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Buds and Blossoms

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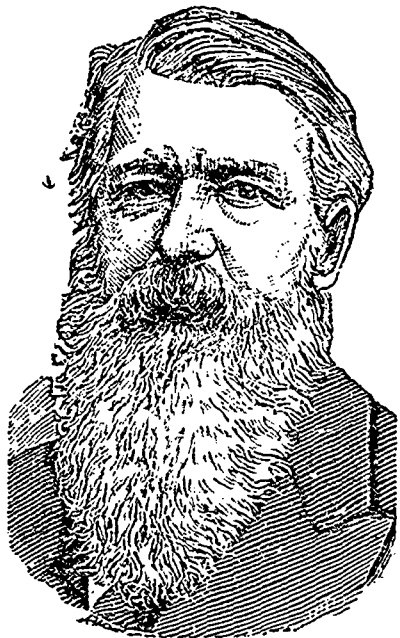
Friendly Greetings.

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

Vol. X.—No. 4

APRIL, 1886.

{ WHOLE No. 112.



THE LATE JOHN B. GOUGH.

Ribbon of Blue Gospel Temperance Notes.

BE believe in showing and standing by our colors. "Trust in God, and do the bright." We fully agree that narcotics and alcoholic drinks are not friends but foes, and would say, however flavored or disguised, of the serpent beware. Both the stimulus and cheering influence of these things in so-called moderation is

deceptive and alluring, leading into a habit productive of many ills both to mind, soul and body. We would advise, Do not smoke, chew or drink. For the supposed comforters thus used, are not what they seem to be to the habitual user. Some correspondents seem to fear the Editor loves the weed. Why, we can hardly tell. It is certain our sanctum does not smell of smoke. The writer never used a particle of the weed which tends to make so many dull and stupid and prepare them for a stronger stimulant and narcotic. It always seemed an expensive and foolish habit, to say the least. More, to many, alas! it is a snare and a sin. Much time and substance has been idly puffed away. Instead of spending the time in prayerful and profitable meditation and endeavor, it

is sacrificed in a foolish dreaminess and listlessness, which cannot be pleasing to God, whose creatures we are, and whose love demands that we redeem the time, and give the passing moment something to keep in store.

A father who professed to scorn drunkenness said, "It would take ten glasses of wine to make me drunk." His little boy, seeing him pour out his second glass, said, "Then, father, you are only one-fifth drunk now." How far intoxicated is the man when soaked with the narcotic of tobacco. His nerves unstrung, unsteady, he tries, by lighting his little fire, to quench and stifle the unrest within. Friend, we do not condemn thee, but write in love. Whether it would be better to be clear of a habit certainly not of the cleanest or most economic character, judge ye. Would your example be likely to benefit others? How do you like to see an inveterate smoker? How would a pipe, cigarette or cigar look in the mouths and hands of your boys? If it is good and wholesome and a beneficial habit why not let the ladies smoke? It would certainly be more pleasant when travelling if all had the same taste and ideas of a goodly smell. What is more nauseous and poisonous than an old stale pipe filled with rank tobacco? If the habit is so ennobling and stimulating to self-elevation how comes it that our jails and poor-houses abound with both male and female proficient in the art of smoking?

If you do not like what is written do not please say so before your own boys. Maybe when you tell them not to smoke they will say, "But father does", and if they love you as they should, remember, until you cruelly undeceive them, you are their ideal of manliness.

"Run! speak to this your man,"

Unnumbered foes assail him,
Lest in the rushing tide of life

His strength and courage fail him.
Thine hand upon him, bid him think,
Fly from the pipe, cigar, the drink;
His feet are on the shelving brink;
"Run! speak to this young man."

Friend, we know that this world is full of unrest; that amid the uneasiness of life's battles there is a yearning for something to satisfy and give peace. Be not deceived. It is not in the power of narcotics to satisfy and give thee lasting easement. But if you look to Jesus you will find in Him and from His word real and lasting rest and peace such as the world cannot give and can never take away.

A HINT TO THE ROMANS.—The Wages of Sin is Death, but the gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Chst our Lord. Read, Romans vi. 23.

Muller's Orphanage.

(From a Brother at Bristol.)

"Muller's Orphanage" are almost household words throughout Great Britain, and in all parts of the civilized world this Institution is looked upon as a monument of the faithfulness of a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God.

Mr. George Muller, whom God raised up, fitted and guided to start and continue this stupendous work, was born at Kroppenstaedt Prussia, on Sept. 1805, converted in 1825, and received the first orphan on the 3th of February, 1836.

The objects in view were, and are still: That God might be glorified in its being seen that it is no vain thing to trust in Him, and that thus the faith of His children might be strengthened by the spiritual welfare of fatherless and motherless children, and their temporal welfare.

The work was commenced, and has been carried on these 50 years, entirely by faith in God, until at the present time there are 2,000 children in the Orphan Houses, fed and clothed and spiritually cared for, without anyone but God being informed of their requirements. The girls received into the Orphanage, who are instructed in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, etc., are kept till they are capable of taking situations. The boys, who receive the same instruction in their schools, have a free choice of the trade they wish to procure, and then apprenticed to it, and not a few of them have risen in the social scale above the ordinary working-man.

The Institution consists of five immense stone houses, with hundreds of glass windows in each, situated on Ashley Downs, one of the healthiest suburbs of Bristol, England. It well repays one to take a walk in that direction on a bright sunny day, to see the five long lines of continuous buildings, each approached by a long carriage drive, and attached to which are well-stocked vegetable gardens; to hear in otherwise surrounding stillness the voices of the hundreds of children repeating their lessons, or their shouting in the play-grounds, but best of all to join one of the groups of visitors which are shown through the various houses on different days. The older children may then be seen engaged in their various occupations, and the younger ones busily prosecuting their studies. There can be seen and felt, the reality, the faithfulness, and the unchangeableness of a loving heavenly father. For my own part I never look upon the buildings, or upon the long string of orphans, occasionally to be met with, without being led to praise, and to take a firmer hold on God, and to desire to trust in Him with a still more childlike trust.

Everything connected with the Orphanage seems the essence of order, cleanness, and happiness.

During the fifty years of existence, although sometimes brought low, perhaps to test their faith, the Lord has never left them, nor forsaken them, but has come in to help in a most remarkable way at the right moment. Numbers of such instances are recorded in the "Narrative of some of the Lord's dealings with George Muller," written by himself, and published by J. Nisbet & Co, London, which also contains an account of his conversion, his remarkable orphan work from the commencement, and the

various other remarkable works in which he is engaged for the Master. Half-yearly Reports are also published by the same, at sixpence, containing information to encourage the child of God, and to silence the sceptic.

The conversions amongst the children have been numerous.

The Regions Beyond.



HAVE we, are we, as converted men and women doing our best to obey the Master's injunction and example; going about doing good, letting our light so shine that others may see our good works and as a result glorify our Father in heaven? Is the command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature a living obligation which we recognise and endeavour, by our prayers, means and personal efforts, to fulfill? Have we been true to the trust he left us? To-day there are millions who have never heard the name of Jesus. What is the measure of our responsibility? Has not individual Christian apathy something to do with this? Are we not, all called upon at home and abroad to do missionary service? Dare we say we are not called?

In connection with the history of Christianity the progress of Christianity from the very beginning has really depended upon the action of the few, and that few gradually influenced an expanding few. In the 3rd century the Christians in Rome were less than one-twentieth of the population, and before and since then, a comparatively few have been winning a small number to Christianity, and this number has been gradually increasing. This is mysterious, and unquestionably as we look upon God's dealings with the world we find mysteries again and again. Although there has been a very great outpouring of the Spirit in the last three centuries, and particularly in the last ninety years, and there has been a very great impulse to foreign missions, let us remember there are even now 600,000,000 of mankind in utter darkness.

The fact that there are in this year 1886, such grand openings for the preaching of the Gospel as did not exist several years ago, and that God in His mercy had awakened in England, America and the Christian Church every where a measure of missionary spirit and zeal for obedience to God's command that had not hitherto been experienced to the same degree should lead Christians to think how they could be strengthened in the habit of giving regularly to missions up to the highest mark their circumstances would admit of, and so create a higher stimulus in the work.

And should we not rejoice that now the Gospel of the Grace of God shall have "free course" throughout the length and breadth of Burmah to "run and be glorified."

In Japan, which country used to be shut against missionaries, it had actually been proposed that Christianity should be adopted as the religion of the State. In Africa the country has been opened up. In China there is an Inland Mission, and missionaries are permitted to travel through the country.

The population of India forms one-sixth of the people in the world, and reckoning all the missionaries that there are at work, there are not more than two to every million of the inhabitants. How much then need we to pray for more laborers in the harvest field?

Forty young men from Dublin University have recently offered themselves for the missionary work. A number of Cambridge young men have also volunteered for service in the mission work abroad. Mr. C. T. Studd, the celebrated cricketer last year, fully consecrated himself and fortune of \$300,000 to the Lord, and went to China on the same common fare and conditions as the other missionaries of the China Inland Mission. Open doors are in every direction. If we cannot give ourselves we can our prayers and of our means. For unless we take distinct interest in the propagation of the faith and missionary labor, such Christianity cannot be living and real. A sign of true Gospel and spiritual life, both in churches and individuals, is to manifest a desire to extend itself elsewhere. Our young readers may enjoy reading the following abstracts.

One of the officers of the British force in Burmah concludes that stomach-ache is a widely prevalent malady in that region. At Kooniah he found an idol which effects miraculous cure when a sufferer plasters a flake of gold leaf upon the part corresponding to the seat of his own disorder, and the abdomen of this idol has been caused to protrude in a most extraordinary degree by the plastered offerings of health seekers.

Marriage among the Khyers. The marriage custom of the Khyens of Burmah is, it is believed, unique. The girls are given in marriage by brothers, not by their parents. When a girl is born she is especially assigned to one of her brothers, or, if she has none, to one of her father's sister's sons, whose consent has to be obtained by any one aspiring to her hand, and who, after her marriage, must be treated with the greatest respect by her husband. If the husband visits the brother, he must take with him a present of *khong*, a fermented drink; and should the brother visit the husband, he must take with him *khong* and pork, or, if his circumstances are such that he cannot do this, he must make profound apologies. As a rule, girls are affianced early to one of their cousins, but the match may be broken off. In such a case the defaulter, if the man, has to give the girl five pots of *khong*, a bullock, a pig three feet in girth, a spear, a fork, a bag, and a piece of ornamental cloth. If the girl breaks off the match she has to give the man a brass dish, a silk cloth and belt, and a silk turban.

Pick Out What You Like.

HINTS TO PARENTS.—If you do not look after your children, the devil will.

Coleridge the Philosopher, was once visited by Thelwall, a sceptic. Thelwall maintained that children should not be taught religion: it was interfering with their freedom, and filling their minds with prejudices; they should be allowed to grow up naturally, and then choose for themselves. The two sauntered into his garden. Coleridge loved his books more than his plants, and his garden was a mass of

weeds; but Thelwall was fond of gardening. "I wonder," said he, "Mr. Coleridge, that your garden is in such a state. Why don't you weed and plant flowers?" "Oh," replied Coleridge with a smile, "I want my garden to grow up naturally. I won't fill it with prejudices."

TO CHURCH MEMBERS.—Extend your hand to the strangers. Invite them to come again. Do not excuse yourself because you do not know them. Rather, that is a good and sufficient reason for speaking to him and giving a welcome.

TO MINISTERS.—A minister who had received a number of calls, and could scarcely decide which was the best, asked the advice of a faithful old colored man, who replied: "Master, go where is the most devil."

TO THE ENGAGED.—An old gentleman of 83 having taken to the altar a young damsel aged 15, the clergyman said to him, "The font is at the other end of the church." "What do I want with the font?" asked the old gentleman. "I beg your pardon, I thought you had brought his child to be baptized."

A Boston Congregation the other Sunday were waked right up out of a sound sleep by the preacher's saying, "That young man peeping in the door had better come in and find whether she is here or not. The people in the back end of the church won't be so troubled by the draught."

Absence of occupation is not rest; a mind quite vacant is a mind distressed.

Home Circle.

In the past month, as in months past, the good hand of our Father God has been manifested. We desire to set up our Ebenezer and realize it is not our duty to sit down thereon and sing Ebenezer until we fall asleep, but rather to make the past stepping stones for present and future successes, so that all along our pathway, records of mercy and grace-given may be set up to testify to the faithfulness of the Promiser, who said, "As thy days so shall thy strength be, My grace is sufficient for thee." Sometimes the hardness of the way of duty causes one to tire and faint as far the flesh is concerned. But at such times the new man in Christ Jesus gets a drink at the fountain of promise, and lifting the eye of faith gives new inspiration. Looking unto Jesus, who can consider Him, and grow weary of well-doing, even when wearied in the service? For, "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Knowing although the way may be rough, it cannot be long. We will cheer it with hope and smooth it with song. Truly the memories of the past month lead us to sing, "Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die."

In the month of February, as has been our custom for many years, it was agreed to hold some extra meetings. Four instead of two evenings were given up to prayer meetings, and the result of the past is shown in a large ingathering. From the first there was much to encourage and quicken our faith.

Thank God, through summer drought and winter's cold, in the work at the Tabernacle, the records of the past prove, God has never ceased to be gracious or allowed the ploughing and sowing to be in vain. There has been times of testing when the love of many has waxed cold, when times and conjoined circumstances were very trying, not only to flesh and blood, but to our faith. Nevertheless Jesus, precious Jesus, has appeared for our relief. Is it not like Jesus? A present help in every time of need. At such times what wonders He hath wrought w.l.a. goodness shown. It is "of Him and through Him, and to Him are all things, to Him be glory for ever." Just when the strain of the extra services was testing severely

BUDS AND BLOSSOMS.

in a way very unexpectedly relief came. Often the desire had gone up, "Oh, for some one to share and help in the toil." And who could doubt the providence, when after Sunday morning service a lady said, "My husband is an Evangelist, and would like to give you some aid in your work. After a little consultation with the brethren, our good brother A. F. Gurney was asked to come, and for eight days side by side we wrought, with no small easement of mental strain to the writer. And at the same time a spiritual strength and stimulus was given to the meetings by the preaching and testimony of the evangelist, who very sweetly and with much preciousness, opened unto us the Scriptures. Our brother is evidently a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of life. Mr. Gurney has been many years in the Master's service and given himself to special evangelistic work until failing health compelled him to go aside to rest, and on his farm and work at home, he has found strength returning and is planning to aid more fully in breaking up new fields. May the Lord bless and give him success, and may his reward be great for the help given in the past and for what is offered for the future.

DONATED FOR BUILDING LOTS.—Mrs. Burgs paid \$5.00.

OUR SABBATH SCHOOL.—The spiritual interest still seems to deepen. The prayer meeting on Sunday afternoon is a rallying point of power.

MEMBERS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.—By baptism, 8; letter, 1; profession 2nd Feb. Total, 11.

OUR MISSION PRESS has been kept going so much of late that often we can almost fancy we hear it cry give, give more blank paper. To any who may wish to keep it moving, and to have tracts and leaflets scattered freely, the cry is a hint and suggestion. We do this work for Jesus' sake and look to Him to move your hearts towards us in this matter. Don't reply, "I wish you well," for if wishes were horses beggars might ride. Good wishes are not always the most expressive or useful form of aiding a good cause.

AGAIN we say, DON'T TEAR UP GOOD MAGAZINES OR PAPERS. We know where we can place not a few, as letter printed elsewhere will show. One dear little girl in Frankfort, Mass., cheered us by her thoughtfulness, she not only sent quite a nice packet of papers, but wrapped up 25c., and with her loving hand, too young to use a pen, wrote in pencil, "To aid your Mission." We intend to write a note and to tell her what we did with her gift. It strengthened our faith. Seeing that there was more pressing upon us than we could overtake and finding a young sister who desired specially to work for the Lord. We determined to move forward and she is now staying with us, working in many ways for Jesus, and in God we trust.

We have received several papers from Mr. E. Templeton, Manitoba; Mr. Thomas Hubley; others from Mrs. Etter, Miss Bayers, Miss J. Carr, Miss Hughes and Miss Stewart. Some have been sent to Kazubazua, others to Wolfville and the States. Quite a number have been distributed among the operatives of the Cotton Factory.

FRIENDLY GREETINGS FOR BUDS AND BLOSSOMS.—It is pleasant to repeat kind words. We believe to say what others say may be a help to stir our friends in the good work of making B. & B. more extensively known. Spring is the time to propagate, and if we would have plenty of BUDS AND BLOSSOMS by and by we do well to plant and pass round specimens of the same. If you can do no other work then give to some one the slips enclosed. Who can tell? That act may be the indirect means of grandly helping us to find new hearts and homes where, by our pen, we can write, and thus speak a word for Jesus, so that instead of the fir tree of mere worldliness there shall spring up the myrtle tree of true godliness, which shall blossom unto holiness, and the fruit thereof shall be eternal life. Our aim is to write strikingly and profitably, and withal in unexpected lines and places to put the barbed hooks of gospel truth so as to catch men and to win them to Jesus, for none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. Jerusalem sinners were doomed because they would not be saved. Mark! not, could not, but would not, come to the saving King.

A sister in the Lord writes from Kazubazua.—"The nice package of B. & B. arrived. I have read them with pleasure and profit, and have sent them in different directions to be read by others. I have a poor sick boy twenty-five years of age, who never did or will do a day's work. He is so fond of reading, and delighted with the prospect of being able, through

your kind offer, of getting BUDS to read. I am an old woman of 63 years. We have no school, and the poor children only get what little education I give them in my kitchen. It has been my work for years to get all the good tracts and papers, etc., I could and scatter them in this backward settlement. I often beg and get reading to scatter among the people and children, for many have none other than what is given them. May the blessing of God rest upon you and the noble work in which you are engaged. Yours in the bonds of Christian union."

Another writes: "I am proud of having the privilege of canvassing for BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. All speak well of it, even Catholics are in love with it, and all who love Jesus ought to have it. It is only one year since I found Jesus. How I wish I had all the money worse than wasted in novels. I would lay it out in B. & B. to give away."

From a minister in Dakota, U. S.: "Dea. Brother, I have just seen a sample of your very beautiful paper, and do not hesitate to say you are doing a grand work for our blessed Christ. I am too poor to send you any cash. But I can do this,—write you an encouraging letter and pray for you. Before writing this I went into the closet and asked our Father to bless you with abundant power of the Holy Ghost, for Christ's sake."

These words comfort and cheer us. At the time of writing subscriptions are coming in very slowly, and although our output is larger less cash has come in than up to this date last year. Knowing the seed is good, and the motive which prompts, faith saith, "Stay not thy hand; sow and you shall reap."

We thank the following in paying for "B. and B.": Who sent one dollar, and we credit to free list 25c. each. Mr. B. Fielding, Mr. Kinghorn, Mr. Roome, Mr. Edward Etter, Miss Salsman.

During the month we have mailed, since the regular monthly issue, over 500 copies—20,000 pages—to all sorts of places and names, just as we could gather them up. Pray for the divine blessing, and that some may fall amongst honest and good hearts, who will be willing to share with us in some measure the responsibility of the work, at least to the extent of a year's subscription.

A LOVING QUESTION.—We do expect all persons on our regular mailing list to pay subscriptions when due, or as soon as their circumstances will allow. We do not like, after the paper has been sent for months, to have it returned without a kind word. It seems mean and dishonest. We cannot allow accounts to be thus settled. It would be unfair to all parties, besides unbusiness and unchristian like, and bring us into financial entanglements. When we give we give in good faith, and have for the Lord's sake wrought for years without any financial benefit. Brethren, pray for us.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Mrs. Aaron Hubley made the boys coats, and donated her labour as a help to the mission work in hand. Miss Annie Hubley kindly paid for a rubber stamp, to be used in the same work. Mr. W. Davies, a bottle of stamping ink. We now have 4 Stamps for service, but need more. "Out of my want," 25c. per A. M. C.

Olive Branches.

BIRTHS. March 1st, the wife of Mr. W. Davies, a daughter. March 19th, the wife of Eli Evans, a daughter.

FADED LEAVES.

DIED.—March 9th, our sister in Christ, Christiana Riches, aged 64, after a long and painful illness. But her end was peace and joy in believing. As long as she could speak or hear, the name of Jesus always seemed to stir fond memories. There was no fear in her death. She desired to depart and declared it was far better to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. May the God of all grace minister comfort to the aged husband and other loved ones left behind.

Feb. 15, in the 36th year of his age, in the bloom and strength of his manhood, Silas M. Dickie, passed away, leaving a good record as a temperance worker and christian. Died March 15th, Mrs. Edward Trueman, aged 36 years. The question of all importance is, are you ready? It is appointed, unto men once to die. All must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. How, as friend or foe?

NOT PATIENCE, BUT PORRIDGE,

AND OTHER SKETCHES.



Waiting for Breakfast.

“**M**OTHER! mother! we are so hungry. We want our breakfast.”

The cries came from a group of children who were seated round the breakfast-table, ready and eager for the meal. The smaller ones had seized their spoons and were tapping the sides of their mugs, as if to remind their mother that something more than milk was needed before they could make a beginning.

The mother needed no reminding. She was busy enough preparing the porridge, and as the children clamoured she turned a hot, but good-tempered face towards them, and said, “It will soon be ready, dears. I am a little late, but you shall have it in a few minutes.”

“But *I* want it *now*,” cried a persistent youngster and “So do I,” “So do I,” followed in chorus from the rest.

"Patience, my children, patience," said the mother. "No, no," shouted they, with one accord. "We are hungry. We don't want patience, we want porridge."

"It is always 'now,' 'now,' with you children," replied their mother, laughing heartily at the answer of her little ones, and at the same moment pouring out the steaming porridge for which they were so eager.

"And it is 'now,' now, with most of us, where the things of this world are concerned," said the father, who had witnessed this little scene.

He was a minister, and the next time he went into the pulpit he told the story of the clamorous little ones, and their cry, "We don't want patience, we want porridge."

"We are just like the children," he said. "We hunger after what we reckon the good things of this world, and we do not like to wait for them. We set our affections on riches, and would fain have them now. We desire new houses, new clothes, new enjoyments, new scenes, new occupations. And if we were asked by One who had the power to grant all our petitions, 'When do you want these things?' the answer would come quickly from every tongue, 'Now.'"

Yes, we should say, "No time like the present, for it is all we can be quite sure of. Even if we lived to be old, there would not then be the same advantage in possessing the good things of this life. Money might put all in our power, but the taste for the pleasures of the world and the power to enjoy them would be, in a great measure, gone. Give, but give now."

How differently we feel and act with regard to eternal riches. Our Father extends His hand of love and mercy, and tells, "Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation." "Turn now every one from his evil way." "Prove Me now." "Come, for all things are now ready." We are like the invited guests spoken of in the parable—we "begin with one consent to make excuse."

We have business to look after which needs all our attention. We have no time to listen to our Father's voice; no time now to lift up our own in prayer; no time to look into our own hearts, or to examine our lives by comparing our doing with God's commands.

The things of this life, we say, must be attended to now. The things which belong to God and heaven, and on which our eternal happiness or misery depends, may wait for a more convenient season.

God calls to us by His Word, His ministers, His judgments, His mercies. "Repent and believe the gospel." Believe in your need, for "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Believe in the love of God manifested in Christ Jesus, who says, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. And this is the will of Him that sent Me; that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life."

So the calls follow each other. Invitation succeeds invitation, and there is a welcome waiting for all who will come now. Salvation now; pardon now; peace now; happiness now and for all eternity.

And we turn away, or go on as before, and as if we either heard not, or that we consider these things might be of consequence to every one but ourselves. Time enough yet; time to think of heaven when earth's work and its pleasures claim our attention no longer.

God's "now" and man's "now" are very different things. The former affects eternity. God calls, "Be wise now," for He "wants to be gracious." The years of our lives roll on and on, and all the patience is on the side of our Father in heaven, who is "ready to pardon, gracious, and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness."

Sometimes, though, we cry now to our God. If in danger, we plead "Save now." If in poverty, "Send now prosperity," if in sickness or suffering, we want healing or relief now.

May the Holy Spirit so show us our sinfulness and need that God's now and our now may mean the same, and our longing souls be satisfied with nothing but the living Bread sent down from heaven to give full, free, and present salvation.

Ruth Lamb.

DEACON PRAY'S APPLE-TREE.



THE preacher was absent one Sunday, and Deacon Pray was invited to speak to the people; and he talked on this wise:—

"Some years ago, an apple-tree, growing quite near my door, produced such small, mean fruit that my wife one day declared it utterly worthless, and advised me to cut it down. So, getting my axe, I prepared to strike a heavy blow, when, swift as lightning, through my brain came this thought: 'Let it stand, and graft into its worthless trunk a shoot from some tree which bears good fruit.' 'I will,' I said, and carrying back my axe, returned with grafting-wax and a shoot, which I soon had firmly grafted into the useless tree.

"And, my friends, after a few seasons, that same tree bears the largest, fairest fruit that grows upon my farm to-day; and all because of that little shoot from the better tree, which, infusing its life and qualities into the old trunk, brought its fruit up to a higher standard.

"And my wife declares at each harvest time that the old tree preaches a sermon to her, for it makes her think of the love of Christ, which, grafted into our hearts, renovates them and bears fruit in better motives and actions than were ours before. And, friends, following out this thought, let us remember that among our fellow-men there are none so low

but that they may be saved by grace. A little kindness and charity on our part may lead them on to higher places, even to the throne of grace."

It is well known that if the seeds of an apple are planted, there is not the slightest probability that they will produce apples like that from which they were taken. No one but the Creator of all things can explain the mystery that lies wrapped in an apple-seed; but to this uncertainty we owe the enjoyment of thousands of kinds of apples, different in size, colour, shape, taste, and flavour, with which we are supplied.

Nurserymen never depend upon the uncertain chances of securing good natural fruit. No matter what the quality of the tree from which the seed came may have been, the fruit-grower puts little dependence upon the natural stock. He might wait ten years for the tree to develop, and then find that the fruit was worthless; he knows a better way than that, and so when the trees are very small, just beginning to grow, he goes through the nursery and cuts off all the tops, and grafts every one of them with just such shoots as he prefers. Grafting them near the root, the whole tree bears one kind of fruit; grafting them when they are small, the strength of the tree is not wasted in fruitless experiments, but is at once utilized.

There are many persons who have been pruning and digging and working about the old tree of human nature, and who yet get no good fruit. What they want is the grafting, the implanting of the new principle of Divine life, which will make them what they need to be, and what they must be, in order to fill their place in this world and be a blessing to those around them.

Let the Word of God be engrafted or implanted in the soul of man, and, like the good seed cast into good ground, it speedily brings forth good fruit. Blessed are they who, ceasing from their own strength, their own ways, and their own wisdom, "receive with meekness the engrafted Word" which is able to save their souls.

WHERE ARE THE NINE?

PERHAPS one of the commonest sins of believing Christians is ingratitude towards God; many are ready enough to cry out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us," to acknowledge Jesus as their Master and Saviour; to confess their own need of mercy; to believe that He can heal all their wounds, and yet, when the prayer of faith is granted, how few remember to thank Him, and give glory to God for the benefits received?

How often now must the Lord have cause to say of us, as He did when He entered that Galilean village eighteen hundred years ago of the lepers, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?"

Picture to yourselves that scene. Our Lord going

up to Jerusalem, walking with two of the apostles, James and John, for St. Luke tells us that they were with Him, and at the entrance to a certain village He meets ten lepers who stood afar off, for the law did not allow people afflicted with this terrible disease to enter the towns, nor to hold any intercourse with their fellow-men. We know that they dared not approach even the Great Physician, so they cried aloud to Him to have mercy upon them. And then we can fancy the Saviour turning in the direction of their voices and saying, when He saw who it was who spoke to Him, "Go show yourselves unto the priest."

There was no need for them to explain what they wanted; the marks of the leprosy from which they were suffering were all too visible, even if the Lord had not been able, as He was, to read their thoughts and see their faith, as well as their sickness, and at once He answers, "Go show yourselves to the priest."

This very answer implied that their prayer was granted, for it was the custom for all those who had been cured of leprosy to show themselves to the priests that they might certify they were really healed, before they ventured to mix with other men, or to enter the synagogues and villages. And the lepers never doubted His power. They turned at once to obey Him, and as they went they were cleansed.

So far the ten lepers are an example to us of faith, and trust, and obedience. But what follows? One only, and that one a Samaritan, a member of a despised sect, returned to give Him thanks, and he fell on his face before Him, and with a loud voice glorified God.

Now, as we read this story, we cannot fail to be struck with the gross ingratitude of the other nine, and yet are not many of us guilty of like ingratitude? Leprosy has always been taken as a type of sin, so that, in a spiritual sense, we are all lepers; all of us have need to cry to Him to heal us of this terrible disease which shuts us out from the heavenly city, and separates us from the society of angels and God's elect servants, and many of us have cried to Him for mercy, and have received His loving answer of pardon and peace.

And what then? Have we returned like that poor Samaritan, and thanked Him heartily and humbly? Do we constantly remember to thank Him for all the blessings, temporal and spiritual, we so constantly receive at His hand? Does it ever occur to us to thank Him for the trials and troubles, the loving chastisements He sometimes sends us; often blessings in disguise?

Or are we like the nine lepers? Do we go on our way without one word of thanks? If so, we not only grieve Him by our ingratitude, but we miss the further blessing which the Samaritan received, for we read that when he thanked Jesus, the Lord healed him of his spiritual sickness as well as of the physical disease, giving him a far greater blessing than he had asked for.

It is this greater blessing that we miss if the Lord has ever cause to say of us, "Where are the nine?"



Outside the Walls of Jerusalem.

A STORY FOR THE TROUBLED.

JESUS was always ready to bless, even before He was called. Those who pressed to touch the hem of His garment were richly rewarded for their faith. He was peculiarly susceptible to domestic sorrow; to assuage it He performed His greatest miracles. It cannot be owing to exhaustion of body, for waiting for refreshment at Jacob's Well He forgot self in speaking to the woman there. While suffering agony on the cross the penitent thief was gently comforted.

The suppliant at Jacob's Well was a Gentile and a heathen, and in this, the first instance of one not a Jew being blessed, it may have been necessary to justify the gift by the urgency of the occasion. Also, it may have been expedient to show that there was stronger faith outside the Jewish pale.

This woman in particular God meant to bless. So you who are burdened spread out your case before Him. Sins may weigh you down; conscience may ceaselessly reproach you; the heavens may appear shut to your cries. Despair not, this story is recorded for you. The treatment does not dissipate her faith. True it is that silent contempt is worse to bear than even an open denial; but her thoughts turn to her demented daughter, and she redoubled her cries, till at length the disciples manifest their natural prejudices and want of sympathy, and they would send her away.

"I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," was the Lord's answer. As if He said, "I am full of mercy, but not for you; I am sent to seek, but I pass you by. Daughter of an accursed race, return to your house, there to hear the demoniac cries of your unfortunate child."

Fellow-man, does God appear thus to act toward you? Is there no light upon your path? Does it appear that the decrees of God are against you? I pray you follow this recital. Observe that the second refusal does not damp her faith. Great events rouse and quicken the dormant energies.

Now the suppliant rises to a higher level of faith and entreaty. She may have heard of the cure of a Syrian leper; of a widow of Zidon, whom a prophet of Israel had greatly blessed; of a woman of Samaria, whom Jesus Himself had personally befriended. She draws

near and worships. But the treatment appears to become worse instead of better. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs."

Oh, my brother, if this is a parallel to your present position, do not lose heart. Peace, assurance, confidence may be to you meaningless words; your prayers seem to vanish into air and bring no answer; your perseverance has only caused greater difficulties; your strength is turned to weakness; your sins rise up as billows to overwhelm you, and you are ready to exclaim, "Never so great a sinner has received salvation."

But stop! do not give up; give no place to despair. Satan may wish to drive you to it, but God has yet deliverance for you. Read again.

The acuteness and earnestness of the woman are further illustrated. She hears the words of Jesus and acknowledges their truth. But she honours the Lord by extolling the supplies of His abundant grace. In my father's house there is bread enough and to spare—abundance of bread for the children and crumbs for me. And the Lord, if He may not as the sent, as the servant, receive this poor suppliant Gentile, exercises the prerogative of a Son, and receives her into the family. "Oh, woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Blessed result! Nay, she received a greater blessing than she craved for. She asked for her daughter, and she received also for herself. Her prayers were more than answered. Oh, to be sincere in prayer! Would not many start alarmed if their petitions of the lip were answered? Monica's son has many imitators, who pray his prayer, "Lord, make me holy—but not yet." Oh, if but we beggars had the eagerness in asking that the Benefactor has in bestowing, what heavenly gifts would be showered upon us!

The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence. Take not one, two, or three denials. Let us seek till we find, knock until the door is opened. The faithless king withheld his arrows, and Syria was unsubdued. Jacob wrestled until the breaking of the day, and as a prince obtained power with God and men. So let us also persevere, nor rest content short of His full salvation; for such as are of this mind will surely see the day dawn and the day-star arise in their hearts.

Rev. Dr. M'Cosh.

TWO WAYS OF READING THE BIBLE.

"**W**OULD you like another chapter, Lilian dear?" asked Kate Everard of the invalid cousin, to nurse whom she had lately come from her quiet home in Hampshire.

"Not now, thanks; my head is tired," was the feeble reply.

Kate closed her Bible with a feeling of slight disappointment. She knew that Lilian was slowly sinking

"There must be something wrong here," thought Kate, who had never during her life kept her bed for one day through sickness. "It is a sad thing when the dying do not prize the Word of God."

Such was the hard thought which passed through the mind of Kate, and she felt it her duty to speak on the subject to Lilian, though she scarcely knew how to begin.

"Lilian," said Kate, trying to soften her naturally quick, sharp tones to gentleness, "I should have



"And what is that verse?" asked Kate.

under incurable disease, and what could be more suitable to the dying than to be constantly hearing the Bible read? Lilian might surely listen, if she were too weak to read to herself. Kate was never easy in mind unless she perused at least two or three chapters daily, besides a portion of the Psalms; and she had several times gone through the whole Bible from beginning to end. And here was Lilian, whose days on earth must be few, tired with one short chapter.

thought that now, when you are so ill, you would have found special comfort in the Scriptures."

Lilian's languid eyes had closed, but she opened them, and, with a soft, earnest gaze on her cousin, replied, "I do—they are my support; I have been feeding on one verse all the morning."

"And what is that verse?" asked Kate.

"Whom I shall see for myself;" began Lilian slowly; but Kate cut her short.

"I know that verse perfectly; it is in Job; it comes

just after 'I know that my Redeemer liveth;' the verse is, 'Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.'

"What do you understand by the expression 'not another'?" asked Lillian.

"Why, of course, it means—well, it just means, I suppose, that we shall see the Lord ourselves," replied Kate, a little puzzled by the question, for though she had read the text a hundred times, she had never once dwelt on its meaning.

"Do you think," said Lillian, rousing herself a little, "that the last three words are merely a repetition of 'whom I shall see for myself'?"

"Really, I have never so particularly considered those words," answered Kate. "Have you found out any remarkable meaning in that 'not another'?"

"They were a difficulty to me," replied the invalid, "till I happened to read that in the German Bible they are rendered a little differently; and then I searched in my own Bible and found that the word in the margin of it is like that in the German translation."

"I never look at the marginal references," said Kate, "though mine is a large Bible and has them."

"I find them such a help in comparing Scripture with Scripture," observed Lillian.

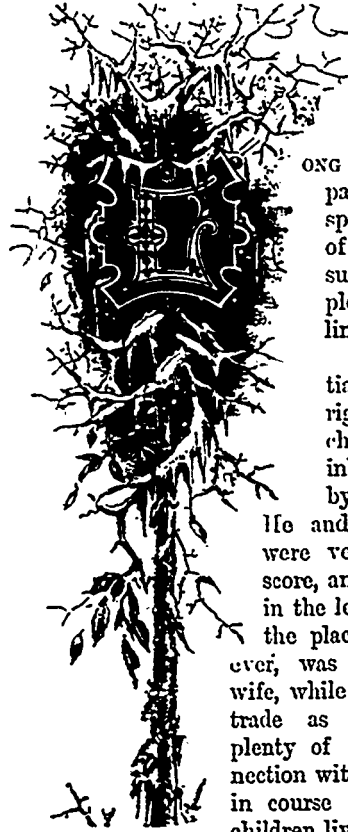
Kate was silent for several seconds. She had been careful daily to read a large portion from the Bible; but to "mark, learn, and inwardly digest it" she had never even thought of trying. In a more humble tone she now asked her cousin, "What is the word which is put in the margin of the Bible instead of 'another' in that difficult text?"

"A stranger," replied Lillian; and then, clasping her thin, wasted hands, she repeated the whole passage, on which her soul had been feeding with silent delight: "'Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger.' Oh, Kate," continued the dying girl, while unbidden tears rose to her eyes, "if you only knew what sweetness I have found in that verse all this morning, while I have been in great bodily pain! I am in the valley of shadow—I shall soon cross the dark river. I know it; but He will be with me, and not a stranger. He is the Good Shepherd, and I know His voice; a stranger would I not follow. And when I open my eyes in another world, it is the Lord Jesus whom I shall behold, my own Saviour, my own tried Friend, and not a stranger. I shall at last see Him whom, not having seen, I have loved."

Lillian closed her eyes again, and the large drops, overflowing, fell down her pallid cheeks. She had spoken too long for her strength. But the feeble sufferer's words had not been spoken in vain.

"Lillian has drawn more comfort and profit from one verse, nay, from three words, in the Bible than I have drawn from the whole book," reflected Kate. "I have but read the Scriptures; she has searched them. I have been like one floating carelessly over the surface of waters under which lie pearls; Lillian has dived deep and made the treasure her own."

Let me earnestly recommend the habit of choosing from our morning portion of the Bible some few words to meditate over during the day. At a mothers' meeting which I attend, each of the women in her turn gives a text to be remembered daily by all during the week, and in every family such a custom might be found helpful. It is by praying over, resting on, feeding on God's Word that we find that it is indeed spirit and life, and to the humble, contrite heart sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. A. L. O. E.



MARK, THE CARPENTER.

LONG years have glided past since I used to spend a month or two of the brief northern summer at one of the pleasant villages that line the Frith of Clyde.

The beauty of Christian integrity and uprightness shone in the character of an humble inhabitant of this village by name Mark Oswald.

He and his partner in life were verging towards threescore, and kept a small store in the leading thoroughfare of the place. The store, however, was attended to by the wife, while Mark wrought at his trade as a carpenter, finding plenty of employment in connection with the numerous villas in course of construction. No children lived with the old couple

—their only son having entered the service of a Glasgow draper, with whom he resided, though sometimes he had the indulgence of a holiday to pay a visit to his old father and mother.

I used to look in of an evening, and spend an hour with the good old couple. They were both instances of the intelligent Christian piety so often found in the humbler walks of life in Scotland. A neat book-case occupied a conspicuous place in their clean and tidy back parlour, containing many a well-thumbed volume of the good old Scottish divines, and neatly-bound volumes of modern Christian literature. On the top of the antique chest of drawers lay "the big ha' Bible, once his father's pride," which, regularly as evening came, was read at the family altar, and its sacred lessons made the theme of evening prayer. And with this practice their whole lives and characters were beautifully consistent.

In illustration of this, I may be allowed to glance for a moment at their previous history. They had seen better days. Mark had been a prosperous store-

keeper in a thriving manufacturing district. Things made fair to crown his exertions with a modest competence, when a sudden and great depression of trade threw the workpeople, on whose custom he depended, out of employment. Money became scarce—long accounts were run up at Mark's store, who could not refuse to trust his old customers in their hour of need. All hoped trade would revive, and things get right again. Trade, however, continued to get worse, and the workers dispersed in search of employment elsewhere, leaving Mark to wind up his affairs and count his losses.

Mark had now to meet his liabilities as he best could. After disposing of the remainder of his stock, and paying his creditors all the money he could raise, he left the place, being still indebted to the extent of somewhere betwixt one and two hundred pounds. It was then he came to the village where I made his acquaintance. He immediately found employment at his original handicraft, and a few months' saving sufficed to start the small store which his wife managed.

And now one object engrossed the anxieties of both. That was the payment of their just debts, incurred, no doubt, through the misfortunes and consequent shortcomings of others, but still manfully acknowledged by Mark Oswald as calling for payment so soon as his means would permit. So out of the fruits of their joint industry the regular monthly instalment was sent off towards the payment of past claims. Year after year was this continued, until the whole was cleared off, and a receipt in full obtained.

A thankful man was Mark Oswald when he once more "owed no man anything." He praised God for the health granted to him—enabling him to continue his exertions until the object so near his heart was accomplished. To be sure, old age was drawing on, and he might soon be sorely in need of the money thus paid away, and worldly-wise men would scarcely have blamed him, in the circumstances, had he become bankrupt, and thrown off all further legal responsibility.

But Mark was not the man to shirk what he conceived to be the plain duty of an honest man and a Christian. No increase of personal comfort weighed for a moment in his mind, in comparison with a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man; and the privilege of publicly holding up his head, and boldly saying, "I have wronged no man—I have defrauded no man."

But a dark shadow fell across the threshold of this worthy Christian family. The only son, on whom all their earthly hopes rested, and to whom they looked to be the support and comfort of their declining years, came home, as it turned out—to die. He had caught cold, which ended in consumption, and all efforts to arrest its progress were vain. A tall, fine young man he was, and it was sad to look upon his pale, wasted face and hands, as he sat in the arm-chair by his mother's fireside, and to notice how anxiously the mother scanned the countenance of the physician, to, if possible, extract some ray of hope from its expression. But eventually hope was extinguished in all minds by the rapid strides of the disease.

Yet there was no gloom in that house. The dying man had from a child known the Holy Scriptures. They had been the guide of his youth, and they had preserved him from the snares of sin. In his calling he had shown all good fidelity, and the regret of his employer, who heaped every kindness on him in his illness, was scarcely less intense than that of his parents. He now rested calmly on that Saviour on whom he believed, trusting in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and in the righteousness which is unto and upon all them that believe. He fell asleep in Jesus, and his aged parents sorrowed, but not as those who have no hope. They followed the departed spirit with the eye of faith to that house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens, whose threshold is never crossed by the shadow of death. They knew it was but a short separation—the prelude of a never-ending re-union—that as Jesus died and rose again, so them also who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.

Shortly after this bereavement, Mark Oswald became too infirm to continue working at his trade as heretofore, and confined himself to the management of his humble store, whose returns now sufficed for all the wants of the aged couple. For so much was their character esteemed in the village, that people would go even out of their way to make purchases from them—being sure that everything sold there was what it professed to be, and that scrupulous integrity characterised all Mark's dealings.

And not only the minister, but many Christian friends were often to be found in the tidy back-parlour, delighting in the Christian intercourse which it never failed to yield. And many a thoughtless youth has in that little store had spoken to him a word in season, whose fruit is, perhaps, now apparent.

Now the street where the worthy couple lived has been rebuilt—the store, with its tidy back-parlour, has been swept away, and Mark Oswald and his aged partner lie beside their only son in the village churchyard, awaiting the resurrection of the just. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

LOOKING FOR A BETTER COUNTRY.

THE promised land of peace
Faith keeps in constant view;
How different from the wilderness
We now are passing through!

Here often from our eyes
Clouds hide the light divine;
There we shall have unclouded skies,
Our Sun will always shine!

Here griefs, and cares, and pains,
And fears distress us sore;
But there eternal pleasure reigns,
And we shall weep no more.

Lord, pardon our complaints;
We follow at Thy call;
The joy prepared for suffering saints
Will make amends for all.



"I'd rather be as I am."

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

"I'd rather be as I am, a hundred times over; that I would!"

So said Thomas Scales. Yet, to look at him, you would not have thought his a happy state at all. He had been a strong man once, a blacksmith by trade, and very proud he had been of his size and strength; but now he was a helpless cripple, paralysed in one side, and with hardly any use of his limbs, and could not get about without his crutch.

He still looked a fine man, but he could not get up from his chair without help, nay, he could hardly feed himself. It was a pitiful sight to see that big man drag himself slowly across the room, leaning on a crutch on one side, and held up by his wife's arm on the other. And even this he did only once or twice in the day; usually he sat in his chair by the fire without moving.

And yet, looking back to his days of health and strength, he said (though the tears stood in his eyes while he said it), "I'd rather be as I am, a hundred times over!"

How was this? But now let us hear what else he said.

"I'd rather be the poor helpless creature I am than what I was then. I used to be proud of being so big and strong; people used to call me a fine man, and I thought I was one myself, and I was mighty proud of what I could do. Ah! God has brought down my pride now. But all that time I hadn't a thought about God. I never cared one bit about Him or my soul. I was just as if I had no soul. I used to drink and swear, and talk big and laugh—poor fool that I was!—just as if I could do anything, and as if nothing could happen to me. Wasn't it a mercy God didn't cut me off then?"

"But see what He has done, bless His holy name! He brought me down sharp, and took away my strength, and made me no more than a child, as you see

me now. This was all to bring down my pride. And then he showed me I was a sinner. I was like a blind man before, but now He made me see. I saw what a proud fool I had been—what a wicked sinner; I saw how good God had been to spare me; and I learnt about Jesus and His precious blood, and about the Holy Spirit the Comforter, and He does comfort me; and now He gives me happy thoughts, and I can give up all, and be thankful too.

"And though I'm a bit low-at times, yet that does not come often. I think God keeps it away. When I feel so, then I try to think of my Saviour dying for me, and caring about me still, and of my Father in heaven; and when I think that He has forgiven me all my sins for Christ's sake, then I'm happy, and I seem to care for nothing. Yes, I'd rather be as I am, a thousand times, than what I was before."

I would not change my blest estate
For all the world calls good or great;
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner's gold.

Thomas wiped away a tear as he spoke; but it was not a tear of sorrow. You could not hear him and see him, when he spoke so, without quite believing, what he said. Yes, he was far happier, with his heavenly Father's forgiveness, and far better off, than ever he had been in his health and strength.

COMING! COMING!

THERE was an old turnpike man on a quiet country road, whose habit was to shut his gate at night and take his nap. One dark wet midnight I knocked at his door, calling, "Gate! gate!"

"Coming!" said the voice of the old man.

Then I knocked again, and once more the voice replied, "Coming."

This went on for some time, till at length I grew quite angry, and jumping off my horse, opened the door and demanded why he cried "Coming!" for twenty minutes, but never came.

"Who's there?" said the old man, in a quiet, sleepy voice, rubbing his eyes. "What d'ye want, sir?" Then awakening, "Bless yer, sir, and yer pardon; I was asleep. I get so used to hearing 'em knock that I answer 'Coming!' in my sleep, and takes no more notice about it."

So it is with too many hearers of the Gospel, who hear by habit and answer God by habit, and at length die with their souls asleep. Awake, O sleeper! for God "hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath appointed," and then your idle answers will all be brought to light.

Time is earnest, passing by;
Death is earnest, drawing nigh:
Sinner, wilt thou trifling be?
Time and death appeal to thee!

THE BURNING OF THE "POLAR STAR,"

AND OTHER SKETCHES.



THE BURNING OF THE "POLAR STAR."

SERGEANT WILLIAM MARJOURAM relates an experience of God's providence which occurred to him when quite a young man. He had just been made a corporal, and the whole regiment was ordered out to New Zealand. He and his young wife and the detachment to which he belonged embarked in the *Polar Star* at Gravesend, little anticipating the distress and suffering to which they were to be exposed before they quitted that ill-fated vessel.

The passengers often congratulated one another on the prospect of a speedy conclusion of their voyage, and talked of the pleasures awaiting them in New Zealand. These expectations were speedily overclouded by a fearful calamity. At half-past eight on one Lord's day morning, the cry of "Fire! Fire!" was heard throughout the ship, and in a few moments volumes of smoke issued from the hatchways. When the alarm was given, some of the passengers were in bed, others at breakfast, and Marjouram and his wife were just about to sit down to theirs. He thus graphically describes the scenes that ensued:—

Every one was now seen running wildly to and fro; some with only a blanket around them, and others half-dressed; women calling for their children, and wives for their husbands. The women and children were soon hurried into the cabin on the upper deck, and the crew, male passengers, and soldiers, began to throw water down the hold. But we soon discovered that it was useless, as the fire was evidently gaining on us, and we were in danger of being suffocated with smoke. So the captain gave the order to batten down the hatches; and, as everything we possessed was below, our worldly all was lost.

A heavy sea was running. It seemed hopeless to attempt to lower the boats, but they were all got ready, and everything done that could be done.

For three days the women and children remained huddled together on the quarter-deck, exposed to the cold and the spray that was constantly breaking over them, with no other food than some biscuits and a bottle or two of wine. We managed to fill two casks with fresh water, and when all was done that could be done, we were left each to his own thoughts. We had stopped every hole and crevice with the manure that was in the horse box, but we could not prevent the smoke from escaping. About this time I went to the captain, and asked him if he had any objection to our having our usual Sunday morning service. He

said, "Not the slightest." As the doctor had usually performed this service, I requested him to begin; but, after he had read a few sentences from the Prayer-book, I discovered that he was quite unfit. I accordingly read the 107th Psalm, and afterwards engaged in prayer; and thus ended our solemn service.

It was supposed the fire had originated in the hay taken on board for the horses, and which it was reported had been taken on board damp. The boats were not capable of holding half the people, and the soldiers nobly determined to see the women and children safe away from the ship, and they take their chance of being saved afterwards.

In the evening we were told off into two watches—one under the charge of a lieutenant and a sergeant, the other under the first mate and myself. We were relieved every two hours.

We were steering towards Rio Janeiro, and out of the usual track of vessels, having seen none for some weeks. Oh! how anxiously was every eye



directed towards the horizon as long as a glimmer of daylight remained; but all in vain. Alone in her ruin rode our burning ship, the smoke issuing from every aperture. We saw the sun go down, but with little prospect of ever witnessing another sunrise. My dear wife and myself now committed ourselves to God in prayer, trusting that if He was about to remove us from all earthly troubles, He would take us to that place where the weary are at rest. We continued our labours without a moment's pause during the night, and,

praised be the Lord, once more beheld the day.

Another sun rose and set—another day of apprehension and alarm. We had killed one of our sheep, but could not get it properly cooked, as we had no coal on deck. Ever since the fire broke out, the mast-head had carried our flag of distress, and had been frequently occupied by look-outs with a powerful telescope to scan every part of the horizon. We were beginning to feel cold, faint, and exhausted with incessant exposure and wet, yet another night of weariness and toil awaited us.

On being relieved from my watch, I took my Prayer-book from my pocket with the intention of reading, but imagine my delight when on the very first page to which I turned, I saw inscribed that ancient promise of glorious encouragement—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." I shouted it to all around me, and then read the Psalm aloud. Possibly some who heard it will remember it on their death-bed.

I had scarcely finished when the glad cry of "A sail on the weather bow," suddenly put fresh life and hope into every one. All lungs and throats were instantly strained, and three vehement cheers resounded over the water.

Night was fast closing in, but hope was high that our signals might still be seen. Our little store of powder was soon used up, and met with no response. We had but one blue light left, and that we fired from the fore-yard. I will not attempt to describe the sickening eagerness with which we watched its effect, or yet the unutterable joy with which, after a weary ten minutes' interval, we witnessed a similar light burning from the deck of the other vessel. Now woke up the grateful hymn, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" We soon saw our deliverer bearing down upon us, and in half an hour were hailed by "Ship ahoy!"

"Hallo!"

"Do you want any assistance?"

"Yes."

"All right, I'll go about and lie to."

She proved to be the *Annamooka*, from Callao, bound for Cadiz, with a cargo of guano. The captain promised to remain near them during the night. In the meantime, at all events to secure their safety, the women and children were removed from the burning ship, Marjouram with a few others volunteering for this perilous service. It was a task full of danger, for a heavy sea was running, and although the vessels were not more than half a mile apart, frequently neither was visible to those in the boat. After three trips their object was successfully accomplished, and on the following morning the men left the *Polar Star*, with difficulty escaping from the flames that now raged with fury along the main deck and along the rigging.

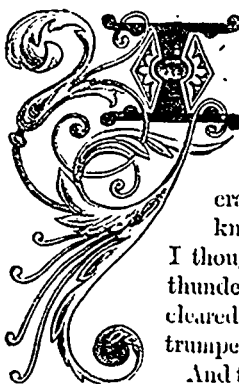
They had not quitted her more than ten minutes, when the main-mast went over the side, tearing the fore-top and mizen-top with it, and ripping up the deck, so giving greater vent to the maddened flames. In two or three minutes all the remaining masts went over, and the vessel was in flames from stem to stern. Night was rapidly coming on. The boat shipped some heavy seas, and the rain was pouring down in torrents; while, to heighten their apprehensions, an enormous shark followed in their wake within an oar's length of their stern. After beating about in this manner for some time we were observed by the *Annamooka*. A boat was immediately despatched to our assistance, and we were soon safe on board.

My heart (says Marjouram) was raised in grateful praise to Almighty God on looking back at the dangers we had escaped. Let him who would ridicule the idea of the superintendence of Divine Providence reflect on this simple illustration, furnished by the experience of myself and my fellow-sufferers, of a truth so very full of comfort, before he ventures to nourish his unbelief.

Any one who has taken a long voyage will know that it is possible for a ship to be even months at sea without seeing either land or vessel. And should any fatal accident befall it, its fate would, in all

probability, never be known. Might it not have been so with the *Polar Star*? Then, too, as regards the manner of the timely rescue—I had it from an officer of the *Annamooka* that she had been more than a fortnight on the opposite tack to the one she was on when we saw her. Then let me "thank the Lord for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men." Is not this a direct interposition of Providence?

THE LONG-SUFFERING OF GOD.



Is not the Divine forbearance the miracle of miracles? I am sure when I stood for a few minutes at the bottom of Pilate's Staircase in Rome, and saw the poor creatures crawling up and down it on their knees, and the priests looking on, I thought that if I had the loan of a thunderbolt or two I would have cleared out all the impostors and their trumpery in a twinkling of an eye.

And then I recollected that they were dealing with God, and not with man. He looks down on antichrist and all its blasphemies, and still stays His hand. He sees in this City of London sins which I dare not mention; yet does His thunder sleep. He hears men curse Him, and even defy Him to His face, and still do His compassions go forth, and He beareth with them still. Wonderful, wonderful is the omnipotent long-suffering of the Lord. Oh, then, my brethren, we ought surely to have patience with the trifling affronts which we have to put up with in the service of God, and we ought never to grow weary in well-doing.

Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

IN A FELON'S CELL.



CHARLES ALLINGHAM was the only son of a respectable tradesman, who conducted a considerable business in the town of Hertford. Old Mr. Allingham was a linendraper, bordering on sixty, was well-to-do in the world, and had but two children—a son and daughter, in whom all his affection centered. He used frequently to say that if anything serious were to occur to either of these beloved children, it would at once deprive him of all regard for life.

His wife, however, a woman of not less affectionate nature, but more correct notions, reproved her husband for his loose manner of expressing himself. She asserted that it was the duty of all to thank Providence for every blessing, but not to set undue value on one above another.

Had Mr. Allingham not allowed affection for his children to become so engrossing a passion; had he given a larger measure of sympathy to his fellow-

creatures in general, and devoted more of his time and means to aid religious effort, the episode which we are about to relate might never have occurred in his family, and he and those dear to him might have been spared the agony which it occasioned.

Be this, however, as it may, Charles Allingham was the only son of his parents, and being about as fine a young man as could be seen anywhere, their extreme partiality for him was not without its extenuating circumstances. His sister, too, was "beautiful exceedingly," so modest, and frank, that young and old were

He was a young man of about his own age, from London, who was on a visit to his country cousins. With this person's conversation Charles was quite fascinated; so much so, that he was induced by him to quit the "slow" life of the parental roof, and repair to the great city.

It is easy to conceive, but impossible to describe, the astonishment and grief of Charles Allingham's parents on the announcement of this intention. All remonstrances, however, were in vain, and even the eloquent pleading of sisterly affection failed to shake Charles.

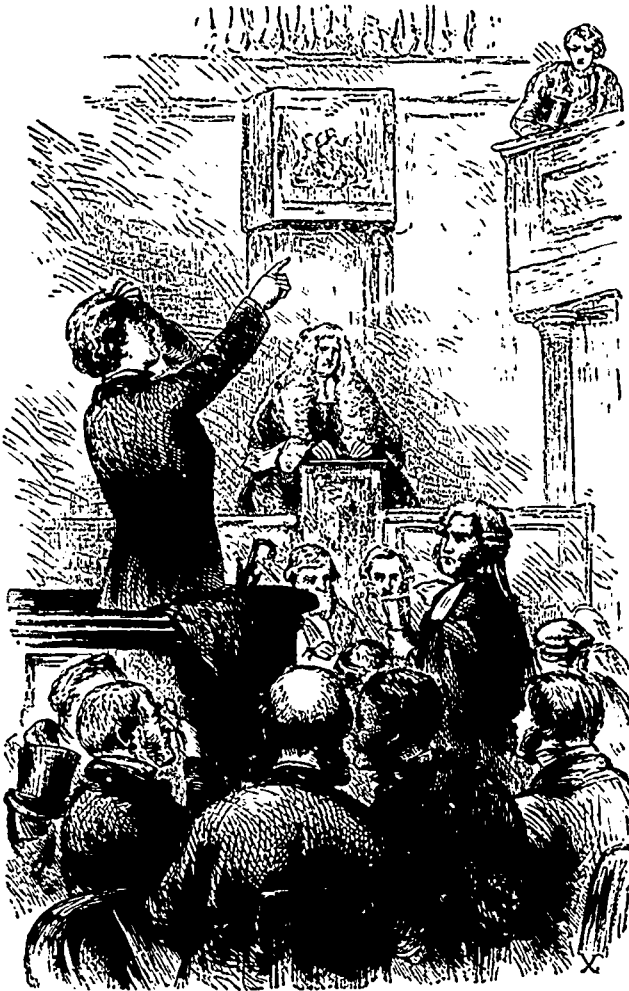
In London, Charles Allingham, withdrawn from the salutary influences of home, felt his mind easily corrupted, and his moral character soon began to reflect the nature and effects of the change. He entered upon the gaieties of city life with recklessness; and this soon involved him in difficulties, and in an evil hour he yielded to temptation, helped himself to what did not belong to him, was detected, and in due course committed to take his trial at Newgate.

The consternation, the heart-rending grief of his parents and his affectionate sister may be conceived, when they were made aware of his situation. But the intense agony of Charles Allingham, when he found himself the occupant of a felon's cell, was not less heart-rending. He had time to take a survey of his short life, and to contrast the peace, the purity, the happiness of that period of it which was spent under the parental roof with the false glitter, the feverish excitement, the sin, and the sorrow of that which followed; and when, on their visit to him, he heard the sympathy and hope which fell from his parents, he sobbed in agony, and in broken accents asked their forgiveness and their prayers.

And he was forgiven. His contrition was profound and sincere. He had seen the error of his way. He had passed through the fiery furnace of trial and affliction, and his high qualities of character shone forth in after life all the brighter for the ordeal through which they were passed.

He lived to become a prominent member of a Christian church, and an active promoter of every good work. He took especial interest in the welfare of young men, whose temptations and trials he knew from his own bitter experience.

Nor were the effects of this lesson of suffering confined to him personally. His father frequently acknowledged his wife's warning words of wisdom respecting his excessive parental fondness; and he also felt it his duty to take a more active interest in the general work of the Gospel, and do what lay in his power to save others from the contamination of bad society, from which his beloved son had been saved as if by a miracle, and all through his after life he ungrudgingly assisted, to the full extent of his means, in the dissemination of Christian truth.



In the Dock.

alike attracted; and this brother and sister loved each other tenderly.

Charles was disposed to be gay enough, but would as soon have thought of committing sacrilege as of disobeying his parents; and his sister would never go where he was not invited. Therefore no danger to morals or social propriety was ever felt by their parents from the invitations they were in the habit of accepting. Nevertheless, at an entertainment given by a neighbour, Charles had the misfortune to meet a person whose conversation inspired longings to which he had previously been a stranger.



Fleeing to the City of Refuge.

THE CITY OF REFUGE.

IN Old Testament times, God taught His people, the Jews, very much as we teach our children, by pictures and illustrations. These pictures, drawn, as it were, by God's own hand, we call types. They all pointed to the Great Deliverer who was to come, telling something of His person, or character, or work, as God's appointed Substitute and Saviour for the guilty children of men.

Not the least striking and beautiful of these types was the City of Refuge.

God's abhorrence of the awful crime of murder was stamped upon the code of laws which He gave to Moses. "The murderer," says the Great Lawgiver, "shall surely be put to death." The "blood" of the

murdered person was represented as "defiling the land;" and it could not be cleansed from the dark and dreadful stain but by the death of the murderer. "The land," said God, "cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." The nearest of kin was appointed as the executioner of God's vengeance. He was to be the "avenger of blood," and was to slay the murderer when he met him.

This law, as we might expect, was relaxed in the case of a person who had taken another's life by accident. In such cases an opportunity of escape was provided. Six cities of refuge were appointed—three on the east side and three on the west side of the River Jordan—so as to be within easy distance of the people. The roads were always to be kept in good

repair, all stones or other obstacles that might hinder the runner in his course being taken out of the way. It is said that hillocks were levelled, and bridges thrown across the streams, and that at all road-crossings there were finger-posts pointing to the city with the word "REFUGE" written in large letters; so that the terrified fugitive might not mistake the way. When he reached the city, whether by day or night, he found the gates open to receive him. His case was then tried by the elders of the city. If it was found that he was a real, intentional murderer, he was delivered up to the avenger of blood; if, however, it was found that he had not willingly taken away life, he was allowed to remain until the death of the high priest, and was quite secure from the avenger's sword.

We have here, surely, a most beautiful type or symbol of our blessed Saviour as the true and only Refuge for sinners. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews probably has this figure before his view when he speaks of those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them." He refers to sinners who had fled to Christ for salvation.

The fugitive was hotly pursued by the avenger of blood. The sinner is threatened every moment by the avenging justice of God; for "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

The fugitive knew the great danger he was in of being smitten down by the sword of his pursuer. Sinners are in the extremest danger, and they must know it, or they will not truly seek a Saviour. The fugitive fled in haste; he well knew that a single moment's delay might prove his ruin. If sinful men do not at once flee to the Saviour, they may perish everlastingly.

The City of Refuge must be appointed by God. No other city would avail but that which God has chosen. No one can afford help or security to the sinner except the great Saviour whom God has ordained "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The road to the City of Refuge was kept in good condition and repair. All obstacles were taken out of the way of the poor terrified fugitive. God has left no obstacle in the way of the sinner's coming to Christ. Through the merit of the blood shed on Calvary, the way is clear and open. "God is just, even while justifying him who believeth in Jesus."

The fugitive could not mistake the way to the City of Refuge. If sinners are willing to be guided by God, in His holy Word, they cannot mistake the way to Christ. It is simply through believing or trusting. He that runs may read. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The gates of the City of Refuge were open continually. Christ is ever ready, ever willing, ever waiting to receive sinners. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

The City of Refuge was near. Christ is always "near to them that call upon Him, that call upon Him in truth." "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

When the man reached the City of Refuge he was safe. He that has fled to Christ is eternally secure. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

There was no price of admission to the City of Refuge. The man of poverty was as welcome as the man of wealth. Christ gives His salvation free, "without money and without price." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

OUR TEA-PARTY.

TEA-PARTIES in general are common-place enough, and there is not much to be said of them that might not be as well left unsaid. But I flatter myself that in some respects "our tea-party" was a peculiar and interesting one.

The tea-party originated in the warm hearts and active brains of two ladies with whom I was associated in district-visiting in Edinburgh. We had it in one of the small rooms at the top of a long flight of spiral stairs. The guests were invited by card. They mostly consisted of the respectable and regular attendants at our weekly prayer-meeting, for we resolved to make this private party select, in order that the privilege of admission might act as a gentle stimulant to such members of the meeting as were apt to absent themselves too frequently.

The first guest that arrived was a lame old woman. She was very old and frail, but her large frame and her intelligent manner showed that she had been a useful member of society at one period of her life. She entered the room with difficulty by the help of a stick, trembling very much as she moved slowly to her chair. This lame old woman had a son—a keeper in a madhouse some distance out of town. He did not like his situation—who would?—and the anxiety bore heavily on the old mother. She had another son, or a nephew, I forget which, whom I once saw lying in her bed in a suspicious condition. Doubtless he was a cause of anxiety also. She had a grandchild, too, a "ne'er-do-well," who kept her in perpetual hot water. It seemed to me as if this old creature was surrounded by descendants who conspired to make her life miserable. This woman had not descended the stair at the top of which she dwelt for seventeen years.

The next guest was the woman with the ailing baby who lived in the attics. And after her came an old man, one of the most regular attendants at our meeting, who had once earned a livelihood by making dolls. I had always regarded this man with much interest. He was very quiet, sober, and humble. As long as his wife lived the doll manufacture was carried on briskly.

He made the wooden limbs, she sewed the canvas cuticle and stuffed it with sawdust. But when the wife died the old man's energy departed; his fingers were not skilled to make the skin, and his hand refused to construct the skeleton. In these circumstances we got him placed on the roll of the Indigent Old Men's Society—an association which, with the kindred one for Indigent Old Women, cannot be too highly spoken of or too liberally supported by all who entertain feelings of respect for old age.

The guest that followed next was a little old woman, whose abode was the smallest possible room in the attics of one of the great piles of old houses that surrounded us. This little old woman's hobby was the ornamentation of her diminutive home, and well assured am I that the joy created in the heart of that poor creature by the decoration and the admiration of that humble apartment was not one whit inferior to that experienced by the wealthiest noble of the land while engaged in the planning and ornamenting of his most stately palace. Truly "contentment with godliness" must be "great gain" when it places the lowest beggar on, to say the very least, a level with the highest peer.

There were several other guests besides those described, but space forbids more than the mere mention of their arrival. About fifteen or eighteen sat down round the room, and a few well-behaved children were accommodated with a low bench in front. Of course the babies were not taken into account. Being inseparable adjuncts to their mothers, they were admitted without cards.

All the guests being assembled, we commenced with prayer. Then the tea and bread were handed round. This duty was performed by myself and the two ladies above referred to. The great point to be overcome was the stiffness natural to such people on such an unusual occasion. We wanted them to feel that we were all having a social cup of tea together, *not* holding a prayer-meeting with the addition of food. We wished them to be what is very expressively termed "jolly," and to this end, after handing about the tea and bread, we sat down beside them and conversed with one and another in a quiet easy way, thus setting an example to the rest, which they were not slow to follow.

We had now attained to a most successful pitch of felicity. The buzz had become loud and steady, the tea-cups rattled in their passage to and from the table for additional supplies of tea, and the two tin kettles, that seemed to me to hold an inexhaustible amount of hot water, sang cheerily on the fire.

The old doll-maker was listening humbly to the learned expositions of another very white-headed old man, as old but by no means as humble as himself, who disconcerted me not a little at our weekly meetings, when he came to them, by nodding his head in an approving manner and listening with a very critical expression of countenance, and who, on one occasion, put me to utter confusion by coming up at the close with an uncommonly patronizing air and saying, "Thank you, sir; you gave us the marrow of it, sir, this time."

A man who had been a whaler had discovered, apparently, that there was an elevating power in tea as well as in whiskey, for he was chatting in animated tones to a grandmother with a sick baby, and commenting freely on the condition of the poor child's limbs, which he bared and handled with a tenderness that would have done credit to the professional touch of an M.D.

In short, everyone seemed to be happy, not excepting the trembling old woman who had not been down stairs for seventeen years, and who, although too old to talk much, and too deaf to hear anything, nevertheless nodded her head and gazed admiringly on the whole scene.

At this point in the proceedings I introduced that charming and necessary element, *variety*. I touched the spring of a musical box. The effect was instantaneous. All became perfectly silent with the exception of an elderly female, who, being somewhat deaf, did not hear, and a baby, who, being extremely young, did not care. The former was brought to her senses by a severe punch in the side from her next neighbour, and the latter was quickly smothered in its mother's bosom.

After the musical box had played its part to the entire satisfaction of all who could hear it, I produced some pictures and curiosities which I had brought home from a far-distant part of the earth, and gave the guests a short account of my travels. As the main objects of that evening were amusement and relaxation, I carefully avoided anything like an effort to instruct, and spoke only of such things as were positively interesting or humorous. I even sang them one of the boat-songs peculiar to the country of which I was speaking, and I am bound to say that I never saw a more intelligent or attentive audience.

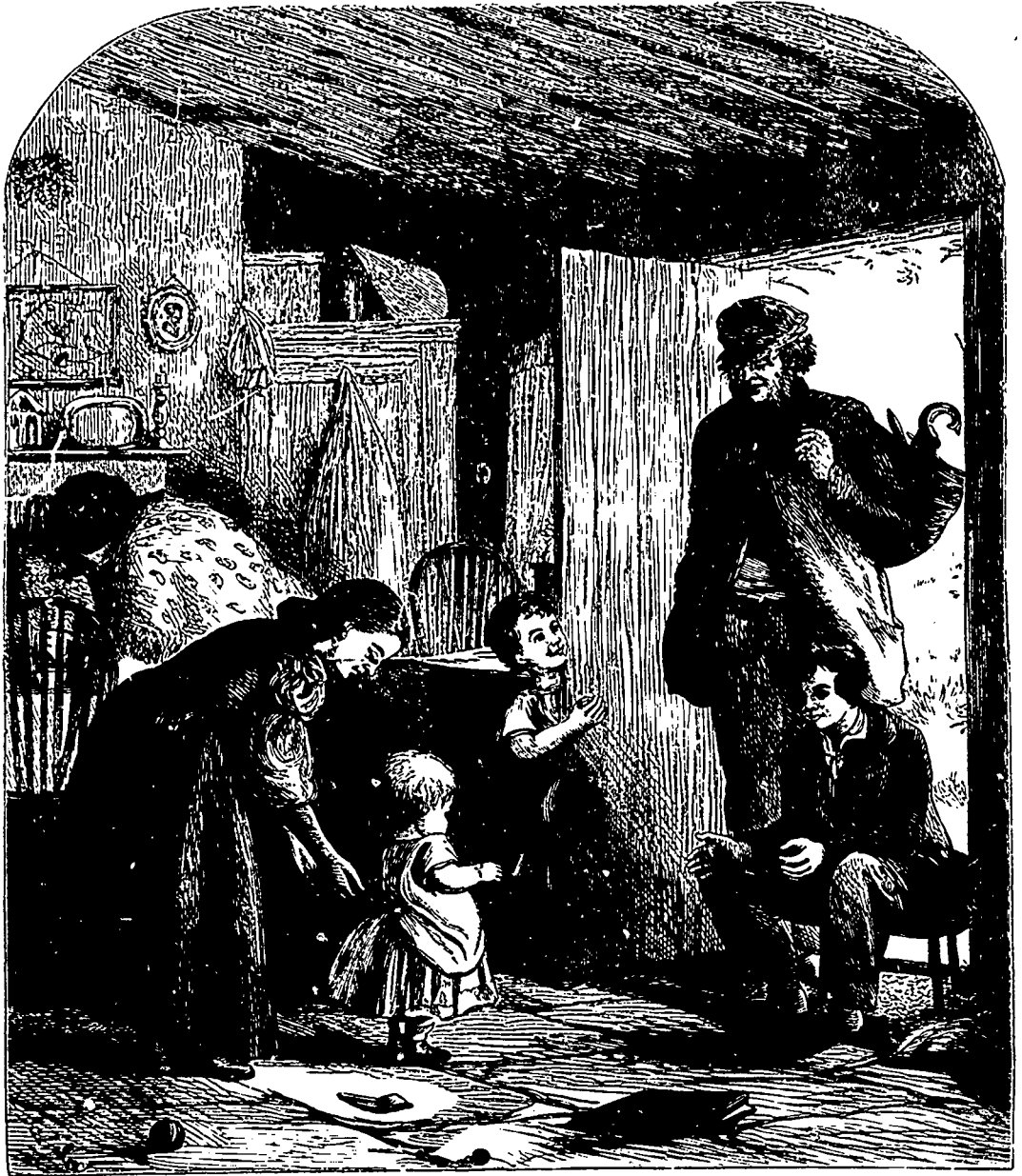
This done two friends, who had been invited to come and help to entertain the party, each delivered an address. These addresses were short, earnest, and in some parts humorous. When they had done we felt as if we could have listened to more. There is no higher compliment to be paid a speaker than that.

Our tea-party terminated as it began, with prayer, and the guests then dispersed to their homes in the garrets and cellars of the old town.

◆◆◆

GOD'S CARE OF HIS PEOPLE.

WE are not only, like Israel, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, but our God having made us His people, He provides for us by the way, giving constant evidence of His abounding grace. We do not go a warfare at our own charges. He never leaves nor forsakes us. All through our journey, our necessity is God's opportunity for doing us good. Because He careth for us, He bids us cast all our care upon Him—to be careful for nothing. Unworthy as we often prove ourselves of the least of His mercies, still He loads us with benefits, He leads us about, He keeps us as the apple of His eye.



HOME FROM WORK.

THE workshop bell rings while the sun is high,
 And frees its workers from their toil and care,
 For rambles in the fields, or rest at home,
 And preparation for the day of prayer.

The weary father treads his homeward way,
 Smiling to think upon his children's mirth,
 And all the tender love and humble faith
 That bless and glorify his lowly hearth.

There is a welcome at his very door,
 From the sweet babe that scarce can lisp his name,
 The laughing boys, the daughter, proud to share
 The household duties of the thrifty dame.

What of the long, long hours of daily toil,
 Commencing almost ere the dawn is bright?
 The simple food, the raiment coarse and worn?
 He wins the recompense for all to-night.

And with his happy children round his knee,
 He envies not a monarch's crown and cares,
 Nor all the pomp and glory of the great—
 Their only real happiness he shares.

What makes our country great among the lands—
 Beyond her works of art, her princely domes,
 Her world wide commerce and her world known fame?
 "Her holy Bibles and her happy homes." . . .

THE STORY OF BETHLEHEM,

AND OTHER SKETCHES.



View of Bethlehem.

READ LUKE ii. 1—20.

WHEN Mary was at first informed that Joseph and she must go to Bethlehem, perhaps she shrank from so long a journey, lingered to the last ere she entered on it, and took it slowly. She was late at least in her arrival at the village. The inn, we may well suppose the single one that so small a place afforded for the entertainment of strangers, was crowded. She had to take the only accommodation that the place afforded.

FRIENDLY GREETINGS. N. J. 287

A very lowly mode of entering upon human life ; nothing whatever to dignify, everything to degrade. Yet the night of that wonderful birth was not to pass by without bearing upon its bosom a bright and signal witness of the greatness of the event.

Sloping down from the rocky ridge on which Bethlehem stood, there lay some grassy fields where all that night long some shepherds watched their flocks—humble, faithful, industrious men ; men, too,

of whom we are persuaded that, Simeon-like, they were waiting for the Consecration of Israel; who had simpler and more spiritual notions of their Messiah than most of the well-taught scribes of the metropolis. They would not have understood the angel's message so well; they would not have believed it so readily; they would not have hastened so quickly to Bethlehem; they would not have bent with such reverence over so humble a cradle; they would not have made known abroad what had been told them concerning this child,—made it known as a thing in which they themselves most heartily believed—had they not been devout, believing men.

Under the starry heavens, along the lonely hillsides, these shepherds are keeping their watch, thinking, perhaps, of the time when these very sheepwalks were trodden by the young son of Jesse, or remembering some ancient prophecy that told of the coming of one who was to be David's son and David's Lord. Suddenly the angel of the Lord comes upon them, the glory of the Lord encompasses them with a girdle of light brighter than the mid-day sun could have thrown around them. They fear as they see that form, and as they are encircled by that glory, but their alarm is instantly dispelled.

"Fear not," says the angel, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Mary had been told that her child was to be called Jesus, that He was to be great, to be son of the Highest, the heir to His father David's throne, the head of an everlasting monarchy. Joseph had been told that he was to call the child born of Mary, "Jesus," for He was to save His people from their sins—a simpler and less Jewish description of His office. The angel speaks of Him to these shepherds in still broader and sublimer terms. Unto them and unto all people this Child was to be born, and unto them and unto all He was to be a Saviour, Christ the Lord, the only instance in which the double epithet, Christ the Lord, is given in this form to Him. A universal, a divine Messiahship was to be His.

The shepherds ask no sign, as Zacharias and Mary had done; yet they got one. "And this," said the angel, "shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." But one such child, born that night, wrapped up in such a way, lying in such a place, could so small a village as Bethlehem supply. That village lay but a mile or so from the spot they stood on; the sign could speedily be verified.

But they have something more to see and hear ere their visit to the village is paid. The voice of that single angel has scarce died away in the silence of the night—lost in wonder they are still gazing on his radiant form—when suddenly a whole multitude of the heavenly host bursts upon their astonished vision, lining the illuminated heavens.

Human eyes never saw before or since so large a company of the celestial inhabitants hovering in our earthly skies, and human ears never heard before or since such a glorious burst of heavenly praise as those

angels then poured forth—couching it in Hebrew speech, their native tongue for the time foregone, that these listening shepherds may catch up at once the cradle-hymn that heaven now chants over the newborn Saviour; that these shepherds may repeat it to the men of their own generation; that from age to age it may be handed down, and age after age may take it up as supplying the fittest terms in which to celebrate the Redeemer's birth—"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men."

That little dropping of its praise committed for human use to human keeping, heaven hastily veiled itself again from human vision. The whole angelic manifestation passed rapidly away. The shepherds are startled in their midnight rounds; a flood of glory pours upon them; their eyes are dazzled with those forms of light; their ears are full of that thrilling song of praise. Suddenly the glory is gone; the shining forms have vanished; the stars look down as before through the darkness; they are left to a silent unspeakable wonder and awe.

They soon, however, collect their thoughts, and promptly resolve to go at once into the village. They go in haste; the sign is verified; they find Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. They justify their intrusion by telling all that they had just seen and heard; and amid the sorrows and humiliations of that night, how cheering to Mary the strange tidings that they bring! Having told these, they bend with rude yet holy reverence over the place where the infant Saviour lies, and go their way to finish their night-watch among the hills, and then for all their life long afterwards to repeat to wondering listeners the story of that birth. With those shepherds let us bend in lowly worship over the place where the infant Redeemer lay.

Dr. Hanna.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

READ ST. MATTHEW xxii. 34—46.

GOD'S first commandment to us is to love Him with all our heart, and soul, and mind. Do we love Him so? Do we love Him at all?

Man was always bound to love God. But how are we bound to love Him, to whom the Gospel has come? We must know God in order to love Him, and He has now revealed Himself to us, as "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." We must know Him thus in His dear Son, we must know and believe the love that God hath to us, for "we love Him, because He first loved us."

This is a great commandment indeed, to love God with all the heart, and soul, and mind. It is a great deal more than a commandment merely to do, or not to do, some particular thing. This commandment extends to the whole man—to his thoughts, his feelings, his affections, and hence to his life, for what we do is governed by what we feel.

This is the first commandment. We are to love God before all. We may have relations and friends, who are both near and dear to us. But who gave

them to us, and who taught our hearts to feel a natural love to them? God Himself. He who gave them to us yet claims the first place for Himself. We are not to love His gifts more than Him.

It may seem strange to be commanded to love. Can we make ourselves love? Is not love a feeling of the heart, which comes of itself? Yet what do we think of a child who does not love his parents? Do we not feel that he is to blame? In like manner, only far more, it is a duty to love God; His command is that we should love Him. It is not as if we were told to love a stranger. That would be difficult indeed. He whom we are to love is our Father in heaven; who made us, and redeemed us; who gave us all we have; who is kind, gracious and compassionate towards us; who loves us. Let any one but know what he owes to the love of God, and it will seem nothing strange to him to be told, as the first commandment, to love Him.

Love is a feeling; we should feel love to God. Our hearts should be drawn to Him, our affections should be fixed upon Him. If our hearts are warm and tender towards an earthly friend, but cold towards God, is there not a fault, a great fault?

But true love does more than feel; it acts also. Our Lord said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." And we read in St. John, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." Love prevents them from being thought grievous or burdensome. He who truly loves God loves the will of God too.

But the love of God is not in us by nature; and though we are commanded to love Him, and it is our duty to do so, yet we cannot love Him of ourselves, for our hearts are naturally estranged from Him. The love of God must be "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." We must be taught from above, both to know the love of God to us, and to love Him in return. Do we wish to love Him? Do we wish to love Him far more than we do? We must ask God to give us His Holy Spirit to teach and incline us to love Him. He will never refuse such a prayer.

Love to God must come first; but there must be love to man too. This second commandment is not opposed to the first, but "like unto it;" so like that there cannot be love to God without there being also love to man. Here again St. John teaches us. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."

How are we to show this love? In thought, and word, and deed. In great things and in little things; but chiefly in little things, because we have most to do with them. Those who live together in the same house have daily opportunities—in bearing with each other's faults, in speaking kind words, in doing little services, in showing unselfishness. For we are to love our neighbour as ourselves. We are to love God, then, more than ourselves, for this is but the second commandment, not the first.

Rev. F. Boardman.

CHRISTMAS.

SEE cheerful day disperse the night,
And angels from the heavenly height,
Now to the pious shepherds say
That the Good Shepherd's born to-day.

Bright peace around Him shed its ray—
And little lambs and sheep astray
Shall in His flock rest quietly,
And subjects of His kingdom be.

Gentle, and mild, and free from sin—
Nor gold and silver did He bring;
But by His life and death did He
From grief eternal set us free.

His Church, though smallest seed it be,
Shall soon upgrow a shady tree;
Which shall its branches fair outsend
Round the whole earth till time shall end.

As gently falls the summer rain,
His Word shall cheer the earth again,
And bring forth fruit which ne'er shall cease,
Of Truth, and Holiness, and Peace.

And heaven and earth shall pass away,
But His dear holy Word shall stay;
To Him all tongues their songs shall raise,
Their God and Saviour's name to praise.

Arise and shine, Humanity,
For Christendom thy name shall be:
To rest and glory see the way—
To trust in Christ the Lord for aye.

The Lord's great grace in song upraise,
His mighty power, His wondrous ways;
And praised through all eternity
The riches of His mercy be.

A WORD IN SEASON.

WE cantered pleasantly along the straggling village road, catching glimpses of snug firesides and busy farmsteads, then out into the lonely, dreary forest.

Not one single wayfarer did we meet, though we had passed over five or six weary miles. Suddenly Jerry pricked up his ears, and gave a snort of intensified delight. I listened, and by-and-by saw something looming in the far distance; then the creak of wheels was heard breaking on the silence. What could it be? A coal huckster's cart, drawn by a wretched, half starved horse, dragging his weary load painfully along. But where was the huckster himself? Not with his cart. Oh, no, the patient and diligent creature was fulfilling his task more faithfully than his master. Where could he be?

Jerry seemed concerned, and cast a pitying glance on the lank, lean, much-enduring animal ; but he went on, and so did we. For a full mile nothing was to be seen ; then a small, dark speck was discernible in the road—a man careering along, legs apart like a pair of compasses, making vain endeavours to steady his reeling steps. The man, though evidently under the influence of strong drink, apparently knew me, and remembered my profession.

"I say, doctor," he stammered out, "is that you? Stop, if you please ; I want to ax you a question."

"Well, my friend," I replied, gently drawing Jerry to a stand, "what is it?"

"Why, I want you to give me a prescription. You've a great name, doctor, in these parts, and you're a good friend to the poor ; maybe ye'll give it me for naught."

"What for, my friend? What ails you?"

"Well, sir, I want a prescription for keeping my legs from turning into the public-house. If I could only get that, I should be all right, you know, doctor."

"You set me fast, my man," I replied, quite puzzled for the moment, "you set me fast. I really cannot give you such a prescription. But, now I think of it, there is a very great Physician, a Friend of mine, who both can and will give you what you want, if you apply to Him."

"Where is He, doctor? Does He charge high?"

"He is not far off ; and He gives His advice

quite freely, without money and without price. He is a very great Physician, as I said. Your only plan is to go to Him."

"That will I. Only tell me His name, and where he lives."

I hesitated, looking steadfastly at the poor, reeling, staggering figure of the drunken huckster, and wondering if indeed he might be able to understand me. The man thought I was undecided about giving the Great Physician's address ; so he cried out imploringly, "Oh, doctor, let me know where He lives. Now do, doctor ; for indeed I'll take it, whatever it may be ; I will in deed and in truth, doctor."

And the man fixed his keen grey eyes earnestly upon

me. He really meant what he was saying. "I be a poor, wake, frail body, doctor, an' I be feared of losing body and soul ; I be indeed. Now tell me His name, doctor."

"Well, my man," I said, touching the tip of his shoulder with my whip, "listen to me, and mark my words. The Great Physician is the Lord Jesus Christ. Go to Him straight. *Go to Him*, and He alone can give you what you want."

The poor fellow seemed suddenly sobered. He gathered his feet together and stood erect ; he neither spoke nor stirred. His thoughts were powerfully, irresistibly engrossed ; he seemed riveted to the spot. I wished him good-night, and passed on my lonely

track. I looked back ; there stood the small, dark figure transfixed. I looked again : there it was, scarcely discernible in the great distance. There was a turn in the road, so I saw the coal-huckster no more.

Some weeks passed, and again I beheld the small, wiry figure ; not drunk now, but alert and brisk about his small traffic. He avoided me, however, so I took no notice.

Another day, some few months after, when the dull winter had passed away, and the spring flowers were peeping, and the birds building among the trees or in the thatch, and all nature wore a smile, I espied the little coal-huckster sitting on his cart. He, too, wore a smile. He caught my eye, bounded towards me,

took hold of the rein of my horse, of my hand—of both hands—shook them warmly, pressed them between both his own, quite unmindful of their state. Tears rolled softly down his thin cheeks—blessed tears, such as angels love to see. "God bless you, dear good doctor ; God bless you !" That was all, and enough : we understood each other entirely. I returned the grateful pressure ; I fancy my own eyes grew dim. I know that tears were in my voice when I returned his benediction.

That coal-cart was never seen standing before a public-house again. The old horse grew sleek and trim. He, too, may possibly have felt, as I did, the truth of the words : "A word in season, how good is it !"



A CHRISTMAS TREE AT THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

It was a sunny afternoon in January, and at a small hospital for children with hip-disease everything looked gay and bright, for it was the day the children were to have their Christmas tree.

Perhaps you have never been inside a hospital! I had not until that day, so I will tell you how it looked.

When we arrived we were met at the door by the matron, a pleasant cheerful looking person, dressed in a dark serge dress with large collar and cuffs, and a pretty quaint cap which made her look quite picturesque. I explained that I had brought a few presents for the Christmas tree, and showed her my parcels. She smilingly told me the little hospital was quite full of visitors come on the same errand, and that the tables were covered with toys of all sorts for the sick children, who were just going to have tea, after which the tree would be unveiled. She led me straight to them, and I had never pictured any room in a hospital looking so bright and happy as this, although I must say a great lump seemed to rise in my throat at the sight of so many sweet little children called upon to bear such a burden of pain and sickness.

There were two large rooms, and the folding doors between had been removed; in one half of the opening two tall screens were arranged in a circle, from the centre of which peeped the top of the tree, and there were little shouts of delight heard now and then from the expectant children as one of the "sisters" disappeared behind the screen with more and more parcels brought by fresh arrivals.

The little beds were arranged in two rows in each room, all facing the mysterious screens; each had a pretty scarlet quilt, and was occupied by a little child in a white night-dress and scarlet flannel jacket, their faces beaming with pleasure, and the excitement making some of them look as bright and rosy as if there was nothing the matter; but at the foot of each little bed hung the suspended weight that told the reason of their being in the hospital.

Perhaps you do not know that generally when children have hip-disease, it is necessary that the leg

should be kept perfectly straight and stretched out, to prevent its shrinking and becoming shorter than the other, so a heavy weight is attached to it by means of a cord, and happily after a time the children seem scarcely to feel it, though we, who are strong and well, could scarcely bear for even a day to lie in bed quite still with a weight dragging at our foot all the time.

Tea was being carried round to all the little beds, with plenty of nice cake and buns. While this was going on I was attracted by a very white, wan, little face, with large sad blue eyes, intently fixed on visitors

just coming in, and looking round I saw a lady I knew with her two little girls, Effie and Rose La Touche; they were pretty children, with golden hair falling on their velvet frocks, and Effie had a little bunch of early snowdrops in her belt; they each carried a basket of fruit and cakes, and seeing my poor invalid's eager look I beckoned them to bring him some; but it was the children themselves that delighted him, and above all the sight of Effie's snowdrops—he would not look at either tea, cakes, or fruit, so engrossed was he with my little friends, and when Effie unpinned her flowers and gave them to him, his poor thin hands were stretched forth eagerly to grasp both flowers and pin, that he might fasten them on his little red jacket.

I left the children talking to him while I asked one of the "sisters" about

him, and was told that he was Willie Mather, the only child of a poor widow, and alas! that he was so ill that the good doctor gave no hope of his recovery.

I could tell you more about him, but as I am limited in the length of my story I must pass on and return to his bedside, where, in a husky, feeble voice, he was talking eagerly to Rose and Effie, and they had promised they would come the next visiting day (which at the hospital was every Wednesday) and bring him all the snowdrops they could find in their own little gardens.

Just then the screens were withdrawn, and the Christmas tree appeared in all its glory, covered with twinkling lamps, golden balls, and all kinds of pretty



things. The joy and pleasure in all the little faces was indeed a recompense for the trouble bestowed on it, and never did two rooms seem more full of happy, merry, childish voices than these when the parcels were opened and each fresh toy displayed. But although three nice presents fell to Willie's lot, he only gave them a passing smile, so eagerly was he counting how many hours must pass before Wednesday, at three o'clock, when Rose and Effie were to come again with the flowers.

I must pass over the rest of that evening, although it included a touching interview with poor Mrs. Mather, who came late to see her little Willie and admire his presents, as she had to go out to work and could not be there early enough to see him receive them; and now we will take a peep at Effie and Rose in their own happy home.

They returned from the hospital very full of all they would do for Willie, and of the beautiful basket of flowers they would collect to take him on Wednesday, and for a day or two this quite engrossed their thoughts; but Mrs. La Touche was unexpectedly obliged to leave home, and to their great delight invited a little cousin to stay with them during her absence.

The new arrival was a great favourite, and brought with her a very lively game, which for a time put the thought of Willie into the shade, although they quite intended taking Mary Allison with them to the hospital, and she had been very much interested in hearing about it; but alas! for children's memories when fresh pleasures come between.

I hope, my little readers, you will remember to fulfil promised acts of kindness better than Rose and Effie did. The excitement of the new playfellow gradually engrossed all their time and thoughts, and it was only at five o'clock on Wednesday afternoon that the sight of a whole bunch of snowdrops nodding their white heads in her little garden made Effie exclaim in dismay, "Oh, Rose! this is the day for Willie's flowers, and we have never been."

You may imagine their grief, the very thought that Willie would have expected them, and that he must now wait another week for his snowdrops, made them very sad; so the next morning, when they came to tell me of their broken promise, I suggested we should go at once to the hospital and ask for the snowdrops to be given to Willie, although I had not much hope of being permitted to see him.

My little friends were radiant at the idea, each gathering from their garden every flower they could find, and off we went, but on asking for the kind matron and explaining the case, tears rushed to her eyes—"You are just in time," she said; "come at once, for Willie is dying."

She led us to his little bed, and there lay the poor child breathing heavily, and the blue eyes almost dim, but at the sight of Effie and her flowers his poor lips broke into a smile, and although unable to speak, his hand grasped the snowdrops and then fell heavily on the bed, scattering them in a shower all over him.

His poor mother, who was standing by, gave one

grateful look at Effie for bringing her boy this last earthly pleasure, and I hurried my charges away.

I do not think they will ever again forget to perform such a promise, although I did not tell them the history the matron gave me of Willie's excitement the previous day as three o'clock drew near; how flushed and feverish his poor little cheek became when the hour struck, increasing minute by minute, until at last the doctor administered a composing draught, which sent him to sleep, and made him for a time forget to watch for them.

It was a very small fault on their part to forget; but we little know the grief our want of thought may cause another; and I am sure they and I shall always feel grateful they were allowed to make amends in a small degree, and to see Willie's look of happiness when at last he saw his looked-for friends with their snowdrops.

L. C.

BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

HERE is the response of the Divine Word to a weary, sin-laden world, and to every seeking sinner: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

All the knowledge the jailer possessed of Divine things was soon imparted, easily carried, and yet it was sufficient to save. "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and unto all that were in his house."

He who fulfilled all righteousness, He who stood in the sinner's room and stead, He who through the Eternal Spirit offered up Himself without spot unto God—a sacrifice of infinitely more value than numberless offerings slain by any human priesthood,—directed Paul and Silas to the Gentiles, brought them into contact with the earnest inquirers before them, and gave them authority to make this declaration: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

The question comes to us still—What *must* we do?

A man is brought before the bar of the Judge. How can he be declared just? A Jew who had not read the Law to good advantage would say: He must pass through a prescribed ceremonial, make ablutions, attend to every observance with the most punctilious care, and have sacrifices offered for him by a priest of the tabernacle. Very many who enjoy greater light than ever the Jews possessed, would say: He must be baptised by the Church; he must perform good works, and have something to bring in his hands before God; he must pray to the saints to intercede for him that he may appear in some of their super-abundant grace, and that a patch-work righteousness from saints and Saviour may cover the sins of the accused.

Surely, surely, the answer of these holy men to the earnest seeker after the truth was intended to be full and free and final, and has shown us a more excellent way.

The man pleads guilty to every charge, but with faith he directs the Judge to One who is just, who bore his sins in His own body on the tree, who has

said, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The Judge declares him justified, for Another has taken his place, and as two cannot suffer a penalty for the same offence, the sentence of the court is, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you remission of sins, and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses; and we might add, by laws of human device more galling than was ever the law of Moses.

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to assent to the truth of what we have recorded of Him and of His work. But it is more than this. It is not the same as accepting a proposition of Euclid, or a clearly-drawn inference in Paley's "Evidences of Christianity." If it were so, every man of sound understanding would be a Christian. Belief is an act of the heart as well as an assent of the head, for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." It is emphatically a trusting. Christ died for sinners. I am a sinner. He died for me. Then I shall cease making a vain attempt at saving myself. I shall commit and confide my soul, my hopes, my all, to Him.

One of the most devoted Sabbath-school teachers I have known was asked by a member of his class what was meant by "believing." Sickness had laid its hand upon the boy, and removed him from busy scenes of life and work. In his mother's cottage, his mind was led to an earnest consideration of the things he had heard and read. The teacher, who had made a regular study of his case, on paying his usual weekly visit and finding his scholar alone, said, "Robert, would you stand on that bench, with your back turned towards me?"

The lad stood on the bench.

"Could you let yourself fall back into my arms, which are very near you, and which will bear you up?" added the teacher.

The boy hesitated, and threw forward his hands, as if to balance himself.

"I am afraid you do not trust me. Am I not strong enough, and do I not love you?" continued the teacher.

Blushing at the thought of distrust towards one whom he loved, Robert fell back into the arms of him who was watching for his soul, and that day knew what it was to be "safe in the arms of Jesus."

I have read the solemn words of resurrection-hope over the grave of one who was brought to a saving view of the truth as it is in Jesus by an illustration suggested by the "Holy War." He felt himself shut up in a fortress. Sin and self "heaped heavier still the fetters, barred closer still the gates." Around were the hosts of a conquering Captain, who showed the besieged what had been done with him, and how precious was his soul in the sight of God. He pointed

to the cross, to let him see how far Heaven came to meet those who were enemies. He said to him, "Son, give Me thy heart and submit to Me." And a sight of the Saviour's love led to an unconditional surrender to Him. The enemy became a friend, the outlaw a citizen of the skies.

A mother had an only child. A neighbour-woman came into her house one day, and found her weeping as if her heart would break. On being able to control her voice, the mourner said, "There is my child, for whom I have given up all. I have spent fourteen years of my life with that child; I refused to allow her to go to an institution; I would not let the servants take care of her; my nights have been sleepless, my days have been full of sorrow; and after all this she does not know me from you or any other neighbour. If that child would only look up, recognise me once, and say, 'Mother, I thank you for all you have done!' But she does not know me, and that is breaking my heart."

Dear reader, does not this apply to many, very many? "God has nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Him." "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" "All day long have I stretched out My hand towards a disobedient and gainsaying people." May all who read these lines have their faith elicited as by magnetic touch, and their love inflamed as by fire—when they think of the love, and the mercy, and the long-suffering shown towards rebellious man!

An earnest trust will show itself in loving service. A ransomed slave will kiss the feet of his liberator. The jailer, filled with joy, brought the prisoners into his house; as far as he could, he made amends for his former harshness; washed their stripes and bound up their wounds. In every possible way he proves the reality of his faith and the sincerity of his love towards Him whose servants had made known the way of salvation.

That night he was baptised, he and all his, straight-way; and I am sure that as long as he lived, whether a member of the Church in Philippi or a member of the Church elsewhere, by his walk and conversation, by his faith and by his life, he adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Here is the true order in which good works appear. They follow the faith as echo follows voice; and till the last the former shall continue to be the proof of the latter, and shall ever manifest themselves as the sign of our gratitude and the mark which the Master has placed upon His own.

On a gravestone overgrown with moss in a country burying-place, the following lines were with difficulty rendered legible. May they be exemplified in thy life and in mine—

"I do not work my soul to save—
That work my Lord hath done;
But I will work like any slave
For the love of God's dear Son."

From "The Christian Irishman."

"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US."



Our Helper, God, we bless His name,
Whose love for ever is the same;
The tokens of whose gracious care
Open and crown and close the year.

Amidst ten thousand snares we stand,
Supported by His guardian hand;
And see, when we review our ways,
Ten thousand monuments of praise.



Thus far His arm hath led us on ;
Thus far we make His mercy known
And while we tread this desert land,
New mercies shall new songs demand.

Our grateful souls, on Jordan's shore,
Shall raise one sacred pillar more ;
Then bear in His bright courts above,
Inscriptions of immortal love.