wicked triumph, and the workers of iniquity boast themselves?"

And then, when we contrast our own condition with such a state of affairs, surely we must recognise God's great goodness to us and our land. We sit as it were under our own vine and fig-tree, with none to make us afraid; while not far from us the furies armed with vengeance are let loose to revel in destruction and human anguish; and over all Europe elements that can never settle into peaceful order are seething, and may burst forth at any moment to the subversion of all existing institutions, accomplishing it may be, a regeneration of its kind, but with a baptism of blood and fire.

We may have had our sorrows and trials.—Some who read these lines have suffered much. Some are suffering now. Death has made some hearths dreary, and some hearts sad and desolate. But, notwithstanding, even for the afflicted and bereaved, the closing year has been one of goodness and mercy. And now,

when it is leaving us, before we part with it for ever, let us listen to its impressive admonitions, which all, however many they be, converging to one centre, and forming one great and persuasive remonstrance and entreaty, find apt utterance in the Apostle's words,—“See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

1. Consider the general precept respecting the manner of one's life. “Walk circumspectly, &c.” Literally, *Walk, looking about you*; as people do in an unsafe, ill-conditioned, or otherwise dangerous road. As a moral precept the phrase is easily understood and applied to the conduct of life. Just, as in the similitude a man, aware of dangers besetting the path he walks in, is on his guard, and maintains a good look-out,—so let all men in the path of life be warned, and take care of their footsteps, and watch against enemies to their peace and safety.

For there are dangers which all will encounter in the journey of life. Many, who set out in youth with fair and hopeful beginning, have turned aside, and fallen into an abyss of sin and misery. Many have been way-laid and seduced by tempters into a course that led to ruin and despair. None has pursued the perilous journey long without meeting detriment of some kind. God will preserve the souls of those who trust in Him; but they, too, learn from sad experience, how much they need the Saviour's constant guardian care.

Therefore, to you especially who know this—who, with gospel light and offered grace, have also received the warning counsels of the faithful Son—to you the admonition is addressed. Respect it, for God's sake, for your own eternal good, and for the benefit of all connected with you, of all who look up to and look on you.

“Walk, . . . not as fools.” We are prone to folly.—We are unwise in the matter of greatest moment.—We are often most heedless at the most critical time. And we can turn back to folly again after much experience of sore trouble and rebuke. We should be wiser: we may be wiser. Take warning now, and *walk circumspectly*.

2. The special precept, directing us to one pressing duty: which may be regarded as the special admonition of the closing year—“Redeeming the time.”

(1.) What is time? How should we estimate it?

Time defies definition almost as much as it eludes our grasp and mocks our efforts to stay it. The past has gone, never to return. The future has not come yet, and we may not live to see it—and the present, which a moment before was the future, is becoming the past while we think of it. So many of these fleeting moments are allotted to each of us, and when they have run out, we must die like the fathers, and the prophets, and the nameless crowd who have gone before us.

Time is God's gift to us. It is a talent committed to our charge, or rather the condition in which all talents are to be put to use under the sense of responsibility to the Giver. We are living in God's world, upon His bounties, beneath the Omniscient Eye, in a state of probation, while eternal issues are pending; and these issues—the blessedness of heaven, or the horrors of hell.

Life-time is thus a most momentous thing for all of us. Here we grow in wisdom and stature. Here we come to the knowledge of God, and of man's relation to Him, and of our sinful condition. Here we learn of Grace bringing Salvation by one Jesus Christ.—Here we are to ask—seek—knock—at mercy's door, if we would win Christ, and be found in Him at last. And, whether we learn these lessons or not, whether transformed into the likeness of Jesus or not, we are learning something; and our character is forming—becoming deeper-lined, of firmer texture, more decided and clearly defined.

Then there are such magnificent, and such unutterably calamitous possibilities for us in this probationary life-time:—We may learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart; we may come to know God as our Father, taste His goodness, and love him much having much forgiven us: we may yield ourselves to the Spirit's guidance, receive His grace and consolation, and obtain a title and a fitness for “the inheritance incorruptible

and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Or, we may refuse Him that speaketh, may turn away with aversion from the Saviour of the lost, and mock at entreaties and defy threatenings; we may grieve that Holy Spirit of promise, provoke God to leave us, and so treasure up for ourselves "wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God:" we may live after that, heedless and secure, prostituting every faculty to the service of sin, or in that conformity to this world which, with many an external show of respectability about it, is yet practical Atheism—without God: We may thus live,—and die,—and be buried,—and in Hell lift up our eyes in torment.

The one destiny or the other awaits us all; and it is determined in time—Now!

Time, so important to us, is brief and uncertain. "Few and evil have the days of my life been," was not the querulous complaint of a discontented old man, but the calm statement of one who longed for the end of his weary pilgrimage—waiting for the salvation of God. Let us look back to any well-remembered event of by-gone days;—how short the time seems since that till now! How changed are our notions of the length of time since the days of childhood! And we are hurrying with swift-footed time to our journey's end, and to the reckoning!

(2.) Surely we feel that, time being what it is, and fraught with such solemn eventualities for us, its redemption must be of vast consequence, and we should know what that is, and be ever at it.

To redeem, is to buy back,—to pay a price for something we had parted with in order to recover it, as redeeming a pledge, or to pay a ransom for a prisoner or slave. The word has a wider range of signification however; thus, we speak of redeeming land, by draining the marsh, clearing the forest, or bringing waste moorland under culture; and we speak of redeeming character from odium, by reformation of manners, and putting the slander to shame and the scandal to silence by a virtuous useful life. So redeeming the time

means to rescue what remains of it from idleness, vice, misdirection, and misuse of every kind, and to improve it to all attainable beneficial ends.

Some arts may be acquired, some science may be learned, after a fashion, by beginning at any time, and at any stage; but most matters worth learning, and which are learned to any good purpose, are learned by beginning at the beginning. So is it with the art of redeeming time. God must teach us; and we must begin with Him. One taught of God may require the lessons to be repeated—to be set before him in varied forms and experiments; but one that is not taught of God and that does not begin with Him can never possibly redeem the time. He may better the time—for himself and others by thrift and well doing—by placid temper and just and kindly intercourse with his fellow men. He may lengthen the life-term, and make it pleasanter in many a way by temperance, prudence, and such like virtues. He may glorify the time, as we speak, by the productions of his learning, skill, genius,—so we talk of the golden age, the Augustan age, the age of such and such men of renown. But he cannot redeem the time till he know God and Jesus Christ whom God hath sent,—till, awakened from spiritual sleep, he rise to life with Christ the Life-giver.

So, by all that is of value, and by all that is dear to you in life and hope, seek grace wherewith ye may redeem the time. Let your first essay be to acquaint yourselves with God, to know His will, and to feel His presence awing your souls. Let your earliest step be toward the closet, or to the mercy-seat, wherever you be. And, if you have not done it before, *Do now, surrender to God.* "Know that it is an evil thing and a bitter that we have departed from Him, and that His fear is not in us." Ask Him to reveal His Son in you, and follow Christ,—and learn of Him.

Take the Saviour's yoke upon you, and ye shall find peace and rest for the soul. Ask the Holy Spirit's guidance, and the path will be made plain and inviting. The Redeemer alone can redeem the time. They know its meaning

and its dangers: and they are kept in a Father's hand, and led in safety through the wilderness to the promised land.

Then, to the work given you to do turn with a cheerful, honest heart. Do not shrink from duty nor complain of hardships. There is a field before you all for loftiest aspirations and noblest doings. "I would not live away," the most devoted servant may say in some hour of sorrow or of longing to be with Him whom the soul loveth; but only the devoted servant has a right to say so—only the Christian who has shown that there are possibilities here for man which holy angels might covet. To think that we—all of us—by God's grace may serve Him here—workers together with God—ministers for good to the bodies and souls of men! Who should not desire to live here? May we not think of saints in heaven praising the Redeemer for deliverance from this present evil world, and praising Him, too, for their lot on earth, though in life's battle they sometimes fared so badly: and though frequently in manifold tribulation the groaning of the weary heart would not be restrained?

Seek then to be armed with patience, and animated by the ready mind, and, in the sphere wherein God has placed you, "Work, while it is to-day."

Redeem the time by industrious occupation, providing honestly for the families dependent on you, and that it may be in the power of your hand to help unfortunate fellow-men.—No worthy work is ignoble, nor is it to be regarded as of lesser account than what is generally meant by "*religion*." An honest handicraft carried on for good and generous ends is as much a Divine worship in its way, as any worship we give. We are to glorify God with our *bodies* and our *spirits* which are His.

Redeem the time by employing so much of it in the pursuit of knowledge. You thereby honour Him who endowed us with understanding, and placed us in the midst of His wonderful works: and you thereby qualify yourselves for greater usefulness and for a larger and truer apprehension of sacred truth.

Redeem the time by seeking opportunities to do good to your fellow-men. There is misery here, the fruit of sin; bid it look up from the depths to Jesus who saves from sin. Sad mistakes are made here; for, bad as human nature is, all evil is not the product of set, deliberate wickedness. The number of those who have *slidden* is greater than that of those who have *leaped* into the abyss of crime. Judge righteously, not harshly. The training which many a poor creature has received has been little better than an education of the evil within them. Therefore pity the fallen; and try to alleviate what distress you can. Endeavour to dissuade from the course that leads to shame; and give counsel as you are able to such as need a guide.

Redeem the time by committing your way to God. Serve Him in work, in prayer, in family and public worship; reverence His Sanctuary, and keep holy His Sabbaths. And, seeing so much of time is past and so much lost, double your diligence now to make up that loss if it may be, to make what amends you can for former unfaithfulness, and to undo as far as that is possible what has been done to our bitter regret. This diligence and faithfulness can become, not a drudgery, but the intelligent aim, and the happy habit, and the joy of our life. Any of us may do all this through Christ strengthening us.

Thus, redeeming the time, amid evil days which, because they are evil, all the more need Christian work and more of Christian love and energy in it, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. Then you will not have received the grace of God in vain, nor have lived in vain; and, when comes the end, you will be ready!

RICH.

A boy went from Ireland to America about two years ago to seek his fortune. A few months since he found his Saviour, and became a happy child of God. He thus wrote back to his friends, "*I have found a fortune.*"

Ah yes, and nobody, nothing can rob him of it. It is above all the changes of time, and beyond the power of thieves. Read Matt. vi. 19-21.

HOW TO STUDY THE WORD OF GOD.

By Rev. Dr. Humphrey.

If all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, then it cannot be too devoutly read and studied. The remarks which I am about to offer are not for the learned but for the common readers of the received English version. The great mass of the people cannot study the original Greek and Hebrew. They must read the Word of God "in their own tongues, wherein they were born."

There are many Bible-readers who do not know how to read it to the best advantage. Several methods may be adopted, each of which has its advantages, but not to the exclusion of others.

The Bible may be read through in course, so many chapters in a day, from Genesis to Revelation. It ought to be read through very early by the children of every family; and once a year, ever thereafter, is not too often. It would give such a familiar knowledge of its contents, that the careful reader would be able at once to turn to almost any passage without the help of a concordance; and to this end we should always use the same Bible, as we are often very much helped by recollecting where, on the page, the passage we wanted is to be found.

But these daily Bible readings in course, and spending no more time upon one part than another, are not enough. Some things are much harder to be understood than others. The historical books of the Old Testament, for example, may be passed over much more rapidly than the epistles of the New. The right understanding of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible requires *study*.

Another, and a very profitable way of reading the Scriptures, is to take up a gospel or an epistle, and read it carefully through, from beginning to end, at one or two sittings, so as to take in the whole scope of the writer. This, I believe, is scarcely ever done by common readers. I suppose there are many who, though they read the Bible every day, never yet sat

down to read one of the gospels, or the Acts of the Apostles, or one of the longer epistles through, as they do other books. All their reading is desultory,—a chapter here and a chapter there,—without much regard to the connection. Hence, though they may study isolated passages, and may be able to quote them, they get no comprehensive views of the main drift of the history or the argument. What proportion of professors of religion, even, spend much time in such continuous reading of the sacred books?

If any should offer the excuse that they have not time for it, they must allow us to question them a little. Do they not find time to read forty or fifty pages of history, or a long article in some favorite quarterly, without rising from their seats? The longest books in the New Testament can be read through, deliberately, in two or three hours. The epistles will not, upon an average, require half that time. Many spend more time, every day, in reading the secular newspapers than it would take to read the whole of the Gospel of John, or the Acts of the Apostles.

But here, let me say, I have no doubt that whole books of Scripture would be read through much oftener than they are, if they were printed as other books are.—It is known to every one who has paid the slightest attention to the subject, that the divisions and sub-divisions throughout the whole sacred volume are extremely arbitrary. In numberless cases the divisions into chapters are made without any regard to the natural transition from one topic or train of thought to another. The chapter leaves off abruptly, without any conceivable reason, just where you expected something more to carry out the argument,—or it begins as abruptly in the midst of a subject. The subdivisions of chapters into verses are still more arbitrary. Sentences are so cut up into fragments, as it were, or so run together into verses which ought to have been kept separate, as to deprive them of half their force. Instead of presenting to the eye a symmetrical articulation of joints and bands, there are often such violent distortions as almost deter a great many readers from trying to put the parts together. By whom this haphazard work was done, it were of no use now to

inquire. Nothing of the kind is to be found in the original Scriptures. Nevertheless, it will be the reader's own fault if he is hereby deterred from reading the books carefully through, one at a time.

Now, if he would be well instructed into the "things of the kingdom," must he stop here. He must "search the Scriptures." He must study the Word of God, to learn what is "the mind of the Spirit," with regard both to the doctrines and duties of religion. Where anything is hard to be understood, instead of rejecting it, he must endeavour to get the true meaning by comparing Scripture with Scripture.— Other helps may be resorted to, but the Bible is its own best and safest interpreter. Who that has been at first perplexed by obscure passages, has not also often been agreeably surprised to find, in turning to other parallel texts, how much light they reflect upon each other. The further this method of studying the Bible is pursued, the fewer difficulties will be left to solve. The great reason why so many persons who are ever learning are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, is that they rest upon insulated texts, without taking the trouble to inquire how they agree with other texts, and with the general scope of the Bible. I repeat, that the Word of God must be studied and compared with itself, or it will never be rightly understood. As the richest pearls are brought up by the deepest diving, so, to bring out some of the most precious truths of the Scriptures, we must go down into the mine. We must search for wisdom as for silver, and dig for it as for hid treasures.

I would not condemn the use of concordances and marginal references as helps, but the best way is to get the Bible so much by heart that we can readily turn to any passage we want to find without their aid. They may be sparingly used to good advantage, but the more you depend upon them the more you will, and the less familiar will your knowledge of the sacred oracles be. It were better, in most cases, to search a good while upon the sacred page itself for what you want, than to ask Cruden where you can find it. Here, as well as everywhere, the more you rely upon your own memory, the better it will serve you.

About the use of commentaries I have

only room left for a word or two. They are not to be rejected, as of no advantage, in studying the Word of God. They are important helps to common readers. But before referring to them for the meaning of a passage, it should be studied patiently in its connection. To take the opposite course, to ask Henry or Scott what the true meaning may be, is very much like studying any Greek or Latin classic with a translation, and constantly referring to it, instead of studying the text itself. As such a student will never make an accurate scholar, no more will he who depends upon an expositor, to save him the trouble of finding out the meaning himself, gain a thorough and familiar knowledge of the Scriptures. It is searching the commentator, and not the Bible.

But, after all, read and study the Word of God as we will, we shall never understand it without the teaching of the Holy Spirit shining upon the sacred page; and that we may not expect without habitual prayer for the needed aid. God delights to see us devoutly reading and studying his Word, and we have the most abundant assurances that he will teach us if we ask light from above. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not. May we all so read, and understand, and obey the Scriptures, as to be wise unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD.

The rights of women—what are they?
 The right to labour and to pray,
 The right to watch whilst others sleep,
 The right o'er others' woes to weep,
 The right to succour in reverse,
 The right to bless whilst others curse;
 The right to love whom others scorn,
 The right to comfort all that mourn,
 The right to shed new joy on earth,
 The right to feel the soul's high worth,
 The right to lead the soul to God,
 Along the path her Saviour trod—
 The path of meekness and of love,
 The path of faith that leads above,
 The path of patience and of wrong,
 The path in which the weak grow strong.
 Such, woman's rights; and God will bless
 And crown their champion with success.

JESUS CHRIST, THE PREACHER'S EXEMPLAR.

It is not the matter, but the manner of the instructions of Christ, which I propose to consider. What first strikes me is the absence of any thing approaching to oratorical art. Jesus did not make sermons, He talked; I am almost tempted to add, His discourses were actions. There were no formal divisions, no premeditated arrangement, no preamble or peroration.

If, then, we are to take Christ as a pattern, we must talk in the pulpit, not dogmatize. This precept, so simple in theory, is extremely difficult in practice; because it requires a total forgetfulness of self, a setting aside of personal reputation, and the absence of all pretension to effect. A truly regenerate heart will alone consent to this; and even! . . .

But I have no wish to judge others; I merely notice the fact, that Jesus did not *preach* in the ordinary sense of the word. He spoke, sometimes to His disciples, sometimes to the multitude, occasionally to a single hearer, and His words are just as free and unconstrained on the one occasion as on the other.

The crowd, the apostles, and the Samaritan woman, are all spoken to familiarly and pointedly. The thoughts are not deeper, nor the style less simple in the parable of the sower, than in the conversation with Simon Peter.

If the absence of oratorical art is the prominent characteristic of the preaching of Christ, we are necessarily reduced, in studying His style, to observations of detail; but these are far from unimportant. I will class them under three heads: the preacher, the audience, and the subjects treated of.

I commence with the last, and cannot help remarking how our Lord, instead of treating of subjects, treats of persons. He speaks less of salvation than of a Saviour; He discourses, not of humility, but to the humble; He does not say that forgiveness

of injury is a virtue, but rather "Love your enemies." In a word, He confronts, not ideas, but living beings. Notice, for instance, the sermon on the Mount. Does Jesus enlarge on mercy, purity, humility, etc.? Not at all; He at once refers to persons and exclaims: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the afflicted, the merciful."

This distinction appears to me fundamental, whether we consider the nature of the things themselves, or the object of preaching.

In truth, virtue, and vice, doctrines and precepts cannot exist abstractedly. Take away saints and sinners, God and Satan and all the rest is nought. There is nothing which is in itself redemption, but there is a Redeemer. The thief on the cross was saved by faith, though, probably, he had never heard nor uttered the word itself. These dogmatical expressions are the algebraic formula of language; they may give ideas, but not feeling; the knowledge of a system may be thus imparted, not salvation itself, and moreover the hearer is sometimes exposed to the temptation of thinking himself a Christian, because he understands Christianity.

If I am told that Paul has freely used such expressions in his epistles, I reply that I am speaking of sermons, not epistles, and, moreover, that I would rather imitate the Master than the servant. I might say more; often abstract expressions do not really convey ideas any more than sentiments. People listen to such, with cold indifference, whereas, when we speak of persons, interest is immediately roused.—The majority of men feel so strongly the necessity of dealing with living beings, that it becomes requisite to imagine these beings, in order to communicate ideas.—Jesus did so; witness His parables, where fictitious beings give life to doctrines.

Many modern preachers do just the contrary; they eliminate persons and facts from the Bible, leaving only principles and theories. To be convinced of this, you have just to take up a volume of modern popular sermons, and compare the table of contents with the headings of chapters in the gospels; you will be struck with the wide difference; on the one hand, ideas, on the other, facts. I take an example from

one of our best writers. I open the volume, and I find these titles:

"The look."

"Minding the things of the Spirit."

"The believer accomplishing the sufferings of Christ."

"Philosophy and tradition."

"The precautions of faith."

"Imaginary perfection."

"The stones of the temple."

"A people and humanity."

"Christian utilitarianism."

"Jesus invisible."

"Grace and faith."

"Anger and prayer."

Now take the Gospel of St. John, and looking for the discourses of Christ, you will perceive that He spoke, not of the new birth, but of the man born again; not of spiritual worship, but of those who should offer it; not of spiritual blindness, but of the spiritually blind; not of false doctrine, but of false prophets; and so on. When an abstract thought meets Jesus, He connects it with a living image: "I am the door; I am the resurrection; I am the life." Instead of metaphysical disquisitions there is constant action, and illustration from life. Such I esteem to be the salient point in the ministry of our Lord. I need not dwell on it further; I write for intelligent readers.

From the subjects treated of, let us pass to the hearers. Though Jesus teaches invariably the same truth, He finds means indefinitely to vary the mode of imparting it; and His starting-point is always the nature of His audience. He deals with them according to their measure of intelligence and morality; He considers their station and their prejudices, and, by starting from their level, He induces them to walk with Him; He does not carry, but lead them. Far from reproaching them with their ignorance and weakness, He lowers himself to them, looks at things from their point of view, and, by following their own reasoning, gradually brings them to the acknowledgement of error, and the discovery of truths which He has not yet declared. The Pharisees Jesus does, indeed, reproach and condemn, but it is because He sees them irrevocably incased in hypocrisy.

One or two examples will illustrate my meaning. A young lord, strong in his own righteousness, comes to Jesus to ask what finishing work he shall perform to become perfect, and merit eternal life.—Jesus well knows that every man is a sinner, and can only obtain eternal life as a free gift from God. Does He then say to this young man, "You are deceiving yourself, you have never done really well, your motives were stained with selfishness and vanity, your good deeds have been performed only within the limits of your own convenience. You know nothing of love as a principle of self-denial, of self-sacrifice; your best deeds need pardon, and the free grace of God alone can save you." I ask, was this the language of Christ? Far from it. Though the simple truth, it would not have been understood by the young man; it would have repelled by wounding his pride, and it would have left in darkness one whom Jesus wished to enlighten.

Our Lord, then, takes His stand on the young man's own principle that salvation is of works, and requires that he should fulfil the law. To make him fully understand the difficulty, the commandments are enumerated; and to make him feel the weakness of human nature, Jesus refuses for himself—here considered only as a Teacher or Prophet—the title of good. All this fails to open the eyes of the presumptuous youth, who supposes he has kept the law unbroken. At this point of the conversation, how would one of our ministers have acted? He would probably have said, "Proud man, know that all men are sinners," etc. Not so Jesus. So completely does He enter into the feeling of the spiritually blind man, that it is said He loved him! Yes, doubtless, he loved him as one loves and pities a man who is honestly mistaken. While keeping the right goal in view, Jesus still follows the wanderer on the wrong path, in order to shut him up to a duty, his shrinking from which must inevitably bring conviction home. "One thing thou lackest; sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor." Now the object of our Lord is gained. He has made the young man feel powerless before the claims of Divine

right; he cannot fulfil this condition; either he must now seek the exercise of free grace, or he will carry away in his conscience a sting which may one day bring him back to the feet of Jesus, sorrowful and penitent.

Jesus sometimes goes beyond this, and replies to thoughts instead of words. He fathoms the hearts of those around, and brings to light things they would fain hide, perhaps even things of which they themselves were ignorant. He never seeks an acknowledgment of victory, but endeavours to prevail in reality. He silences, not by using authority, but by convincing.

More than once we are told that guessing the secret thoughts of the Pharisees, He made an answer quite unexpected by them; for instance, in Mark, where the Scribes asked *among themselves* why this man forgave sins; in Luke, where Simon the Pharisee doubts *within himself* whether Jesus were a prophet; in John, where Jesus knows that the disciples *desired* to ask the meaning of the expression, "In a little while ye shall not see me."

I attach all the more importance to this observation, as too many of our modern preachers follow a very different course.—They are much more anxious to confound than to convince; they reply much more to words than thoughts, even taking advantage of an inadvertent expression to gain the victory. And if they win applause they are quite satisfied. Such show an utter want of love to souls; humiliation, not salvation, is what the speaker aims at.

To this consideration for the mental position of his hearers, Jesus joined a manifestation of wisdom, I might almost say of skill, which I shall only point out in two circumstances.

The first in His meeting with Peter after the resurrection, near the lake of Gennesaret. Our Lord wished to reprove Peter for his threefold denial; not for the purpose of degrading him, but of deepening his repentance. To speak of the fault openly, would only be to silence the culprit, Jesus does not even name it; on the contrary, He turns at once to the love of the disciple, and the charge about to be committed to him. "Simon, lovest thou

Me?" is the question asked. By repeating it a second time, Jesus implies He has some reason to doubt the affection of Peter; by repeating it a third time, He recalls unmistakably the three sad denials. Thus, without a word of rebuke, our Lord awakens in Simon's breast the recollection of sin, obliges him inwardly to accuse himself, and by this humbling remembrance, provokes him to greater watchfulness for the future. How wonderful is the union here of tenderness and severity! How different is our mode of proceeding in the pulpit, or out of it! In similar circumstances, how we should have apostrophised our hearers! How readily we should have put ourselves into the place of masters and judges, we, professing servants of Him who uttered not a word of reproach to His faithless disciple!

Here is another instance. The Pharisees bring to the temple a woman taken in adultery, and address to Jesus a question so insidiously worded, that answered in the negative, it will furnish ground for accusation before the high-priest; answered in the affirmative, it will bring Him in guilty before the civil governor. Jesus discerns their intention. He might declare it to the assembled people, and bring His provokers to shame. But no; He succeeds in confounding them without replying to the question at all, and sends them away with wounded consciences, perhaps the germ of future repentance.—He appeals to "the one that is without sin;" and as He had foreseen, reproved by the inward monitor, all left convicted, not by the preacher, but by themselves.

Were I obliged to condense these observations on the preaching of Christ, into one phrase, I should borrow His own words, and say its general tone was, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." According to this profound saying, advance in the knowledge of truth is in proportion to a man's love of holiness.—*N. Roussell.*

DEFECTIVE RELIGION.

A religion that never suffices to govern a man, will never suffice to save him; that which does not sufficiently distinguish one from a wicked world, will never distinguish him from a perishing world.—*Howe.*

SPOTS ON THE SUN.

Wonderful discoveries have been recently made regarding the spots on the sun. The telescope has shown that they are openings of gigantic size through which the observer can see the body of the sun. It has been found that there are three atmospheres round the sun, and that the outermost is a layer of immense objects (of what nature it is not yet known) having the shape of a willow leaf overlapping each other, and those which are near a "spot" appearing all to point and lean over into it. Just when astronomers were thinking that these strange appearances must have something to do with the fresh creation of a supply of light (for the waste of light from the sun is extreme, and the question is forced upon us, How is the supply kept up?) two observers at a great distance from each other at the same moment perceived through the telescope a bright "something," brighter than the surrounding surface, dart out from among them, and during five minutes travel over to one of the spots, into which it plunged and was lost. This extraordinary phenomenon has confirmed their expectation. There is good ground for thinking that the effects of such movements as these must in some way by friction, or some such cause, be connected with the keeping up of the sun's light. This is thought to be an era in our knowledge of the laws of light.

Who does not feel these speculations to be sublime? Here science towers on her highest flight. Human reason grapples with a wonderful problem. Man attests his God-given lordship over nature. He will even say to light, the eldest born, the first of created things, if not uncreated, "Since God is light and ever in an unapproached light dwelt from eternity," and nearest to what is spiritual, if not itself spiritual,—Who art thou, and whence comest thou? And with his telescope, the huge creation of his own skill, he demands and waits for an answer. Is not such an investigation to the glory of God? Well may we say, if this thy creature which blinded reason has often worshipped as a God, be so glorious, Thyself, how wondrous thou!

And here a valuable illustration suggests itself. The sun is a type of the Godhead—the outgoings of the divine beneficence in the daily communication of life to unnumbered creatures as well as the maintenance of life with many means of happiness to a still greater number, give an ordinary view of God's glory to our bewildered reason. This is the ordinary display of His character, like the dailysunshine which gives us our familiar idea of what the sun is but God has on purpose made an opening into the depths of His inner nature, that we may look in and see

attributes of the Godhead, which the works of creation and providence do not reveal. In the cross of Christ we see His anger against sin dart forth like a "furbished sword," take daily aim at this Man "afflicted of God," and bury itself deep into his devoted bosom. Then after an interval of "a little while" we hear a voice saying, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," and we learn that the Man was the fellow of God, the Son of the Blessed, Himself God and at the same time man, having assumed the human nature along with the divine, that, by so doing He might satisfy Justice, and obtain the means of exercising Mercy. God has now raised Him to his former proper position of divine glory, to which He has carried a fresh contribution from the scene of His triumph, and now in His name and through His merits forgiveness of sins and salvation from death are preached to every creature. Oh! is not this a deep opening into the nature of God! How much more do we know now of God! How much more of the essence of God are His Justice and Mercy than His Wisdom and Power! The heart of God may be seen here just as the body of the sun may be seen through the spots; and the way in which these attributes work together so as to add to His glory, may be seen just as the way in which new supplies of light are obtained, is seen in these extraordinary phenomenas.

A REMARKABLE CONVERSION.

In the course of an *Evangelical Christendom* letter from Italy, we read:—"One man, who has since become a colporteur, was saved from the error of his ways in a very singular manner. Some time ago he was most wretched. He did not believe in God. He tried to believe in the devil, and to love him. He cherished in his heart the infernal image, and read with avidity all that related to Satan, or could recal his influence. He went the length of invoking him, asking the evil one to reveal himself to him. One day the cure from the pulpit announced that the town of Perugia was infested with Protestants. "And do you know, my dear brethren," said he, "what Protestants are? They are monsters of iniquity, who have renounced Jesus Christ, and who worship the devil." "Excellent news," said the man of whom we are speaking to himself; and that very day he ran to the meeting of those worshippers of the devil, and it was there he learned to give himself to Jesus Christ, and to worship Him."

FEMALE ACTIVITY.

The prominence which Christian women in modern times have assumed in almost all works of religion and benevolence, is no new thing under the sun. It was so from the beginning, and those who have not examined the Scripture in reference to the matter will be surprised to see how abundant were the devout labours of women. We find in the early part of our Lord's ministry, that there were with Him not only Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna, but many other women who ministered to Him of their substance; and we find that the last at the sepulchre on Friday evening, and the first on the Lord's day morning, were women, who were sent by the angels and by our Lord Himself to tell the glad tidings to the tardier men. On the opening of the Acts, we find the women engaged in the prayer-meeting, as well as the men; the name of Dorcas of Joppa, has become a synonym for a particular kind of activity in "good works and alms-deeds;" and Philip the Evangelist "had four daughters which did prophesy."

But perhaps the most striking intimation we have of female activity in the Apostolic Church is found in the salutations appended to the Epistle to the Romans. These salutations have sometimes been derided by shallow writers, as mere lists of names that have no value for us in modern times. And yet they not only lay bare Paul's great and warm heart, as nothing else does, but they give us a striking glimpse of female activity in the early Church. Of the long list of salutations there sent, nearly one-half are to females, and of course to females that he had met elsewhere, for he had never been to Rome. This fact shows the extent of territory that was covered by these Christian women, who happened at that time to be in Rome. And in enumerating them, nearly all of them are commended for active labours. Of Phebe, the deaconess, he says, "She hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." Of Priscilla, that she laid down her own neck for his life (probably at Ephesus) and had the thanks of all the churches of the Gentiles. Of Mary, he says, that she

"bestowed much labour on us;" of Junia, that she was of "note among the Apostles;" of Tryphena and Tryphosa, that they "laboured in the Lord;" of the beloved Persis, that she "laboured much in the Lord;" of the mother of Rufus, that she had also been a mother to him; and of Julia and the sister of Nereus, that they belonged to a particular cluster of saints that deserved a common salutation. To the Philippians also Paul mentions the case of distinguished female servants of the Lord. "And I intreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help these women which laboured with me in the Gospel."

Why should not all Christian women feel it to be their duty and their privilege to *labour in the Gospel*? Such labour does not involve speaking in public, or any other unseemly course by which a woman degrades herself. But it does imply the diligent use of private intercourse, in all its forms, for the furtherance of the good cause. Many a revival of religion has originated in the Divine blessing upon the quiet efforts of some beloved Persis. Many a meeting for prayer has been kept alive by the persevering faith of some Priscilla. Many a blessed scheme of usefulness has been carried through by the zeal of a Tryphena and Tryphosa.

HIDDEN TREASURES.

In the "green-room" in Dresden, where for centuries the Saxon princes have gathered their gems and treasures until they have become worth millions of dollars, may be seen a silver egg, a present to one of the Saxon queens, which, when you touch a spring, opens and reveals a golden yoke. Within this is hid a chicken, whose wing being pressed, also flies open, disclosing a splendid golden crown studded with jewels. Nor is this all: another secret spring being touched, hidden in the centre is found a magnificent *diamond ring*.

So is it with every truth and promise of God's word—a treasure within a treasure. The more we examine it, the richer it becomes. But how many neglect to touch the springs.

L. H. R.

A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER.

By Rev. Wm. McKenzie, Ramsay, C. W.

"O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."

This is the season for good wishes, and kindly thoughts; for family gatherings, and friendly meetings: the season devoted to the exercise of those social affections, which, like a golden thread, bind households and communities together. A smiling, out-spoken benevolence meets us on every side; and the kindly greeting, sealed with a warm grasp of the hand, expresses the common desire of all in neighbourly standing, for mutual peace and happiness.

This is the season, too, for memories sad and joyous. At the end of another stage in the journey of life, we look back most naturally on the past way, and recal to mind the more conspicuous events which have marked our path;—plans, happily accomplished, or broken through; the increase or loss of worldly substance; hopes, fulfilled or disappointed; the changes in our home circle,—God's gift of little ones to fill a place around our table, or new households branching off from the old family stock. Far distant friends, whose forms live in the memory, seem to hover round us; and too often we miss from our side some old familiar face which has passed away for ever. We look on a tangled path, rough and smooth, dark and bright, alternately; and yet, a path compassed about with God's mercy. But how often, alas! God's blessing,—how He hath fed us, and led us all the way,—is not remembered but forgotten.

And we cannot enter another year without hearing

"A timid voice that asks in whispers,"

many things of the time to come. We would find it difficult,—even did we desire it,—to silence all those obstinate question-

ings, and shut out those dim anticipations of all that may possibly happen before another year has run its course. There is something deeply solemnizing in the steady contemplation of all that may come, and of all that must come, out of the unseen and unknown future: whether peace or trouble lies in our way,—whether beloved friends shall be spared, or taken from us, whether we are to become more godly, or more worldly,—whether we are to live, or die,—such questions, multiplied an hundred-fold, and broken up into every variety of anxious inquiry, crowd upon the heart and mind of any man who thinks at all, at such a season as the present.

Now, in the face of these memories and anticipations, standing on a point of time between the past and the future, looking back on the one with all its vicissitudes, and glancing forward on the other with all its uncertainties, what prayer for ourselves, and for those we love, can we send up to the God of our life, more appropriate than this—"O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." The living God has been the dwelling-place of His people in all generations. Let us, each one, but take refuge under the shadow of His Almighty wing, and make the most High our habitation, and *then, no evil shall befall us.*

The special blessing prayed for here is *mercy*—"O satisfy us early, with Thy mercy." We are evidently to understand it here, in its largest sense, a equivalent to all the blessings of salvation. Even in its more restricted sense,—when it signifies the simple act of forgiveness, the pardon of sin,—*mercy* is the *first*, the *initial* blessing of salvation. Not having obtained mercy we have, as yet, obtained and enjoy no saving blessing. Without mercy the soul still remains in death. As an unfor-given sinner a man lies under the sentence

and curse of God's holy law, and the wrath of God abideth upon him. He is not reconciled to God; he has no close and loving fellowship with him, he does not know him as his covenant God and Father, nor can he possess that peace which is the heritage of all God's children. Unforgiven and impenitent, not having obtained mercy, he lives the wretched life of an alien and an enemy, without God, and without hope in the world.

But mercy, as the initial blessing, secures, in proper time and place, all the other blessings of God's eternal salvation. It removes the wall of separation, which our sins form, and brings us nigh to God. It destroys the alienation and enmity which exist in the natural heart, and binds the affections to the blessed God. It opens the door to all the special privileges and blessings of God's children. Without mercy, we have, as yet, nothing, not one saving blessing. But having mercy we have the earnest, or germ of all things. Eternal life has then begun in the soul—that *endless life* which shall grow up to full fruition in the Father's house, and under the glorious light of his gracious countenance.

Thus, in Scripture, do we find the blessed God called "the Father of mercies," and those who are saved, "the vessels of mercy." That which makes them differ from the lost is that they have received mercy; God hath poured it in to their empty souls. Thus does the Apostle Paul describe the work of God's grace in his soul by the one significant word, "I obtained mercy," which, as a general description of all the people of God, the Apostle Peter applies to them in these words—"which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: *which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*"

Taking the word, then, in its largest sense, what a rich and heart-filling blessing is sought for in this prayer. God's everlasting mercy, which contains in germ every blessing of the great salvation—that mercy offered in the gospel to lost sinners. O that every man yet destitute of the blessing, might be persuaded to seek after it—yea, rather, to receive it as God's free gift in Christ Jesus, now offered to him. Even now, reader, may your own earnest desire and cry rise up to God—"O satisfy me early with Thy mercy."

Before passing on, notice the expression "*early.*"—"Satisfy us *early* with thy mercy." This Psalm—the only one ascribed to him—is "a prayer of Moses, the man of God." It seems to have been uttered first near the close of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness. For forty years the people had now wandered in that terrible wilderness. Once, indeed, they had come to the borders of the promised land, and had a glimpse of the sunny, fruitful hills of Palestine. They had even seen the fruits of the land, the goodly clusters of Eshcol. But, in wretched distrust, their hearts sank at the prospect of toil and danger, and they could not enter in because of unbelief. There they tempted God, who swore to that generation that they should not enter into the promised inheritance. Moses had seen that faithless generation melt away. There were now but few survivors of the six hundred thousand men, who had gone up out of Egypt harnessed for the march. But after long and weary wandering, their face is once again to Canaan, and their great leader pours out his heart to God, "O satisfy us *early* with Thy mercy." It could not be too soon for the eager desires of the toil-worn pilgrims. And then, looking at the dark and weary past, with a deep pathos he adds—"make us glad according to the

days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil." Satisfy us *early*, is the burden of his prayer, *now* make us glad with the long-promised mercy.

And so, doubtless, there are some who read these words who have walked twenty, forty, or fifty years, in the wilderness of a present evil world. Because of unbelief you have never yet entered into God's rest. Your hearts are weary in the world's ways empty of all true peace and gladness. With a golden crown within reach above your head, you have worked with your face to the earth, raking together a worthless heap of chips and straws. You have laboured for that which profiteth not. You have nothing laid up for the time to come, for eternity; and were God's word to go forth *to-day* respecting you—"thy soul is required of thee"—naked, unprepared, in utter poverty, with only a lifetime's sins as your portion, you would fall into the hands of the living God. It is a pitiable life, and a miserable issue. O reader, will you not be persuaded to seek mercy? to send your earnest cry up to God *this day*, "O satisfy us *early* with Thy mercy?" It is full time; full time for *thee* to seek the Lord.

Literally the prayer is, "O satisfy us *in the morning* with Thy mercy,"—a special word to the *young*. It is not too soon in early youth, in the morning of life, to seek mercy. Whenever your tongue can form the words 't is time to cry to God, "O satisfy me in the morning with Thy mercy." Those who have reached, or passed, middle life, without mercy, have spent their day of life in darkness. Their sins, like a thick cloud, hang above them, growing darker and darker every day.—They stumble on through life, walking amid shadows and vanity; grasping many things, which in the darkness they see not to be worthless;—while they are busy in

this wretched work, death comes; everything falls from their stiffening hands, and they sink into the blackness of darkness for ever. Now, that you may not lead that pitiable life, nor come to such an end, lose not a day in making your prayer to God for His mercy in Christ Jesus. If you obtain that precious mercy, then no dark cloud of sin or wrath shall overshadow your day of life. Its sun shall shine as in a morning without clouds, and brighten more and more into the perfect day. Should you reach the evening of old age, even then there shall be light; and the soft sunset of your life shall be merged in the glory which shines on those who stand before the throne, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

What a prayer this is for the young, for the morning of life—"O satisfy us *early* with thy mercy." "I love them that love me, and they that seek me *early* shall find me." That is God's special word of encouragement to those in youth to set their heart to seek him. *Delay only hardens the heart*. Make this your prayer, to God *even to-day*.

When we consider the qualities of this mercy, then it approves itself to be a *good*, which every man should earnestly desire and seek after. For—

First, It is *satisfying*, hence the prayer "Satisfy us *early* with Thy mercy." Sin is the one element of dispeace and trouble which robs the soul of man of all true satisfaction. Sin shuts us out from the blessed God, the maker of our spirits, with whom alone is the fountain of life; and the soul cannot quench its thirst at any other spring. Carnal pleasures, worldly knowledge, and all the delights and enjoyments the earth can offer, can only satisfy the soul with a gratification which is short, and passing away. "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again," is the inscrip-

tion written over every well-spring of earthly joy. But *mercy* opens the way back to the fountain of life. Our sins are forgiven, and we are made nigh to God, through the blood of Christ. We enter his rest—we rest in God; and then the weary soul seeks no farther, for in the blessed God reconciled to us in Christ, the soul never fails to find the quiet refuge, and the *satisfying portion* which it longs for.

The Israelites could not rest satisfied in the wilderness. They could make nothing of the arid rocks, and waste sands which stretched away on every side. Their souls longed for the refreshing plenty of the land flowing with milk and honey; into which they could not enter because of unbelief. This is a picture of every unconverted soul. What have you in the wilderness of this world to satisfy your soul? Your worldly interests, pursuits, and pleasures, you say. Well, what have they done for you in time past?—what shall they do in time to come? Have they ever filled your soul with true satisfaction and peace? Have they not made a time of sickness a wretched season of weariness, and painfulness; of disquiet and fretfulness? But in God's mercy we are able to glory even in tribulation. Does your trust in these things not add bitterness to a season of adversity, making you feel the loss of worldly wealth or station like a mortal wound? But God in His mercy giveth his people songs in the night of adversity. And then, shall not the world's profits and pleasures flee from a dying bed, leaving the stings of anguish and remorse in your pillow, making that hour a time of fearful and hopeless foreboding? But,

“Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are.”

The everlasting mercy, sealed to us by His precious blood, makes us more than con-

querors, in life or death; for the soul rests satisfied in Him that loved us, as a refuge and a portion. But to all this, alas! that it should be so, you cannot enter in because of your unbelief. O reader, yet unconverted, turn ye now unto God with the cry—“O *satisfy me* early with Thy mercy.”

Second. It is *gladdening*. Satisfy us with Thy mercy, it is said, “that we may *rejoice and be glad.*” This is more and higher than *satisfaction*. Now, doubtless, oftentimes there is *mirth* at least in worldly pleasure; mirth, the semblance of joy, though it enters not deeply into the heart. There is also a certain joy and gladness in a time of prosperity, when you have safely gathered in a great harvest, and can look, well pleased, on your overflowing barns; or, when you have had speedy and large returns of profit, and see your bank account swelling day by day. There is a deeper and purer joy and gladness than either of these, when you have watched and waited by the bedside of your best beloved,—parent, child, husband, or wife—and have seen the crisis of the fever pass, and the quiet sleep of returning health fall gently on the weary eyelids.—The turning aside of that terrible stroke opens the deep fountains of the heart. Yet these are not like that joy awakened by God's mercy, nor like that gladness which dwells in the heart of a ransomed sinner.

“Now, I saw in my dream that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus, till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed

from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and light-some, and said with a merry heart,—He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death. Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder, for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the waters ran down his cheeks. Now, as he stood looking, and weeping, behold, three shining ones came to him, and saluted him with, “Peace be unto thee.” So, the first said to him, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” The second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment. The third also set a mark upon his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bade him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the Celestial Gate. So they went their way. Then Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing—

‘ Thus far did I come laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither. What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Blest Cross,—blest Sepulchre,—blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me.’”

The mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, opens up the deepest fountain of joy and gladness of which an immortal soul can drink. “Thou hast put gladness in my heart,” says one, “more than in the time that their corn and wine increased.” “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom,”—says another, “neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls,—yet I will rejoice in the Lord: I will joy in the God of my salvation.” It is not that this glad-

ness exceeds that of earth merely—there is no proportion nor comparison between them: this stands alone as the true joy and gladness of an immortal soul. The first experience of it settles the question of preference between God’s gladness, and the world’s gladness, at once and for ever.—When once the heart of a poor sinner has been made glad by the mercy of God, he would be willing to lose all things else rather than renounce it; the most alluring worldly good could not tempt him. Take all the world counts most precious,—earthly power and honor, boundless wealth to command every rare and refined earthly pleasure, a wide-spread fame, and the admiring applause of millions, the delights of congenial society, and the love of friends,—combine them all into one splendid portion, and enhance their worth to the utmost stretch of the imagination, give a brighter sparkle to every cup of pleasure, a keener zest to every enjoyment, and add the assurance of health, and long life wherein to hold them, and then offer them to one whom God hath satisfied and made glad with His mercy in exchange for his hope and joy. Not only would he spurn from him the tempting bribe, but, as if there were pollution in the very suggestion he would turn and flee to the arms of his God, with the cry, “Lord lift thou up on me the light of thy countenance, for thou hast put gladness in my heart.”

Third. It is *enduring*. The prayer is, “O satisfy us early with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad *all our days*.” For, whether they be days of prosperity or adversity, of health or sickness, of peace or trouble, the experience of God’s mercy can shed the sunshine of joy and peace over all. Renwick was one time closely hunted by his persecutors for two days and nights, and he speaks thus of it:—“Enemies think themselves satisfied that

we are put to wander in mosses, and upon mountains; but even amidst the storms of these last two nights, I cannot express what sweet times I have had, when I had no covering but the dark curtains of night—yea, in the silent watch. my mind was led out to admire the deep and inexpressible ocean of joy, wherein the whole family of heaven swim. Each *star* led me to wonder what HE must be, who is the Star of Jacob, of whom all stars borrow their shining."

But the mercy is *everlasting*, a fountain of joy and gladness to all eternity. ☉ Mere earthly joy is marred by earthly trouble, and, at the best, it cannot pass beyond the grave. Like a dream, when one awaketh, with all its unsubstantial phantoms flitting before the mind, so, when it awakes in eternity,—shall earthly pleasures be to that soul which lived in them. But, says the Lord, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—Coming from God, it shall *return to Him*, and flow for ever in His presence. "I have set the Lord always before me," says the Psalmist, "Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope. Thou wilt shew me the path of life, in Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Thanks be to God, said the dying Dr. Preston—"Though I change my place, I shall not change my company; for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest in Him."

Dear reader, begin this new year with this prayer, "O satisfy me early with Thy mercy; that I may rejoice and be glad all my days." If you have already tasted God's grace, seek the more abundant

enjoyment of it, for "the joy of the Lord is your strength." If you have not yet obtained mercy, how much need have you to pray this prayer. Suppose you are to be spared for another year, shall you now resolve to spend it in the same course of empty worldliness in which you have wasted all your past life; or, shall you set your heart upon God's mercy—that mercy which can make your heart glad all your days? That mercy in Christ Jesus is again offered to you, offered *freely*, to you, a sinner, if ye will have it. O! reader, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart," to refuse mercy from God, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon Him *while He is near*."

THE NEW YEAR.

FOR THE YOUNG.

My young reader you have entered upon a new year. How will you spend it if God shall permit you to live? Have you *begun* right? Do you ask what is right? The Bible, the very book you are studying, tells you better than I can. One great reason why you should study it, is that you may learn what is *right*. You are a child, under your parents' care, dependent on them for a home and its comforts. The Bible tells you that you should always obey them. Begin with this. You have brothers and sisters, it may be; you should be kind to them. You are attending school; be diligent in study to improve all your time to acquire knowledge. This is right. Be industrious. Help your parents' and every one you can, and make as little trouble as possible. This is right. Do you go to the Sabbath-School? Attend every Sabbath, if possible; get a lesson every Sabbath, and be sure to remember every Sabbath to keep it holy. This is right. You are dependent on God for all things; for life, health, food, clothing, and home. Remember this every day, and pray to Him to give you your daily bread. This is right. Above all, go to God and ask Him to forgive your sins, to give you, for the sake of Jesus Christ, a new heart, and save your soul. This is right. It is not right to live any longer in sin. No, not a day, not a single hour, has been given you in which to sin. It is right that you should love and serve God, and you cannot do right if you do not love Him. "Remember *now* thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

THOUGHTS FOR SPARE MOMENTS.

THE TWO-FOLD INJURY.

In 1763, a married man of Cremona being missed for two or three years, his wife was suspected of having murdered him. Rumour soon increased into a direct accusation, and she was apprehended.— Being put on the rack, to avoid the torture, she accused herself of a crime of which she was entirely innocent; and in consequence thereof she was burnt, and her ashes thrown into the river. Five or six days after her execution, the husband arrived from Parma, where he had engaged himself for three years. Hearing of what had happened, he went to his wife's accusers, and to the judges, to clear up her character. Instead, however, of exculpating the woman's reputation, they turned against the husband, whom they charged as an impostor, saying, that the wife having confessed the murder, the man must really be dead; in consequence of which he was obliged to withdraw from the place, lest his own life should be forfeited to preserve the credit of the law. Happy are they whose privilege it is to dwell in a land exempt from such abuse of legal power.

THE WISE MAN TAUGHT WISDOM.

One day in early spring, the youth Solomon sat beneath the palms in his father's garden, and bending his eyes on the ground, seemed deep in thought.— Nathan, his teacher, stepped up to him, and inquired, "Why sittest thou here so thoughtfully?"

Solomon raised his head, and replied. "Nathan, I should like to behold a miracle."

The prophet smiled, and answered, "That is a wish I also indulged in, in my youthful days."

"And was it fulfilled?" hastily inquired the royal prince.

"A man of God," thus Nathan continued, "approached me once, holding the seed of a pomegranate in his hand. 'Behold,' said he, 'what will become of this seed.' Thereupon he made a small hole in the earth with his finger, laid the seed in it, and covered it up again. When he had withdrawn his hand, the earth divided,

and I saw two tiny leaves appear. But scarcely had I seen them before they closed together, and became a smooth, round stem, enveloped in a rind; and the stem became visibly higher and thicker.

"The man of God spoke to me, saying, 'Pay attention.' And whilst I was watching, there sprang seven branches from the trunk, like unto the seven arms of the candlestick on the altar. I wondered; but the man of God made a sign, and bid me be silent and attentive. 'Behold,' said he, 'new creations will soon take place.'

"Thereupon he took water in the hollow of his hand from a brook that was flowing past, and sprinkled therewith the branches three different times; and the branches now hung full of verdant leaves, spreading refreshing shade around us, mingled with sweet-smelling odours. 'Whence,' I exclaimed, 'arises this perfume, in addition to the cooling shade of the leaves?'

"'Dost thou not see,' answered the man of God, 'those purple flowers, hanging in clusters, and peeping between the leaves?'

"Before I could yet reply, a soft breeze arose, and, rustling through the leaves, cast the flowers to the earth, like to flakes of snow floating down from the clouds.— Scarcely had the blossoms fallen, when the beautiful red pomegranates appeared between the leaves, like the almonds on Aaron's staff. The man of God then left me, sunk in silent wonder."

Nathan ended. Hastily Solomon exclaimed—

"Where is he? What is the name of the holy man? Is he still alive?"

Nathan answered, "Son of David, I have related a dream!"

When Solomon heard these words, he became sorry at heart, and sad.

"How canst thou thus deceive me?" he said.

But Nathan continued: "I have not deceived thee, son of David. Behold! in thy father's garden thou canst see all that I have related in reality. Is not the same the case with every pomegranate, and with other trees?"

"Yes," answered Solomon; "but gradually, within a wide space of time."

Then answered Nathan, "Is, then, the miracle the less wonderful or divine be-

cause it takes place in quiet and without show? I should think it the more wonderful.

"Study the works of Nature," he continued; "then you will learn to believe in the Most High, and not pine and wish for miracles by human hands."

HINT TO SCEPTICS,

Sir Isaac Newton was a sincere believer in revelation; and one day, when Dr. Halley had uttered some loose expressions, with regard to religion, in his company, Sir Isaac reproved him in these strong terms:—"Dr. Halley, when you talk about philosophy and mathematics, I always hear you with pleasure, because these are subjects with which you are well acquainted; but I must beg that you will say nothing about Christianity, for it is a subject you have never studied; I have, and I know that you know nothing of the matter."

DEISM.

The greatest unbelievers generally believe much more than they are willing to acknowledge. This, in the opinion of Hume, was the case with Rousseau; for the former being met by a friend in the park, shortly after the arrival of the philosopher from France, the friend observed that Hume must be particularly happy in his new associate, their sentiments being nearly similar. "Why, no man," replied Hume; "in that you are mistaken. Rousseau is not what you think him; he has a hankering after the Bible, and, indeed, is little better than a Christian—in a way of his own."

WORKING FOR OTHERS.

The late Mr. John Croumbie, of Haddington, some time before his death, calling on one of his customers, his friend said unto him, "I am sure, Mr. Croumbie, you need not care for business." He replied, "It is true, my friend; but, if I were to give over business, I should not be so able to assist the various societies that are formed for diffusing the knowledge of the Gospel throughout the world."

FAITH AND GOOD WORKS.

Faith is the link that binds me to my Saviour; good works the link that binds me to my fellow-men. Faith is the light of the soul; love is the mirror in which it is reflected. The mind is the prism of faith; the heavenly ray falls on it, and we call the refraction by the names of "joy, peace, long-suffering,

gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance." Faith without works is a vine without grapes; faith without love is the faith of demons. Faith is a fruit tree; and neither oaks nor elms, however full of leaf, are accounted fruit trees. Without faith it is impossible to please God; without good works it is impossible to attest its reality before men. Faith is the channel by which all that is pure and angelic is received into the soul; love is the overflowing of that fountain, which gushes out in benevolence and good-will to all.—Faith sees with the eyes, feels with the heart, and works with the hands of love.

DRAW NEAR TO GOD.

The way is open, the path is clear. Draw nigh to God who has given you Christ. Draw nigh through Christ whom he has given.—Trust that he, who has given for you his Son, his only begotten, only beloved Son, will with him, and in him, give you all beside. Not only draw nigh, but dwell nigh; not only fix the mind, but keep it fixed on him. Do for him as he has done for you. Give him the best you have. Offer him a talent, you will receive a kingdom; cast into his treasury a mite, you will draw out a pearl of great price; light up for him a spark, you will be blazed upon by a sun; present to him, through Christ, the tribute of a heart, you will receive from him, through Christ, a rich recompense of reward—the recompense of his sufferings, which cannot be fathomed—the reward of his obedience, which cannot be weighed. Yes, render to God a sinful but a contrite heart, and ye will receive from God a spotless, sinless, cloudless, changeless heaven.

THE EFFECT OF EXAMPLE.

Lady Huntingdon, with a very moderate income a year, did much for the cause of religion. She maintained the college she had erected at her sole expense; she erected places of worship in several parts of the kingdom; and she supported ministers who were sent to preach in various parts of the world. A minister of the Gospel and a person from the country once called on her ladyship. When they came out the person from the country turned towards the house, and, after a short pause, exclaimed, "What a lesson! Can a person of her high rank and noble birth live in such a house, so meanly furnished? and shall I, a tradesman, be surrounded with luxury and elegance? From this moment I shall hate my house, my furniture and myself, for spending so little for God, and so much in folly."

GOOD ADVICE.

The following rules were given by the late Mr. Jefferson in a letter of advice to his namesake, Thomas Jefferson Smith, in 1825:

1. Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

2. Never trouble others for what you can do yourself.

3. Never spend your money before you have it.

4. Never buy what you do not want because it is cheap.

5. Never forget that pride costs more than hunger, thirst, and cold.

6. Men rarely repent of deeds of self-denial.

7. Nothing is troublesome that is done willingly.

8. Much pains have those evils cost us which never happened!

9. Take things always by their smooth handle.

10. When angry, count ten before you speak; if very angry count a hundred.

 VERSES FOR THE NEW YEAR.

How solemn is the thought to us,
The creatures of a day,
Another year of life is gone,
For ever passed away.

Its hours for action and for prayer,
Its pleasures all are o'er,
Gone as the years before the flood
Ne'er to return more.

How many who began last year
As full of health as we,
Have not been privileged, alas!
The close of it to see?

They, too, did fondly hope and trust,
Still longer to abide,
And banished from their minds the thought,
That death was at their side.

Let us from them a warning take,
This fact keep in our eye,
That we are liable every hour
To sicken and to die,

The web of life will soon be wrought,
Its thread will soon be spun,
Its doleful tale will soon be told,
Its short race soon be run.

Perhaps we ne'er again shall hail
Another infant year,

The one we're entered on may be
The close of our career.

Life's tide is swiftly ebbing,
As ebbs the mighty main,
And never shall with backward flow
Return to us again.

Like water-fowl adown the stream,
We're carried on life's course,
But unlike them we cannot rise
And wing back to its source.

Our residence on earth is brief,—
A speck, a span, a day;
And now, alas! 'tis shorter,
Another year's away!

O! let us then lay it to heart,
Time still is flying fast:
This coming year let us improve
As if it were our last.

X. Y. Z.

 THE SINNER'S BURIAL.

"So I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy; and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done."—Eccles. viii. 10.

Wrapt in a Christless shroud,
He sleeps the Christless sleep;
Above him, the eternal cloud,
Beneath, the fiery deep.

Laid in a Christless tomb,
There, bound with felon-chain,
He waits the terrors of his doom,
The judgment and the pain.

O Christless shroud, how cold,
How dark, O Christless tomb!
O grief that never can grow old,
O endless, hopeless doom!

O Christless sleep, how sad!
What waking shalt thou know?
For thee no star, no dawning glad,
Only the lasting woe!

The rocks and hills in vain
Shall be the sinner's call;
O day of wrath, and death, and pain,
The lost soul's funeral!

O Christless soul, awake
Ere thy last sleep begin!
O Christ, the sleeper's slumbers break,
Burst thou the bands of sin!

THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

My God I is any hour so sweet,
 From blush of morn to evening star,
 As that which calls me to Thy feet—
 The hour of prayer!

Blest is that tranquil hour of morn,
 And blest that hour of solemn eve,
 When, on the wings of faith up-borne,
 The world I leave!

For then a day-spring shines on me,
 Brighter than morn's ethereal glow;
 And richer dews descend from Thee
 Than earth can know.

Then is my strength by Thee renew'd;
 Then do I feel my sins forgiven;
 Then dost Thou cheer my solitude
 With joys of heaven.

No words can tell what sweet relief
 Thore for my every want I find;
 What strength for warfare, balm for grief,
 What peace of mind.

Hush'd is each doubt—gone every fear;
 My spirit seems in heaven to stay;
 And e'en the penitential tear
 Is wiped away.

Lord! till I reach that blissful shore
 No privilege so dear shall be,
 As thus my inmost soul to pour,
 In prayer to Thee.

JOSEPH'S SORROW.

Gen. xiv. 2, "And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard."

It is said of Joseph, "He wept aloud;" in the original, "gave forth his voice in weeping." In this way in the East do they still speak. "How loudly did he give forth his voice, and weep!" "That child is for ever giving forth its voice."—The violence of their voice is very great, and may be heard at a considerable distance. "This," says Chardin, "is exactly the genius of the people of Asia, especially of the women. Their sentiments of joy or of grief are properly transports; and their transports are ungoverned, excessive, and truly outrageous. When any one returns from a long journey, or dies, his family burst into cries that may be heard twenty doors off; and this is renewed at different times, and continues many days, according to the vigour of the passion.—Especially are these cries long in the case of death, and frightful: for their mourning is right-down despair, and an image of hell.

I was lodged, in the year 1670, at Ispahan, near the Royal Square: the mistress of the next house to mine died at that time.—The moment she expired, all the family, to the number of twenty-five or thirty people, set up such a furious cry, that I was quite startled, and was above two hours before I could recover myself. These cries continue a long time, then ceases all at once; they begin again as suddenly at daybreak and in concert. It is this suddenness which is so terrifying, together with a greater shrillness and loudness than one would easily imagine. This enraged kind of mourning, if I may call it so, continued forty days; not equally violent, but with diminution from day to day. The longest and most violent acts were when they washed the body, when they perfumed it, when they carried it out to be interred, at making the inventory, and when they divided the effects. You are not to suppose that those that were ready to split their throats with crying out wept as much; the greatest part of them did not shed a single tear through the whole tragedy." This is a very distinct description of Eastern mourning for the dead: they cry out, too, it seems, on other occasions; no wonder, then, the house of Pharaoh heard when Joseph wept at making himself known to his brethren.

GOOD NEWS.

"Oh, sir," said a poor boy in the reform school to his minister, "I am not GOOD ENOUGH to go to Christ."

"My boy, Jesus Christ came into the world to save SINNERS. He receives the bad, not the good, else none would be saved. It is your BADNESS, not your goodness, that you are to bring to Him," answered the good man.

"Oh," cried the boy, "that is news, that is good news; there is hope for me."

Hearers, are of four sorts; the sponge, which swallows up every thing; the funnel which allows that to escape at one end which it receives at the other; the filter, which allows the liquor to escape and retains the dregs; the sieve, which rejects the chaff and retains nothing but the wheat.—*Jewish Proverbs.*

GUILILESSNESS.

"Neither was guile found in his mouth."
—(1 Peter ii. 22.) How rare, and all the more beautiful because of its rarity, is a *guileless* spirit?—a crystalline medium through which the transparent light of heaven comes and goes; open, candid, just, honourable, sincere; scorning every unfair dealing, every hollow pretension, every narrow prejudice. Wherever such characters exist, they are like "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Such, in all the loveliness of sinless perfection, was the Son of God: his guilelessness shining the more conspicuously amid the artful and malignant subtlety alike of men and devils. Passing by manifold instances in the course of his ministry, look at its manifestation as the hour of his death approached. When, on the night of his apprehension, he confronts the assassin band, in meek majesty he puts the question, "Whom seek ye?" They say to him, "Jesus of Nazerath." In guileless innocence, he replies, "I am he?" "Art thou the king of the Jews?" asks Pilate, a few hours after. An evasive answer might again have purchased immunity from suffering and indignity, but once more the lips, which scorned the semblance of evasion, reply, "Thou sayest!"

How he loved the same spirit in his people! "Behold," said he of Nathanael, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is *no guile!*" That upright man had, we may suppose, been day after day kneeling in prayer under his fig-tree, with an open and candid spirit,—

"Musing on the law he taught,
And waiting for the Lord he loved."

See how the Saviour honoured him: setting his own divine seal on the loveliness of this same spirit! Take one other example: When the startling, saddening announcement is made to the disciples, "One of you shall betray me;" they do not accuse one another: they attempt to throw no suspicion on Judas: each in trembling apprehension suspects only his own treacherous heart, "Lord, is it I?"

How much of a different "mind" is there abroad! In the school of the world (this "*paidic* world"), how much is there of what is called "policy," double-dealing!

—accomplishing its ends by tortuous means—outward, artificial polish, often only a cloak for baseness and selfishness!—in the daily interchange of business, one seeking to over-reach the other by wily arts—sacrificing principle for temporal advantage. There is nothing so derogatory to religion as aught allied to such a spirit among Christ's people—any such blot on the "living epistles." "Ye are the light of the world." That world is a quick observer. It is sharp to detect inconsistencies—slow to forget them. The true Christian has been likened to an *anagram*—you ought to be able to read him up and down, every way!

Be all reality, no counterfeit. Do not pass for current coin what is base alloy. Let transparent honour and sincerity regulate all your dealings: despise all meanness; avoid the sinister motive, the underhand dealing; aim at that unswerving love of truth that would scorn to stoop to base compliances and unworthy equivocations; live more under the power of the purifying and ennobling influences of the gospel. Take its golden rule as the matchless directory for the daily transactions of life—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—*Zion's Herald.*

"WITH CHRIST OR IN CHRIST."

"I have had six children (said Mr. Elliot), and I bless God for his free grace, they are all *with* Christ, or *in* Christ; and my mind is now at rest concerning them. My desire was, that they should have served Christ on earth: but if God chooses to have them rather serve Him in heaven, I have nothing to object to it, His will be done."

PETER THE GREAT'S QUESTION.

When any one was speaking ill of another in the presence of Peter the Great, he at first listened to him attentively, and then interrupted him. "Is there not," said he, "a fair side also to the character of the person of whom you are speaking? Come, tell me what good qualities you have remarked about him." "Speak not evil one of another."

PRAYER OF QUEEN ANNE.

ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND, PRINCE
GEORGE OF DENMARK

Almighty and eternal God, the disposer of all the affairs in the world, there is nothing so great as not to be subject to thy power, nor so small, but it comes within thy care: thy goodness and wisdom show themselves through all thy works, and thy loving-kindness and mercy do appear in the severe dispensations of thy providence, of which, at this time, I earnestly desire to have a deep and humble sense. It has pleased thee to take to thy mercy my dearest husband, who was the comfort and joy of my life, after we had lived together many years happily, in all conjugal love and affection. May I readily submit myself to thy good pleasure, and sincerely resign mine own will to thine, with all Christian patience, meekness, and humility. Do thou graciously pardon the errors and failings of my life, which may have been the occasion of thy displeasure; and let thy judgments bring me to sincere and unfeigned repentance, and to answer the wise ends for which thou hast sent them; be thou pleased so to assist me with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that I may continue to govern the people which thou hast committed to my charge, in godliness, righteousness, justice, and mercy. In the management of all affairs, public and private, grant I may have a strict regard to thy holy will, that I may diligently and heartily advance thy glory, and even depend entirely upon thy providence. Do thou, O gracious Father, be pleased to grant that I may do the greatest good I can in all my capacity, and be daily improving in every Christian grace and virtue, so that when thou shalt think fit to put an end to this short and uncertain life, I may be made a partaker of those gracious, endless joys, which thou hast prepared for those that love and fear thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE HATRED OF SELF.

M^r Laurin, the distinguished author of the sermon on "Glorying in the Cross of Christ," with that sanctified wit by which

it is said his conversation was characterized remarks, "If men could *hate themselves* as they do their neighbours, it would be a good help towards *loving their neighbours* as themselves."

However strange it may appear to those who have not thought on the subject, this self-hatred is an important duty, and its discharge has marked the character of the most eminent servants of God. Man, by nature and by choice, has been depraved and made guilty by sin, and till he hates himself on account of sin, he has made small progress in the way of holiness.—When Job had been favoured with an enlarged view of the holy character of God, he said "Wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes." When the prophet Isaiah had been favoured with a similar vision, he cried out, "Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips." And the apostle Paul, when he investigated the struggle in his soul between the contending powers of sin and holiness, he exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" or from this dead body, which as a foul carcase I have to carry about. Of all popes, says good John Newton, it is most important to be delivered from *Pope self*. He was right; for the best man on earth has sin enough in his soul to call forth the constant exercise of all his love of holiness, that he may "deny himself."

We will suggest the inquiry, whether it is not one important evidence of growth in grace, to increase in opposition to all those feelings to which we are tempted in opposition to God? One of the old divines says, "The more righteous we are in God's sight, the more unrighteous shall we be in our own;" and another says, that "when the Christian has reason to believe that God has forgiven his sins, he finds it exceedingly difficult to forgive himself.

Reader, is it not very important to encourage this hatred of sinful self? Be pleased to consider this subject, and endeavour to ascertain the full meaning of the excellent divine from whom we have quoted our first sentence.—*Watchman and Reflector*.

The Resolutions of Jonathan Edwards.

When the great and good President Edwards was a young man, just entering upon the work of the ministry, he drew up a series of resolutions for the regulation of his conduct throughout life. To this he was impelled by the desire to show gratitude "to God for his unspeakable gift." Love was the great motive which prompted that holiness of life for which he was so conspicuous. Few men have lived more to the glory of God, or rendered more important services to the church of Christ than he did. It may be interesting and profitable, especially to young Christians, to study the principles upon which he regulated his course. The resolutions were seventy in number. The following were amongst the most important of them:

Remember to read over these Resolutions once a week.

1. Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence. Resolved to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general. Resolved to do this, whatever difficulties I meet with, how many and how great soever.
2. Resolved, To be continually endeavouring to find out some new invention and contrivance to promote the fore-mentioned things.
4. Resolved, Never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God; nor be, nor suffer it, if I can avoid it.
5. Resolved, Never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can.
6. Resolved, To live with all my might, while I do live.
7. Resolved, Never to do anything which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.
18. Resolved, To live so at all times, as I think is best in my devout frames, and when I have clearest notions of things of the gospel, and another world.
20. Resolved, To maintain the strictest temperance in eating and drinking.
21. Resolved, Never to do anything, which if I should see in another, I should count a just occasion to despise him for, or to think any way the more meanly of him.
24. Resolved, Whenever I do any conspicuously evil action, to trace it back, till I come to the original cause; and then both carefully endeavour to do so no more, and to fight and pray with all my might against the original of it.
28. Resolved, To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.
30. Resolved, To strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before.
32. Resolved, To be strictly and firmly faithful to my trust, that in Prov. xx. 6, *A faithful man who can find?* may not be partly fulfilled in me.
33. Resolved, Always to do what I can towards making, maintaining, and establishing peace, when it can be without overbalancing detriments in other respects.
34. Resolved, In narration never to speak anything but the pure and simple verity.
37. Resolved, To inquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself; also at the end of every week, month, and year.
38. Resolved, Never to speak anything that is ridiculous, or matter of laughter, on the Lord's day.
39. Resolved, Never to do anything that I so much question the lawfulness of, as that I intend, at the same time, to consider and examine afterwards, whether it be lawful or no; except I as much question the lawfulness of the omission.
43. Resolved, Never, henceforward, till I die, to act as if I were any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's.
46. Resolved, Never to allow the least measure of any fretting uneasiness at my father or mother. Resolved to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of speech, or motion of my eye; and to be especially careful of it, with respect to any of our family.
47. Resolved, To endeavour to my utmost to deny whatever is not most agreeable to a good, and universally sweet and benevolent, quiet, peaceable, contented, compassionate, generous, humble, meek, modest, submissive, obliging, diligent and industrious, charitable, patient, forgiving, sincere temper; and to do at all times what such a temper would lead me to: Examine strictly every week whether I have done so.

50. Resolved, I will act so as I think I shall judge would have been best, and most prudent, when I come into the future world.

52. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age.

54. Whenever I hear anything spoken in conversation of any person, if I think it would be praiseworthy in me, Resolved to endeavour to imitate it.

56. Resolved never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

57. Resolved, when I fear misfortunes and adversities, to examine whether I have done my duty, and resolve to do it, and let it be just as Providence orders it: I will, as far as I can, be concerned about nothing but my duty, and my sin.

62. Resolved, Never to do anything but my duty; and then according to Eph. vi. 6, 7, 8, do it willingly and cheerfully, as unto the Lord and not to man; knowing that whatever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord.

67. Resolved, After afflictions, to inquire what I am the better for them, what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.

THE ANGEL'S TREASURE.

BY THE REV. JOHN TODD, D.D.

It was midnight when the angel of light sprang from the earth to go upward. There were sobbings and groans as he left, for he came out of a half-lighted chamber. Upward and upward he flew, and soon soared out of earth's sight. Then he saw the sun before him. Onward and onward he flew, leaving the planet Venus on the right hand, and then Mars, and Saturn, and Jupiter, and the great Sun himself were left behind—far behind.—Still upward he bent his flight, through the milky way into the vast regions of space, passing worlds and systems of worlds—straight upward and onward. At length he met a fellow-angel on his way to a distant part of God's creation, so distant that it would take many thousands of our years to reach it. The beautiful and noble beings paused to greet each other.

'Whither bound, my friend?'

'To that far-off world never yet pressed by angels' feet.'

'How long have you been in the Presence since your last great work?'

'About two thousand years, yet they seem only a few hours. Time with us is hardly worth mentioning. I may now be absent many thousand years; but they are nothing—a mere drop dipped out of eternity. What have you there so carefully folded up, and carried in your bosom so tenderly?'

'A jewel from earth!'

'Earth! Earth! O, how much I have heard of that little world since the Son, who is on the throne, went there to do his great work. I have never yet had the opportunity to visit it; but I know all its history; and I have the promise that I shall go there some day before it is burned up and destroyed. Perhaps I may be sent on some errand of great mercy! I have seen multitudes who were created there, who came up to live with us in heaven. I have heard many songs, but none so loud, so sweet as theirs. They sing of redeeming love. How they sympathise with all that is done in their world! But I will not hinder you, nor will I enquire further as to your precious charge. Farewell!'

'Farewell, noble one! May every blessing attend you!'

So they separated. Then upward still darted the angel, straight toward the heaven of heavens. As he entered the golden gates, all made way for him, for they saw that he had brought something very precious. No one stayed him to ask a question. Through the ranks of glorious ones he passed, till he stood before the great white throne, where was light, greater than a thousand suns would emit. As he bowed in awe and love, a voice came forth—"Good servant, hast thou done thine errand?" Carefully and gently the angel took from his bosom a beautiful thing. It seemed lighter than air, sweeter than the breath of morning, and seemed to float like music. The everlasting arms were stretched out to receive it. *It was the soul of a little child!*

"Suffer it to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The beautiful little thing uttered no sound, but it seemed to thrill with joy unutterable. Then ten thousand voices broke forth into songs of praise, and all the harps of heaven seemed to awake, and the daughters of music came forth from every quarter, and uttered his praise. For through the courts the tidings spread that another jewel had come to shine in the eternal crown of Christ.

On earth there was a funeral. That night the mother dreamed that her little one was with her, and stretched out her arms to take it, and it was not there, as she awoke in tears.

The little coffin held the beautiful body.— Friends had put white flowers in the waxen hands as they folded on its bosom. The whole-house was in deep mourning, for the sunbeam had been quenched. The mother sobbed and kissed the cold face of her child, and called it dead. And she thought of it as dead. She could not realize that Christ could love her child more than she did; or that any body could take care of it as she could; or that any other world would be as good a place to educate and train it as this; or that any bosom could shield it as could hers: or that it was far better off than to be here. Will she know it among the angels of day when she next sees it? Will it have anything about it by which any one would know that it was earth-born? Will it be her child to fondle and love? Who can tell?— Ah! mother, if you are a Christian, when you come to see as you are seen, and to know as you are known, you will see and feel that this removal of your child was all right, and just as you are glad to have it. Dry up your tears then, and trust all to the wisdom and goodness of your blessed Redeemer.—S. S. *Times.*

Sabbath School Lessons.

January 3rd, 1863.

OTHNIEL.

Judges, chapter III. 1-11.

BY REV. W. FERRIE, A. M.

Verse 1st. The children of Israel had so frequently provoked God to anger by worshipping false gods, and intermarrying with the heathen that (see chap. 2, v. 20-23) He had resolved he should hastily drive out no more of the nations which Joshua had left, but suffer them to remain for the *proving* of Israel whether they would keep his way like their fathers, or not. The word translated "the Lord," in this verse, is in the original language "Jehovah." It seems an unhappy thing that this great name of God should be so often kept out of sight in the English Bible. Jehovah left certain nations to prove Israel by them. God never tempts, but he proves his people. He suffers evil spirits to prove them, too, and those evil persons from whom they will not separate themselves. He led Israel forty years in the wilderness to humble them and prove them, and to know what was in their hearts, whether they would serve him or not (Deut. 8. 2.); and even his own Son Jesus Christ was led by the Spirit

into the wilderness to be *proved* of the devil. When men are *tempted* they are led away by their own lusts, not by God. God *tries* but does not *tempt*. When it is written God did *tempt* Abraham, it is merely meant and should have been written, that God *tried* Abraham. God did not ask Abraham to sin, but led him to make a most remarkable manifestation of his faith in Him. The Devil tempted our first parents to shew a want of confidence in God. God tries by giving men an opportunity of doing the very opposite.

Verse 2d teaches us that another object of Jehovah in leaving certain of the heathen nations among the Israelites, was to teach the art of war to those of them that were born too late to have been in all the wars with the Canaanites, and still more for the instruction of those who had known none of these wars. It was of importance that Israel should be skilled in war, for there still remained much land to be possessed, and the Lord had purposed to exalt them even temporarily above all the nations that were around them. God's spiritual Israel on earth are a militant church, and their young should be so taught from the first, as to be able earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Verse 3d. The Philistines dwelt to the south-west of Israel. They were exceedingly often at war with them. Their country is now almost wholly desert and occupied by the Bedouin Arabs. "Howl, O gate: cry, O city: Thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved," Isaiah xiv. 31.

The Canaanites were the descendants of Canaan, that son of Ham who was cursed on account of his father's impiety. Driven by Joshua out of the land of Canaan, it is believed that many of them went south into Africa; where, under the influence of the burning sun, they acquired the features that characterise the Negro race. The curse on Canaan has been remarkably fulfilled. In America, which some ages ago were peopled with Indians (the descendants of Shem) the Anglo-Saxon race (descended of Japhet) now dwells, and rules; and the black man or Canaanite, is their slave. "God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servants," Gen. ix. 27. Yea, and inasmuch as many of the present masters of slaves were themselves servants, before coming to America, Canaan is actually still "a servant of servants." The "Sidonians" dwelt to the north-west of Israel. The town of Sidon was once a great city (see Joshua xi: 8.); it is still a town although many nations have served themselves of it, and its present name is Saide.— Christ once said, It will be more tolerable for

Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, in which he had wrought such mighty works (Luke x 14.) "The Hivites" seem to have been a scattered people in the land of Canaan. Mount Lebanon stands to the north of Palestine, and is famous for the goodly cedars it once reared. Hermon is a mountain south of Lebanon, and "Baal Hermon" was a city in the valley between the two.

"The entering in of Hamath," is understood to mean "the narrow pass leading from the land of Canaan into Syria, which constitutes the northern boundary of Palestine." Hamath, between Palestine and Lebanon, had its own kings, being a distinct province from either Syria or the kingdom of the Ten Tribes of Israel.

Verses 6th and 7th show us that the children of Israel, when proved by these nations, were found wanting, and narrates the particulars of their trespass. They intermarried with the heathen; did evil; forgot God; "and served Baalim and the groves." Baalim is the same as *Baal* in all his representations. It is the plural of Baal, and the worship of Baal was the worship of the sun and sundry idols.

Verse 8th tells us the necessary consequence of such apostacy. Mesopotamia was a country far to the east of Palestine, as it lay between the two great rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Jehovah had brought Israel out of bondage when in Egypt, and as Israel casts Him off and worships Baal instead of Him, he sends Israel back to bondage again, but now under the king of another nation, until Israel leaves off Baal-worship and returns to Him.

Verse 9th. This they did after having been servants for eight years under Cushan-rishathaim; and God sends them a deliverer in Othniel, the nephew of Caleb. This man's name, being interpreted, is "Lion of God;" and he had before this shown himself very brave by taking the city of Debir to obtain the hand of Caleb's daughter (Judges i. 13.) It was by the Spirit of the Lord that he was made bold, wise, and resolute enough to deliver the land from Cushan-rishathaim, and to judge it afterwards. God's Spirit can make one man chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight (Judg. xv. 14, 15). "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain" (Zech. xi. 6, 7). The Spirit of the Lord makes a man lion-hearted, and disposes him to follow the Lord fully, as did Caleb, Othniel's uncle, whose name as fitly signifies "a dog" as Othniel's does 'lion-

hearted." He followed the Lord as a dog, his master, which, though it may run away at times to a little distance, ever and anon returns: and in times of danger, instead of slinking back, goes growling on before to defend its master, if possible, from even the necessity of combat. You remember how nobly Caleb stood up for God when all Israel, with the exception of but a very few, were coming to the fearful resolution of demanding a captain to lead them back to Egypt (Num. xiv. 6-9). The land rested five times as long as it had been disturbed. God is very gracious, but men despise his mercy; and so, after this long rest, Israel again did evil, and had to be chastised for a much longer time.

Othniel is the first person noticed as judge of Israel after the death of Joshua. A series of judges succeeded him, until at last Israel, wholly forgetting that they had a King in Jehovah, refused to have Samuel's sons for their judges, and demanded a king to be like other nations. This they got in the person of Saul, a Benjamite, whom God gave them for a king in His anger.

Learn to continue in God's fear and service—to call upon Him with all hope in times of trouble—to go on in the strength of His Spirit against any spiritual foe, and when delivered out of evil to "sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John v. 14).

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Read John x. 1-18.

Connection.—Christ's spirit was roused against the Jewish Rulers who had cast out the poor and once blind man, chap. ix. 34. Evidently the verses of this lesson are a continuation of the thoughts excited by that incident. See ver. 21.

I. The Sheep.

The Jews knew the habits of sheep well. Their country was pastoral even near Jerusalem, the temple-sacrifices requiring a continual supply of sheep; flocks, and folds to keep them in, were common. Ver. 3.—*By name—leadeth them out.* In Palestine, the sheep have each their own name, and the shepherd goes before his flock, which willingly follows his voice. *The thief—the wolf.* Shepherds had frequently in these countries to resist the attacks of both wandering Arab robbers and wolves. The servants of Job and of Nabal knew this, *Folds.* They were

most necessary; generally in an eastern encampment the flocks are placed at night in the centre, and the entrance is guarded by a *porter*, ver. 3.

II. The Thieves.

Ver. 1. *Thief and robber*.—Both cunning and violence are implied; both were used against this poor disciple, chap. ix.—*Strangers—hirelings*—were terms all used to point out those who, pretending to guide souls, led or drove them from Christ. *Careth not for the sheep*—no true love for souls; they “seek their own” gratification, love of money, power or self-will. *Entered not by the door*—were not sent by Christ.

III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Ver. 3. The sheep are *his own*—he knows them, and they know him, ver. 14. So the blind man instinctively clung to Christ, and Christ sought and cared for him.

He leads and feeds them—sheep are never found in a wild state, they ever need man's protection, so ver. 4 and 9.

He dies for them, ver. 11. To shield them from danger he interposes his own life—So David did, 1 Sam. xvii. 34. He has *other sheep*—the Gentiles—some on this Isle of the Gentiles. All shall be brought to *one fold*, one church even on earth, one in heaven, safe from every foe. The Father loves the Shepherd because he dies for his sheep, willingly lay down his life. How wondrous the love of the Father and the good Shepherd.

APPLICATION.

The explanation of the parable contains the principles to be employed in the application of it. The latter verses, 15-18, contain truths having no counterpart in the parable.

1. *Christ's sheep*—are you one of them?

1. They were once *lost sheep*—all have wandered. So David, Psalm cxix. 176. They all know this, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

2. They know Christ's voice—it awoke them from carelessness and sin; like Saul, Acts ix. 4; the jailor at Philippi. They hear it in the Bible; it reaches their hearts; they know its loving tone as it calls them by name—so “Mary,” chap. xx. 16.

3. They follow Him—He says still, “follow me,” and they leave all and follow Him, Matt. iv. 19, 20, 22. They not only hear but *obey*, and try to please Christ.

4. They are like sheep for helplessness, proneness to wander, innocence, usefulness, and acceptability to God as sheep were in sacrifice.

5. They are safe—see how Christ sought this poor one, chap. ix. 35; upheld him by his love and power against earth and hell—see Psalm 23.

II. *The wolves*—the enemies of the sheep

1. All who come unsent by Christ—who enter not by the door—like the Pharisees.

2. Who seek their own and not the good of the sheep—hirelings—who scatter and do not gather the flock.

3. Those whose voice Christ's sheep will not hear—so this poor blind man, ver. 27.

4. All who destroy souls—leading or driving from Christ or their duty; stealing their love from Christ as Absalom stole the heart of Israel.

III. *The Good Shepherd*—

1. *Seeks* his sheep—see Matt. xviii. 12; Acts ix. 12. *Guards* the fold safely—so Jacob did, Gen. xxxi. 38, 39. Bethlehem's shepherds, Luke ii. 8. *Feeds them*—ver. 4 and 9. Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 15. The disciples, Luke xxii. 35.

2. Knows and calls each by name—So Christ knew Nathaniel, John i. 47, 48; and Peter, Matt. xvi. 17, 18. Knows them now; He will show he knows them when he separates them from the wicked, Matt. xxv. 32. He knows and calls you.

3. Loves and has died for his sheep—He loved them so that when they or He must die, He laid “down his life” for them. He specially loves and cares for “the lambs,” Isa. xl. 11; John xxi. 15. He will not forget his “other sheep” still ungathered over the world