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GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN CALAMITY.

BY REV. DUNCAN MORRISON, BROCKVILLE.

LUKE XIII. 1-5:—"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

You have all doubtless heard of the fearful calamity that took place a short time ago in the city of Santiago, by which about two thousand persons perished. A few minutes before seven in the evening of Tuesday, the 8th December last, more than three thousand women, and a few men, knelt together in a very grand Roman Catholic church, with the view of paying their devotions to the Virgin. It seems that the church, the grandest in that part of the world, was lighted up to an extraordinary extent, with wax candles and camphene lamps, and decorated in the highest style with images and festoons. Some of these were formed of pasteboard and other inflammatory materials. One very large image of the Virgin was placed upon the altar or stage, forming a conspicuous object, and lighted up in a splendid manner by the strong lights that were thrown upon it. More than twenty thousand lights in all were distributed over the building, many of them pendent from the roof, furnished with coloured globes, and rendering the position of the worshippers below very perilous in the case of fire. There was one main entrance to the church, and two side doors, very strait, and used chiefly for admission to the sacristy. Here there was a brilliant assembly, composed of the youth and beauty of the place, dressed out in their gayest and grandest attire. The church for several successive nights before had blazed with a sea of flame and fluttered with clouds of muslin and draperies, for it

was a festive season, in which orchestral music and singing, and an immense profusion of lights, glittered and flared in every part of the building. But on this night an enthusiastic audience, greater and grander than any before, filled every nook, composed, as I have said, of about three thousand, mostly women, and many of them there contrary to the desire of their husbands. But the performance had scarcely begun when the gigantic figure referred to on the altar caught fire, and in a moment the flame shot across the roof, snapping the long, coloured globes, and dropping the camphene lamps among the gay assemblage below. In the panic all rushed to the main door, which soon became choked up, and not more than a thousand of that brilliant assembly, made up of the flower and fashion of the place, escaped. It was a fearful sight to see women fainting, screaming, entangled in their long swelling dresses, seeking to escape, and holding out their jewelled hands for help, as the remorseless flames came on—to see mothers and sisters—tender and timid women—seized in the embrace of the flames, undergoing the awful transformation—first a dazzling blaze, then a writhing spectacle of agony; then a black calcined mass of dust and ashes—all the beauty gone save the jewels and gems which they loved to wear upon such occasions. In fifteen minutes all was over and the church was burned to the ground. The shrieks and groans of those two thousand sacrifices gave place to the stillness of the grave. "O! what a

sight" one writes, "the placid moon looked down upon! Close-packed crowds of cal-cined, distorted forms, wearing the fearful expression of the last pang—the ghastly phalanxes of black statues twisted in every variety of agony, stretching out their arms as if imploring mercy. And then of the heap that had choked up the door, multitudes were found with the lower parts untouched, and some a shapeless mass, but with one arm or foot unscathed."

Now in view of this calamity there will be many to say that it was a judgment because of great sin, just as in the case of those referred to in the text. And there will be others in that city—the city of Santiago, where the catastrophe took place—who escaped the fire, congratulating themselves upon their safety. They were prevented from going by some untoward circumstance of which they thought hard at the time; or, having gone, they were rescued from the devouring flames in a wonderful manner—because of having been led to take a seat near the door—or because of strong help which they did not expect—or presence of mind, or in some way which they cannot explain. This melancholy event then has two aspects—destruction in the one case, preservation in the other. Why did so many perish and suffer such a death? Because they were greater sinners than others? Nay, says Christ, but unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Those did not perish because of their sins exceeding their fellows; but they perished that others might live—be benefited and instructed—that error might be exposed and God's truth revealed in a clearer light. "Master, who sinned?" said the disciples of old to the Saviour; "this man or his parents that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents, but that the works of God should be manifest in him?" Then, why were there any saved? how are we to account for the

strange escapes and deliverances upon such occasions? We answer by the special providence of God—a providence not suspending or interfering with the laws of matter, but working above it and independent of it altogether.

First, then, with regard to those calamities and those that perish in this way. Why, under the providence of a merciful God, should the tower of Sileam fall to the destruction of eighteen persons at its base? Why should such a bloody tyrant as Pilate be permitted to slay a number of deluded worshippers, and to mingle their blood with their sacrifices? Or why should those two thousand persons referred to perish in the flames and meet with such a death, in the very act of doing homage to the Virgin whom they had been taught from childhood to revere? The answer is, that such calamities are permitted, not so much on account of those that die as those that live. God has in view, not so much the sin of those that perish, as the good, the well-being, the very salvation of those upon whom the ends of the world will come. Such calamities are God's great lessons to men, which they can never forget—monuments to which they turn their eyes for ages and learn instruction. There are sins indeed which are visited with God's wrath, upon which the divine judgments come with sure and certain steps—such as intemperance, uncleanness, imprudence, falsehood, and folly in all its forms; so that just as sure as you find the penalty, you can predicate the foregoing sin. When you see the drunkard's pale-faced children walking barefoot through the snow, holding out their skinny hands for bread, or enter his house and see its sadness and desolation, you conclude at once with the ancient Jew that this man as well as his parents have sinned. Or if you see a man who once occupied a good position in the world, losing caste—his word lightly

spoken of—his character freely canvassed—his company shunned by good men—you may be sure that there is a cause—that this is but the consequence of moral delinquency—that there has been a relaxing of high principle—a disregard to the claims of God—an indifference to his holy eye: and he who governs the world in righteousness means that he should suffer, that he should come under the suspicions of his fellows, and be treated with the cold shoulder and the averted look, and the want of credit and confidence. There are sins and vices which are followed up invariably with God's righteous retribution, so that just as sure as you can see the suffering, you can pronounce upon the sin which has been its cause. But there are sorrows and sufferings that come upon men where you cannot so pronounce—where it would be wrong to say that there has been previous guilt. I refer to all such sufferings as are indicated in the text, and flowing from calamities which we cannot prevent, and over which we have no control. Great suffering has come upon the world in consequence of war, pestilence, famine, fire, and shipwreck. Such calamities take place in every land and in every age, whether we will or no, and involve in misery the innocent and the guilty, the parent and the child. One event happeneth to all—the wise and the foolish apparently without any discrimination. The Christian soldier falls as readily upon the battle-field as the profane wretch that neither fears God nor regards man; the licentious villain that is hastening across the sea to escape the hand of justice is perhaps one of the few that are saved in the wreck, while youth and beauty and innocence perish in the depths below; the devout worshipper is overtaken in his devotions and wrapped in flames; the pious miner is among the number that are choked with the fire-damp, while not a few have been rescued from destruction that are ingrained both in body and in soul with pollution. You can infer nothing from such calamities as to the moral character of those who suffer. They are lessons for the living rather than judgments upon the dead; for although all suffering is preceded by sin either in the race or in the individual, yet the suffering may not be penal but paternal, and become a vehicle of precious blessings to the world. It is important that we should keep this distinction in view, or we will run into the ancient error of concluding, whenever we see great sorrow or a great misfortune, that there must necessarily have been great antecedent sin. On the contrary, the great suffering which a man has to endure may only be the means of making him more precious in the sight of God, and not only so, but a greater blessing to his fellow-men. The greatest sufferer this world ever saw was its greatest benefactor, because suffering not for himself, but for those that should believe in his great name. And in a lower sphere we see the same principle of vicariousness in the works and ways of God. A thousand disasters and shipwrecks have taken place around our shores, and ten thousand precious lives have been sacrificed thereon; but these shores are the safer now because of those disasters, and the beacon lights of Cape Race and St. Paul's, together with all the other precautions and improvements, are the fruit of all those calamities. The battle-field is strewn with the wounded and the dead, and the sad news are followed with many a widow's wail and many an orphan's tear, but the fruit of that victory is liberty to the slave, and the opening of the prison doors to those that are bound. Ten thousand perish upon the field, but they form a sort of bridge upon which those that come after will be able to pass over in safety. The martyr goes forward to the

stake, or bares his neck upon the scaffold, in order that the gleaming axe may do its work, and all this because of some invisible truth which the world will not and cannot receive; but on that night, when men go to their homes and speak of the patience of the sufferer that died before their eyes looking up to heaven—the holiness of his life—the blessedness of his death—the truth for which he died receives a prominence which it never did before, and the scaffold becomes a pulpit which preaches louder than ten thousand ordinary lives could do, and sends forth light and truth over all the land. And so in the case before us—the conflagration of the chapel of Santiago, in which two thousand persons perished in a night. Here, however, it was not the witnessing to a truth but an error, that was the occasion of the calamity. But an error is just the wrong side of a truth; and when an error is demolished you have done a great deal towards the establishing the counterpart truth. And I venture to say that the superstitions connected with Mariolatry—superstitions that have taken a wonderful hold of the human mind, both in this and other lands,—will relax their grasp, and that ever as the 8th of December comes round, which with the seven preceding days, was wont to be the celebration of the Immaculate Conception, it will come with missionary power in behalf of the gospel, and serve as a battering ram to destroy the walls of error, the claims of Mary and every other name that can be named, except the name of Jesus.

It is through a baptism of blood that the human race is to reach the perfection of their powers—to dominion over the elements—to the attainment of truth whether natural or revealed. It is through a baptism of blood that errors are to be dissipated and truths established, and that we are to make our pathway to glory and honour and immortality. The history of

the world shows this and gives a deep meaning to the words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, "Others have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours." And again, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." His sufferings indeed stand apart from all other sufferings—His death from all other deaths, and yet it harmonizes with others in a lower sphere, for the principle of vicariousness runs through all the works and ways of God, and only culminates in its full glory upon the cross. Not one drop of blood which he shed was shed in vain; not one of his words fell to the ground, and the same may be said in a restricted sense of all the sufferings and labours of men, and especially of Christian men. But while all such sufferings and disasters as I have referred to have a bright side—while they are all redemptive in their nature, and fitted to work out good results under the providence of God to those that shall come after, they have a dark side also. They have a voice of warning to those that remain in their sins. They are the premonitory drops that come on before the storm—the forecastings and foreshadowings of that doom which awaits the finally impenitent. "For if these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If the comparatively innocent, becoming victims of error, fall sacrifices for others, what shall become of those who, better enlightened and more frequently warned, refuse instruction and cleave to their sins? "Think ye those Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Second aspect of this case—the *providence of God in preservation*. Scarcely any great disaster takes place, attended

with the loss of life, without remarkable rescues and deliverances. This was the case in the great calamity referred to. Upwards of a thousand made their escape, and some of them in a wonderful manner—not to speak of those who, by strange hindrances thrown in the way, were prevented from going to the festival. Here is another aspect of the case equally worthy of our regard. What are we to understand by the providence of God in calamity? Is it that God suspends the operation of natural law, thus providing a way of escape? Is it that he restrains the fire from its action, or calms the storm, or turns aside the fatal shaft? Not at all. We must look back of these things if we would seek an intelligent account of the providence of God in calamity. The tower of Siloam fell doubtless, according to the law of gravitation; the Sunday sailing party perished according to the law of storms, or from want of skill to manage their craft; and the church of Santiago was burnt according to the law of combustion. Providence does not interfere in the operation of these laws or any other law; but notwithstanding the inflexible action of natural law—the constant and invariable procedure of cause and effect—there is room for the higher operation of the divine hand.

There are two ways in which God can deliver me in time of calamity. He can avert the blow or the flying fragment so that it will not strike me; or he can, in his own mysterious way, move me from the point of danger, and in either case I shall be safe. Now, it is not the former but the latter of these methods that he adopts. God does not arrest the thunderbolt, or turn aside the arrow of death, but he touches a mental chord, inducing the man whom he would save for the present to take another seat in the doomed train—to occupy another position in the building

which proves a place of safety in the crash; or he may throw hindrances in your way so that you may be too late for the ill-fated vessel, or the splendid festival that is to end in flames. The thin column of soldiers, sent out as a forlorn hope to storm the breach, are thinned down still farther with

“Cannon to the right of them,
Cannon to the left of them.”

and the wonder is that any escape. But He whose eye is upon every beating heart, and upon every fatal shaft, can find a pathway of safety amidst the arrows of death for the man that He would save.—By turnings and windings—by reverses and restraints and ways past finding out, he makes his way in safety and returns in triumph. A thousand has fallen at his side and ten thousand at his right hand, but death did not come nigh unto him.—Such are said to be saved as by a miracle, and the impression is that God interposes in the working of natural laws, and so saves them. Now there is nothing miraculous in the case,—understanding by that term the suspension of cause and effect—but there is something far more precious. There is a providence over men, nearer and more spiritual than this. There is a hand unseen by mortal eye, but which touches every man's inner life, leading you and guiding you in all your outgoings and incomings. This brings God far nearer to us than the miraculous view. That brings him to the walls of the building, this into contact with the heart. That would prevent the flame from kindling upon you, but this would carry you away in spirit to a place of safety. Here, then, back of all peradventures, and calamities and casualties lies the special protecting providence of God. Not in interpositions, or marvels, or miracles, but in the hearts and lives of men does God work. Here, deep down in the hidden

springs of action, is the finger of God, unseen by mortal eye, but not unfelt or unrecognised by his children, effecting special providences; and here there is room for filial trust and believing prayer, for the Lord is thy keeper: O Christian, He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

And then again, if we cannot count upon God's interfering in our behalf in the midst of calamity, except in the way I have stated, neither are we to presume upon his preservation in the way of neglect or carelessness. If you are going to make a journey you must attend to the conditions of safety. Prayers alone will not do. The axle will snap as readily with the prayerful conductor as the profane conductor. And the fire will burn as furiously in the timbers of the house of the saint as the sinner. It is not enough that the company pray fervently before they embark upon their voyage. They must see that the vessel is in every respect seaworthy,—the commander competent and possessing the proper qualities and reputation. Piety will not release you from such precautions. It does not supersede the working of natural law. Such a thing would lead to all manner of neglects and carelessnesses and confusions; but these conditions being attended to, as far as you can attend to them, and your eye heavenward, how safe is your path by night and day! True, the righteous man often falls a sacrifice to the evils of life, but it is only in his outward and material estate, not in his spiritual and higher interests. Over all these is the protecting hand of Jehovah, preserving him from evil, preserving his soul from this time henceforth and even forever. There are no joints in the harness of his spiritual equipment, through which the arrow of

the enemy may find its way. There is no vulnerable point from head to heel, over which the baptism of grace has not been poured. Read in this light how precious and how true that ancient psalm which the voice of Inspiration uttered in reference to God's care over His beloved Son and all His children in Him! "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," Psalm xci. 1. Blessed are they who come under the wings of the Almighty and who have entered into an everlasting covenant with Him. At no time will God's blessed care be withheld from them. At no time will they be greatly moved. There is an atonement to which they can look in their darkest hours—there is a righteousness in which they can stand before God with songs of joy upon their head. There is a shield of faith to protect them from the fiery darts of the wicked one. There is a Saviour with them always, even to the end of the world. You are exposed to danger, O christian, but you are safe in the danger because of your union to Him that has entered as your Forerunner into glory; nay, through Him you will be more than a conqueror. God's promise of safety runs along the whole line of that glorious eternity that lies before you—in the hour of temptation—in the time of trial—in the passage through the dark valley—in that day when Christ shall descend from heaven with great power and glory, and when the dead, small and great, shall be gathered for the judgment. God's protecting care is from this time forth even forever; at no time will it be withdrawn. Let imagination take wing and soar away to the altitudes of the blessed life that lies before you, still above its highest reaches and noblest crowns will this truth be seen written as with a sunbeam. Let the pilgrim travel forward in spirit to far distant ages in the

world of light and love to which he aspires, and wander upon the banks of the river of life, amid the shining multitude, hating the song of Moses and the Lamb with undimmed eye and unstained soul, still, he will find himself under the protective shadow of God, and will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust. He shall cover me with His feathers and under His wings shall I trust. His truth shall be my shield and buckler.

I have thus spoken of the two aspects which a calamity presents, destruction on the one hand and preservation on the other. There is another truth conveyed in the text—namely the necessity of repentance—which I must reserve for another occasion; but in conclusion let me observe that while protection is certain to the righteous—protection in their highest interests—there is none for him that refuseth instruction—that stands at a distance from God—unrenewed in the spirit of his mind. God indeed preserves all men for temporary and probationary purposes—even the wicked until the day of His power. Without his watchful eye and guiding hand the blasphemer would drop down while uttering his oath, and the right hand of the wicked would lose its cunning in its first act of violence; but the everlasting protection of which we have been speaking is that which God extends to His own dear children. And you, O sinner, are not His child. You are a lonely wanderer, cut off from heaven and holiness, and life and love, and God and the spirits of just men. You are a wandering star, broken loose from the sweet influences of heaven and to such is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. You are lonely, for it is the nature of sin to isolate and separate from all that is precious. Soon every tie that now binds you to earth will be broken,—every hope you

now cherish will be quenched—every relationship you now value will be blasted—every possession which you now hold will be taken from you, and you will indeed be poor and miserable and wretched and blind and naked. Take heed to the words of the Lord Jesus, “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.”

THE ADVANTAGES OF HOME VISITING.

TO MINISTERS.

“An old soldier was fond of talking of the war, of battles and struggles of past days, the memory of which stirred our hearts. Whenever, in the introduction to one of my sermons, I alluded to those stirring events, those engagements, those hard conflicts, his sympathy was aroused, and he would accompany me a little further into a consideration of that other warfare and those other triumphs of the flesh and of the Spirit, which are contrary one to the other. Upon another occasion, I chanced to see a young man who was following a plough in a field alone, shedding tears. I did not like to notice it at the time lest he should feel embarrassed; but I soon contrived to find out that he had recently left his home and his beloved parents, and that the farmer in whose service he was, treated him roughly; it was a case evidently of home-sickness. Now this was a complaint I too well knew; I spoke a few friendly words to him, and when, on the following Sunday, I dwelt upon the sufferings of the home-sick, and then passed on to the spiritual longing for our heavenly Father's house, I could see plainly that the young man understood me.

Indeed, I generally found that those whom I had visited in the course of the week, or with whom I had some conversation, were pretty sure to come to church on the Sunday; and, accordingly, I contrived that my sermon should have some particular reference to their case, and should be calculated to strike where I had found them vulnerable. This established confidential relations between us. The individual believed that I spoke for him alone, and that he alone fully understood

me; and yet he was only one of many who found themselves in the same condition. For, I repeat it, he who hits the case of one hits the case of a class; and besides, whatever has the impress of truth and reality, will interest even those who are not directly concerned therein.

"Experiences such as these gave before long an entirely new character to my preaching; I began invariably with everyday incidents of actual occurrence, and then by analogy sought to lead my hearers on to the spiritual truths of the kingdom of God.

I remember one sermon in particular, suggested to me by the fact of a child having, through fear of well-deserved punishment run off into the wood, and when evening came being missed by the parents, who instantly instituted an anxious search, and at length found the little truant asleep in the brushwood. I first painted the fear and apprehension of the child, and its consequent flight; then the love of the parents who sought their child; and at last, the joy and happiness of child and parents when the wanderer was found; and I pointed out how the Lord was come to seek and save lost children and lost parents both. Then, again, a fire that broke out and burnt down a mill afforded a rich vein of illustration; and so did the various occupations of agricultural life—sowing, reaping, ploughing, harrowing, droughts, floods—whatever excited customary hopes and fears, was sure to rouse attention. Deaths and domestic events in general were often alluded to with much advantage."—*My Ministerial Experience.*

THE SABBATH.

(From the pen of the REV. DR. WORDSWORTH,
Canon of Westminster Abbey, and nephew
of the late Poet Laureate.)

O day of rest and gladness
O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness,
Most beautiful, most bright!
On thee, the high and lowly,
Bending before the Throne,
Sing Holy, Holy, Holy,
To the Great Three in One.

On thee, at the Creation,
The light first had its birth;

On thee, for our salvation,
Christ rose from depths of earth;
On thee our Lord victorious
The Spirit sent from heaven,
And thus on thee most glorious
A triple light was given.

Thou art a port protected
From storms that round us rise;
A garden intersected
With streams of Paradise;
Thou art a cooling fountain
In life's dry, dreary sand;
From thee, like Pisgah's mountain,
We view our Promised Land.

Thou art a holy ladder,
Where angels go and come:
Each Sunday finds us gladder,
Nearer to heaven, our home.
A day of sweet reflection,
Thou art a day of love;
A day of resurrection
From earth to things above.

To-day on weary nations
The heavenly manna falls;
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls,
Where Gospel light is glowing
With pure and radiant beams,
And living water flowing
With soul-refreshing streams.

New graces ever gaining
From this our day of rest,
We reach the Rest remaining
To spirits of the blest;
To Holy Ghost be praises,
To Father and to Son;
The Church her voice upraises,
To thee, blest Three in One.

BE STRONG.

Take thy staff, O pilgrim,
Haste thee on thy way;
Let the morrow find thee
Farther than to-day.

If thou seek the city
Of the Golden Street,
Pause not on thy pathway
Rest not, weary feet.

In the heavenly journey
Press with zeal along;
Resting will but weary,
Running make thee strong.

—Selected.

THE FUTURE.

THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN.

Has the Christian really no advantage over the unbeliever in respect to the knowledge of the future? It is alleged that he has not—but let us see.

Now it is right that we should acknowledge the disruption which has taken place between this world and all other worlds. Although we have no definite information on the point, we cannot help feeling that we have been parted from the great continent and community of being, and that we are lying, like a detached and isolated rock, among the breakers of an angry sea.

By the incarnation and work of Christ the broken communication with the great father-land have been resumed, and preparations are making for a final return of this earth into the light, and its re-establishment among the righteous worlds. Indeed, it seems that though it is small among the thousand worlds that fill the sky, it is yet destined to become the greatest of them, and to be the favourite dwelling-place of Emmanuel (Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14).

In the meantime, however, we are passing through shaded skies, and we are often plunged into utter darkness, which we neither wonder at nor deplore. We do not wonder at it, for we know the derangement that has happened to us. We know that here, upon this earth, the great battle of the universe—who shall rule,—the creature or the Creator—is being fought, not by God and the Devil only, but by every soul of man taking the one side or the other. And we do not wonder that in such a universal strife the earth should be covered with dust, and that the air should be filled with darkness, and that we should not be able to see things clearly, or at all. Ask the soldier what he saw in the battle-field. Ask him if he understood the evolutions of the fight. He will tell you frankly that he saw nothing but smoke, and understood nothing but the word of command.

My position as a Christian, then, is simply this—I do not know what is to happen to me here, but I know what is to happen to me hereafter. My earthly path

lies through that valley which is covered with mist, but beyond it I see myself emerging on the hill of heaven, and all the rest is clear and bright.

Then, first, as to that unknown part there are many considerations which prevent me from deploring my ignorance of it:—1. It is really a very little portion of my existence that is thus under the shadow—it is but a handbreadth. 2. Although I do not know the particular elements that are to make it up, I know that the whole result is to be good. 3. And although I cannot trace the windings of the stream in that hidden part, I see it issuing from the darkness, and rolling far away, and for ever, in the sunshine of heaven. 4. Every one who is in the habit of vexing himself with possible disappointments must feel that the vexation would become intolerable if they were announced as certain and unavoidable. How could I listen to my child's merry laugh if I knew that six months hence it would be in the grave? 5. And how many sweet surprises of love and mercy we would lose, and the swelling tide of gratitude, if every good thing we were to not was proclaimed beforehand? And finally, How difficult it would be for us to walk with an acquiescent spirit in the path which was announced to us as our future path? If the future were to be announced to, it could not be the possible nor the alterable future, but the absolute future;—the things that we would infallibly do, and the things that would infallibly happen to us. Now, I do not know how others feel, but I own that I would not like to have been put to a test like that—to be told not only what I ought to do, but what I would do. For I would have been ever tempted to try what strength there was in these declarations of the future. I say, my proud self-will would have been tempted to try whether it could not defeat God's counsel, and, when He said that tomorrow I would do so and so, whether I could not do something else.

But thank God, I am to be guided by my DUTY, not by my DESTINY.

I have said that there is an impenetrable mist upon this valley, which hides all objects or misshapes them. To the Christian, however, that darkness is interpenetrated by the True Light that shines. There is

not a spot on earth, nor a point in time, that is not filled with the glory of Him who filleth all things; and there is not a more blessed hour given to him than that which he spends in contemplating and considering the wonderful works of God, as they rise in succession from the darkness into the beautiful light of heaven. He cannot see their bearings, or their connections, or their purposes, for they stand out like the mountain-tops in the morning sun; but that they have a mutual bearing and connection he no more doubts than the man whose the mountain-tops doubts that they have body and basement.

And then, secondly, as to the future that is known. If any one is disposed to complain that the revelations of it are meagre and indistinct, he must remember, upon the one hand, that truth is given us now as we are able to bear it, and that the reserve which God exercises is a merciful one; and, upon the other hand, that there is nothing meagre or indistinct about the grand truth which carries along with it all possible perfection, and all conceivable happiness—the truth, namely, that our endless life is to be spent (without intermixture of sin and sorrow) in the presence of the Lamb, and in the service of God. This satisfied David—“Surely goodness and mercv” (not this or that particular event, but good and merciful events) “shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

And it satisfied Paul, who knew not the things that shall befall him here, and was not moved by them, but desire to depart and be with Christ, which was far better than living here, even though for him to live was Christ. And I can sympathize with the feeling of that dying woman, who anticipated such rapture from the vision of Christ that, when her husband strove to comfort her with the prospect of a happy reunion, she frankly told him that it would be a hundred years before she would be able to take her eyes off Christ to look at him.

To be with Christ, and to be like Christ, are the two indispensable elements of a happy eternity for us, and these two things are firmly secured to believers by the everlasting covenant, “Father, I will that they

also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me.” “And it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” “As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”

Then, at last, when Christ returns to receive His people to himself—when he gathers His elect from the four winds of heaven, and when He comes forth to meet and marry His glorious Bride—then that great truth which we have been celebrating shall be demonstrated, and the blest and the lost alike shall see how able He was to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by Him.

It would have been pleasant to have rested here awhile and to have spoken to the children of God upon the joys of “our gathering together unto Christ”—our gathering out of every nation and tribe and tongue—our gathering *together*—those who have been parted by the estrangements of sin, or by the distances of earth or by the strokes of death—all gathered from these dispersions into one—into one place, and, better still, into one person—even Jesus; as St. Paul declares when he says, that our gathering is not a gathering to heaven, nor a gathering, merely, one to another, but a gathering together *unto Him*.

But I must not enter upon that inviting theme. My failing time warns me that my reader and I must now part—not, however, without an earnest prayer that we may be permitted to resume the subject in that House of the Lord whither all true pilgrims are hastening, and from which, once they have reached it, they shall go out no more for ever.—*Campbell's Power of Jesus Christ to Save.*

HOW TO GET THE VICTORY.

Long have I laboured to give the Lord my heart, but I see the Lord alone can take it from me. Long have I strove to tear out the corruptions from my heart, but they will never stir till Christ says, “Come out;” and Christ will never speak destruction to them till I simply apply to

him with the prayer of faith. I used to watch, and when temptations came, I prayed;—so far I was right;—but after praying, I fought the enemy in my own strength; and here I did foolishly, and smarted for my folly; and then I used to fret against the Lord because of my defeat. Many a sore and long conflict have I had of this kind. Sometimes I have fought a whole fortnight together against a single corruption; and at last, when I thought I could fight no longer, and was ready to surrender, to my great surprise the enemy fled from me; the reason of which I did not then understand, but now I know. While I was fighting my own battles, and relying upon my own wisdom and strength, Jesus could not strike a stroke. But when I cast myself at the Lord's feet he took up the sword and did valiantly. O my gracious Lord, I love thee! Thou shalt now be my Captain, as well as my counsellor; my arm every moment, my salvation all the day long!

If any one had asked me, six weeks ago, "Is Christ to be your strength?" I should have replied, "Yes, to be sure." But then I thought that his strength was to help out my feeble endeavours, just as I thought his merits were to help out my merits, when I was seeking for pardon. I did not make him my *whole* strength in the battle, but only a second in the engagement. When we admit Christ to be our all in all, then he will make us more than conquerors. Come then, my brother, let us watch and pray against sin, and look up to Jesus alone for help. "Watch and pray," is Christ's word; let it be ours also.—*Berridge*.

THE DISEASED LIMB.

A young man, who had been long confined with a diseased limb, and was near his dissolution, was attended by a friend, who requested that the wound might be uncovered. When this was done, "There," said the young man, "there it is and a precious treasure it has been to me; it saved me from the folly and vanity of youth; it made me cleave to God as my only portion, and to eternal glory as my only hope; and I think it hath now brought me very near to my Father's house."

THE BOOK.

(THE BIBLE.)

This Book—this holy book—on every line
Mark'd with the seal of high divinity;
On every leaf bedew'd with drops of love
Divine,—and with the eternal heraldry,
And signature of God Almighty stamped,
From first to last—this ray of sacred light,
This lamp from off the eternal throne,—
Mercy brought down: and in the night of
time
Stands, casting on the dark no gracious bow,
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read,—believe,—and
live.

The wise man, says the Bible, walks with
God—

Surveys, far on, the endless line of life;
Values his soul—thinks of eternity,—
Both worlds considers, and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards: ab-
stains
From evil; lives on hope—on hope the fruit
Of faith: looks upward; purifies his soul,—
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house;
And drinks with angels from the fount of
bliss.
—*Pollak*.

KEPT AT HOME.

Lord, thy servants are now praying in the church, and I am here staying at home, detained by necessary occasions, such as are not of my seeking but of thy sending; my care could not prevent them, my power could not remove them. Wherefore, though I cannot go to church, there to sit down at table with the rest of thy guests, be pleased, Lord, to send me a dish of their meat hither, and feed my soul with holy thoughts. Eldad (Num. xi. 26) and Medad, though staying still in the camp (no doubt on just cause), yet prophesied as well as the other elders. Though they went not out to the Spirit, the Spirit came home to them. Thus never any dutiful child lost his legacy for being absent at the making of his father's will, if at the same time he were employed about his father's business. I fear too many at church have their bodies there, and minds at home. Behold, in exchange, my body here and heart there. Though I cannot pray with them I pray for them. Yea, this comforts me, I am with thy congregation, because I would be with it.—*Thomas Fuller*.

A.D. 1864.

How carelessly we put the number of the current year to the date of a letter.— We have done it ever since we could write. And before that, it used to be written for us like copperplate, on the clean new copy-book; till it shone on the brightly bound prize at school or college. When you sign a transfer, attest a signature, or give a receipt, the same four figures are mechanically added. When you put your name to the marriage contract, registered the baby's birth, or wrote out the inscription for the white stone that covers all you loved, the traces which struck you less than any the pen drew were the closing figures 18—. Those four figures, what do they mean? Changing with the changing year, with the decade, with the century—they do ever anew attest a love unchanging and divine. ANNO DOMINI—what is its signification? It tells me that, as many hundred years ago, ONE, about whom, up to this hour, I have felt little more concern than about any other sage or benefactor of our race—ONE left the bosom of heaven to die for me.

Why does language altogether fail?—Why are there no words, unused hitherto—words not so familiar and dull in our ears, that might express, and not fail to startle, carrying the message of a love like this? ANNO DOMINI—so carelessly written, passed over as the paging of the book or the vague etcetera—it is the blood upon the lintel, which warns death's angel from my door. It is the mark of the Lamb, which cries to the avenger of blood, PASS OVER. Why did not Satan, who has been able in so many ways to cloud the great sacrifice from man's eye, not make the reckonings of his world to depart from some other point than the era of GRACE? China lets her cycles run out under each new emperor's name. But in Christendom, we keep all our reckonings under shadow of the manger of Bethlehem.

Wanderer from thy God, misled and befooled till now by the god of this lost world, who arrivest near the journey's end, having neglected ordinances, and lost thy Bible by the way, raise thine eye!—See one way-mark left, planted by a bleed-

ing hand in this waste for thee. He knew that to-day thou shouldst stop here for a moment to gaze on it. It speaks of his blood, his love, his sacrifice. Each time you see the date of this passing year, take it for a sign of that love which language cannot render, until you take HIM for your own. Let it say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Let it not only carry to the books of God its tales of war and crime, with all the events and ongoings of your daily life, but also witness that, on one of its short-lived days, it saw you turn from sin and idols to serve the God of love. Even if you refuse to turn at his call, if still your eye avoid the Bible page, your foot turn from the sanctuary, your lip from the cup of blessing, the year of grace shall show forth, before you and all men, the Lord's death till he come.—*The Soul-Gatherer, by M. F. Bebour.*

A TIGER STORY.

Lucy and Fanny were two little girls, who lived with their papa and mamma in London. When Lucy was six, and Fanny five years old, their uncle George came home from India. This was a great joy to them; he was so kind, and had so much to tell them about far-away places, and strange people, and animals, and things, such as they had never seen. They never wearied of hearing his stories, and he did not seem to weary either of them.

One day after dinner, they both climbed on his knees; and Lucy said—

"O uncle, do tell us a tiger story! We have seen a living tiger in the Zoological Gardens; and what a fierce-looking animal it was. We were afraid to go near the bars of its iron house. Uncle, did you ever see them in India?"

"Yes, indeed I have, both alive and dead; and very fierce they were."

"Do tell us about them then, uncle. Do not the tigers sometimes run away with little children?"

"Yes, if they are very hungry, and can get near them, without being seen. I will tell you a story about a tiger and a baby, which happened to some friends of my own."

"Oh, that will be so nice."

"Well, this gentleman and lady had one sweet little baby, and they had to take a very long journey with it, through a wild part of India. There were no houses there, and they had to sleep in a tent. That is a kind of a

house made of cloth, by driving high sticks firmly into the ground, and then drawing curtains all over them. It is very comfortable and cool in a warm country, where there is no rain; but then there are no doors or windows to shut as we do at night, to make all safe. One night they had to sleep in a very wild place, near a thick wood. The lady said—'Oh, I feel so afraid to-night; I cannot tell you how frightened I am. I know there are many tigers and wild animals in the wood: and what if they should come upon us?' Her husband replied, 'My dear, we will make the servants light a fire, and keep watch, and you need have no fear; and we must put our trust in God.' So the lady kissed her baby, and put it into its cradle; and then she and her husband knelt down together, and prayed to God to keep them from every danger; and they repeated that pretty verse, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.'

"In the middle of the night the lady started up with a loud cry, 'O my baby! my baby! I dreamed just now that a great tiger had crept below the curtains and ran away with my child!' And when she looked into the cradle, the baby was not there! Oh, you may think how dreadful was their distress. They ran out of the tent, and there in the moonlight they saw a great animal, moving towards the wood, with something white in his mouth.—They wakened all the servants, and got loaded guns, and all went after it into the wood.—They went as fast and yet as quietly as they could, and very soon they came to a place where they saw through the trees that the tiger had lain down, and was playing with the baby, just as pussy does with a mouse before she kills it. The baby was not crying, and did not seem hurt. The poor father and mother could only pray to the Lord to help, and when one of the men took up his gun, the lady cried, 'Oh, you will kill my child!' But the man raised the gun and fired at once, and God made him do it well. The tiger gave a loud howl, and jumped up, and then fell down again, shot quite dead. Then they all rushed forward, and there was the dear baby quite safe, and smiling, as if it were not at all afraid."

"O uncle, what a delightful story! and did the baby really live?"

"Yes; the poor lady was very ill afterwards, but the baby not at all. I have seen it often since then."

"Oh, have you really seen a baby that has been in a tiger's mouth?"

"Yes, I have, and you too."

"We, uncle! when have we seen it?"

"You may see him just now."

The children looked all round the room, and then back to uncle George, and something in his eyes made Lucy exclaim, Uncle, could it have been yourself?"

"Just myself."

"Is it true you were once in a tiger's mouth? But you do not remember about it?"

"Certainly not; but my father and mother have often told me the story. You may be sure that often, when they looked at their child afterwards, they gave thanks to God.—It was He who made the mother dream, and awake just at the right minute, and made the tiger hold the baby by the clothes, so as not to hurt it, and the man fire, so as to shoot the tiger, and not the child. But now good night, my dear girls, and before you go to bed, pray to God to keep you safe, as my friends did that night in the tent."

"But, uncle, we do not live in tents; our nursery door shuts quite close, and there are no tigers going about here. The man in the gardens told us that his one was quite safe locked up."

"Yes, my love, but there are many kinds of danger in this world, and we need God to take care of us here quite as much as in India. Good night, and learn by heart my mother's favourite verse—'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.'"—CHILD'S PAPER.

A MOTHER'S PRAYERS.

"I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children." You have not escaped conflict regarding any one of these children. He that was taken earliest home cost you perhaps the least. It made you anxious first to see the boy set off for school. It would not have been wise to warn him any more. Yet there was much more you would fain have said to him; but it all fell back on your own heavy heart, and never was it so difficult for you to roll any care on the Angel of the covenant. It was never so hard to tarry at the emptying home when so much of your heart was going from you. It was harder still, after the days of wise parental restriction were past, to see the rules kept by all the other children—broken by him only. To find the first novelty lying where God's Word used to be, how it went to your heart! Still you bore up. You praised the Divine Spirit who had set the mark of the Lamb on

your other children's brow, and went to your knees in confidence to pray for him.

"I'm going to the ball, mother," said one such to her who had sought the good part alone for him, and saw him partly choose it, and draw back again. She told him all the truth once more, but the age for prohibition was past. She spent much of that evening alone; then she welcomed him home again herself, far in the morning, and gave him these lines:—

"Go, tread yon airy scene of joy,
If joy indeed it seem to be;
But while its charms thy thoughts employ,
A mother's prayers shall go with thee.

"Amid the dance, the laugh, the song,
Each serious thought afar may be;
Yet as the moments sweep along,
A mother's thoughts have flown to thee.

"Yes full of life, and free from care,
Thy youthful breast may dance with glee;
But there's a heart thou know'st not there,
A mother's heart is fixed on thee.

"While all around wear smiles so bright,
And joy lights up each face you see;
E'en on this gay and mirthful night,
A mother's tears are shed for thee.

"Nor think me gloomy, dearest boy,
If scenes of mirth seem vain to me;
How my heart pants to share heaven's joy,
A long eternity with thee!"

He went abroad. He would not take any introduction to a missionary; he went to the cathedral, lived at the club, took a ticket for the fancy ball, and got a dress for it. But he awoke one night with chills, and in pain cried out, "My God!" It was his first prayer for a long time back. It was the beginning of a life-long communion with the Father through the Son. Recovering soon, he went out to visit the mission. He did not say why he came, but the missionary guessed; for as he stood by a young disciple gained from heathenism he said sadly, "Do you think this will last?" His visit was returned when he expected no one. The missionary found him cutting a velvet cover for his New Testament from the purple velvet jacket purchased for the ball, which was not yet over. Did he not remember his mother then? She that tarried at home did divide that spoil.

When Moses made demand for Israel's departure from Egypt, he said, "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not be one hoof left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither." The Christian mother may utter in faith the same challenge before him with whom she contends: "Not one hoof of all that is mine shall be left behind." "THOU SHALT BE SAVED, AND THY HOUSE." Shall our faith rise to the entireness of the unconditional promise?—*The Soul-Gatherer, by M. F. Barbour.*

SEIZE THE ROPE.

Three years ago a party of five, two gentlemen and three ladies, crossed the Niagara River in a small boat, many miles above the Falls. They were young and light-hearted. They had a merry passage, spent a happy hour on the Canada side, and then embarked for their return. All went well until they neared the centre of the stream. Just then there came down upon them a fierce gale of wind, rushing down the mighty river. The boat shot forward. It was in the mad current. The men plied their oars. They were strong and stalwart; but a power stronger than their's held them within that dark line of swiftly-moving waters.

They left the landing they aimed for behind them. They looked with speechless lips into each others' white faces.—They knew that they were going down the current. The oarsmen strained every muscle. If they could only breast the current for awhile, relief might come. One of the fragile oars snapped. One more hold gone. Never a word was spoken. Death and eternity stared them in the face.—Upon one solitary oar and one single oarsman hung five precious lives. Surely, very surely, they were going down with the dark current.

Two of the five were Christians, and they gave me the joyful assurance that when the first great terror was over, they fell back upon hope and faith, and that to them the near prospect of death was swallowed up in victory.

Suddenly, when the hands of the oarsmen were bleeding and torn, when the signal of distress had long fluttered in vain, and the agitation and alarm had sowed the seeds of death in one fragile frame, a little boat was seen coming cautiously toward them. It turned back. It durst not venture too near. Not a word from the five. They seem very near God and eternity.

Another and stouter craft put off, rapidly at first, then very slowly. It must not come within the power of the infuriated current. One moment passed. No nearer. A rope was uncoiled. "*Seize the rope!*" shouted the boat's crew. An eager hand caught it. The stout craft shot rapidly off, and the rescued boat was drawn from the hurrying current.

Sinner, you, too, are drifting swiftly and surely down a subtle current. A noble craft comes to your rescue. A rope is flung out to you. It is Jesus, the great Redeemer. Seize that rope, and escape the destruction which awaits you.

TEMPTATIONS.

Satan sets a high value on his captives.—He hates you for trying to deliver them in the name of Jesus. When you let his prey alone, you have some rest. When you are tearing it from him, he will give you none.—Was your soul never scorched, as if a blast furnace had opened on it? Evil thoughts will that cruel enemy pour into your mind.—He will conjure up unthought of temptations. Refuse to bear the brunt of them. Tell him they are *his own, not yours*. Lift them up, and cast them afar, as you would a piece of burning rocket. That which thy soul neither originates nor entertains, *it is not thine*.—Do not stop to analyze or mourn over the devil's darts; do not touch them, but receive and "quench" them all on the shield of faith, and pray or sing temptation down on your way to the fight again. Feel how close Jesus draws you to him now, calls you his own, defends the member of his body, and says, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." How broad the shield he flings around! How sweet the accents of his re-assuring love, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Did you never set out, believer, in haste and joy, with perhaps too *light* a heart, but still looking up with a single eye to the Master, saying, "To-day let me work in thy garden?" All at once the remembrance of some

sin of your childhood came with its sting to wound you; and then another and another issued up out of that past life, till, like a swarm of wasps, they fixed on you. Past sins of nature and of practice, present sins fastened on your soul. Each one of them said, "You are the very last that should profess to work for him who searcheth the hearts." Desperate and discouraged, you fell down at his feet. It did not unseal your pardon, nor take from you even all sense of it, but it was like to drive you from attempting to work in his service. There was no sense of his love to uphold you. There came no perfume of flowers from his garden. 'Twas as if you had stumbled over a dunghill outside, and you could not rise again. You shook, and wept, and groaned, and loathed the inward sight of your pollution, and said, from the bottom of your heart, "Send any one to work for thee but me!" The accuser of the brethren raised his voice. Day and night he accuses us before our God, and sometimes the sound reaches us but too nearly.—He borrows an accusation from every sin he ever tempted us to commit. He is the meanest of all foes, as well as the most cruel.—But when most viciously he treads us down, he seems but to pave the way for a more triumphant ascent from the horrible pit and from the miry clay. *There is a new sight of the blood of Jesus; every stain is afresh washed away. There is a new inflowing of the Spirit of grace; every bond is broken anew.* The God of peace hath bruised Satan under our feet once more. Eagerly and humbly, with a heart broken and contrite, we press on to work again. "Here am I, send me! None can tell more plainly than I can this day what thou canst do."

"He breaks the power of cancell'd sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me."

—From *The Soul Gatherer*.—By M. F. Barbour.

THE DWELLING-PLACE OF THE SAINTS.

The saints of God shall dwell on high. That is their enviable position. The higher we ascend from the earth, the less of its fogs, its miasma, and its damps can any way reach us, or cloud our vision. He that dwells on the highest spot has the widest horizon, sees most clearly the panorama that spreads forth like a carpet at his feet, and is able, because of his elevation above the perturbations and disturbances of this lower level, to form the justest estimate of all that he sees, and to feel most perfectly the relative proportions between two magnitudes—the littleness of time, and the greatness of eternity.—*Ladies' Repository*.

"EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

-Jesus, Saviour ! O what yearning,
What impatience at Thy stay ;
Watching still for Thy returning,
Wond'ring at Thy long delay.
Come, Lord Jesus,
Turn our length'ned night to day !
Lord, our longing hearts grow weary
Waiting for our souls' loved choice ;
Every hour seems sad and dreary,
Till we hear Thy welcome voice.
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come, and bid our hearts rejoice !

Lo ! Thy members, Lord, oft languish
Midst the world's cold heartless throng.
Some there are in very anguish,
Cry, "How long, how long, how long."

Come, Lord Jesus,
Quickly raise the nuptial song !
Thou hast promised Thou wouldst take us
To Thy everlasting home ;
Greater still, that Thou wouldst make us
Sit with Thee upon Thy throne.
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come and claim us as Thine own !

Blessed Lord ! behold Thy promise !
See, we hang upon Thy word ;
Thou hast spoken, " I come quickly ;"
Thou hast spoken, we have heard.
Come, Lord Jesus,
Come our own, our faithful Lord.

—*British Herald.*

PRAYER.

Gott ! deine Güte reicht so weit.
O God, Thy goodness far above
The highest heaven extendeth ;
The depth and riches of Thy love
All human thought transcendeth.
O Lord, my God, my tower on high,
Hear my complaint, mark well my cry,
For I will pray before Thee.

I ask not superfluity
Of wealth and earthly treasure ;
I only ask sufficiency
Enjoy'd with Thy good pleasure ;
O give me wisdom to know Thee,
And Jesus Christ sent down for me,
And give me, too, self-knowledge.

I ask not, Lord, for earthly fame,
Though men so greatly love it ;
A conscience clear, and a good name,
Is everything I covet.
Let duty be my chief delight,

To live as ever in Thy sight,
With pious friends who love me.

I ask not, Lord, for length of days,
But for Thy kind protection,
For moderation in success,
And patience in affliction.
My times are in Thy hands : when death
Chills every sense, and steals my breath,
Let me find grace and mercy.

—*British Herald.*

THE HASTY MOTHER.

I. How common ! Yet the Bible commands
us not to be hasty. Eccles. vii. 9.

A woman's ornament should be a meek
and quiet spirit (1 Pet. iii. 4) ; and a
nurse is mentioned as being especially
gentle to the little ones. 1 Thess. ii. 7.

II. Observe the angry woman,
How foolish ! Prov. xiv. 29 ; xxix. 20.
How provoking ! Prov. xv. 1.
How wearing ! Prov. xix. 13 ; xxvii. 15 ;
xxi. 19.

Drives the husband from his fireside.
Sets an evil example to the children.
Often does in her haste what she heartily
repents at leisure.

III. Therefore—

1. Put away anger. Eph. iv. 31.
Do not be soon angry, Prov. xiv. 17 ;
James i. 19.

" Meekness gives smooth answers to
rough questions."

2. Exercise self-control. Prov. xxv. 28 ;
xvi. 32.

3. Teach it to your children.

IV. Remember a hasty temper is a *fault*,
not a *misfortune*. Accustom yourself
and your children to view it in its right
light

V. Ask help from God to subdue it, for
temper is hard to conquer, and meek-
ness is a fruit of the Spirit. Gal. v. 22 ;
Matt. v. 5.

You need help, for there is much to provoke
a wife and mother.

You need help, for you are very weak, but
you can do all things through Christ
who strengtheneth you. Phil. iv. 13.

—*The Christian Mother.*

HOW TO PRESENT THE GOSPEL.

Dr. Chalmers used to complain that many preachers and writers so laid down the gospel that a sinner could not take it up. What they stated sounded very like the gospel, but yet it contained no glad tidings; for it still left the sinner something to do or to feel before he could consider himself qualified to partake of its joys. It affirmed a certain kind of freeness in the gospel, but so hampered with conditions, and cautions, and restrictions, that no sinner, *just as a sinner*, could think himself at liberty to enter at once into peace with God, far less feel the overwhelming guilt of remaining for one moment out of peace with God, or the necessity laid upon him for immediate compliance with "the commandment" that he should "believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John iii. 23).^{*} It did not bring salvation *nigh*, or at least so nigh as to be in contact with the sinner; it left a gulf, or at least a space between him and the Saviour. It set forth repentance, contrition, mortification, as prerequisites, to the acquiring of which the sinner was first to direct all his efforts before he was warranted to throw himself into the embrace of the Saviour. It was jealous of a speedy settlement of the question between the sinner and God; nay, it warned men against such a thing as a delusion. It made doubting the evidence of believing, as if it had been written not "he that believeth is justified," but "he that doubteth is justified." It introduced, though in a more subtle and dangerous way, the "doubtful faith of antichrist," so resolutely protested against by our fathers. For a man to doubt, was the essence of true humility; to continue doubting was the mark of increasing humility; to fall into despondency so as to conclude that God had forsaken him, and that his day of grace was gone, was proof of the deepest lowliness of spirit that could be conceived! This despondency was the

^{*} Thus wrote Vavasor Powell, one of the persecuted non-conformists of the 17th century. Speaking of Satan's devices to keep men from Christ, he says:—"He makes them think that the sin of unbelief is true fear, and under that notion keeps a soul from seeing and knowing the great evil of unbelief which makes God a liar; he persuades them that to believe is presumption, whereas, indeed believing is the greatest submission that can be yielded to God, for it is obeying his commandment and submitting to his righteousness." John vi. 29; 1 John iii. 23; Rom. x. 3.

true state of soul in which he could best acquire that "poverty of spirit," that "meekness," that "pureness of heart," by obtaining which he would at length find himself qualified to come to Christ, and entitled to the peace of the cross!^{*}

All objections to the freeness of the gospel, when examined, will be found to be just so

^{*} It was in reference to such misrepresentations of the glorious gospel that Robert Trail thus wrote: "Let us set this man (an awakened sinner) to seek resolution of his case to some masters in Israel.

"According to their principles, they must say to him, 'Repent, and mourn for your known sins, and leave them, and loathe them, and God will have mercy on you.' 'Alas! (saith the poor man) my heart is hard, and I cannot repent aright; yea, I find my heart more hard and vile than when I was secure in sin.' If you speak to this man of qualifications for Christ, he knows nothing of them; if of sincere obedience, his answer is native and ready—'Obedience is the work of a living man, and sincerity is only in a renewed soul.' Sincere obedience is therefore as impossible to a dead unrenewed sinner as perfect obedience is. Why should not the right answer be given, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved?' Tell him what Christ is, what he hath done and suffered to obtain eternal redemption for sinners, and that according to the will of God and his Father. Give him a plain downright narrative of the gospel salvation wrought out by the Son of God; tell him the history and mystery of the gospel plainly. It may be the Holy Ghost will work faith thereby, as he did in those first-fruits of the Gentiles. (Acts x. 44.) If he ask what warrant he hath to believe on Jesus Christ? tell him that he hath utter indispensable necessity for it, for without believing on him he must perish eternally; that he hath God's gracious offer of Christ and all his redemption with a promise that upon accepting the offer by faith, Christ and salvation with Him is his; that he hath God's express commandment to believe on Christ's name (1 John iii. 23); and that he should make conscience of obeying it as well as any command in the moral law. Tell him of Christ's ability and good-will to save; that no man was ever rejected by him that cast himself upon him; that desperate cases are the glorious triumphs of his art of saving. Tell him that there is no midst between faith and unbelief—that there is no excuse for neglecting the one and continuing in the other; that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation is more pleasing to God than all obedience to his law; and that unbelief is the most provoking to God, and the most damning to man, of all sins. Against the greatness of his sins, the curse of the law, and the severity of God as Judge, there is no relief to be held forth to him but the free and boundless grace of God in the merit of Christ's satisfaction by the sacrifice of himself." (P. 158-160.)

In a very similar strain wrote an old minister elsewhere quoted:

"Satan would keep souls from believing by persuading them that they are not yet qualified and sufficiently fitted for Christ, and that they have not seen themselves absolutely lost, not so much burdened with sin as they should. And, it is to be feared, that Satan makes use of many of God's ministers, as the old prophet mentioned (1 Kings xiii. 11, &c.), to keep off and drive away souls from Christ, under the notion of preaching peremptory doctrine for Christ, and so seeks to fit men for him, as some have preached many months together this doctrine, before they would preach Christ at all; whereas their commission, and the example of Christ and his disciples, was, to preach glad tidings first (Matt. v. 1, 2; xx. 19, 20; 1 Cor. iv. 15; xv. 3, &c.); though they did, and it is the Minister's duty to discover sin also, but how absurd is it to beat and harass wild cattle, and to enforce them to go into a place, before the door or gap be opened? Yet there is a good use of the law if it be lawfully used." Rom. vii. 12; 1 Tim. i. 8.—Powell.

many forms of *self-righteousness*. They show the exceeding tenacity with which even souls in earnest will cling to the idea that they have to *do* something in order to be saved. Drive them from the idea that their doings are to save them, they take refuge in the idea that these doings will at least enable Christ to save them. Drive them from this also, they betake themselves to the thought that these doings of theirs qualify them for being saved by Christ. Drive them from this, they flee from their doings to their *feelings*, and are most loath to give up the thought that these feelings are to contribute to their acceptance; nor are they easily persuaded that salvation by *feelings* is as gross self-righteousness, as salvation by works.

Hence, the answer to all these objections is to shew the self-righteousness which they involve, the unbelief which they indicate, and the denial which they contain of the sufficiency and suitableness of what God has done. In their self-righteousness, they imagine that all their disquietude comes from their failure in *doing* something which ought to be done by them, in order that they may have peace. They are asking "what am I to *do*,—how am I to *do* it,—in what way shall I get it *done* aright?" We are to tell them that they are utterly mistaken. God has not left them anything to *do*, in order to be at peace with him. He himself has done all that was needed for this end. The Jews inquired of the Lord when he was here, "What shall we *do* that we might work the works of God," he answered, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (John vi. 28, 29). The jailor asked the apostles "what must I *do* to be saved; their answer was, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 30.) In both of these cases the drift of the counsel was the same. It was intended to turn the eye away from *doing* to something *already* done. So our answer to the inquiring and perplexed should always be fashioned after the same model, and directed so as to counteract the same ruinous error, as well as to point to the same glorious truth. If we know the gospel, we shall not be led to tell an anxious sinner what to *do* or how to *do* it; we shall at once lay before him WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

Let us never lose sight of this in dealing with those who are in darkness. Let us at all times beware of giving them any counsel of which this is not the beginning and the end. Let us beware of allowing them to suppose for a moment that they have anything to *do* or to feel before believing on the Son of God. Let us never lose sight of this, nor be led away into giving any other direction but this. The sinner must be shut up to this. Let us not lower or dilute the gospel under the pretence of suiting his helplessness. Let us not permit him to evade the demand the gospel makes upon him for *immediate* acceptance; or give him to understand that though he cannot believe, he can pray, and wait, and use means. We are belying our message, and are unfaithful to our trust if we do not in the name of him who sends the gospel, insist upon immediate compliance with it. This is *our* part. Let us see that we fulfil it. If we act faithfully to God in this thing, we may expect a blessing. If we honour God and take his gospel just as we find it, and stand by it in every jot and tittle, God will honour us, and he will show us what wonders he can work through the instrumentality of his gospel.

Let no subtle questions regarding man's depravity drive us from this position.* If there be meaning in words and sincerity in Scripture, then man is a totally depraved,

* "One class perplex the subject with subtle metaphysical difficulties—rendering what, in the testimony of Scripture, might seem to be a simple and most intelligible exercise of mind, a matter which philosophy can hardly master, and never divest of uncertainty. Some make the essence of faith to consist not in persuasion, but in persuasion and doubt combined, the former hardly predominating. Numberless questions are raised concerning the power, degree of influence, and order of operation assignable to the production and first act of faith, till men lose sight of the question of duty to believe, until they settle God's part and prerogative in determining the action of the will, involving the believing act in insuperable difficulties of their own raising—difficulties unknown or unbreached while preachers adhered to the simplicity of Christ and his gospel. We believe men, but the testimony of God, it seems, is fitted to perplex and confound our intellects—though, were the matter agreeable to us, there would be less debate as to the mode of reception.

"But, while the philosophy of faith occupies one class, another class hold to a faith so vague and indefinite in its nature, that, though it embraces all gospel verities with an equal and just credence, rests not on one great central truth—the Father's grant of Christ for salvation to a lost world. The matchless grace, the saving boon, is held out to the acceptance of all, without money or price, without postponement or delay; and faith receives it. And they cry, we think, who place, as many do, the undoubting act of acceptance at an advanced stage of religious experience, instead of placing it, where Scripture does, at

totally helpless, totally impotent being, unable to think, or feel, or believe, or understand aright one spiritual truth. But shall we change the gospel in order to suit his case? Shall we tell him that he is so helpless that he cannot believe, but not so helpless but that he can pray and use the means? Shall we not tell him that he is a thoroughly helpless creature, yet that God has set before him this gospel of his love, and *commands* him to receive it? We are not at liberty to act in any other way, however strange to some this may seem. Our duty is to declare the gospel to him just as God has declared it, and, without any compromise, to shut him up to the necessity of immediately receiving it, at the peril of God's infinite displeasure and his own immortal well-being.

Thus writes Mr. John Brown of Had-dington:* "We must beware of directing sinners to prepare themselves for Jesus Christ, but press them to come to Him as their Saviour—guilty, polluted, and wretched as they are. Nor ought we to excite men to read or hear God's word, or to prayer, or meditation, as preparatives for Christ, but as means of Christ's meeting with their soul. Nor ought men to read, hear, meditate, or even pray for faith itself, without essaying to receive the offered Saviour, for without faith it is impossible to please God, and whatever is not of faith is sin."

Thus also, the author of "BRIEF THOUGHTS," in another place, expresses himself, "If a person strives to perform any duties, or aims to exert any acts, in order to obtain peace with God, he herein contradicts the truth of the gospel; yea, the very turn of his thought, the desire of his mind, and the spring of his activity, are contrary to that perfect freedom of grace in Christ which the gospel was written to testify: and those thoughts that are contrary to the freedom of grace cannot flow from the persuasion of it." And again,—“though a person may profess to renounce all qualifications, principles, du-

ties, or any thing else in himself as having any share in procuring acceptance with God, yet he may still consider *his own act of receiving*, as previously necessary to his justification and peace of conscience before God. Now, here our justification is supposed to be suspended upon the *exertion of this act*, and our peace of conscience upon a consciousness of having exerted it. And if we look a little closer into the nature of this act, we shall find it to include almost every qualification we can think of; for I suppose this act of receiving must be performed humbly, penitently, sincerely, thankfully, affectionately, otherwise it will not do its office effectually; and thus humility, repentance, sincerity, &c., are all brought in as previously necessary to our justification and peace with God; if this be not mixing works of ours with Christ's righteousness in the matter of our justification, I cannot imagine what is. To prevent all this from being esteemed a contradiction to the freeness of grace, we are told that it is by the Holy Spirit we are assisted in or excited to perform this act in a proper manner, in order to justification and peace! Thus, the Divine Spirit, whose work is to reveal and apply Christ as entirely free, is brought in as enabling a person to perform an act which radically contains every qualification in some degree, in order to his justification. And what is the consequence of all? Even this, that a person is taught to take his hope of the divine favour from his being conscious of his rightly performing this act with all its attendant properties, instead of receiving it purely from the consideration of the freeness of the gift. Upon this plan what can a poor guilty soul think, or how can he have any solid hope who finds the contrary of all these experiences in himself? Why, he must be next to a state of despair, or must strive and pray that he may be able to exert the act in a proper manner as a sort of prerequisite to his justification. But if in the midst of this serious perplexity and confusion the *immediate freeness of divine grace* should, by the Spirit, appear to his view, breaking through all these mists and solving all these difficulties, he is then at once relieved in a very different way, and being thus released from his bondage by a sight

the very outset; nay, a warranty for decided faith is sometimes deduced from the strength of antecedent convictions, and sometimes built even on future conduct, as if fruit could be gathered ere the tree was planted."—*Dr. Sieveright's Sermons before the General Assembly.*

* Dictionary of the Bible. Article Gospel.

and sense of free, entirely free, grace, his soul now is quickened and encouraged to all those actings of receiving, embracing, trusting, which the Scriptures represent as flowing from a genuine apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ."

William Arnot of Kennoway, in a sermon entitled "Pure Gospel the only true Gospel," preached in 1780, at the ordination of the Rev. E. Brown of Inverkeithing, thus writes: "It is one thing to mention the gospel truths in a detached, loose, unconnected manner, but another thing to preach the gospel; for unless the truths and doctrines of the gospel be placed in an evangelical order and connection, they cease to be the gospel. For instance, if repentance be placed before faith, it is not evangelical repentance; if love be placed before faith, it is preposterous; or if faith be placed before the sinner's right of access to the promises and fulness of the new covenant, it is *legally* placed, and constituted the condition of the sinner's interest in the new covenant; for faith gives no right to the promises or their contents, it only lays hold upon and pleads that right which the free promise, the gospel offer, gives to Christ, and all things in him freely.

Nay, if even a sense of need be insisted for as previously necessary to the sinner's right of access to the Saviour, it is far from being urged in its proper place. For the word of salvation, sent to sinners *as lost*, exhibits to them a right of access to the Saviour, whether they be sensible of their need or not. In few words, when interest in anything about Christ is suspended, less or more, upon self, when the promises, or any blessing specified therein, are suspended upon our dispositions or duties, revealed truths cannot be preached in a gospel method and connection."

The *Gospel Magazine* for 1800,—a magazine marked by zeal for soundness in the faith, thus states the point: "To have guilt removed by faith in the blood of Jesus; to enjoy the peace of God, by faith in the obedience and atonement of Jesus; to live, walk, and go forward in the free and full belief that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, is the one thing needful. And there is nothing more neglected either in preaching, conversation, or experience than this. It is impossible

to walk with God unless we are at peace with God. We cannot believe his testimony of Jesus, and set our seal to the truth of it, and be in bondage to unbelief. As to what many very good men express of faith, it is in my view of no importance. What is it good for without its object? Ministers should not content themselves with preaching about Christ, but they should really preach Christ. Then, without their awkward definitions of faith, it would clearly appear to the people, that simply looking unto Jesus is the faith of the operation of God. It is not preaching about *faith*, but preaching *Christ*, the object and subject of faith, that is preaching the gospel. It is not preaching how believers are justified, but how God justifies the ungodly, that is the gospel."

But while the author of these "Brief Thoughts" keeps the glad tidings of what God has done ever before our eyes, he does not lose sight of other truths which, by some in our day, have been departed from. He ascribes to the Father his inalienable sovereignty and eternal purpose; to the Son, his special work in reference to the Church; and to the Holy Spirit, his direct operation in renewing the soul. Nor does he feel at all encumbered or perplexed with these doctrines, as if they made the glad tidings less glad,—less free—less universal. He sees before him two parallel ranges of doctrine. At particular points they rise far above his vision, and are lost in the infinity of Godhead. Yet in themselves they are plain and easily understood. Some may call them discordant and irreconcilable, but they both rest upon the same evidence, and that is the testimony of God. He is content, therefore, to believe them both. He has no wish to reason himself out of the belief of either the one or the other. He receives with meekness the ingrafted word, whether that word be concerning God's sovereign purpose, or concerning the exceeding riches of his grace. In truth, the moment I deny the former, my reason for believing the latter is taken from me. I find God telling me in plain language about his purpose. I believe it because he has said it. There my soul stays itself, upon the naked testimony of God. But if I begin to deny this truth, and to put a different

meaning into the words, I am letting go my hold of God's simple testimony; and if that testimony be undermined on one point, it is subverted upon all points, so that my soul has nothing sure to rest upon in believing the gospel. In the hour of conflict with unbelief, what can pacify my conscience, or be an anchor to my soul, but God's sure and simple declaration of His free love? What, then, could I answer to my tempter, if, at such a moment, he could taunt me with inconsistency, and say, "What right have you to take God's word *simply and naturally* respecting the gospel, when you will not take it thus in reference to his eternal purpose? You say that you rest upon His word; but it is plain that you only rest upon it when it suits yourself. Where is, then, your peace? How can it be solid or sure?"

But we abstain from such discussions, leaving the treatise to stand upon its own footing, and commending it to the blessing of that God whose free grace is so fully set forth, as the only and the sufficient resting-place for the weary soul, whether of saint or sinner.

—From Introduction to "Brief Thoughts."

THE GRACE OF GOD.

"The God of all grace."—1 Peter v. 10.

"By the Grace of God I am what I am!" This is the believer's eternal confession. Grace found him a rebel—it leaves him a son. Grace found him wandering at the gates of hell—it leaves him at the gates of heaven. Grace devised the scheme of Redemption. Justice never would. Reason never *could*. And it is Grace which carries out that scheme. No sinner would ever have sought his God but "by grace." The thickets of Eden would have proved Adam's grave had not *grace* called him out. Saul would have lived and died the haughty self-righteous persecutor had not *grace* laid him low. The thief would have continued breathing out his blasphemies had not *grace* arrested his tongue and tuned it for glory. "Out of the knottiest make vessels of mercy for service in the high palace of glory."

"I came, I saw I conquered," says Top-lady, "may be inscribed by the Saviour as every monument of grace. I came to

the sinner; I *looked* upon him; and with a look of omnipotent love, I *conquered*."

My soul! thou wouldst have been this day a wandering star, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness—Christless—hopeless—portionless—had not grace invited thee, and grace constrained thee! And it is grace which at this moment keeps thee. Thou hast often been a Peter—forsaking thy Lord, but brought back to Him again. Why not a Demas or a Judas? "*I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.*" Is not this thine own comment and reflection on life's retrospect?—"Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me!"

Seek to realise thy continual dependence on this grace every moment. "More grace! more grace!" would need to be thy continual cry. But infinite supply is commensurate with the infinite need. The treasury of grace, though always emptying, is always full: the key of prayer which opens it is always at hand; and the Almighty almoner of the blessings of grace is always "*waiting to be gracious!*" The recorded promise never can be cancelled or reversed—"My grace is sufficient for thee!"

Reader! seek to dwell much on this inexhaustible theme: The grace of God is the source of minor temporal as well as of higher spiritual blessings. It accounts for the crumb of daily bread as well as for the crown of eternal glory. But even in regard to earthly mercies, never forget the *channel* of grace—"through Christ Jesus!" It is sweet thus to connect *every* (even the smallest and humblest) token of providential bounty with Calvary's cross—to have the common blessings of life stamped with "the print of the nails!" It makes them doubly precious to think, "This flows from Jesus!"

"When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
And all the flowers of life unfold;—
Let not my heart within me burn,
Except in all I Thee discern!"

Let others be contented with the uncovenanted mercies of God. Be it mine to say, as the child of grace and heir of glory—"Our *Father* which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread!" Nay, reposing in the "all-sufficiency in all things" promised by "the God of all grace."—*Macduff.*

THE SAMARITAN PASSOVER.

The following account of the celebration of the Samaritan passover, as witnessed by Canon Stanley, in his Eastern tour with H.R.H. the Prince of Wales in 1862, strongly reminds one of the early Jewish ritual, although in the course of the last few years it has been considerably modified, and owing to the influence of Western change, even in the little community on Mount Gerizim, this is perhaps the last generation which will have the opportunity of witnessing it.

The Samaritan passover is celebrated at the same time as the Jewish, *i.e.*, on the full moon of the month Nisan. . . . The whole community, amounting it is said to 152, from which hardly any variation has taken place within the memory of man, were encamped in tents on a level space a few hundred yards below the summit of Mount Gerizim, selected on account of its comparative shelter and seclusion. The women were shut up in the tents. The men were assembled on the rocky terrace. In 1854 they all wore the sacred costume. On this occasion, most of them were in their ordinary dress, only about fifteen of the elder men, amongst whom was the high-priest Amram, were clothed, as formerly was the case with the whole community, in white robes; to these must be added six youths, dressed in white shirts and drawers; the feet of these and of the elders being bare. It was about half an hour before sunset that the whole male community gathered round a long trench that had been previously dug in the ground. Prayers followed, and presently, suddenly there appeared amongst the worshippers six sheep, driven up by the side of the youths before mentioned. Recitations from the history of the Exodus were rapidly, almost furiously chanted; the sheep, still innocently playful, were driven more closely together. The setting sun now touched the ridge overhanging the plain of Sharon. The youths drew forth their long bright knives, and brandished them aloft. In a moment the sheep were thrown on their backs, the knives rapidly drawn across their throats, then a few convulsive but silent struggles, "as a sheep dumb, that openeth not his mouth," and the six forms lay lifeless on the ground, the blood streaming from them, the one only Jewish sacrifice lingering in the world. In the blood the young men dipped their fingers, and a small spot was marked on the foreheads and noses of the children.

The next process was the fleecing and roasting of the slaughtered animals. On the mountain side two holes had been dug, one at some distance, of considerable depth, the other close to the scene of the sacrifice, comparatively shallow. In this latter, after a short prayer, a fire was kindled, over which

were placed two cauldrons full of water. Whilst it boiled the congregation again stood round, the recitations continued, and bitter herbs were handed round, wrapped in a strip of unleavened bread (ver. 8). Another short prayer was chanted, after which the six youths poured the boiling water over the sheep, and plucked off their fleeces. The right forelegs of the sheep, with the entrails, were thrown aside and burnt. The liver was carefully put back; long poles were brought, on which the animals were spitted near the bottom of each pole was a transverse stick, to prevent the body from slipping off.

The sheep were then carried to the other hole, a deep circular pit sunk in the earth, with a fire kindled in the bottom. Into this they were thrust down; a hurdle was then put over the mouth of the pit, covered with wet earth, so as to seal up the oven till the roasting was completed. "They shall eat the flesh," &c. (ver. 8, 9).

Two hours had now elapsed since the commencement, and it was quite dark. Five hours more passed in silence,* and it was and it was not till after midnight that the feast began. The paschal moon was still bright and high in the heavens. The whole male community were gathered round the mouth of the oven, with reluctance allowing the intrusion of strangers (ver. 45, 48).

Suddenly the covering of the hole was torn off, and up rose a vast column of smoke and steam, and, in Reginald Heber's words, "smoked on Gerizim's mount, Samaria's sacrifice." The sheep were dragged out, hoisted aloft, and then thrown on large square brown mats, on which we were carefully prevented from treading. The bodies, thus wrapped, were hurried down to the trench where the sacrifice had taken place, and laid out upon them in a line between two files of the Samaritans. Those dressed in white robes still retained them, with the addition now of shoes on their feet and staves in their hands and ropes round their waists [ver. 11]; soon they sat down (a few years since they stood) to eat. The actual feast was conducted in rapid silence [ver. 11]. In a few minutes all was gone but a few remnants; these were gathered into the mats, and put on a wooden hurdle over the hole where the water had been boiled; a huge bonfire was kindled; by its blaze, and by candles lighted for the purpose, the ground was searched in every direction, and every fragment of flesh and bone detected was thrown into the burning mass [ver. 10, 46; Deut. xvi. 4]. By the early morn the whole community had descended from the mountain, and occupied their usual habitations in the town [Deut. xvi. 7].

* During this period the greater part of the community and of our company retired to rest.

JENNY AND HER GRANDMOTHER;

OR, TAKE CARE WHOM YOU MARRY.

"Who was at the door with you last night, Jane?" said an elderly woman to a pretty-looking girl of seventeen.

"Mary and Tom Morris," was the reply.

"And who may they be?"

"Why, Mary Morris works with me at Mrs. Rock's, and Tom is her brother."

"Does Tom work there too?"

"Now, granny, you're laughing: as if young men worked at dressmaking!"

"Well, then, how comes he home with you, Jane, seeing he doesn't work there?"

"He met us coming along, and just stepped on as far as the door."

"Oh, then was last night the first time you set eyes on him?"

Jane blushed; and hesitated; but she was a truthful girl, and said with some reluctance, "You do ask a lot o' questions, grandmother. I have seen him before last night, altogether, perhaps, half a dozen times."

Mrs. Wilmot gave Jane a searching look, and added in a kindly tone, "You have no mother, Jenny, no one to look after you but me: it's no wonder I'm anxious to know if this young man is making love to you."

The end of this speech fairly upset poor Jane. She burst into tears, but sobbed out, "He says he likes me, but I told him I didn't know my own mind yet."

"Quite right, dearie," added Mrs. Wilmot in a soothing tone. "You're over young to be thinking of such things; and besides that, I should like to know the young man a bit first—if he is a sober, God-fearing man."

Jane kept on crying, and her grandmother continued, "Jenny, lass, you've often asked me about your poor mother and father, and now the time seems come to tell you about them. If you get home early to-night, we'll sit down quiet, and I'll tell you their story."

Jane Webb was Mrs. Wilmot's only grandchild, and had been brought up by grandparents from her birth. So far she had well repaid their care. In training her the old people had tried to avoid the quicksands upon which their own early hopes had been wrecked.

Jane came in true to her time at night. She was of a cheerful mood, and the tears of the morning had left no trace upon her face.

"The tea-things are all washed up, granny," she said presently; "here's your chair; and now for the tale. I'll sit upon this stool."

Mrs. Wilmot seated herself, took off her spectacles slowly, as if she dreaded to open the long-closed past; her tongue seemed to

disobey her bidding; she leant forward, and covered her face with her hands. Jane sprang up. "Don't worry yourself, granny: perhaps 'twill make you very dull."

"Dull or not, Jane, it must be said," and the old lady forced herself to begin. "Your grandfather married me at nineteen, and it was several years before your mother was born. We christened her Rose; she was our only child, and she was as sweet as a rose to us. I suppose she was about the same as other children, but we thought none like her, and I fear we spoiled her. We brought her up to mind her Bible in the same way we then minded it ourselves. It was a *Sunday* book to us, and being honest, good sort o' living people, we did not seem to go against what it said; but, Jane, we had no real religion in us, and we couldn't teach poor Rose what we didn't know ourselves. She grew up a sweet girl, a very pretty girl, and somehow the other girls let her take the lead in all the village treats: she had her own way everywhere, at home and abroad. All went on well till she was about seventeen and a half, when a new family came into the village to live. They had a son called George Webb. They were strange sort o' people, and kept company with the idlest in the place. George was surely a very handsome young man, which made the girls forget many things that were reported of him. There was a good deal of poaching going on that year, and the Webbs—father and son,—were said to be in the gang, and, moreover, to be given to drink, especially the son. Rose wouldn't believe it. We were talking them over one day—ah! well I remember it, as if 'twas only yesterday, Jane—we were talking about the Webbs, I say, when all at once Rose got into a sort of passion, took George's part, and declared that such tales were spread about by his enemies in the village, who didn't like him because he was so handsome; and a lot more she went on. I looked at her in a maze. The thought shot into my mind like an arrow, just as it did about you and young Morris this morning, that he must be courting her. I almost held my breath as I asked her what could be the matter with her, and what did it signify to her about George Webb, a man she hardly knew. She tried to turn it off in a laugh; but it wouldn't do, and I asked her downright whether this fellow was making love to her. At first she denied it, then half owned it, and declared he was not a drunkard. Your poor grandfather was in a great way about it, which softened her a little; and at last she promised to be careful, and we promised not to be set against him, but to try to find out the truth.

"She was then just upon eighteen. Her birthday was coming on in the next week, and we were to have a little merry-making; for we were well-to-do poor people. I made a beautiful cake; and the night before we got her two presents wrapped up ready—we always saved up the whole year for this—and put them out to give her in the morning. Her birthday was the first of July, and the glorious sun roused us very early. Your grandfather had to leave for work at six; and when he found she was not down, he laughed, and said he would 'go and call the lazy puss.' As he went I stood still to listen for her merry laugh. I could hear nothing: all was still. Then grandfather's foot sounded along the passage—it was a funny old house. 'Oh, I thought, 'he wont wake her, and is coming back softly.' I peeped into the passage, when I caught sight of him with such a face, like death. 'Wife, wife!' said he, 'oh, I can't bear it!' and fell fainting on the floor."

Here the old woman broke down, and Jane and she sobbed aloud for some moments. "Granny," said Jane after a pause, "was she dead?"

"No, child, she was alive, else you would not have been here," said Mrs. Wilmot somewhat sternly. "She had run away, leaving a letter on the bed, which told us that she'd gone off at daybreak, according to settlement, to some place, to be married. She asked us to forgive her on account of her great love for George Webb. Mark you, Jane, the very idol of our souls for eighteen years broke our hearts for a drunkard she had only known for a few months. I thought your poor grandfather would die, he cried so bitterly.

"In a week or two she wrote to say she was married, and that, trusting to our love to forgive her, they would soon come back and settle near us. We did forgive her, but our earthly happiness was gone. Our trouble left a mark upon us; the Bible came down week-days as well as Sundays, and, thanks be to God, when he took one delight from us, he gave us another. When they arrived we took her to our arms and forgave her, and helped him, though we couldn't abide him, to make a home for her. She didn't look like herself—quite altered. I verily believe, Jane, and I'd have you notice what I say, child, that she had repented of her choice in three weeks: however, she said nothing: she had a true woman's heart after all, and never complained of her husband. The winter came, and George Webb hadn't much work. Often and often I went in to take her a little savoury dish, which she, dear girl! always took as if she was doing me a favour, and not as if her

poor stomach was crying out for food. The old poaching game began again; the same carousings at the public-house. He threw off all disguise now, left us to keep her, and spent his few earnings at the tap; and night after night reeled home as drunk as drunk could be. May you never see such a home, Jenny!

"A few weeks before you were born, which was just after Easter, and Easter was late that year, things got desperate. George Webb was in debt, as all drunkards are. His home had scarcely a chair in it; for though we took care of poor Rose, we did but little for him. Indeed, it was no use: in his drunken fits he would smash everything.

"He generally kept away from us; but one day, one unfortunate day—and yet, poor thing! she's better off,—one day Rose was sitting in our cottage, and I was helping to sew some baby clothes for her; he marched in half-tipsy, and began to abuse her, called her 'madam with the pretty face,' the 'dutiful daughter,' and all sorts o' sneering things. She answered him very meekly—her spirits were all gone, poor dear! But he got worse and worse; told her he was going to be hung one of these days; that his father had said he would come to the gallows. She looked at him as if to melt a stone; but the evil spirit must have been at his elbow, for he rushed up to her and knocked her down. I screamed out, flew at him like a tiger, and dashed him away. I felt that, for my child's sake, I had the strength of a man. My screams brought in a neighbour. Webb made off, and we got her on to the bed. She was taken very bad, and not long after you were born. She then began to sink fast. 'Mother,' said she to me 'father'—she held a hand of both; the words are written on my heart—'I have prayed to God ever so long to forgive my sins for Christ's sake, especially my great wickedness to you. Take my babe to your hearts; and may the Almighty save her from her drunken father!' She died soon after this. When she was in the coffin her beauty seemed all to come back. While she was dying, your father had gone in his drunken fit with some comrades to lay wait for the squire's game-keeper. They only meant to give him a beating, they said; but somehow he got killed. The constables were soon after your father; however, he managed to get to our cottage about ten o'clock the night before poor Rose was screwed down, and he begged so hard, that we let the wretched man look at her. He slipped on his knees beside the coffin, and cried like a child. 'Rosy,' said he, 'I did love you, and but for that cursed drink—well, it's no-use now.' Then he got up and said to me, 'Mrs. Wilmot, I'm off at once to London

if I can get there, and from there abroad. I know you'll be a mother to the poor babe.'

"Your grandfather moved right away from the village, and we've never seen your father from that day to this. I can say no more to-night Jane."

"You have said enough, dear granny," said Jane through her tears; "I promise you, I will do all I can to be a comfort to you and grandfather; and, God helping me, I will never marry an unsteady man."

LAST DAY DISCLOSURES.

I expect to see many wonders at the last day. I expect to see many at the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I once feared I should see upon the left. I expect to see many at the left hand whom I, in my folly and thoughtlessness, supposed were good Christians, and would be at the right.

But there is one thing I do not expect to see—one thing I am sure I shall not see—I shall not see at the right hand of Jesus Christ one single impenitent man. I shall see Abraham there, who said, "I am dust and ashes." I shall see Jacob there, who said, "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies." I shall see Job there, who said, "I am vile." I shall see David there who said, "I was shapen in iniquity: in sin did my mother conceive me." I shall see Isaiah there, who said, "I am a man of unclean lips." I shall see holy Paul there, who said, "I am the chief of sinners." I shall see the martyr John Bradford there, who said often at the end of his letters, "That wretched sinner, that miserable sinner, John Bradford"—that John Bradford who said, whenever he saw a man going to be hanged, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God." I shall see Archbishop Usher there, whose last words were, "Pardon my many sins, especially my sins of omission." I shall see holy Grimsbaw there, whose last words were, "Here goes an unprofitable servant."

But they will all be of one heart. They will all be of one mind. They will all be of one experience. They will all have hated sin. They will all have mourned for sin. They will all have confessed sin. They will all have forsaken sin. They will all have repented as well as believed—repented

toward God as well as believed in Jesus Christ. They will all say in one voice, "What hath God wrought!" The anthem, as Whitefield said of old, they shall sing in heaven, will be, "What hath God wrought!" They will all say, "By the grace of God I am *where* I am," as well as "By the grace of God I am *what* I am."

Pharisees there are upon earth many—there were, there are, there always will be in the visible churches of Christ. But there will be no Pharisees in heaven, no self-righteous people in heaven, no proud people in heaven, no sin-loving people in heaven—all will be of one heart and one mind. Oh! no. There will be no discord, no dissensions, no want of unity. They will have all mourned their sins and forsaken their sins, and they will all say, "We owe what we have, not to ourselves, but to Christ Jesus the Lord."
—*Ryle.*

SNOW FLAKES.

One great law of crystallization controls the whole snow world. Every flake has a skeleton as distinct as the human skeleton, and yet the individual flake is as different from its neighbour as a man is from his. The fundamental law of the snow is to crystallize in three, or some multiple of three. All its angles must be sixty, or one hundred and twenty. All its prisms and pyramids must be triangular or hexagonal; whether spicular, or pyramidal, or lamellar, it ever conforms to its own great law of order, and thus conveys delight to the eye, and most delight to him who, having pleasure in the works of God, searches them out.

Some men reproach the Protestant Church for its various sects. But let such men examine God's works. Unity in variety is the law of the snow. There is a Trinity in it. Every snow flake imitates its Creator by being three in one. It has a stern basis of fundamental doctrine; and it would excommunicate any snowflake that tried to stand on any other. But around that fundamental unity is the free play of individual peculiarities. All snowflakes are alike essentially, while probably no two are identical in details.—*Dr. Kirk on Snow Flakes by Am. Tract Society.*

Sabbath-School Lessons.

February 21st, 1864.

THE BOWED WOMAN HEALED.

Read *Luke* xiii. 1-17.*I. *Christ teaches repentance*, ver. 1-5.

Christ had just been urging, in the last verses of the 12th chapter, the importance of immediate reconciliation with God, when some of his hearers told him of the sudden slaughter of the Galileans. It is supposed that these Galileans, in some insurrection of the Jews, of which they were innocent, had been slain while worshipping at the temple by Pilate's soldiers. The Galileans being Herod's subjects, their death might occasion the quarrel between him and Pilate, chap. xxiii. 12. The tower of Siloam was at the south-east angle of the wall of Jerusalem.

Evidently the Jews thought the sudden death of these men a token of divine wrath. Christ wished to impress on them that it was not so, but that the unrepentant sinner would surely perish, and perhaps as suddenly, his blood mingling with his sacrifice.

II. *The barren fig-tree*, ver. 6-19.

A fig-tree in a vineyard. Pecuniary favoured and cared for. *Three years* was the time usually allowed to try such trees. Christ's ministry among the Jews was just such a period. *Cumbereth.* Not only useless, but injurious. Other fruits might grow there. *The dresser of the vineyard* represents Christ. He acknowledged the justice of the sentence, but pleads that he had still one other expedient to try.

III. *The bowed woman healed*, ver. 10-17.

Christ was teaching in one of the synagogues of Perea, when this woman, probably old and poor, attracted his eye. She came to worship—her feeble frame and bent back could not keep her away from God's worship. *She glorified God*—shows her heart was right.

The ruler of the synagogue openly charged Christ with Sabbath breaking, and warned the people not so seek cures on the Sabbath. *Thou hypocrite.* Christ's anger was kindled; before all he exposes the hypocrisy. On the Sabbath they thought it right to care for their oxen. It was envy against Christ, not love for the Sabbath, that made them blame him for caring for this poor but good woman.

APPLICATION.

1. *Affliction is no mark of God's displeasure.* The wicked often prosper in this world and the good suffer. So Joseph, Job, Lazarus, *Luke* xvi. 20; Christ himself, *Isa* liii. 4. You may be God's child though sorely afflicted, *Heb.* xii. 6; *Rev.* vii. 14.

2. *Prosperity is no mark of God's favour.* Asaph found out this, *Psal.* lxxiii. 12-28. The people of Melita fell into this mistake, *Acts* xxviii. 4-6. Beware of such a mistake; if prosperity makes you confident and proud, it may cost you your soul!

3. *Repent or perish.* Your Judge on "that day" says so! He says it now in kindness to you! Cease doing what is wrong—try to do what right—cleanse your hearts and your hands. Christ will help you. Have you ever thus repented, or are you just now what you have always been? If you repent not you *perish*—no escape, no excuse—how awful! *Mark* ix. 44.

4. *Are we like the barren fig-tree?*

Highly favoured by God. It grew in a vineyard. How many are our privileges? Sabbaths, Bibles, teachers.

Long spared, though fruitless. Year after year the fig-tree was spared. God has sought "fruit," that is, obedience, love, and holiness, in us for many years, and found it not; yet at Christ's intercession we are spared. Still it may be only for a very little longer. The axe may be laid at the root. Once more God waits another year, another month, another Sabbath, to see if you will turn to Him! Oh, turn now! *Matt.* xxi. 19; *Daniel* v. 26, 30.

5. *How good, how glorious Christ is!* He looks at the most wretched. His eye rested on this poor, friendless, hopeless woman in pity and love. "The chief of sinners" he loves to save, *1 Tim.* i. 15. Even those who seek him not, *John* xv. 16. The poor woman sought no cure for her body.

He is able to save to the uttermost. No enemy can stay his hand, *Daniel* iv. 35. No body or mind so weak that he cannot make it strong, *Deut.* xxxiii. 25; *Zech.* ix. 11; *Isa.* xl. 29, 30.

Do you know this Saviour? Has he healed you?

6. *Is your religion like Christ's, one of love?* That of the ruler was not, it was one of formality. Christ's was full of love to all. Is yours such? You may keep the Sabbath, and not be better than the ruler was.

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. Do you see more sin in yourself than in any one-else? ver. 2. It should be so; you see no heart but your own.

*This passage is one where most teachers should confine themselves to two of the sections it contains. Some teachers may find from ver. 10-17 enough.

2. To do *no good* is sufficient to condemn you. The tree had no fruit, Matt. xxv. 25.

3. It is always the time to do good, ver. 16.

4. Beware how you despise the old, the poor, the deformed. Children often do so.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

February 28th, 1864.

AN ANGEL SENDS GIDEON.

JUDGES XI. 1-24.

Verses 1. The children of Israel had had rest for forty years. Nothing that occurred during that time is recorded. The time of temporal prosperity is passed over in silence and the story of another distress, and another deliverance is given. It teaches the often told lesson that where there is sin, there will be suffering. The Israelites had executed vengeance on the Midianites, just before the death of Moses, and had almost extirpated them, but the remnant increased and acquired power.

Verses 2-6. The distress to which they were driven is here recorded. The Midianites became their chief oppressor, for seven years they were obliged to resort to the dens and caves of the earth. Their houses were destroyed, their crops were devoured, and their cattle were carried away, till they became greatly impoverished. It is emphatically stated that the Midianites came up "like grasshoppers for multitude"—an image which conveys a lively idea of both their countless numbers and their cruel ravages.

Verses 7-10. The children of Israel having been afflicted on account of their transgression cried unto the Lord in their trouble, but before delivering them from their trouble he sent a prophet to call them to repentance.—The message which the prophet carried was very plain and convincing, and was probably delivered throughout the land. It doubtless had considerable effect, as it prepared the way for their deliverance.

Verses 11-24. The individual God raised up to be the deliverer of his people was Gideon. Gideon's father was still alive, but he was passed by and this honour put upon the son, for the father kept up in his own family the worship of Baal (ver. 25), which

we may suppose Gideon testified against.—The Angel who gave him the commission was evidently the son of God himself. "*Thou mighty man of Valour,*" ver. 12. It may be that Gideon was meditating on the miserable state of Israel, and conceiving bold designs against their invaders, which however he saw no possibility of accomplishing. To these conceptions the words of the Angel may refer. "*That thou talkest,*" &c.; ver. 17. Gideon seems to have desired some assurance that the person, now speaking was He, who at the bush commissioned Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt. JEHOVAH-shalom, means the Lord send peace. Gideon does not seem to have intended this altar for sacrifices, but for a monument of the Lord's appearance.

Learn 1.—That the tendency of our fallen nature to apostatize from God is so strong, that no means can of themselves prevent its effect. In all cases when divine grace is withheld man as naturally does evil as the stone falls to the ground. This is seen in the conduct of the children of Israel, not only in this portion of scripture, but in preceding and succeeding chapters.

2. That misery invariably follows sin, till it is repented of and forsaken.

3. That if a sinner, or a backsliding saint returns to the Lord, the Lord will return to him, and will have mercy upon him.

4. That if the Lord's people call upon Him in the day of their trouble, He will deliver them.

March 6th, 1864.

THE DROPSY HEALED.

Read *Luke xiv. 1-14.*

I. *Christ cures the dropsy,* ver. 1-6.

The kindness of the Pharisees seems to have been merely a pretence to ensnare Jesus, ver. 1. The rooms of Eastern houses are often open for the sake of coolness. Probably this man was in the court of the house—brought there, perhaps, by the Pharisees designedly. Christ asked the question asked him, Matt. xii. 10, and answered it Himself, as he answered it there; the Jews were bound to help even the ox or ass of an enemy, Ex. xxiii. 5.

II. *Christ gives a lesson to the guests,* ver. 7-11.

It seems to have been a great entertainment, though it was on the Sabbath-day. Christ saw the guests selecting the highest places for themselves.

Christ stated what was the rule dictated by prudence and by politeness, and refers the case to the much higher principle, that humility will always in the end be exalted over pride.

III. *Christ gives a lesson to his host*, ver. 12-14.

He said to him that bade him. Christ never laid his character of a Divine teacher aside, nor lost an opportunity of doing good. Christ saw the company around was such as is described, ver. 12, and knew his entertainer required the lesson to be *charitable* as well as friendly. Christ never meant that we should not be kind to those noticed in ver. 12.

APPLICATION.

1. *Christ lived among men.* He was no hermit, like John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 18. He mingled with children of toil. "Is not this the carpenter?" He was found at their weddings, their feasts, their funerals—yet He was "the Holy One." He can give you of His Spirit.

2. *Christ was always true to God and kind to man.* He kept the Sabbath holy to God. He healed the poor man, ver. 4, silenced his enemies, ver. 6—taught all around him. Walk in your Master's steps.

3. *Beware of any service that requires you to forget the law of love.* If any religious service does so, it is not Christ's religion; do not do it. If any custom of trade or society does so, refuse obedience. "Corban!" "Tricks of trade."

4. *Humility will be exalted over pride.* As sure as God lives; as sure as Christ was humble and the devil is proud. Learn to think little of yourself—much of others—most of Christ. Mordecai and Haman. David and Goliath.

5. *Be courteous.* Politeness, which the world cannot want, is just the shadow of goodness. See you have the reality, and you will have the shadow. Abraham and Paul were most courteous, Gen. xiii. 8: Phil. x. 25.

7. *Be kind to the poor for Christ's sake,* and He will count it as done to himself, ver. 14. "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." Is God your debtor; or will you not trust Him?

Be unkind, and He will repay it too! Ahab and Naboth, Prov. xiv. 31; Matt. xxv. 42, 43.—*Edin. S. S. Lessons.*

A man's most glorious actions will at last be found to be but glorious sins, if he hath made himself, and not the glory of God, the end of those actions.

LIVE BY THE DAY.

One of the reasons why Christians do not attain to fuller and deeper and richer life, is, that they do not live by the day. Practically, they assume to themselves long lives—ample time for the performance of those duties, and the carrying out of those plans which should be begun at once. They leave unsaid many words of cheer and counsel; they defer many kind acts; they neglect to enter many a path of usefulness, giving as an excuse, when conscience lifts up her quiet tone of reproof, "Time enough yet, I can do it to-morrow." The habit results from a desire common to all for present ease—"yet a little more sleep, a little more slumber." One says, "I do not exercise the charity which I ought; I will begin the New Year with a different spirit." Another knows that he is penurious! "Next week I'll begin to give more." One thinks he is not exerting any direct influence for Christ; "To-morrow" he will be more faithful to souls. Another sees his business suffering through lack of provident forethought, and says, "Well, time enough yet! I'll look over matters systematically soon." The indolent man says, "Monday I will go to work." The unrepentant man hopes at some time in the ample hereafter he shall repent and be at peace with God.

Many pangs would it take away from death-bed reflections, were it our habit to live by the day. Many lives that now seem futile would be saved to the Master, and to a world sadly in need of labourers. The gain in peace of conscience would be almost immeasurable. There are probably very few who, were the angel of death to knock for admittance at the close of some day in the midst of what is called "a career of active usefulness," would not say with sudden dismay, "Why, I have not really begun my life. I have been getting ready to live. I am not yet prepared to give account of one day of full living!"—*Tract Journal.*

A tear, dropped in the silence of a sick chamber, often rings in heaven with a sound which belongs not to earthly trumpet or bells.—*Beecher.*