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Buds and Blossoms

AND

Friendly Greetings.

"Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit."

VOL. X.—No. 12. }

DECEMBER, 1886.

{ WHOLE No. 120.

Christmas and Friendly Greeting.



CHRISTMAS comes but once a year. This is an old adage, often repeated at the festive board by those who neither keep feast nor fast in sacred memory of the King whose name is so slightly made a plea for their unhallowed rejoicing. Whilst we have no fellowship with much of the so-called religious observance of these times and seasons, yet Christmas does seem to possess, in the very music of the word, a time for hallowed joy. If the chronicles of time do not accord just when Christ was born, we enter not into their disputes, or champion in opposition claims of the old and new Christmas day; but rather rejoice in the granted certifiel fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, that the angels did sing and rejoice over the plains where shepherds watched their flocks. They sang because in the city of David was born the child, long promised, the wonderful Prince of Peace. The chorus of their song still echoes through the ages, 'glory to God in the highest,' 'on earth peace,' 'good will to men.' They left no ground for ignorance as to the cause of their song, or the meaning of their joy. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Of Christ's grand and gracious life and of the fact of life on earth Theodore Parker wrote:—"Shall we measure Jesus by the shadow He has cast into the world—no, by the light He has shed upon it. Shall we be told such a man never lived?—the whole story is a lie! Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived; but who did their works, and thought their thought? it takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus."

To some Christ's Cross and Calvary are a stumbling block and shame, the shadow thereof hides the glory of the King who died thereon. They despise a Saviour who could not save himself, and will not have such to be their deliverer. Alas, they know not the reason of his inability, the cause, why, he spared not himself. But to many now among the angels, the joy of Christmas-tide is engulfed in the more hallowed, sacred memories of Gethsemane and Golgotha. It was in the shadow of the cross they learned not only the truth which the Centurion uttered, this is the Son of God, but also the meaning of the gracious words 'he gave himself a ransom,' 'by His stripes we are healed.' So that saints below, with saints to glory gone, can now in concert sing; "It is done, the great transaction is done, peace on earth, good will to men. Glory to God in the highest, unto Him who hath loved us and

washed us from our sins in His own blood. We do well when we keep the feast at Xmas-tide to consider Him who said, the poor ye have with you always, and in doing, do heartily as unto the Lord.

"O brother man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;
To worship rightly is to love each other—
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

"Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was 'doing good,'
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude."

To spend our time in the folly of the world is like the crackling of thorns under the pot. Such laughter and pleasure, is energy quickly spent, and to no profit withal. Let us when we make a feast remember the guests Christ would have us invite, and whose entertainment hath hope and promise of eternal reward. For such were his guests, and all Lazarus-like beggars will find that God's estimate of worth differs from the carnal standard. With Him standards differ, and many of the last stand first, and the first last. Some who would thrust themselves in shall be bound hand and foot, because they rejected the covering of righteousness, without which none can sit at the King's table. Want, rags, sores, and death of starvation are no hindrances to prominence in the hereafter and heaven prepared for those who love Jesus and keep his commandments. The come and go of Christmas-tide should teach us that:

"Our life is over on the wing;
And death is ever nigh;
The moment when our lives begin
We all begin to die."

The day of one's birth and death are closely joined. The quick repetition of Christmas greetings should call for serious considerations.

The rolling seasons seem to gather increasing speed with our passing years, and Christmas comes apace, compared with the wearing expectancy of our childhood days. Would not our joy be less boisterous and more hallowed if we considered aright the flight of time, and its importance in the light of eternity. Sorrowless riches would be more the goal of our ambition. For us to live would be Christ:

"The voice of God are on me;
And I may not stop to play with shadows, or pluck earthly flowers,
Till I my work have done, and rendered up account.....
I only pray, God make me holy, and my spirit nerve for the stern hour of strife."

One by one the moments pass, some are coming, whilst others are quickly going, all are to us tokens of Divine love, opportunities to be seized and utilized. Work whilst it is called to-day. To-morrow will bring fresh supplies of grace for the trials and duties in life's conflict.

President Lincoln once wrote:—"God is the only being who has time enough, but a prudent man who knows how to seize occasions can commonly make a shift to find as much as he needs."

Measure man's short lifetime by Christmas-tides as measuring points, the years of our pilgrimage are not many. Friend, next Christmas, where and how do you expect to spend it? What did you do with the last? How many more do you anticipate to enjoy on earth? The last tide of hope, mercy and opportunity, may even now be receding. Escape for your life the Gospel waves seem to say as they roll on the shores of time. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Come to Jesus, come to Jesus now, or else you must come in the judgment, and then go away forever, forever.

Death asks for no man's leave,
But lifts the latch, and enters, and sits down.

The year 1886 has almost worn itself out, and as certainly the steady flight of time wears us away. Recorded years mean less and less for us. Should 1887 in full measure be meted out, it will but shorten the time to come. Vain and foolish to waste on trifling cares, and foolish pleasures, the quickly passing years. When true, present, and lasting happiness comes in the consciousness of duties fulfilled and God's righteous saving word obeyed.

Then the knell of passing years need cause no alarm. The knell of death, though more staid and solemn, may waken heart throbs and gladness. Yea, may sound more sweetly than the merry joyous peal of Christmas bells. The measured beat, saith to the tired pilgrim, there is rest for the weary. Child come home, come home. The conflict of time is ending. Time is fleeing. The unmeasurable bliss of eternity is coming. It is thine forever, forever, forever. **1886, GOOD-BYE! 1887, WELCOME!**

The tidings of great joy link the passing present to a glad future. Jesus Christ came unto the world to seek and to save the lost. Christmas should waken glad and serious thoughts.

Ribbon of Blue, or Temperance Notes.



BEWARE! Why? Of what? Drink and its fascination and flatteries. Touch not, taste not, handle not. Prevent, prohibit by all lawful and possible means the further spread of this wild fire of hell. It is evil spirit, of a truth, and men who have not by long habit stifled conscience, grow

alarmed when they note its destructive power. Even heathens and savages, who love bloodshed and have not the gospel light, cry out in fear and terror when they see the vile spirit of the still, crushing and torturing in crueler forms than their native savagery ever knew. To prove this point, that RUM IS RUIN everywhere, we quote from the appeal of a Mohammedan Chief on the Niger, Africa. He sent to Bishop Crowther, imploring him to prevent the sale of intoxicants among his people. He says:

"It is no long subject. It is about *barasa* (rum), *barasa*, *barasa*, *barasa*. My God! it has ruined our land; it has very, very much ruined our people, so that our people have become foolish. I have made a law that no one may buy or sell it, and that every one who is caught in selling it, his house shall be

broken up; and that every one who is found drunk shall be killed; and have said to all Christian merchants that they may deal in everything except *barasa*." He goes on to beseech the bishop to help him, so that he can not only make these laws, but have them obeyed. "For God's sake, and the prophet's sake, whom He has sent, the bishop must help us in this *barasa*."

Our blood is stirred when we hear of savages slaying and eating our missionaries. But should not our souls be stirred, as we have facts and figures about this abominable, diabolical traffic. The beautiful, wonderful Congo, is a highway to the heart of bleeding Africa. The estimated population of the Congo is 43,000,000. Already the lower river is cursed, and cursed bitterly with the meanest and vilest forms of intoxicating drinks.

We again quote a few facts and figures to indicate the extent of this traffic. The exports of *spirits to Africa* from Great Britain, Germany, Portugal, and the United States, in about a year, amounted to nearly 9,000,000 gallons! And these gallons are multiplied many times before they are dealt out to the natives. One of the National African Company's steamers recently carried 25,000 cases of gin and rum for the supply of two factories only. Mr. Bentley says, "he has heard of 50,000 or 60,000 cases of gin as the annual sale of certain factories of the Dutch House." To save carriage expenses "pure alcohol" is sometimes used as an article of trade. Imagine the demoralization which is the effect of this enormous and most destructive trade. The shrewd trader reckons upon the opening up of the Congo as affording him a new field for his cruel greed. He will pit his casks of spirits against all other articles of trade, and believes he is sure to win. There is no insuperable difficulty in the way of the liquor traffic on this great river at present. It is a fair river. Shall its improved avenue for commerce be used to blight the ignorant millions along its shores? Men of Israel! Lovers of humanity, help! Let there be a loud and long protest, or Africa's untaught sons will curse us with a bitter curse. The fair fields for missionary toil will lie wasted and barren, open to none save the devouring foe.

Might we not rightly pray, from wicked and evil men (who make and sell intoxicating drinks) good Lord deliver us. If used in your house or family or anywhere you can control, please sign your names to prohibit and protest against its use.

By the grace of God, witness my hand,

BUDS AND BLOSSOMS have more than once sent out friendly greeting to those who are behind in their payment, and still the response is not as one would wish or expect. Faith saith, "the Lord will incline their hearts so that they will not wrong or rob you in this matter." Again we say please pay back subscriptions, or let us know why you cannot and do not. We are not unreasonable, and have learned a lesson in editorial patience; remember you are not helping the work by withholding what is due. Again we thank our friends for every kind word, and sincerely hope their efforts will greatly increase our circulation.



Regions Beyond Notes.

IT IS LARGE. It is the world. Room enough to work however varied the talent. Great enough the task to demand prompt and steady diligence and obedience. 'Go work to-day.' 'Occupy till I come.' This is Divine advice. Beware of religious dissipation. In 1794 there is a notice of the arrival of William Carey and John Thomas in India, and letters from Carey describe his first impressions of the field and the work from which a sentence or two may be quoted. "There are difficulties in our way," wrote Carey on January 5, 1796, "more formidable obstacles than you can suppose. Yet this is our encouragement; the power of God is sufficient to accomplish everything which He has promised, and His promises are exceedingly great and precious concerning the conversion of the heathen." He once said: "To give me credit for being a plodder will be to describe me truly; anything beyond this will be too much. I can plod; I can persevere in any definite pursuit; to this I owe everything." Seven years after Carey landed in India, the directors of the East India Company placed it on record as "their decided conviction, after consideration and examination," "that the sending of christian missionaries into our Eastern possessions is the maddest, most extravagant, and most expensive, most unwarrantable project that ever was proposed by a lunatic enthusiast." To-day shows even to men of the world the folly of their august wisdom and decided conviction. What a revolution hath God wrought by apostolic men who go turning upside down the religious prejudices and unbelief of generations, bringing men and nations to own, none but the Gospel of Jesus can do helpless sinners good. Young men and maidens there is a loud call to service from India, China, Japan and Africa, not to mention the isles of the sea and other nations and people yet in darkness. Take up the cross of Christ and go forward to fight the good fight. Fear not being clad in the whole armour of God, with the true Jerusalem blade, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, you will find this weapon truer and more reliable in the time of conflict than the best Damascus blade ever forged by the skill and wisdom of this world, go in the name of the Lord. Praying always, you must win success, until the whole round earth is bound by the chains of love to the throne of God, and led into the willing captivity of heaven's kingdom and service. Let us consecrate ourselves to the work, Jesus must reign. Those who follow the captain, will gloriously share the spoils. Crowns of glory, palms of victory we shall wear. Let us on then, whilst men sleep, the great adversary sows tares. If we tarry the whitened grain will be shed, and the opportunity of harvest be lost forever. The dusky millions of India and Africa call for our active sympathy and love. The crushed and bleeding hearts of childhood and womanhood ask for deliverance and heroes of more than romantic fame. Men and women who shall go with glad tidings of eternal hope. To show and teach, God hath made of one blood all nations, and that through and in the precious blood of Christ there is a free pardon purchased for whosoever wills.

To thus tell the story of a Saviour's love let us crowd our life full of unselfish activity. The Hebrew nation and Christian church seem to have been, and to be chosen instrumentalities in the purposes of grace. Let us learn a lesson from the history of the past, lest we should be set aside as were other workmen proven unworthy by their neglect of more than golden opportunities.

Special Thanks to Advertisers.

We thank you sincerely for past and present patronage, many are old and tried helpers. We are fully persuaded we offer a good and many reaching medium, one that is sure to attract all kinds of readers and people. By the wealth of illustration and general pleasing character, the magazine insures more than a temporary existence. BUDS AND BLOSSOMS are passed round and on. Whilst it offers full monetary and market value, advertisers have the satisfaction of knowing up to the present every dollar has been spent in paying the bills of the printers, binders, etc. Our toil thus far has been the only thing we have drawn therefrom, save a revenue of rich and varied experience, the good-will and blessing of not a few, and a good conscience of service rendered to God.

Faith halted a little, as to further advance for the coming year. So far the present income cried halt, hold, strengthen, economise, and thus you may gather some profit for 1887. Then the thought of the years of mercy and growth past, seemed to say, "go on. Increase of circulation will encourage men of business to advertise and enlarge eventually your field and opportunity in this strangely opened door. Doubtless some advertisers will say, faith is wondrously like work, judging by the earnestness of our canvasser; but in reply, be it known this is of God's ordering. We knowing her desire for christian work and training said, come if you like and are willing to share in toil for Christ's service, where silver and gold comes slowly, and our demands seem to be many. Seeing the possibility of enlargement for BUDS AND BLOSSOMS, the prompting of love to others made her willing and apt for work. Thanking you for encouragement given, we would say increase circulation is our motto, but all for Jesus. If ever it brings any financial reward to us or ours we shall be thankful. Anyway conscious weariness in well-doing makes rest and heaven sweeter, we will endeavor to work till Jesus comes, and we will rest at home.

Our Sabbath School.—The last teacher's meeting revealed the finance to be in a very healthy condition. Funds in hand for next year's monthly supplies. Nearly one hundred dollars worth of papers and helps were ordered. When paid for, the treasurer said, that leaves about one hundred and seventeen dollars on hand—balance to the good. Two new teachers were appointed and the hopefulness expressed, and that with cause, made us glad. Let us pray and work for harvest-tide blessing. Feeding lambs is honored employ.

Our Home Mission Work.—The Hospital and Poor-house have been visited. Words of comfort have been spoken. Not a few pages of good literature have been passed round, to cheer away hours which to them often move slowly. Will our friends please give us an extra good supply for Christmas? me. Send us your old cards now laid away to fade and spoil, they will cheer someone else. We have emptied our apple barrels. Could you even in imagination know how an apple is appreciated in a poor-house you would soon say, "there are more to follow." We know hearts are being touched, and souls won for Christ.

Home Circle.

Building Lot.—Ethel Mason and Maggie McEacheran, one lot, \$5.00, S. S. Scholars; also infant class, one lot, \$5.00.

Members Received.—Nov. 7th, 1 by baptism, 2 by letter.

Miss Weatherly sent us a splendid package of tracts, booklets, etc., very suitable to scatter in with our general reading matter, which consists of magazines and weekly religious and other papers. We thank her, and through her the British and American Book and Tract Society, which has for many years past done, and is still doing noble work for Christ. Only the roll of eternity will be long enough to tell out all the good done by the parent Religious Tract Society, of London, England. The Lord prosper.

Distributed since our last report, in the Hospitals and Poor House, 6,300 pages reading matter; sent out 399 free copies of Buds & Blossoms, equal to 15,960 pages. Total 22,260 pages.

Papers sent for mission:—Mrs. Herman, Mr. Iram Russell, E. Smith, Mr. James Templeton, Miss Emily Smith, Mrs. Corkum and H. Payzant, Mr. Gabriel, Stanley Richardson. Per Mrs. J. Fitch, from her mission school, Freddie and Emma Faris, Alfred Witherly, Carrie and Alice Rogers, Bruce and Clara Spencer.

Apples sent for mission:—Mrs. Murgeson, 1 bbl. Mrs. McLane, grapes and candies.

TABERNACLE NOTES.—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow." "O, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men." On Thanksgiving Day, as notified in circular enclosed last month, we held a thanksgiving service and the envelope offering on the plates amounted to one hundred dollars. Sums sent before and since raised the total. The Juvenile Jubilee Singers added much to the pleasure and profit of the meeting. It had a tendency to draw out our thoughts and sympathies as we listened to them. It showed the benefit of education and the power of song. We felt that our sisters and the brethren who have a long time taught and maintained a Sunday School at Africville, have done, and are doing, real missionary service amongst the children of that little coloured settlement, and in no wise will the reward be lost. Our own choir rendered good service. The people all seemed in an enjoyable and appreciative and liberal mood, with such an audience it is not hard to give pleasure or meet success.

We thank God and take courage. This enabled us to pay interest on lot, and save the interest on our accumulating fund, towards paying off the principal on mortgage. Our capital grows slowly but then it is surely.

ENVELOPE PLATE COLLECTION.—Elias Covey, \$6.00; W. Davies and Thos. Spry, Sr., \$5.00 each; M. Manuel and B. Byers, \$3.00 each; Mr. and Mrs. T. S. Spry, Chamber Blakley, Geo. Hurshman, J. K. Hubley, J. E.—, \$2.00 each; two friends, \$2.00; Stanley and Beatrice, \$1.50; Mrs. Kraush, \$1.25; Mrs. W. Davies, Abbie Glawson, Mrs. DeWitt, Mrs. Rhude, C. Blakley, A. Hubley, Emma Hubley, W. H. Teas, B. J. Hubley, The Lord's Name be praised, Sophia Stephens, Yours Truly, Mrs. J. K. Hubley, Mrs. J. Baker, Geo. Noonan, C. Hubley, Sr., B. Byers, J. Barrowman, Friend, Mrs. Byers, Mrs. J. Mason, Dr. DeWitt, Friend, \$1.00 each.

Mrs. W. H. Teas, Emma Davies, E. H. Barnstead, E. Barnstead, Louisa Glawson, Mrs. C. Hunt, Frank Barry, Mrs. McPhee, E. Estano, E. M. Davies, Minnie Covey, J. H. Barnstead, James McEachern, Mary Davis, Mrs. C. Dickey, Mrs. Horton, 50c. each; seven friends, 50c. each; James Brackett, Friend, 40c. each; E. Webster, 35c.; Mrs. J. Blakley and Fannie Hurshman, 30c. each; Mrs. A. Myers, Miss Wilson, Edith Byers, Nat Butler, Fizzie Dickie, Fanny Hughes, Minnie Baker, A. McCabe, Mrs. Burgis, Lizzie Peddle, Minnie McEachern, Lizzie Dickey, Mrs. Doyle, Bessie Deal, Effie G., Percy H. Davies, Mrs. J. Davis, E. Peddle, A. J. Davis, A. Soldier, Stanley DeWitt, Arthur Hurshman, 25c. each; twenty-two friends, 25c. each.

Received by the Pastor before and since Envelope Plate Collection. **Thanksgiving Fund.**—Mrs. Bennett, U. S., \$2.00; Mr. Colin Covey, U. S.; \$1.00; Mr. Robert Roomc, \$1.00; Mr. G. McDonald, 25c.; Mr. G. E. Forsyth, \$4.00; Mrs. W. Crowe, \$1.00; Mrs. Corkum, 50c.; no name, 50c.; A. McKay,

75c.; L. Hunt, 25c.; Minnie Hunter, 50c.; no name, 50c.; Mrs. Flemming; C. A. McLane, \$3.00; Mr. J. Gabriel, 25c.

Pidus Achates writes: "Being one of the Lord's afflicted and poor ones, it is nevertheless my desire to help, \$1.00." From Ontario Mrs. J. C. Yule sends a beautiful thanksgiving hymn, and a \$1.00 from her mission box. She writes, I want to help you, cannot continue B. and B. after the time paid for by some kind friend, or hardly expect them to renew, so please discontinue, although reluctantly I write it. Sincerely we hope yet, we shall have an order to continue, although we have forgotten who sent the first subscription.

Those who took up the collection found it hard to make out names on the envelopes. We give the list as far as we can decipher.

Encouragements.—A Jad once a play-mate of my son Ernest writes from Pittsburg, Pa., U. S.:—"Enclosed find a \$5.00 bill, take for B. and B., which by the by is very interesting. The balance use as you like in your mission work. Since starting work, I concluded to give one tenth to Christ and his cause. Yours seems to me very deserving." Mr. Philip Myers gave \$1.00 for the work. Mrs. W. Hubley sent us some squash, Mrs. A. Hubley sent cucumbers. Miss L. Canavan a dress for baby. Mr. Harris Recd a barrel of apples. Last, but not least, if we judge by weight, Mr. Gaston went fishing and told the boys to call with their pony and trap to get a small fish or two. The largest weighed twenty lbs. Certainly biggest and freshest the editor ever tasted.

The following having paid \$1.00 in advance for Buds and Blossoms, we credit each 25c. to our mission work, N. B. Eddie, Mrs. G. E. Forsyth, Miss A. J. Onderdonk, Cora Groom, Mrs. J. G. Fitch, J. C. Merlin, Mrs. Anderson, Roda P. Housel, Mrs. Welsh, 40c.

Prepare for Christmas Fancy Sale, Thursday, December 16th.

We specially thank Mr. N. Butler for painting the columns, a most decided improvement and showing good taste. His assistants, our brethren, John and James McEachern also took no small pains to clean the gas-fittings.

Olive Branches.

BIRTH—Oct. 23rd, the wife of Mr. Joseph Perryman, of a daughter.

Nov. 5th, the wife of Mr. Etter, of a daughter.

Nov. 9th, the wife of Mr. J. McCabe, a son.

Orange Blossoms.

MARRIED Nov. 20th, at the house of Captain Arnold, by Rev. J. F. Avery, Leonard W. J. Harpel to Josephine Arnold.

FADED LEAVES.

DIED Nov. 14th, the wife of John McCabe.

Not often is it our sad experience so soon to visit the grave and to lay side by side mother and child. On the 9th her new born son was, after a brief life, laid in the tomb; to be followed by the mother, with whom disease had long struggled for the mastery. At the early age of 23, the young wife and mother, after months of weariness and suffering, fell asleep. Her hope in Christ was strong and bright. When all thought nature too worn and weak for utterance, she rose in bed, and, in a strong clear voice, with thrilling power sang,

"I am coming Lord,
Coming now to Thee;
Wash me, cleanse me, in the blood
That flows on Calvary."

Reader, could you say if the death chills were gathering, as she said, with the fullest confidence, "I am coming Lord, coming now to Thee." The grave loses its victory over the blood-washed. To them the sting of death is destroyed by their risen Lord, Jesus the Christ.

DIED Nov. 11th, Samuel Noble, aged 61.

For many years known and highly respected as a government official, Treasurer of the Customs at Halifax. The immense gathering at his funeral showed how a Christian can fill a difficult and honored position, and so maintain his trust, as to gain the good-will and esteem of his fellow men. One remark that specially pleasing was to hear a stranger say "they will miss him at the Sabbath School!" *Friend, where would you be missed.*

YOU ARE A LITTLE TOO FAST, SIR,

AND OTHER SKETCHES.



THE very worst thing that ever befel young Spratt was his being left a

bit of money when his old grandfather Spratt died. It wasn't very much, it is true, but it was too much, nevertheless, for young Spratt's balance. It turned him quite topsy-turvy. I am not at all sure but that he would have turned out pretty well in life if it hadn't been for that unfortunate money.

It had three very bad effects upon him, which I will now proceed to relate.

In the first place, it *made him lazy*. "What's the good of working when I can go a-playing?" he was accustomed to say to himself and others. "Grind, grind, grind all the day long isn't the sort of life I

shall ever fall in love with; and the long and short of the matter is, I shall turn gentleman, put my hands in my pockets, and do nothing."

In the second place, it *made him proud*. He was independent, wasn't he? He was a young man of consequence therefore—somebody a bit above the ordinary run, somebody worth looking at. Dear me! how young Spratt did swell out. What airs he put on, and how he tried to look down on everybody! He was proud all over.

In the third place, it *made him fast*. Of course it did. Whoever heard of a young man who went in for a lazy life, and being "stuck up" to boot, who kept straight? Doing nothing very soon leads to doing something, only that something will be something bad. And so young Spratt soon found himself among fast company, in fast places, and engulfed in fast ways.

Now, when a young man is bent on going to the bad, he will not find it a hard matter to accomplish. There are plenty of people who will help him on, and help him down. The devil himself will be at his elbow to "lend a hand," and help him over the stiles. A man never has so many helpers as when he is going fast downhill. And so young Spratt found.

And, moreover, when he once begins to go down he gathers speed as he goes. Every day, pretty nearly, finds him increasing his pace. Beginning slowly at first, he gets up more and more steam until the speed becomes quite bewildering.

Poor young Spratt! He went so "fast" that he shot past church doors, and never by any mortal chance could bring himself to stop and enter there. And as for reading his Bible, or kneeling down and praying as he used to do, he was much too fast a young man for that. In fact, religion altogether was much too "slow" for fast young Spratt. Spinning along at such a giddy pace, he very soon parted with the last particle of anything in the shape of religion. He left it all behind him. Mother, father, and sisters hung on to young Spratt, to moderate, if possible, his pace. But it was of no good. He shook them off one and all, and left them weeping behind him. A runaway horse was nothing to young Spratt, so "fast" was he.

Nevertheless, he stopped at last, and how he did it I am now going to tell you.

There was an honest old watchmaker, a friend of the family, who lived not very far from young Spratt's, and who had long been watching the young man's ways. While others watched and laughed, he watched and prayed, and hoped that the time would come to put the drag on young Spratt's speed. Well, the time came, as it always does to those who pray for it, and have patience to wait for it, and eyes to see it when it does come.

One day the young man brought in his gold watch to be examined and mended. It wouldn't "go" somehow. There was something wrong with it.

The old man saw his opportunity and used it. Opening the watch, and narrowly inspecting it, he said, "You're a little too fast, sir." There was more than the words, however, for the tone of voice said infinitely more. "You want to be cleaned, sir—thoroughly cleaned. In fact, sir, you need to be taken to pieces and thoroughly overhauled. How long have you been going so fast, sir?"

"I don't quite know," stammered young Spratt, who saw the meaning of the old man's words clearly enough, but did not wish to seem to see it.

"Yes, sir," continued the old watchmaker, "thoroughly cleaned, thoroughly overhauled, and properly regulated; we'll make a good job of you yet."

Young Spratt fled, leaving the watch in the old man's hands.

But while he fled, he also thought.

"What's the good of a watch that is too fast?" he said to himself. "And what's the good of a young fellow who goes too fast? No good to anybody. And I've been actually priding myself on being fast.

Why, the watch might as well pride itself on being too fast.

"'Cleaned, overhauled, regulated.' Ah, yes, precisely so; not rubbed up without, but 'cleaned, overhauled, and regulated' within. That's it. I'm wrong inside; no doubt about that.

"And who's to do it? The watchmaker is the only one who can clean a watch, and my Maker is the only One who can do this for me. Dear me! what a long time it is since I said my prayers or went to church. I must see to that, indeed I must."

A few days afterwards young Spratt called for his watch.

It was quite ready. But when the old watchmaker handed it to him, he said, "You're not too fast, sir, now, I hope?"

Young Spratt was not quite so shy now, for he answered, "I've 'slowed down' pretty much, and I intend to 'slow down' more still. I've been too fast, God knows; but, please God, I'll keep better time."

"Thank God!" said the old man; "but be sure you go to the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the only One who understands the 'workings' of your heart, and can 'clean, overhaul, and regulate it.' Cleansed with His precious blood, renewed by His Spirit, you'll 'go' even better than this cleaned watch."

Rev. Charles Courtenay.

GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

—We must not eat to be idle, but eat to labour: labour that we may eat, and eat that we may labour.

—God's refreshments must quicken us to God's employments.

—Men that will not follow the commands, shall want the comforts of Christ. If you will not follow the light of direction, you shall want the light of consolation.

—Add meditation to hearing, practice to preaching; when you have heard a sermon, then go live a sermon.

—If thou hast a praying heart, thou wilt find a praying place and a praying time.

—God often makes us fatherless in respect of creature reliefs, that we may be fatherless in respect of creature reliance.

—If Christ had not prayed for Peter, Satan had not only winnowed him like wheat, but blown him away like chaff.

—Unbosom your hearts to the Lord if things go not well; in praises and thanksgivings, if things succeed well.

—God's people have often been alone in respect of comfort, but never alone in respect of assistance.

—God would have His people judge of the lawfulness of their undertakings, not by works, but by His Word; not by providences, but by precepts; and this, that we may learn to live by faith, and not by sense.

—Those of God's soldiers who have been most fearful in garrison have been most valiant in the field; those who have suspected their hearts most, who have been

most humble, fearful, and jealous of themselves, have proved most resolute and valiant when God hath called them upon service.

—That you might not love the world, God suffers the world to hate you; that you might be crucified to the world, He suffers you to be crucified in the world.

—As there is a curse hid in the best things to wicked men, so there is a blessing hid in the worst things to God's people.

—How many can say, I had not been so rich in grace if I had not been so poor in gold. I had not been so sound in soul, if I had not been so infirm in body. If I had not lost so much of the creature, I had not got so much of Christ!

—When God puts us to a lesser trouble, it is for our greater good.

—A man's harbour may sometimes be more dangerous than the sea. Many have been lost in harbour who would have been safe at sea. A tempestuous sea is not so dangerous as an unsafe harbour.

—Christ is the Prince of Peace, but He is a conqueror first; where Christ doth not conquer and reign, there look for no peace with God, no peace with man.

From Bolton's "Tossed Ship."

THOU FOOL.



A MAN of intelligence, but of a very sceptical turn of mind, had had many conversations with his clergyman, and was always stumbling at the doctrine

of the resurrection as a vexation and plague to his reason. He stumbled at that stumbling-block, being disobedient. His clerical friend did not succeed in reducing his scepticism, which pro-

ceeded not so much from particular difficulties and incredibilities in the mystery before him, as from a proud, self-relying dependence, not upon God, but upon his own reason.

At length for a long time they were separated. The clergyman did not meet the sceptic for years. Meanwhile the grace of God came into his heart, and he was converted, and became as a little child. All his scepticism departed, and now he listened only to God.

The first time he met his former friend after this great change, the clergyman said to him, "Well, my dear sir, and what do you think new of the doctrine of the resurrection?"

"Oh, sir," said he, "two words from Paul conquered me—'Thou fool!' Do you see this Bible?" (taking up a beautiful copy of the Scriptures, fastened with a silver clasp) "and will you read the words upon the clasp that shuts it?"

The clergyman read, deeply engraven on the silver clasp: "Thou fool!"

"There," said his friend, "are the words that conquered me; it was no argument, no reasoning, no satisfying my objections, but God convincing me that I was a fool; and thenceforward I determined I would have my Bible clasped with those words, 'Thou fool!' and never again would come to the consideration of its sacred mysteries but through their medium. I will remember that I am a fool, and God only is wise."

How striking, how affecting was this! Ah! this is the way to come to God's Word. Let every man put this clasp upon his Bible, "Thou fool!" and let him enter it, to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him, just as a little child, remembering the saying of David: "The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

THE BIBLE.



FOUNTAIN ever springing,
Where the wearied may repair,
The heavy burden bringing
Of sin and of despair.

A hive of honeyed treasure,
Distilled from Eden's bowers;
Where heaven-born hope, with pleasure,
May feed in wintry hours.

Drink for the soul that's thirsting,
Comfort for those that fear,
Balm for the heart when bursting,
May all be gathered here.

What added boon is wanting,
Thy blessing, Lord, must give,
The gift of faith by granting,
To read, believe, and live.

Barton.

THE FARM SERVANT'S PRAYER.



FARM servant in Yorkshire had been persuaded to attend some religious services, in the course of which he was deeply convinced of sin, and led to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

It was a case of true conversion, and his altered life showed at once the power of his new-found faith.

In nothing was the change more evident than in the conscientious way in which he discharged all his duties to his master. He did more work than he had ever done before, and he did it more thoroughly. Nothing was neglected, and nothing was done in that careless, slipshod fashion in which, it is to be feared, too many servants do their work.

That is how it ought to be whenever a servant professes to be a Christian. It is what the Apostle Paul enjoined in his letter to the Ephesians; for, addressing servants—and those servants, it is to be remembered, were slaves—he exhorted them to render

to their masters a constant and respectful obedience. They were to do this, not only in their masters' sight, but in their absence, and with regard to matters about which they were not likely to know anything whatever; and they were to do it because God required it, and would be pleased with them for doing it. Here are the apostle's own words: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."

The master noticed the difference, and of course he was greatly pleased to be served so faithfully; but he had no idea at all of the reason of the change, and he wondered how it was. He had never given any serious thought to religion; and, besides, he was not nearly the steady man he ought to have been.

One evening a neighbouring farmer had gone to spend an hour or two with the lad's master. The neighbour was not a man whom it was at all desirable for the latter to have for a companion or friend, for he was addicted to drink, and he was otherwise unsatisfactory. The lad knew all this, and he could not help seeing that the man was exerting an evil influence over his master, and gradually leading him far astray. It troubled him greatly, but he did

not feel as though he could presume to say anything about it to his master.

As the two men sat together, each over his glass, the master said to his neighbour, "I don't know what's come over our Jem, but he attends to the cattle and takes care of them as nobody did that I ever had for a servant in all my life. I can't understand it a bit. And he spends such a lot of time with them; I many a time wonder what he finds to do. He's there now."

There was a little further talk on the subject, and then it was proposed that they should go to the cattle-shed and see what he was about.

Drawing near to the shed, they heard a voice, and at first they thought there was somebody with him. As quietly as they could they drew still nearer, and then they entered. They soon found that he was alone, for he was speaking without a break, and nobody replied to him. He was praying; and so absorbed was he in the exercise that he never heard their

approach. The cattle-shed was his "closet," to which he was in the habit of going that he might pray to his "Father in secret." He thought he could be more alone there than anywhere else.

Unaccustomed as these men were to prayer, they speedily learnt how he was occupied, and they were so far awed as to offer no interruption. Nor did they go away immediately: they stood and listened.

It was a simple-hearted, earnest prayer, the outpouring of his inmost soul. In his own broad expressive Yorkshire speech, he uttered his requests to God, evidently without the least suspicion that anybody was listening, but as plainly without the shadow of a doubt that God heard him.

First he prayed for himself, that he might be a good lad, and that God would help him to do his duty to the cattle and to his master. Then he prayed for his master, deploring that he was going so far wrong, and that his neighbour, whom he

named, and who, he said, was by far the worse of the two, had so much influence over him. Would the Lord deliver him? Then he prayed for the neighbour too, that God would convert him.

That prayer went home to the heart of one of the men. It was his master. There had been thus revealed to him the secret of the lad's new life, and the spring of his faithful service. It was his religion. Before very long he learnt to pray for himself, and, like his servant, he became a true Christian.



Whether or not any good influence was exerted on the mind of the neighbour, we have not heard. Let us hope, however, that the remembrance of the prayer which was offered for him on the night of which we have spoken may lead him to seek his own salvation, and to live a new and better life.

But let this be specially noted: It is not likely the lad's master would have been greatly moved by hearing his servant pray for him if the lad's conduct had not been in keeping with his prayers. So we say to all servants who have masters or mistresses whom they would like to see brought to the knowledge of Christ, whilst you pray for them daily and earnestly, which we hope you will not fail to do, take care that you render to them such faithful service, that they shall be in no doubt at all that your religion is sincere. Who can tell? They may thus be led, without your ever saying to them a single word about Christ, to seek for themselves His "great salvation."

WHICH IS THE LIKELIEST?

"GRANDPAPA," said my little grandson to me one day lately, "how long do you think I shall live? Shall I ever be as old as you?"

"I cannot tell you," I replied. "No one knows but God. You may die whilst you are only a little boy, or you may live to be an old man. People die, you know, at all ages. But you may live—and I hope you will—to be as old as I am, and a great deal older."

"Do you think, grandpapa," he asked, "that I might live a hundred years longer?"

"A hundred years!" I said. "That is a very long time. How old would you be if you were to live till then?"

"I am six now, grandpapa," he said; "that would make a hundred and six."

"I have heard of people," I replied, "who lived to be as old as that; but I do not think that either you or I shall live so long."

"But we shall be living somewhere, grandpapa," he asked, "shan't we?"

"Yes, George," I answered. "You know it is only the body that dies. Our spirits will still live. We shall be either with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, or else we shall be with fallen angels and bad people in that place where there is no hope."

"I know all that, grandpapa," he said, thoughtfully and slowly; "but which is the likeliest?" And he repeated the question, "Which is the likeliest?"

It was a child's question; but who does not know that children, in their imperfect way, often ponder questions of the most solemn moment? Of all questions we could ask, there is none which concerns every one of us more deeply than that, for it involves our everlasting destiny.

Has it ever struck you to ask, reader, "Where shall I be a hundred years hence?" The next hundred years will roll away, bearing with them changes in the fortunes of the world of which no man has the faintest idea; but this is certain—that you will not be here to witness them. Long before then you will be smitten with your last sickness, or else, worn out with age, the powers of life will die out, and that frame which is now so vigorous will be borne to "the house appointed for all living."

But you will be still living. Your spirit, which is the nobler part of your being, will never die. Whatever your character, good or bad, whether you are a servant of God or a servant of the devil, your spirit is immortal. This is not so much affirmed in Scripture as assumed—assumed in every promise of everlasting life, and assumed in every threat of everlasting death.

Where, then, will you be a hundred years hence?

We can tell you where you may be. When good men die—and by good men we mean true followers of

the Lord Jesus Christ—their spirits enter at once into the presence of the Saviour in heaven. They bid farewell for ever to sorrow and care; but unspeakably better even than that, delightful as it is, they are freed evermore from sin, which is the one great source of all misery; every holy affection is quickened, and they render to the Lord a perfect service, which knows no weariness, and which will never end. When the first Christian martyr, Stephen, was dying, it was his assured hope that he should be received at once into the presence of Jesus. So, too, the Apostle Paul believed that to die was "gain," and that, departing, he would go "to be with Christ," which was "far better." A hundred years hence, then, you may be before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, gladdened by His smile, the companion of angels and



of spirits ransomed, like yourself, from everlasting death, your present dim and imperfect views of Divine truth exchanged for a perfect knowledge, and you may be uniting with the countless multitudes of the saved in celebrating the praises of redeeming love.

That is where you may be. But then you may not be there; for all who die do not go to be "with Christ." If not "with Christ," then where?

There is one of our Lord's parables, the most solemn and impressive of all the parables, which may help us to find an answer to this question—it is that of the rich man and Lazarus. It describes the rich man, whilst his brothers were still living on earth, as in hell, lifting up his eyes, being in torments. If the parable teaches anything, it surely teaches this: that just as the saved enter at once into perfect

blessedness, so the impenitent and unforgiven sinner passes at once to "his own place of retribution and woe."

Now which of these, think you, is the more likely?

"The precious blood" which the Lord Jesus shed on the cross cleanses the soul from all its guilt; and as soon as the contrite sinner believes in Christ, he is freely and entirely forgiven. But more is needed than forgiveness. They must all be holy who are admitted to heaven; but the Lord Jesus sends His Holy Spirit into the heart which believes in His great sacrifice, that He may renew its desires and affections, deliver it from the love of sin, and make all things new. The man who is thus forgiven and renewed becomes, in consequence of his forgiveness and renewal, a child of God; and to all who thus become His sons the Lord promises the everlasting inheritance of heaven.

"Thank God," some reader says, "it is long since I trusted in Jesus, and I trust Him now. I am a poor frail creature still, and the Lord has a great work to do in my soul before I am altogether like Himself; but I do feel that the Holy Spirit has renewed my heart, and I can cry, 'Abba, Father!'"

Can you indeed say that? Then you have good reason to hope that a hundred years hence, and for ever, you will be "with Christ."

Do you feel that you cannot say that? We shudder to think of you as lost; but if you live and die without Christ there is no alternative. And yet we are most willing to hope that it is the "likeliest" you will still be numbered with the saved. You have heard much of Jesus; many prayers have been offered for you; and you have often been melted as you have heard of His love. Come, end all doubt and indecision; believe and live.

CAREY'S FIRST BAPTISM.

WILLIAM CAREY thus describes the baptism: "29th December, 1800—yesterday was a day of great joy. I had the happiness to desecrate the Ganges by baptising the first Hindoo, viz., Krishna. The river runs just before our gate, in front of the house, and I think is as wide as the Thames at Gravesend. We intended to have baptised at nine in the morning, but, on account of the tide, were obliged to defer it till nearly one o'clock, and it was administered just after the English preaching.

"The Governor and a good number of Europeans were present. Brother Ward preached a sermon in English from John v. 39, 'Search the Scriptures.' We then went to the waterside, when I addressed the people in Bengali, after having sung a Bengali translation of 'Jesus, and shall it ever be,' and engaging in prayer.

"After the address I administered the ordinance to Krishna. At half-past four I administered the Lord's Supper, and a time of real refreshing it was.

"Thus, you see, God is making way for us and giving success to the word of His grace. We have toiled long and met with many discouragements, but at last the Lord has appeared for us."

Jeymoon, Krishna's wife's sister, was the first Bengali woman to be baptised, and Rasoo, his wife, soon followed. Gokool was kept back for a time by his wife, Komal, who fled to her father's, but Krishna and his family brought in first the husband, then the wife, whose simplicity and frankness attracted the missionaries.

Unna, their widowed friend of forty, was also gathered in, the first of that sad host of victims to Brahmanical cruelty, lust, and avarice to whom Christianity has ever since offered the only deliverance. Of 124,000,000 of women in India in 1881 no fewer than 21,000,000 were returned by the census as widows, of whom 669,000 were under nineteen years, 286,000 were under fifteen, and 79,000 were under nine, all figures undoubtedly within the appalling truth. Jeymoon and Unna at once became active missionaries among their countrywomen, not only in Serampore, but in Chandernagore and the surrounding country.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

FROM the commencement of the Bechwana Mission in 1816, for a period of more than ten years, not a ray of light shot across the gloom to cheer the hearts of the missionaries. A dull and stolid indifference reigned; the Batlaping would talk of any ordinary subject, and were willing to avail themselves of the presence of the white people in their country for any temporal advantage that might be within their reach; but the moment a word was said about Divine things their ears seemed to become deaf at once, and they would walk away determined to have nothing to do with that foolishness.

The darkness was long and gloomy beyond comparison, but there was no wavering of faith. There were times, indeed, when the brethren Hamilton and Moffat were cast down and disposed to cry with the prophet, "Who hath believed our report?" and to ask, "Is this the right path?" but there was one member of the mission who never faltered. She would but fall back on the promises of the unchangeable God, and say, "We may not live to see it, but the awakening will come as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow."

On one occasion she received a letter from her friend, Mrs. Greaves, of Sheffield, asking if there was anything of use which could be sent. The answer of Mary Moffat was, "Send us a Communion service; we shall want it some day."

At that time there was no glimmer of the dawn, and in the course of the two or three years which it took with their slow communications to get that request of faith fulfilled, an even thicker darkness overspread the sky, and the sorest cross of all was a rumour which came that doubts were beginning to be felt at home about the use of going on with the Bechwana Mission; but they held on.

In the year 1827 there began to be a sort of change, almost like that change in the sky even before the dawn, which is familiar to watchers in the night. In 1829 a marvellous awakening began.

It came, as such things do, without any visible exciting cause. There was a wave of tumultuous and simultaneous enthusiasm.

In a few months the whole aspect of the station had changed. The meeting-house was crowded before the service had begun. Heathen songs and dancing ceased, and everywhere were to be heard instead the songs of Zion, and the outpouring of impassioned prayers. The missionaries were beset even in their own houses by those who were seeking fuller instruction. The moral condition of the community rapidly improved.

The two brethren who witnessed this change were sober-minded hard-headed Scotchmen, by disposition not willing to lend themselves to any movement which might seem to have the taint of mere sensationalism. It was only after careful examination that from the many who pressed forward they selected some six to receive the rite of baptism.

Few can enter into the feelings which must have animated the hearts of the missionary band when they first sat down with that little company at the table of the Lord. On the day preceding this memorable occasion in the history of the Bechwana Mission, a box arrived which had been long on the road from England. It contained the Communion vessels for which Mary Moffat had asked nearly three years before.

From the Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat.

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.



ARE you in trouble, or have you ever been in trouble? Then you know the blessing of sympathy. Even when our friends can do nothing to help us, it is still a great comfort to us to have their sympathy.

There is in the world a great deal of sympathy, much more than we sometimes think.

When Mungo Park, the African traveller, was in the wilds of Africa, he came to a village where he was kindly welcomed for the night in a native hut. Early in the morning, he was aroused by the noise of women grinding corn, and by the sound of their voices as they sang at their work. As he listened, he found they were singing about himself, and what they sung was something like this: "Poor man! he has no wife to grind his corn, no one to cover him as he lies down to sleep, nobody to tend him when he is sick." And it was very cheering to him to think that there were such kind hearts, even in savage Africa.

How much more deeply thankful should we be that we live in a land where men's hearts are softened by the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and where their sympathy is so much kinder than in places where the Gospel is unknown.

But no mere human sympathy is perfect. People are often so much occupied with their own troubles and cares that they can scarcely find time to think of ours; and, besides, they may know nothing at all about the things which try us most, and nothing, or very little, about what we feel.

There is, however, a sympathy which is wholly perfect—that of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Lord of angels, the Maker and Lord of the whole universe, the Son of God. Though He sits on the throne of heaven, He looks down on poor, frail, erring, suffering men with the kindest sympathy.

Nearly nineteen hundred years ago He came down from heaven in order that He might take on Him our human nature. "God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Christ took our human nature that He might know, by His own personal experience, our feelings, our temptations, our wants, our griefs; and now, though He is so highly exalted, He has forgotten nothing of all He thus learnt about us.

You have read about Him in the Gospels, how kind He was to everybody, but especially to the needy and the suffering. Never was any man so strong in spirit, and never was woman more tender. He had compassion on the multitude, and He wrought a great miracle in order that He might feed them. When the sick and palsied were taken to Him, He healed them every one. How kindly He spoke to the woman who washed His feet with her tears! He wept at the grave of Lazarus; and how lovingly He comforted his sisters in their sorrow! These are only a few instances of His most tender sympathy. Take your New Testament again and read it, and you will find a great many more. And He is just as kind and pitiful to-day as He was in the days of His earthly life.

This sympathy of Christ is shown to all kinds of people, not only to the great, but even to the very lowliest—to the lonely widow as she sits in her poor cottage; to the aged, the sick, the bereaved; to the shepherd on the moor; to the shipwrecked sailor; to the emigrant in a strange land; to the prisoner in his cell; to those who are just about to die. He sees and knows them every one, and He knows all about them—all their circumstances, all their cares, all their tears, their inmost hearts. He can do this because He is not only human but Divine—the Son of God as well as the Son of Man.

He thus sympathises with us always. There is nothing fitful about this sympathy—as there is so often about that of our fellow-men. Even though we may grieve Him by our unbelief, and waywardness, and sin, He does not cease to care for us, and to pity us.

Nor is the sympathy of Christ in any case a barren sympathy. There are people who say they sympathise, but who never help; and there are sometimes those who sympathise with us very kindly, and who would help us if they could, but who are altogether unable. But He has all power in heaven and on earth; the holy angels are all His servants, and He sends them on errands of love to men; and He is always ready to give to us His own Holy Spirit.

Go to Him, then. Tell Him all your need and all your grief. He cares for you; He hears you; He will not fail to help you. "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." S. G.

HOW OLD ARE YOU ?

"How old are you?" said a woman to an aged man, who was standing by a shop door leaning upon two sticks. As I was going by at the time, I lingered a little to hear the old man's reply. "I shall be fourscore," said he, "if I live till next Easter."

There seemed to be nothing remarkable in the question, "How old are you?" and yet I could not help thinking of it as I walked on. Many a word dropped by the wayside has been picked up and pondered on with advantage in an after hour: let me then, reader, ask you, "How old are you?"

Are you ten? Because if you are, you have ten thousand sins to repent of, and ten thousand mercies to be grateful for. What a thought! Did you ever think of it before? If not, it is worth your while to think of it now, and very seriously too, bearing in mind that youth is the time to serve the Lord; that a good beginning bids fair to be followed by a good ending; that "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," and that "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."

Are you twenty or thirty? If so, you have still more sins to forsake, and more mercies thankfully to acknowledge. You are in the meridian of your day, the prime of your life. If you have allowed your youth to pass unimproved, run no further risk, try to make amends for the past. Up and be doing; call upon the name of the Lord. Though you forget a thousand things, never forget that "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Are you forty or fifty? If this be the case, there is no time to lose. You must look about you, lest the shadows of night overtake you. What have you done for the glory of God? What are you doing? What do you intend to do? More than half your life is gone by, even though your days should be long in the land. If you have not yet made up your mind to forsake sin, and to cling to the cross of the Redeemer, think of the following passage: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Are you sixty or seventy? Do you answer, Yes? Then I hope that while your feet are on the earth, your eyes and your heart are fixed upon heaven. Is it necessary to remind you that your days are drawing to a close, that your life is as a spider's web? "The days of our years are threescore years and ten: and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Death is at the very door. Flee from the wrath to come, and ponder on the passage, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

But if to the question, "How old are you?" you can give the same reply as the old man did, "I shall be fourscore if I live till next Easter," you are quite beside yourself if you are not daily looking forward to eternity. Not only with your mouth, but with your heart you should say, "There is but a step between me and death." If you have not long ago fled for refuge to the cross, and obtained mercy from the Saviour of sinners, go now, even at the eleventh hour; think of the innumerable, the heaped-up transgressions of your youth, your manhood, and old age! Lose not a day, an hour, a moment, in applying to Him who "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."



GOLDEN TEXTS.

A Day of Reckoning.—Men may cheer themselves in the morning, and they may pass on tolerably well, perhaps, without God at noon; but the cool of the

day is coming, when God will come down to talk with them.

Get Understanding.—There is no knowledge to be compared with the knowledge of God; no knowledge of God comparable to the knowledge of God as reconciled in Christ; no knowledge of Christ to be compared with the knowledge of His love; nor any knowledge of His love to be compared with that knowledge of it which subdues our hearts to His obedience, transforms our souls into His likeness, and raises up the soul to aspire after His enjoyment. Thus it is that "we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

AND SO IT CAME TO PASS, AND OTHER SKETCHES.



Saved by the breeches-buoy.

“AND so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land.” That word “so” is our text. If you turn to your Bibles (Acts xxvii. 44) you will there see what the “so” means. In fact, the verse tells us: “Some on boards, some on broken pieces of the ship, and so”—clinging hold of spars, hanging on to boards, gripping bits of the vessel, so they came all safe to land.

Some few years since, I was on the east coast, and I had an opportunity of seeing the life-saving appara-

tus in full swing; not that there was an actual wreck, but my good friend, Captain Clarke, said, “We will have a sort of review; it will be good practice for the men, and it may interest you.” So I am going to use the life-saving apparatus of the Board of Trade as illustrating this word “so.”

Now the very first thing necessary is that the alarm should be given. The coastguardman is walking along his solitary beat, listening and looking. I think I can see him as he stands and listens; he is

persuaded that there is a ship approaching the shore, but the blackness is so great he can scarcely make out whether he is mistaken or not; suddenly it is beyond all doubt, for with a crash she is on. I can imagine how he comes up to the door of the house where the captain of the division lives, and gives a thundering knock at the door. "What's the matter, Tom?" cries a voice. "Ship ashore, sir," replies the man. How quickly that is telegraphed along, and the whole town is awake in three or four minutes, with groups of women, who turn out even at the dead of night, half clad, no matter how cold the weather. "Ship ashore" rouses everybody.

All around about our sanctuaries, and up and down our streets, there are human ships ashore. All about us there are ships ashore. What I want to ask my heart and yours is this, "Does the cry awaken the same enthusiasm in God's Church that it does in such a town as Aldeburgh in Suffolk, where I saw what I am trying to describe? Does the Church of God realise that it is its duty to buckle to and say with the Apostle Paul, "By all means save some!"

Well, now what is the next thing to do after the alarm is given? Why, the great cart, kept for this very purpose, is dragged out down to the shore. I think I am correct in saying that there is everything inside that cart that can possibly be needed. They don't wait until they hear there is a ship ashore to go and stock it. It is always kept ready; not only are the ropes, and the rockets, and the pulleys there, but I believe flasks of restoratives are also prepared for the half-drowned, so that when they have the cart on the scene they have everything.

I stood close by the door of the building when the cry was raised, and in a moment what a rush there was for it. Long ropes were attached to that cart, and along the ropes were several loops; and how quickly we put our heads through these loops—everybody seemed to want to have a hand in the business. Off we dashed, and ran over the sand hillocks just as though we had been on a macadamised road. We ran it down to the beach, and then out came all the contents; and there was every necessary appliance perfectly ready.

And now all the things were handed out; and then came the firing of the rocket. We all step back; there is a smouldering for a few moments, and then—sh—sh—out rushes the fire, and as the rocket flew I could hear the rattle, rattle, rattle of the line it carried out of the box. I could not help shouting, "Well done!" as I saw the line drop over the very place where it ought to go. Now I ask you, of what value was that rocket of itself? None whatever, save only as it carried the rope. That rocket was not fired off in order to please little boys, or celebrate a Fifth of November: it was not intended to be a pyrotechnical display at all. Do you think that when there is a ship going to pieces out there, and men and women are crying for help, do you think the coastguardsmen fire off rockets in order to see a multitude of momentary stars in the sky? No, it is the rope the rocket carries, that is all; and when it has carried the rope, who thinks of the rocket? It

was all burnt out, and the stick was charred. I saw it afterwards. It had been lying there on the beach all night; no one had thought of the rocket; why should they? It had carried the line, it had done its work, and it had burnt itself out; and I am not ashamed to say that for a moment my eyes got rather dim, and I prayed: "Lord, make me something after this sort; teach me how to carry a line unto the perishing; and if by some means or another I am able to carry the line from the shore over the wreck, what does it matter if the old rocket is burnt out and forgotten?"

The first thing, then, you see, is that communication must be established. You know what comes next. This thin but strong line is gripped now by the men on board of that stranded vessel, and they begin to haul it in; and as they do that, they pull out to themselves what the sailors call the endless line, and what is called the "breeches-buoy."

When that breeches-buoy or cradle is run out over that taut cable, the men on that vessel have to do something: they have to get in it. I dare say there is someone sitting in this chapel to-night who has known what it is to be in that breeches-buoy, with the sea rolling and roaring underneath, and he just swinging in that cradle, and trusting to a salvation outside himself. Well, now what would be the good of those men on the vessel saying, "That is a very nice-looking breeches-buoy indeed, and we quite believe that cable is strong enough to bear us, if we were to get into it; and we believe that those people on the shore are quite willing and strong enough to pull us to land, if we did get into it?"

No good at all. They have to believe not only about it, but in it. You see they have no footing of their own, they have no ground to put their feet on; underneath there is nothing but the deep; and those men might say, concerning that rope, "I do trust thee, trust thee with myself." Nothing less than belief in it will do.

Do you know I would give anything if some of you were to see the difference between believing about and believing on. You may believe about Christ, but that won't save you, you have to believe on Him. Let me give you a very simple illustration. There is a man in the sea, and a life-belt is thrown out to him. He says, "I believe that is a splendid belt; I believe it is real cork there, and no shoddy work in that, and I believe that if I were to just duck and put my head through it and my arms over it, it would be able to support me; I believe all about that life-belt." Yes, and as he believes all about it he goes down with a gurgle. But here, there is another who puts his arms through it, and says, rejoicing, "I believe on it, I believe on it." It is believing on that saves. Why, you find that term some three dozen times in John's Gospel. It is "believe on" the Son of God.

Before I came here to-day I had a strange example of stupid unbelief. Would you believe it, I have had a cheque for £90 lying at my house all day, and I can't get a man to come and take it away! I wrote a letter this morning, and I said, "Dear Sir,—Will you please come round to my house before twelve

o'clock? I want to see you on very singular, very important, and what I can assure you will be most pleasing business to you."

Well, I sent one of my agents round with it, and the man looked at the letter, and said, "I don't know, I think it's a hoax, I shan't go round. He says it will be very pleasant business; how am I to know it will be very pleasant business? I don't believe it."

So he said to my agent, "I don't believe it."

But my agent replied, "Oh, I can assure you Mr. Brown would not write a letter like that if he had not meant what he says."

"No, I won't believe it," he said; and all the day there has been £90 waiting for that man, and he won't come through unbelief. There is a man within fifteen minutes' walk of this chapel for whom £90 is waiting, and he cannot have it because he won't come and fetch it. Ah, you smile, but there is salvation, how near to us? Within fifteen minutes? Ay, at your very side; Paul says it is as near as if it were in thy very mouth. Why don't you take it, man? Why don't you receive it? Cannot you see there is God's cradle of salvation run right out to the very side of thy stranded ship? Step into it and trust it.

And then, in conclusion, there was the landing. How we all pulled at those ropes. It was not simply calling them in, but hauling them in. Is not that what God's Church ought to be doing always? Pleading at the prayer-meetings, and laying hold of men and constraining them with holy violence. Oh, for consecrated men and women, who will run and say, "Give me your hand, let me give you the last lift."

We greatly want some Barnabas to introduce souls into our churches. I remember hearing of a young Norwegian who was thus brought off. He was drenched to the skin, and the ice was on his beard, but the next moment after he was ashore he had his jacket off and was pulling like a giant to get somebody else in. That is what it should be—first saving yourself, and then seeking to save others.

Dear friend, are you safe? Can you say, "By the grace of God I am saved"? May you be able to say it now! I know He has saved me, and I know He is willing to save you; and all He asks at your hand is this, "Will you trust Me? will you trust Me?" Behold Christ as thy Saviour; just rest on Him, even as the man despairing of salvation by stopping on the wreck steps into the cradle and says, "I am going to let this save me." So by one single step of faith go to Christ; rest on Him, and thou shalt be saved. And so it shall come to pass that we all shall escape safe to land. May God save every one of you for His name's sake!

Rev. Archibald G. Brown.



ARE YOU SAD?

Do dark forebodings fill your mind? Is all around you mantled as with a gloomy pall? Does no opening appear through the dense covering which seems to have overspread the heaven of your soul? Are you ready to despair? What is the grand secret of all this? Either you have never known God, or you have forgotten Him. "God is love"—love to the most guilty and self-destroyed, as well as to the holy and happy. He is love to you. His whole heart of compassion gathers in Divine interest around you. Your soul is more precious to Him than ever was Absalom to David—than ever was man to man.

"No tender parent's melting breast
Longs like your God's to make you blest."

Either you have never known this, or you have forgotten it for the time. You have overlooked the fact that He who was willing to endure the bloody sweat of Gethsemane, and to bear the curse of the cross, is still the same, and as willing to aid and bless you now as He was willing to die for you then. Lay your cross upon Him. Look up to Him as He is—your infinitely kind, your best Friend. Remember what He feels, and what He has done for you, and your darkness will be turned into day.

THOUGHTS TO THINK ABOUT.

—To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power.
Donald Grant.

—Slippery places may fling up the heels of great giants, and little temptations may overthrow well-grown Christians.
Lec.

—Do not wait till you be holy ere you cast your confidence on the Saviour; but cast your confidence on Him now, and you shall be made holy.
Dr. Chalmers.

Now do I gather strength and hope anew,
For well I know Thy patient love perceives
Not what I did, but what I strove to do;
And though the full ripe ears are sadly few,
Thou wilt accept my sheaves.

—In speaking of the Spirit, Christ uses the simile of the wind. You know the wind always blows towards a vacuum. If we can make a vacuum in our hearts the Holy Spirit will fill them.
A. J. Gordon.

Daily living seemeth weary
To the one who never works;
Duty always seemeth dreary
To the one who duty shirks.

Only after hardest striving
Cometh sweet and perfect rest;
Life is found to be worth living
To the one who does his best.

C. N. Sheldon.



DOUBTING CASTLE.

Now there was, not far from the place where they lay, a castle, called Doubting Castle, the owner whereof was Giant Despair, and it was in his grounds they were now sleeping. Wherefore he, getting up in the morning early, and walking up and down in his grounds, caught Christian and Hopeful asleep in his fields. Then with a grim and surly voice he bid them awake, and asked them whence they were, and what they did in his grounds. They told him they were pilgrims, and that they had lost their way. Then said the giant, 'You have this night trespassed on me by trampling in, and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must go along with me.' So they were forced to go, because he was stronger than they. They also had but little to say, for they knew themselves in fault. The giant, therefore, drove them before him, and put them into his castle, into a very dark dungeon, nasty and stinking to the spirits of these men. Here, then, they lay from Wednesday morning to Saturday night, without one bit of bread or drop of drink, or light, or any to ask how they did. They were, therefore, here in evil case, and were far from friends and acquaintances. Now in this place Christian had double sorrow, because it was through his unadvised haste that they were brought into this distress.

"Well, on Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day.

"Now a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half amazed, brake out into this passionate speech: 'What a fool, quoth he, am I, to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.' Then said Hopeful, 'That's good news: good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom and try.'

"Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon-door, whose bolt as he turned the key gave back, and the door flew open

with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out."

It is not necessary that every Christian pilgrim should pass some time in Doubting Castle. Doubts and fears are not a necessary, though they are a very common, part of Christian experience. We find some of the Old Testament saints, such as the writers of the Psalms and the Book of Lamentations, complaining of the thick darkness which came between their souls and God, when He hid from them the light of His countenance. We find them speaking of being brought into great trouble and heaviness; of their souls being shut up in prison; of the waters having closed over their heads; of their sinking in "deep mire where

there is no standing;" of their heart being "sore pained" within them, and "the terrors of death" having fallen upon them.

But, though such experiences are common, we have no Scripture authority for saying that they are necessary. On the contrary, God's Word declares that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" and again, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

When, therefore, Christians lose their peace of mind and assurance, the fault is theirs, not God's. The way is still open; the promises are still sure. God hath not "forgotten to be gracious." He "ableth faithful." Probably it is the wilful indulgence of some favourite sin, some spiritual sloth in prayer or watching, or the neglect of the means of grace, that has caused this season of doubt. These things bring a cloud between God and the soul, and cause His face to be hidden, so that the Christian cannot find Him, or realise His presence, and so goes mourning all the day.

"Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when He led thee by the way?"

Reader, are you, from whatever cause, in anxious doubt and fear about your own salvation? Take all your anxiety to God in prayer; spread it before His throne of grace. So long as you keep silence and refrain from prayer, you cannot expect relief. But there lie scattered over the pages of Holy Scripture promises, which, as stars in the midnight sky, are purposely put there by God to give light to the Christian pilgrim in seasons of spiritual darkness. Turn, then, these promises into prayers, and if you are earnestly seeking through Christ the salvation of your soul, He who has borne your sins and carried your sorrows will say to you by His Holy Spirit, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

ALL FOR LOVE.

Foor fellow! I suppose it was partly his bringing up, and partly the trouble that came afterwards, but it was terrible to see a man so hard and shut-up like as Sam Parsons was, for I believe he neither had a bit of love in his own heart, nor believed in it in any one else—he seemed cold as ice.

He had served his time to a carpenter, and was getting on well in his trade, when he fell in love with a pretty young girl, who soon promised to marry him; and every one said he was a lucky man to get her, and so he thought himself. Three days before the wedding he was obliged to go to town on business, and when he came back the next morning the girl was gone! A few hours after he left she had been married at the registrar's to another young man, better off than Sam; they had left for Liverpool by the next train, and were to sail for America that same evening. That was the news that Sam learned from a letter he found at his lodgings, signed by Mrs. Nith—her new name.

The letter seemed to turn Sam into a stone. He didn't abuse her; he didn't rush off to Liverpool after her. He just went to the registrar and asked to see the names. He made no remark. The next day he left his work, came to Melton, and took a room in the house with my wife and me, never thinking, I suppose, that as it was so far from where it happened, the news of his trouble would ever reach. But it did, and sorely it fretted my wife, who is, though I say it who shouldn't, the kindest and most loving-hearted little woman on the face of the earth.

She daren't say a word of pity to him, though her heart was full of it, for he looked as if he wouldn't think twice of knocking down any one who attempted it, and he wouldn't so much as give her a civil "Good-morning," when he met her on the stairs. I had given up trying to make friends with him, and I advised her to do the same now; but she wouldn't hear of it.

"His heart can't be harder than stone," she said; "so he's not beyond the power of that Holy Spirit who has promised 'to take away the heart of stone, and to give us a heart of flesh.'"

By slow degrees Sam became, if not kinder in his manner, at least less gruff; he seemed to shun Mary less, too, when he found she didn't intrude her pity on him, for that she had heard of his troubles he knew well. So one day, when she met him on the stairs, she

plucked up courage to try whether asking a favour of him would have a better effect than offering him one.

"I beg your pardon," she said; "but if it wouldn't be making too bold, I thought I'd ask if you could kindly spare time to do me a favour?"

Whether it was that he was taken by surprise or not, I can't say, but certain it is that he stopped short and said, "That I will, and with pleasure. What can I do for you?"



Mary told him that I had gathered a good many books, one way or another, and that not having anything of a bookcase, they had to be kept in a box, and that she thought she'd like to have two or three shelves for me for a present for my birthday, which would be next week; that she had got the wood, and that she thought, perhaps, he'd be so kind as to put them up for her when the day came.

"That I will," said Sam; "but maybe it would be better for me to see the wood, and where you'd like the shelves, that I may have everything ready, for I

suppose it's to be a secret till the time comes?"

He seemed quite interested about the shelves, and said he would like to take them with him to finish them up a little better. So he took them, and the next day he was down again to ask if he might nail on a bit of scarlet cloth he had got for next to nothing—it would make them look so much smarter. The next day he brought them for her to look at, and stayed for quite a talk; then she told him that he must come and spend my birthday evening with us, or that I should be dreadfully disappointed, and that she would not have half the pleasure in giving the shelves. He said he'd come, and that he couldn't make out why she had been so kind to him ever since he came to the house, and he so rude and uncivil to her.

"Ah!" said she, "I wish you knew what the kindness of God is, and then you wouldn't think so much of mine; He loves you with a love that there's no coming to the end of."

"Loves me!" said Sam. "Why should He? He's no call to love me; I've never done anything for Him; so why should He love me?"

"But He does love you," answered Mary; "loves you so much that, rather than see you perish everlastingly, He sent His only Son to die in your stead, and to bear the punishment your sins deserved that you might go free."

"But why did He do it?" asked Sam. "I can't see why He cares whether I'm lost or saved."

"I'll tell you," said Mary. "I was down at the doctor's this morning to get some medicine, and as I was waiting in the hall his little daughter came down—the sweetest, prettiest little child of four years you ever met in your life. She spoke quite friendly to me, for I had often been there about needlework, and said she, 'I was at the bazaar yesterday.'

"And did you get anything pretty, miss?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," she said, "I got a lovely doll; but I didn't pay even one penny for it, for the Misses Gardes gave it to me, all for love!"

"And away she ran. Now, I think it's just so with God's gift of His Son. We can't buy it, and we don't deserve it. He gives us that, and everything else, without money and without price, all for love, as it says in the Bible, 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. By grace' (that is, by free, undeserved mercy) 'ye are saved.' You see, if we have only a little bit of anything—of bread, for instance—we'd keep it for those belonging to us; but if we have plenty, why, we make the beggar in the street welcome to a bit of it. So, too, if we have only a little love, we're likely to keep it for our families, whereas if we have big hearts and great love, we have some to spare for our neighbours."

"You have a good share of it, then," said Sam. "I believe you have a bit to spare even for me."

"That I have," answered Mary, "and if I have a big heart and plenty of love, oh, think what the great God must have! Why, He has been loving people and having mercy on them ever since the world was made, and He is rich in mercy and great in love still. And more than that, it's a downright joy to Him to pardon a poor sinner. Listen to what it says in the Bible: 'Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy.' I declare some people talk as if when they had begged, and prayed, and entreated God to forgive them, and had done their best to please Him, that then perhaps He'd have mercy on them when they were dying."

"That's what I always thought," said Sam; "isn't it the truth?"

"No, nor a bit like the truth," answered Mary. "God doesn't forgive us grudgingly; and we can neither deserve His mercy nor pay for it; but as I said before, 'He gives it freely and willingly, all for love.'"

"But haven't we got to love Him first, at all events?"

"No, indeed," said Mary; "it just goes the other way: 'We love Him because He first loved us.' Till we believe that He loves us, we couldn't love Him, if we tried ever so hard. But the very moment we believe in our hearts that He has forgiven our sins, and that they are washed away in the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and that, not because we deserve it, but all for love—all for that 'great love

wherewith He loved us'—then we haven't to try and love Him, for we can't help doing it; 'we love Him because He first loved us,' and 'our real trouble is that we don't love Him more.'"

"Then you think He's willing to love me, hardened sinner that I am?"

"Why, He's not only willing to love you, He does love you—loves you now as you are sitting on that chair. Only come to Him, and see the welcome that He'll give you, and now He won't think the best He has too good for you. Just take this Testament," she added, handing him one of her own, "and read in the 15th of Luke how He seeks and saves poor lost sinners."

"And all for love?"

"Yes," said Mary, "all for love, as you'll find for yourself, I'm sure."

And he did find it, but not that day, nor the next, nor even when he spent my birthday evening with us, and we three were so happy together; no, the full belief that God loved him came slowly to Sam; but when he believed it, oh! he did love God, and he never seemed weary of telling others how God had had mercy on him, and had washed away all his sins in His Saviour's precious blood—not because he deserved it, but "all for love."

IN YOUR SINS.



SAYS Christ, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." No matter how unsullied your virtue, how incorruptible your honesty, how lovely your deportment, how extensive your benevolence, how kind your disposition or delicate your susceptibilities; no matter how refined and elevated may be your conceptions of the beautiful in nature, art, or morals; no matter what exalted opinions your fellow-men may form in relation to you—if you have no vital connection with Christ by faith, you will die in your sins.

Your sins must be forgiven before you can enter heaven. They can be cancelled only by belief in Christ, the appointed way; and if not cancelled, you will die with all their terrible guilt attached to them; sins surcharged with the fearful punishment which they deserve.

Are you running the fearful risk of dying in your sins? You would not risk all your property upon the throw of a die; yet you risk eternal misery upon the chance of your dying as you are. In your sins, is to be out of heaven, the sinless abode of the pure; in your sins, is to be in hell, where sin is supreme; in your sins when you die, is to have your destiny fixed for ever. I conjure you, get out of your sins, lest you die in them. Deeply repent of them, and have your heart cleansed of them by the blood of Him who taketh away the sins of the world; so shall you, when you die, die "in the Lord."



FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

WHAT is faith? Faith is like the eye that looks to Christ, or the hand that touches the skirts of His garments, or the foot that walketh after Him, or the voice that crieth unto Him: "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, O Lord, and I shall be saved."

But, observe, there is no virtue in faith itself. The virtue is in Christ, and in Christ's work. Not in the eye that looks: the eye that looks may be covered with scales, and dimmed with weeping; it is Christ's eye-salve that clears it. Not in the hand that touches: the hand that touches may be polluted with leprosy, or stiffened with palsy, or withered with infirmity; it is Christ's skill that heals it. Not in the foot that walketh after Him: the foot may be staggering amid the heaving billows, and sinking into the yawning gulf, while the voice of the perishing man is crying out in its agony: "Lord, save me, or I perish!"

But faith itself has no power to save him. It only joins his hand to the hand of Christ; and it is Christ's hand, in its almightiness, that lifts him from the horrible pit, and sets his feet upon the rock, and, putting the new song into his mouth, enables him to exclaim: "O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song!; He also is become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall I draw water out of the wells of salvation."

And what is penitence? Penitence is the tear that drops from the eye of faith, when that eye is fixed upon the cross of Christ. Of course, where faith is wanting, there can be nothing like the godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of. A man may contemplate his iniquities from any other point but Calvary, and spread them out before him, with all their aggravations, and with all their eternal consequences; and even view them in the awful colours which are reflected from the flames of hell; but, after all, his heart may remain unmoved—unchanged. But let him look directly to the cross, and form a clear conception of the perfection of the Saviour's finished work, and believe, because God has said it, that Christ is able to save to the very uttermost, and apprehend the full import of these marvellous words: "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins"—let that lesson be taught to him by the Spirit who teacheth savingly and to profit, and the heart that is within him, though previously harder than the adamant, will straightway be dissolved—every feeling and every fibre will be touched with the spell of a melting sensibility—the

head will become like waters, and the eyelids will be turned into a fountain of tears.

But is this the view of repentance which the sinner is naturally disposed to entertain, or which he is most ready to exemplify? No such thing. He reverses the order of the Divine arrangement. God puts faith first, and repentance follows as the necessary result. But the sinner, left to himself, is inclined to put repentance first, and to make faith dependent upon it. In other words, he cannot bring himself to the conviction that he is warranted to look to the cross at once, and to believe that the blood of Christ is sufficient of itself to cleanse him from all his sins.

God's method is very different. First of all He pours out His Spirit—the Spirit of grace—the Spirit of supplications. And what follows? The man looks upon Him whom he has pierced! That is faith, and it is faith looking in the right direction—faith riveted upon the cross of Christ. And then, when the man looks upon Him whom he hath pierced, he mourns and is in bitterness, even as one mourneth for an only child. And that is repentance—the repentance that breaks the heart of stone—the repentance that worketh unto salvation not to be repented of.

Hence repentance has been described as a saving grace; that is to say, it is not a thing inherent in ourselves, or which we ourselves can originate. It is a gift—a free gift—a gift of Divine love. It is God Himself that gives it. It comes from Him just as truly as faith does. For thus it is written in regard to Christ: "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

To give repentance. Not merely the forgiveness of sins, which we readily admit to be the gift of God, but repentance also, or the godly sorrow which, within our own hearts, worketh unto salvation not to be repented of. The latter, no less than the former, is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ—the penitence as well as the pardon—the godly sorrow as well as the remission of sin. To Divine grace, and to Divine grace alone, the believing and the repenting sinner is indebted for them both.

The more thoroughly he is taught that in himself there dwelleth no good thing, and that, consequently, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, the more heartily will he now magnify the riches of the Saviour's grace, and the better fitted will he be hereafter for joining with the countless throng who are casting their crowns at the Saviour's feet, and ascribing, not unto themselves, but unto Him who hath loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood, all the wisdom, and the glory, and the honour, and the thanksgiving, and the power, and the victory, for ever and ever.



THE LIGHTHOUSE LAMP.

HERE by the broad and solemn sea
 My father lives alone with me,
 And towering high above our home
 The lighthouse looms as pale as foam.
 In earlier years, ere mother went,
 We both were merry and content;
 But grief, since then, has left its trace
 Of tears upon my father's face;

And I, who cheer him all I may,
 Must often struggle to be gay;
 For though a girl scarce twelve years old,
 I feel within my heart unfold
 The longing, through his future life,
 To serve him like a little wife!

So, when he's tired from toilful days
 Of casting nets in coves and bays,
 And bringing back, with weary tread,
 The fish that help to buy us bread,
 I watch him where he sadly sits
 Beside the fire that leaps and flits,
 And say, with active air and bright:
 "Father, I'll tend the lamp to-night."

Then, while he nods and lets me go,
 I mount the stairs that well I know—
 The stairs that wind so firm and high
 To where the great lamp fronts the sky.
 And then, as mists of coming night
 Enshroud the lonely sea from sight,
 I make the lamp put forth its power
 And bloom through darkness like a flower!

And oh, I love to mark its beam
 Across the dangerous ocean stream;
 To feel that I afar can send
 Sweet thoughts and tidings to befriend
 The souls aloft on those black waves,
 That yawn all night like open graves!

Oh, other children may be glad,
 In pleasant homes, with comforts clad,
 Who never dream of ships that sail
 In shade or sun, in calm or gale;
 But I, howe'er I pine and fret,
 At times, perchance, am happier yet
 To think how one frail child like me
 Can make less dark that cold, wild sea!

Edgar Fawcett.

POOR AND LOWLY THOUGH I BE.

DEAR Lord of life and Lamp of love,
 Oh hear me from Thy throne above;
 Yes, hear me when I call to Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

Oh let me not, when in despair,
 Forget that Thou dost answer prayer,
 But bid me ever think of Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

And guide me in the way that's right,
 To do Thy will both day and night,
 That I may do what pleaseth Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

Lord, I will ever to Thee pray
 My thoughts on earth may never stray
 From one so good and pure as Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

And I will try to love Thee more;
 Yes, day by day, and hour by hour,
 My love shall always cling to Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

I will not mourn what is my lot,
 Let it be hard, or let it not;
 My song on earth shall be to Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

May every day that's fleeting by
 Fit me for heaven when I die,
 That I may sit and sing with Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

Oh, then, let every trial prove
 Me better worth Thy joys above,
 That my last breath may fly to Thee,
 Poor and lowly though I be.

FARMER BRIDGE'S HORSES, AND OTHER SKETCHES.



A Quiet Meal.

THE whole countryside rejoiced in the brightness of a summer's day. The sun shone radiantly, making everything look joyous and glorious, and Farmer Bridge's horses, after several hours' work, were enjoying a quiet meal, and, deep in the contents of their nosebags, seemed scarcely to notice a little bird perched upon a gay-coloured blackberry branch which trailed across the fence beside them. But the

little songster sang on, a merry joyous strain, making music for them while it waited patiently for its own share—the few scattered grains which it knew it would get when the larger animals had finished their meal. Farmer Bridge noted the little creature's bright eyes and expectant look, and threw out a few extra oats as he removed the nosebags and patted the patient horses. The little warbler flew down,

pecked at the grains, swallowed them rapidly, then, with one glad sweet note of thanks, flew away to its nest in the leafy hedgerow.

"Pretty little creature," murmured the farmer, as he watched it fly away; "so bright and knowing! No wonder some fanciful people say that song-birds are like spirits or souls. Only souls don't want food like this little thing.

"Well, I'm not so sure of that," he continued, after a moment's pause. "I suppose after all that our souls want food as much as our bodies; but we do starve them terribly. I know my soul has had no food to-day."

It was quite true. The good man had overslept himself that morning, and then had "got out of bed the wrong side," as people say; had hurried away without stopping for a word of prayer or a single text—one of those tiny crumbs of which the Lord can make enough to richly feed a hungry soul.

No, without a single thought of his Master, he, a professing Christian man, had hurried away to meet the day's trials and difficulties. No wonder everything had gone wrong! No wonder he had already slipped and sinned in tongue and temper!

"It is not too late," he suddenly thought. "Why should not I, like that little bird, pick up a few grains of help and comfort here?"

Time was precious, but the men had stopped work to eat the food they had brought with them, and Robert Bridge seized the opportunity, went into the next field, and in a few brief words told the Lord his needs. Then, as he walked back to rejoin the men and unpack the basket which his wife had filled for him, he let his thoughts dwell upon one of the precious texts with which his mind was happily stored: "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." And although he worked both with hands and brain during the rest of the day, he found how blessed and helpful it was to live with his soul resting upon God while his mind and body were actively employed.

How many of us feed our bodies carefully and well, yet literally starve our souls!

The only truly satisfying food for the soul is Christ Himself, the Bread of Life. We feed upon Him when we draw near to Him and commune with Him. Helped by His Holy Spirit, we get our supplies of nourishment at the mercy-seat; and the channels through which we draw these supplies are prayer and meditation, the reading and study of His Word, and companionship with His people; and the neglect of these brings poverty and starvation to the soul.

Some people take in a large supply of spiritual food on Sunday, the feast-day which the Lord has graciously appointed, and then live meagerly all the week, or take at the most one meal a day. What an allowance! It is regarded as one of the terrible penalties of a Hindoo widow's lot that she is permitted but one meal a day. And yet many people habitually keep their souls upon that scanty allowance, living sometimes upon nothing for a day or

two, by way of a change. Is it surprising that there are so many starved and stunted souls?

But there are plausible excuses made for this state of things.

One man has got into a lax, careless way of forsaking the assembling of the saints, and gives as his reason that he lives in a country district, and there is no good preacher in his neighbourhood, and he "doesn't seem to profit much" by the words spoken, or any part of the service.

Another complains of deafness, and cannot hear all the words.

But is it wise or right to stay away? Christ has promised a special blessing which you cannot afford to lose. He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

And cannot the presence of His people help to cheer and comfort you upon whom the Lord has laid the burden of deafness? You may hear scraps occasionally, and Christ can make for you a full meal from these fragments. Gather them up, that nothing be lost. Only put them in His hands, and look to Him expecting to be fed.

"But I have no time to feed my soul," says someone. "The cares of earth are so pressing and numerous, and take up all my time; the world moves so fast, and we must move with it, and business must be attended to."

And must not your soul have attention also? You find time to eat, in spite of all your business, and it is just as necessary for your soul to have food as for your body. Time is precious, you say. And so is Jesus precious to those who trust Him,—so precious that they cannot do without Him, but must feed continually upon His grace and mercy.

"But I have no appetite," says another; "I have no taste for spiritual food."

Then you have never known the joy and satisfaction of feeding upon Christ, the true Bread of Life; have only tried the outer husks of religious ceremony, which have seemed to you so dry and empty that you have turned from them with loathing to the bitter-sweets of earth.

Pray that God may give you the Divine appetite which He alone can satisfy. He has said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." And some are hungering for they know not what—dying of hunger while a rich provision is made for them, starving and famine-stricken in a land of plenty.

Why die of want, when food is freely offered, when Jesus holds out to you the Bread of Life?

"I am the living bread, which came down from heaven," says Christ; "if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever."

"He that cometh to Me shall never hunger."

It is an easy matter to stretch out our hands to take our daily bread, and why do we not take the heavenly bread of which there is such abundance? There is no limit to God's supply—enough and to spare. Enough to feed us daily, and to make us strong men in Christ Jesus, if we will but take from Him daily the rich bounty He offers.

L. B.

I SHALL NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP THE BIBLE.

Who live in this happy land of light and liberty, where the sun of the Reformation has in a large measure dispelled the mists of ignorance and superstition, can have little idea of the hardships to which certain readers of the Scriptures are exposed in foreign lands. As a rule, the priests of the Romish Church are the principal hindrance to a free circulation of the Word, although exceptions are found of men, even of this class, who are anxious for their people to become versed in the oracles of God.

From the Christian standpoint, Austria is one of the darkest parts of the earth, and this could be curiously illustrated by the adventures of those who endeavour to circulate the Bible and Christian literature in the land. About eight or nine years ago, a colporteur worked during several days in a certain parish in Lemberg, but on Sunday he was somewhat taken aback when notice was given in the parish church that people were not to buy the stranger's books, and that those who had purchased were to give them up at once, in order that they might be burned. Unhappily, many of the superstitious people were weak enough to comply. They gave up what might have been to them the bread of life, and allowed their opportunity to pass.

Others were not disposed to yield; and one man, a mason, showed a bold front which, under the circumstances, was thought to be very remarkable. He absolutely refused to yield to any pressure which could be brought to bear upon him.

"You have bought a Bible; you are to bring it to me at once," said the priest.

"If your reverence wishes to have one I will with pleasure go and buy one for you at the colporteur's," answered the mason.

"No, I do not wish to buy one; the book is false," cried the other. "I forbid you for your soul's sake to read it! I command you to bring it hither."

But the poor artisan, who had been captivated by the words of eternal life, was more than able to hold his own. "I have now been reading the book for several days; I have taken a fancy to it," he said. "Really it contains nothing that can do my soul any harm; much more, it contains words such as I have never heard before, and can never forget." He then quoted certain texts which he had learned; and this alleged pretence "to know the Bible by heart" incensed the priest more than ever.

"I would wish to know it," the workman still replied, however; "and to cut the matter short," he added, in a calm but determined manner, "I shall never, never give up the Bible."

That was a grand resolve for a man amid such surroundings to make; but he not only kept it as regarded himself, he even stood by the Bible-stall on market-days and encouraged passers-by to purchase. Surely, from such an example, the poor of other countries ought to learn to value more and more the words of eternal life.



THE PRINCESS' CASKET.

AN ARABIAN STORY.

A ROYAL young Araby's daughter,
A princess both gentle and fair,
Received from the wise one who taught her,
A casket of ivory rare—

A casket of carving most clever,
A dainty delight to the eye,
But, "Open it not," said the giver,
"Until a whole year has passed by."

How oft with the casket before her
The princess would touch the closed lid,
And wonder, like little Pandora,
What treasures beneath it lay hid.

But time still moves on, though it lingers;
The long year of waiting is past;
With trembling of fair slender fingers
The casket is opened at last.

Alas! for the treasure long cherished
Behold but a small shroud of rust,
A something whose beauty has perished
As flowers go back to the dust.

Beneath, on the smooth satin lining,
A small slip of parchment appears;
The princess, perplexed and repining,
Unfolds it and reads through her tears:

"This trinket, when herein I placed it,
Bore one little rust-spot alone;
But time and neglect have defaced it
Till now all its beauty is gone.

"Learn, princess, how one fault or failing
May injure a character fair,
And virtue be all unavailing
If one little 'rust-spot' be there.

"Place here in your casket a treasure,
A jewel of untarnished gold;
Your eyes may behold it with pleasure
Still beautiful when you are old.

"And you—with my heart's prayer I ask it—
Oh, keep yourself spotless from sin;
Your body the beautiful casket,
Your soul the pure treasure within."

E. S. Carter.

BUNYAN AND THE SPIDER.

BUNYAN'S chief enjoyment in prison, next to his high communion with God and heaven, was the composition of his "Pilgrim's Progress." That work was the only one of his joys which he allowed neither stranger nor friend to intermuddle with. He kept it "a fountain sealed" from all his family and fellow-prisoners until it was completed. He says expressly of the "Pilgrim's Progress"—

"Manner and matter too were all my own,
Nor was it unto any mortal known
Till I had done it."

When Bunyan lifted his eyes from his Bible in prison he saw little, of course, to sharpen his wits, or to give play to his fancy. He could, however, make much of little. His cell overhung the river, and thus he could look down upon the gliding stream, and forth on the aspects of the sky. A leaping fish, or a skimming swallow, was both an event and a sermon to him, when he could spare a few moments at the grated window from the labours of his pen and pincers. But it was not often he could do so. He had to work hard with his pincers, in order to tag the stay-laces which his wife and his poor blind daughter made and sold for the support of the family.

He had also to study hard, in order to bring his writings up to something like the scheme and scale of other theologians. His pen was thus heavier to him than his pincers; for he had nothing to lighten its labour but his Concordance. When he did escape, however, from his chair to the window, he was all eye and ear to whatever was stirring in the heavens above or in the waters beneath; and if nothing presented itself outside the window, he could learn much from the spiders and flies inside. It was whilst watching them one day that he drew the striking picture of an entangled and struggling Christian.

"The fly in the spider's web," says he, "is an emblem of a soul which Satan is trying to poison and kill. The fly is entangled in the web; at this the spider shows himself. If the fly stir again, down comes the spider, and claps a foot upon her. If the fly struggle still, he poisons her more and more. What shall the fly do now? Why, she dies, if somebody do not quickly release her. This is the case with the tempted. Their feet and wings are entangled. Now Satan shows himself. If the soul struggleth, Satan laboureth to hold it down. If it maketh a noise, then he bites with a blasphemous mouth, more poisonous than the gall of a serpent. If

it struggle again, he then poisons it more and more; insomuch that it must needs die, if the Lord Jesus help not. But though the fly is altogether incapable of looking for relief, this tempted Christian is not. What must he do, therefore? If he look to his heart, there is blasphemy. If he look to his duties, there is sin. Shall this man lie down in despair?

No. Shall he trust in his duties? No. Shall he stay away from Christ until his heart is better? No. What then? Let him look to Christ crucified! Then shall he see his sins answered for, and death dying. This sight destroys the power of the first temptation, and both purifies the mind and inclines the heart to all good things."

Bunyan was so pleased with this parallel between Satan

and a spider, that away went pincers and laces until he rhymed the fact. He makes the spider say:—

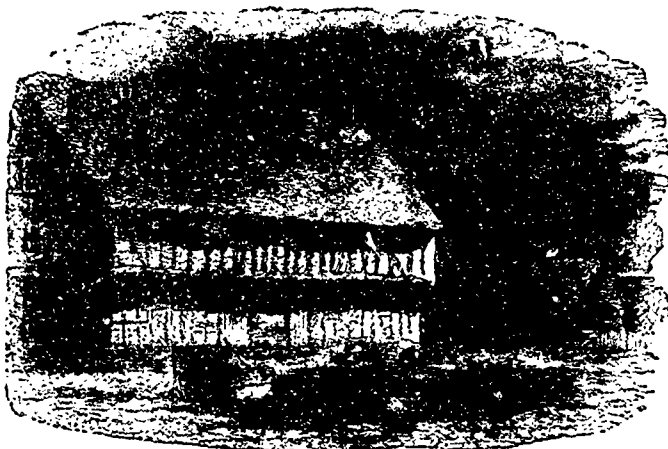
"Thus in my ways God wisdom doth conceal,
And by my ways that wisdom I reveal.
I hide myself when I for flies do wait;
So doth the devil, when he lays his bait.
If I do fear the losing of my prey,
I stir me, and more snares upon her lay.
This way and that, her wings and legs I tie,
That, sure as she is caught, so she must die;
And if I see this like to get away,
Then with my venom I her journey stay."

Bunyan studied and talked with this spider so much at the window, that it became a favourite with him at last. He abuses it in "good set terms" through half a long poem; but it taught so much sound wisdom, that he withdrew his sarcasms, and sang:—

"Well, my good spider, I my errors see;
I was a fool in railing thus at thee.
Thy nature, venom, and thy fearful hue,
But show what sinners are, and what they do.
Well, well, I will no more be a derider;
I did not look for such things from a spider.
O spider! I have heard thee, and do wonder
A spider thou should lighten, and thus thunder.
O spider! thou delightest me with thy skill;
I pray thee spit this venom at me still."

Thus he ended with high compliments to his web-weaving neighbour; for from her instincts and habits he found her the best philosopher he had ever met with.

Philip's "Life and Times of Bunyan."



Bunyan's House on Elstow Green.

FAIRLY BAFFLED.

Poor Harry Rhodes was in great trouble. His wife had been in poor health for months, and trade was very bad.

Harry kept a little shop in a part of Oldham inhabited almost entirely by working people. It was a very general sort of shop, for he sold groceries, flour, bread, garden produce, threads, tapes, and one can scarcely tell what besides. Harry had been an operative in a cotton mill, but being an enterprising

had given a good deal of credit. Of course there was no money to be got for back reckonings from people who were out of work; and, besides, some who owed him money, and who had found work, had gone to other places, and it was not very convenient for him to follow them in quest of his money.

Nor was that the worst of it. Some who were already in his debt pleaded hard that he should trust them still further, till times mended. He hardly knew how to say no, for he was a kind hearted man; and, besides, he had to consider that, if he did not



Out of Work.

sort of man, and having saved a little money, he set up his shop. For several years he did very well indeed, and he had got fairly on his feet, but when the depression came—and it lasted a long time—the little he had gained quite melted away.

No wonder, for one of the mills, where at least a quarter of his customers worked, was shut up, and another, where he had nearly as many, was running short time.

It would have been bad enough if his trade had all been done for ready money; but, unfortunately, he

trust them, they might perhaps go somewhere else when the times were better. Still, he did say it, for, as he rightly thought, it would be like giving so much money out of his pocket, and a man who has only a small business, and who, besides, is doing only half his usual trade, can scarcely afford to do that.

If a man has not money coming in, of course he cannot pay money out, and, for the first time in his life, Harry had got behind in his payments to the people who supplied him with his goods. Some of these people were very forbearing. They knew he

was a good, honest fellow, and that he would pay them as soon as he could; yet even these were not at all pressing for fresh orders from him, and he saw their travellers passing by as quickly as they could on the other side of the street. Others, however, pressed him hard for their money.

One evening, after Harry had shut up his shop, he was sitting alone at the other end of it when a knock came. He was not very willing to get up and open the door, for he was afraid it was one of his poor customers who wanted to be served on credit. Still, whoever it might be, he felt he could not be uncivil, and he went to see who it was. To his great relief he found it was his friend John Scott. John had missed him at church on the previous Sunday, and he had come to see what was the matter.

Of course Harry was very glad to see him. When a man is in trouble it always does him good to see anybody who has a kind word to say to him, and especially an old friend. There was a little bit of fire left in the grate at the other end of the shop, so Harry put on another piece of coal, and the two friends sat down together by the fireside.

Taking for granted that Harry had remained at home on Sunday on account of his wife's poor health, John inquired after her; and he was glad to hear in reply that she was somewhat better.

Still John saw that Harry was sadly downcast, more downcast than, as it seemed to him, after the report he had given, he needed to be on account of his wife. Indeed, he had hardly a word to say.

"Harry, my lad," said John at length, "thou'st sadly down in the mouth; what's the matter?"

In reply Harry told him in substance what we have told our readers; and when he had ended he said, with a quivering lip and with his eyes full of tears, "I'm fairly baffled, and I sometimes feel as if I would be glad to get out of it all, and get a bit of peace anywhere."

"Thou'rt not the first who has said that by many a thousand," said John. "It's a pity thou wasn't at church on Sunday morning, for Mr. Bennett was preaching about it."

"About what?" asked Harry. "About what I've been saying? Nay, he couldn't do that."

"Well, maybe not exactly," replied John; "but about something very like it. His text was those words of David: 'Oh that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest.'"

"And what did he say about that?" asked Harry.

"He said," replied John, "that we all had our troubles, but that sometimes a great lot of troubles came to a man all at once—like Job, who lost all his children and all his property in one day; and then, as if that were not enough, he was smitten with sore boils from head to foot. Or, again, like the Psalmist, who, when he said, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest,' had a great many things at the same time to trouble and vex him. At such times, Mr. Bennett said, men were very apt to feel as though they would be glad to get away anywhere for peace

and rest; but God, he told us, doesn't give us wings to fly away from our troubles. Instead of that, very often at least, He makes it plain that He means us to stop where we are—in the very middle of them."

"Anyhow," said Harry, "it looks as if He meant that for me; for my troubles have lasted a good bit now."

"But, Harry," asked John, with a twinkle in his eye, "thou wouldest not really want to leave Mary and the children behind, wouldest thou? And a man with a wife and four children could not fly very fast or very far."

"Nay, nay," replied Harry, smiling for the first time during their talk; "I love them all too well for that, even if I could fly away."

"But there was something else Mr. Bennett said," resumed John. "He said we might all be at rest anywhere, and in all sorts of troubles, if we would only trust in God."

"Yes," replied Harry; "but I can tell you it is not such an easy thing to keep a quiet mind when your trade is only half what it was, and customers have gone off in your debt, and you don't know whether you may not have to put the shutters up, and your wife's ill into the bargain."

"I think, Harry," said John, "thou'st done fairly well since we were lads together in the Back Lane, hast not thou? Anyhow, till this last bad time set in. Now canst thou not believe that God, who has given thee so many blessings hitherto, will take care of thee still, and give thee all that He sees to be really for thy good? Thou knowest He says, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Cheer up, lad. Have faith in God."

"Well, I ought to do," replied Harry; "and I'll try; but it is not very easy sometimes."

"Pray to God to help thee, and give thee more faith," said John.

"But now," he added, "I've a bit of good news for thee: Crossfields, of Manchester, have taken Holland's mill, and they'll open it in a fortnight, and I have heard that before long all the mills will be running full time again."

Harry brightened up wonderfully when he heard this; and it was all confirmed next morning from other sources.

It took him some time to get fairly through all his difficulties; but he has got through them. He does not seem likely to become a rich man; but ever since that visit of John Scott's he has been a great deal richer in faith and hope than he ever was before; and if a man be rich in these he is rich indeed.

Quiet, Lord, my froward heart;
Make me teachable and mild,
Upright, simple, free from art;
Make me as a weaned child:
From distrust and envy free,
Pleased with all that pleases Thee.

What Thou shalt to-day provide,
Let me as a child receive;
What to-morrow may betide,
Calmy to Thy wisdom leave.
'Tis enough that Thou wilt care:
Why should I the burden bear?

GET INTO THE SUNSHINE.

"**E**h! but, John, you have much to be thankful for."

"I don't see that," returned John Milroy, doggedly. "I should like to know what I have got to be thankful for. Seems to me I have a great deal to complain of."

"Nay, nay, man, never say that. Look on the bright side. Begin to count your mercies, and you'll find that they are more than can be remembered. When you're as old as I am, maybe you'll see it as plain as I do that there's more of good than of evil in the strangely-twisted web of human life. I am drawing very near to the grave now, and I can truly say, as I look back over the past, that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

So spoke David Macintosh, a gentle, venerable old man, much beloved in the Highland parish in which he lived. A good friend was he to all who were in sorrow, for he had the tender, sympathetic nature of a true son of consolation.

But his words had now no soothing effect upon his neighbour, John Milroy, a sturdy, hard-working farmer, who had been laid aside from his work for many weeks by a sharp attack of rheumatic fever, and was but just beginning to get about again. His brow darkened as he bent forward in his chair with his eyes bent upon the glowing hearth. The kettle on the hob was singing cheerily; but there was nothing cheerful in John Milroy's appearance as he replied impatiently, "It's all very well for you to talk so, Macintosh. You never had a daughter who served you as mine has served me. To think of all that I did for her. No girl ever had a fonder father, though I say it myself. I denied her nothing. I never crossed her wishes except when I forbade her to keep company with a worthless fellow, who will never be worth his salt. And then for the sake of a fellow like that she leaves me to shift for myself, and goes off with him to the other side of the world. Ah! I did feel it hard, when I lay on that bed unable to turn myself for pain, that I had not a child to do anything for me."

"You might well feel it so," returned the older man. "Yes, you must have missed your daughter sorely when you were ill."

"Little she cares whether I miss her or not," said the injured father, morosely. "Her poor mother was a woman of another kind; but there's no such thing as gratitude now-a-days, I suppose. But she will rue her folly. You mark my words—my daughter will live to rue her folly. She thinks I shall be ready to forgive and forget at a word, but she will find herself mistaken."

There was a pause of some minutes ere David Macintosh spoke; but presently he ventured to say, "No doubt there's a deal of ingratitude in the world; but have you ever thought, Milroy, when pondering ingratitude, what a heavy case in respect to it our Father in heaven might make out against most of us? Look at yourself now. You were talking as if you had nothing to be thankful for; but think of the years

of health and strength God granted you ere this sickness came; think how He has blessed your toil; think of the mercies of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter."

"Ah, but I have known some bad seasons," said Milroy, grimly.

"True, but you have come out of them better than most men. How often have you said to me in harvest, 'After all, the corn is better than I thought it would be.' And then those strong lads of yours who have kept things so straight on the farm whilst you have been laid aside; surely any father might be proud and thankful to call them his sons. But when I remarked to one of them the other day how well his field of young turnips was looking, he said, rather dolefully, 'Yes, but father is sure to find some fault. He grumbles at everything; it's a way that he has.'"

"Did he say that?" exclaimed John Milroy, his eye kindling with anger.

"Ay, but don't be angry with your boy because I have dared to repeat his words. You will allow an old friend like me to speak a faithful word to you. I don't think you can know what a hold the habit of grumbling has taken upon you, nor how it darkens the home for your sons. There is nothing more fretting to a young spirit than perpetual grumbling and fault-finding. I wish you would try my plan instead, and begin counting your mercies. It pays to do so, for a thankful spirit is its own reward."

John Milroy looked as if he were inclined to resent the freedom with which his old friend spoke to him. An angry reply rose to his lips, but a feeling of reverence for the good old man, so near the end of his earthly pilgrimage, restrained him from uttering it. Then he remembered a verse he had read that morning in the book of Proverbs, which told him that "faithful are the wounds of a friend."

"I daresay you are right," he said, rather glumly, at last; "but I am not one of those who can be thankful for everything or nothing."

"For everything, not for nothing," corrected the other. "Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God.' Have you ever noticed how in almost all his epistles St. Paul calls upon his readers to give thanks?"

"I can't say that I have, though I have been reading the Bible rather more than usual since I have been laid aside," said Milroy.

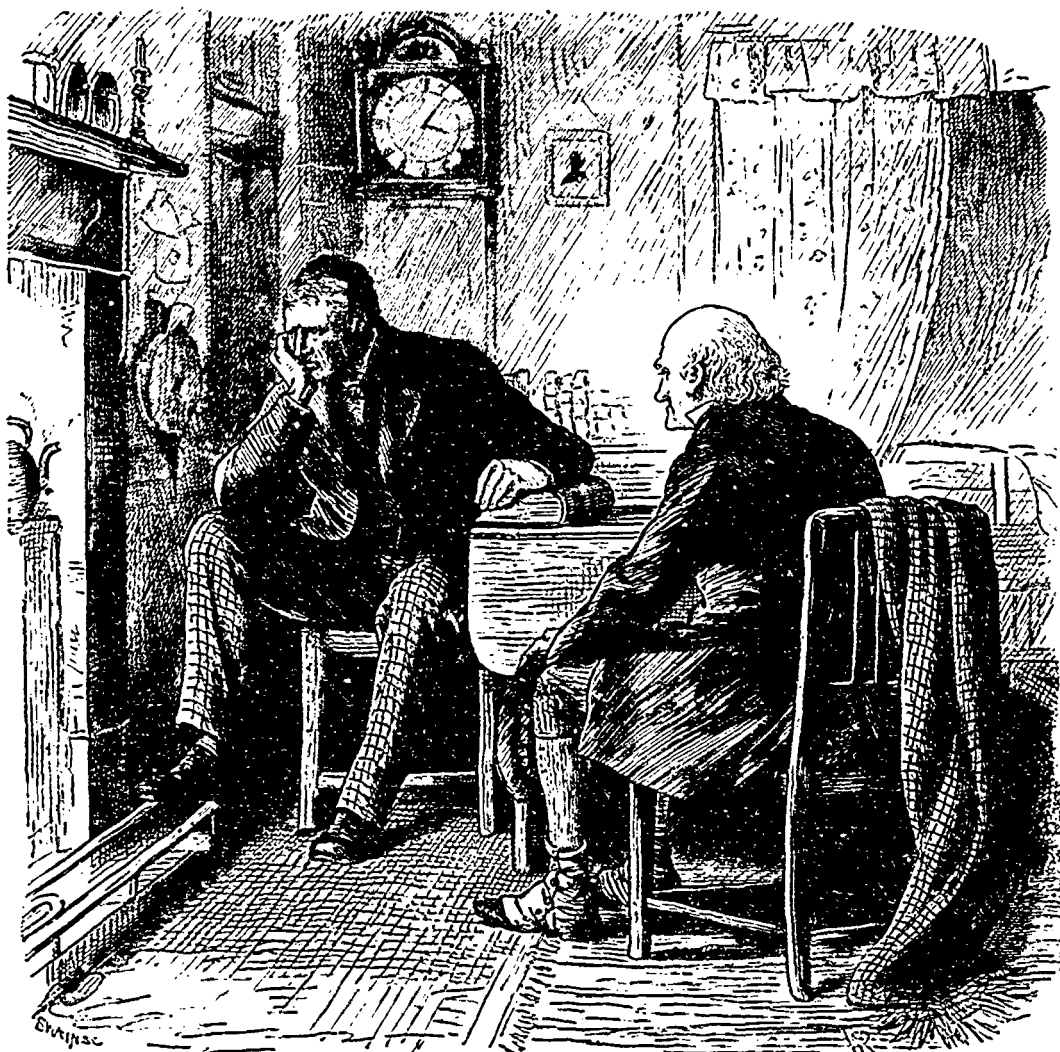
"Why, that's another mercy," exclaimed old Macintosh. "Sickness is a real mercy when it leads us to study God's Word, and meditate upon it."

"Why, you'll make out presently that everything is a mercy," said John, with a smile.

"And so everything is," said the old man, brightly. "You'll learn to be thankful even for your daughter's undutiful behaviour if it teaches you how you have failed in your duty to your Heavenly Father. And when you find how much He has forgiven you, you will not find it hard to forgive her," he added, significantly. With that David Macintosh rose to take his departure.

"You must get out into the sunshine as soon as you can," were his last words. "What a mercy that you

FRIENDLY GREETINGS.



"It's all very well for you to talk so, Macintosh!"

had your fever in the spring, and not in the autumn! As I came through the glen just now the very birds seemed to be praising God. Surely we ought to be as thankful as the birds."

Left to himself, John Milroy mused long over the words of his friend. They had wounded him, but he felt that he deserved to be thus wounded. He turned to the Bible that lay at his elbow, and quickly found passage after passage which enjoined the duty of thanksgiving. And he saw that St. Paul practised what he preached. Again and again he found him giving thanks to God for mercies vouchsafed to himself and to those dear to him. Before one verse John Milroy paused, and read it many times, till tears blurred his vision: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." Ah, that precious, wonderful, unspeakable gift—that love which passeth knowledge! How could one who had dared to call that gift his own, who was trusting in that Saviour for salvation, yet cherish a thankless, repining spirit? John Milroy bowed his head in shame and sorrow, convicted of basest ingratitude.

That hour wrought a change in John Milroy, which soon exerted a happy influence on those about him. He believed that it was not too late in life for him to try to acquire, by God's help, a cheerful, thankful habit of mind. It was not an easy acquirement, for mental habits are not more readily changed than bodily ones; but gradually he succeeded. His sons wondered to find their father less keen to detect their faults, and less prone to grumble over things that could not be helped. They had begun to shun their father's society, and they might soon have been driven to frequent undesirable places, had he continued the disagreeable habit that was embittering their home life. The neighbours were surprised to find the man who had been so morose and fault-finding developing into a genial, warm-hearted friend. No one now heard him speak bitterly of the daughter who had deserted him for a husband whom he deemed unworthy of her.

And it was all because John was learning to count his mercies, and to give thanks out of a loving heart for the blessings of his daily life.