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## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

A SERMON BY REV. W. AITKEN, MINISTER OF UNION CHURCH, SMITH'S FALLS.

"Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. VIII. 11.

In the portion of this chapter immediately preceding, we have an account of the truly interesting circumstances under which these words—the words of Him who spake as never man spake—were originally uttered. Our Lord having entered Capernaum—one of those doomed cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, without availing to bring them to repentance—his kind interposition was besought by a certain centurion, on behalf of a servant of his who was lying at his house in extreme distress. To this appeal to his mercy the Saviour with compassionate promptitude replied, "I will come and heal him." The announcement of this gracious purpose led to a manifestation on the part of the centurion at once of the deepest humility and the most exalted faith. "Lord," he said, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed: For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

On a certain occasion, when Jesus was prosecuting his ministry in his own country, we are informed that he marvelled because of the unbelief which he there witnessed. Now, on the contrary, the spirit of simple but sublime faith displayed by the Gentile centurion, strikingly contrasting with the grievous destitution of such a spirit among the far more highly privileged Hebrew race, awakened in his breast a feeling of profound admiration, and drew from his lips the language of emphatic commendation—of commendation, how-

ever, charged with reproachful reference to the people whose high privileges had been so culpably misimproved. "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Our Saviour continued as in the text and the verse which follows, taking occasion from the centurion's memorable exhibition of faith unfeigned to foreshow the extension of the privileges of the Gospel economy to the Gentiles, while solemnly forewarning the anciently-chosen and long specially-favoured race of the terrible evils which their inveterate and irreclaimable unbelief would inevitably bring upon them. "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom (God's once peculiar people) shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The centurion in his wondrous faith was a representative man—the type of a class—a type of those from among the Gentiles who should after turn to God, and acquire an interest in the blessings of the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, through faith in Him who was to break down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and reconcile both in one body to God by the blood of His Cross—a type of the many who would yet come from the east and west, and at last sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

The form of expression—the *kingdom of heaven*—or the slightly varied form in the parallel passage of the Gospel by Luke—the *kingdom of God*—is used in Scripture

in several closely allied senses. Sometimes it denotes the Gospel dispensation, or the method of divine spiritual administration under the Gospel. Sometimes, again, it denotes the dominion of grace in the soul of the individual believer. Sometimes, moreover, it denotes the general community of believers in which the dominion of grace is established, and which constitutes the church militant here below. In the text it may signify either the great assembly of the redeemed from the earth, comprising the church triumphant above; or the world of glory itself, in which the just made perfect, the members of the church triumphant, shall have their everlasting home. It matters comparatively little which of these meanings shall be adopted; we give the preference to the last.

In the kingdom of heaven, therefore, as thus understood, "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." And in the sequel of this discourse we shall advert to some of those views of heaven and of the dwellers there which the text, regarded as having relation thereto, is adapted most obviously to suggest. It teaches us to think of heaven as a *distinct place, having a certain positive locality*—as a *place of saintly society*—and as a *place of rest and joy*.

We are accordingly to conceive of heaven,

1st. As a *distinct place, having a certain positive locality*. It is presented to our contemplation as the residence of the Father of the Faithful and his illustrious descendants, Isaac and Jacob; and of those who, having been distinguished by like precious faith, shall ultimately be associated with them in that lofty habitation.

We are sometimes told that heaven is to be considered as a *state*, rather than as a place referrible to any particular locality. And, undoubtedly, if heaven be taken

*symbolically*—if it be taken as, essentially, a *symbol of the perfection of holy blessedness*—it is independent of place, and may anywhere be realized. In like manner, of *hell*, assuming it as a symbol—a symbol of the *hopeless and utter misery which is the wages of sin*—it may be affirmed that it is a *state* rather than a *place*; and, instead of being confined to any specific locality, may anywhere be experienced in all its unmitigated horrors. Hence the fearful words which our great poet has put into the mouth of the rebel-angel, the arch-enemy of God and man—

"Me miserable! which way shall I fly  
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?  
Which way I fly is hell, myself am hell;  
And in the lowest deep a lower deep,  
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,  
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven!"

It can answer no good purpose, however, to aim at being more abstract or more spiritual in our conceptions than the Word of God. It is a spurious refining which would attempt thus to improve on its sacred teaching. And no student of Scripture requires to be informed, that, according to the uniform tenor of its representations, while heaven may certainly be contemplated as a state, it is also to be regarded as a place, and as having a proper locality no less than the world in which we now dwell.

But in what region of the vast universe it may be found—whether among those bright orbs, which shining unchangeably on from age to age, shed their calm effulgence upon us from afar, or in some realm of the boundless immensity immeasurably more distant still—this is a matter with respect to which we have been left in utter ignorance. Whatever may be the fact in this particular, we are to conceive of that heavenly world as one of inexpressible glory. Such, assuredly, the world must be where God peculiarly has his august abode—the world which he has chosen as

the palace of his kingly majesty, as the temple of his holiness—the world where angels ever unstained by sin, and saints redeemed, behold his countenance unveiled, are admitted to his most intimate fellowship, and blessed with the brightest manifestations of his excellence, and the richest fruitions of his love. In the volume of inspiration, accordingly, we see all nature laid under tribute for imagery the most splendid whereby to represent to us its supernal grandeur. Even, however, with all the assistance thus afforded, faint and inadequate as compared with the sublime reality must be the most vivid and exalted ideas of it which we can form now. Here, emphatically, in respect of heaven and its glory, we see as “through a glass darkly;” here we but “know in part.”

But though such be the obscurity and limitation of our present views, yet as the disciples of Jesus, the people of God, it is ours to cherish the hope—the good hope through grace—that hereafter, in relation to that respecting which we now see as through a glass darkly, and but know in part, we shall attain to a clearer vision and a fuller knowledge. It is ours to cherish the hope that in the celestial world, where-soever in the spacious universe it may be, we shall have our future and everlasting home, and all its glory be revealed to our direct and unobstructed gaze. And, having this high hope, earth and its peculiar objects may well cease to have the pre-eminence in our hearts; we may well like superior alike to its allurements and its trials; and in a life swayed and hallowed by all pure and heavenly influences, manifest our interest in the world where that hope so great and so divine shall have its eternal fulfilment.

But we are to conceive of heaven—not only as a distinct place—but,

2nd, As a place of saintly society. There, with the faithful patriarchs of

ancient times—with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—will be conjoined the faithful privileged to live amid the splendour of that Gospel-day whose surpassing brightness they saw from afar, and in the expectation of whose coming they rejoiced—there will be associated in one hallowed company the redeemed of mankind from the beginning of the world to the final consummation.

With reference to this celestial company, the first thing to be noticed is *its greatness*. “Lord, are there few that be saved?” was a question addressed to Jesus on a certain occasion, as “he went through the cities and villages teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.” In reply, he exhorted his hearers to “strive to enter in at the strait gate,” for that “many would seek to enter in and would not be able.” At the same time, however, it was intimated, in language parallel with that in our text, that there were those who should “come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.” Nor was it to be comparatively but a few who should thus come heavenward; but, as the text apprises us, *many*—forming, as we elsewhere learn, “a great multitude which no man could number.”

Closely connected with the greatness of the celestial company is the next point we have to notice respecting it, namely, *the various origin of the persons composing it*. It will comprise individuals from the east and from the west—from the rising of the sun to where he hath his going down—from every region of the habitable globe—from every country and every clime—an innumerable multitude “of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues.”

Under the Gospel such restrictive peculiarities as those by virtue of which the blessings of Judaism were mainly confined to a particular territory and a select people,

have no existence. In Christ the covenant of peculiarity, raising a barrier of separation between Jew and Gentile, has been done away: national and other adventitious distinctions, to which so much importance is often attached by mankind, are of no account. By His Cross he has opened up a way of free access to heaven for the inhabitants of all lands—for men of every class and condition; and he makes the attraction of his Cross effectively felt by all to draw them thither; and the various origin of the general assembly of the redeemed will eventually bear signal testimony to the unlimited character of his ability and his willingness to save.

So great in number—and so various in origin—the next point we have to notice in regard to the celestial company is *its unity*. In all its vastness and diversity it is nevertheless one; subsisting in a unity such as may be affirmed of members of the same family, who, long and far dissevered, have at last been all collected in their father's house, their common home. Contemplated under this aspect, how striking is the contrast between the redeemed in heaven and the redeemed on the earth! Here the people of God—so far from exhibiting a visible unity expressive of those hidden spiritual relations in virtue of which, howsoever outwardly divided, they are in reality one—are broken up into innumerable distinct societies. There is but one great Shepherd of the sheep, but there are many flocks. Whether it will ever be wholly otherwise below, we may not venture to predict. But, if never on earth, at least in heaven, the prayer of Christ for the members of His Church, "that they all may be one, even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us," will be fully answered; and as there is but one Shepherd, so there will be but one sheepfold.

From the unity of the celestial company

we naturally pass to notice that inward pervading *harmony* which the description before us may be held to import, and of which unity is the appropriate exponent. The divisions which to so great an extent exist among the people of God on the earth, are referrible to conflicting views and sentiments, the malignant working of prejudice and passion, and the insufficient influence of Christian love. But among the people of God above, ignorance or error will not cloud the understanding; no evil affection will hold possession of the heart; but love will have the undivided and uncontrolled supremacy. Then they shall see eye to eye, and every bosom will beat in unison—the unison of holy love.

The celestial company, in its final completion, will be the result of a gradual process, which is now as it has for ages, even from the beginning, been going on; and which will be continued till time shall be no more. It is constantly enlarging, that bright company, by ever new additions. Every redeemed soul which passes away from the earth contributes to swell its vastness. And thus friends who once walked with us in this vale of weeping, and who in dying fell asleep in Jesus, went in death, to them truly great gain, to that sainted society. Not even for a moment is the believer in dying separated from the fellowship of God's people: death but transfers him from the divine family on earth to the divine family in heaven. And the period is drawing nigh when that divine family above shall have received its last destined accession; and then the mystery of God will be finished, and the present order of things having fully answered its intended purpose, will be brought to a close.

Meanwhile, as the people of God through faith in his Son, and destined to be yet included in that celestial company of which we have been speaking, let us habitually

recognize the ties which connect us with the heavenly world and the redeemed in glory; let us be ever seeking to walk worthy of that high and holy relation, having our conversation in heaven; and let us rejoice in anticipation of the time when we shall be joined to the society of the just made perfect who have gone before. Even a heathen could look forward with delight to emancipation from the cares and turmoil of this life below, and to being associated with the virtuous dead in a diviner sphere. With how immeasurably greater satisfaction, as having so much better a faith and hope, with what joy unspeakable and full of glory, ought not the believer to cherish the thought of a similar emancipation, of a similar immortal consummation! Having such a prospect before us, let us endeavour to realize the salutary influences which it is adapted to exert while we sojourn here—ever, by a patient continuance in well-doing, aspiring to a glorious and honourable immortality.

“Seek those things which are above.”

COL. III. 1.

And what are the things which are above? Holiness—or conformity to Jesus, and entire devotedness to His service. Happiness—flowing from the manifestation of Jehovah's glory, the presence of Jesus, and the soul's delight in His will. Unity—saints above realize close, intimate, and indestructible union to Father, Son, and Spirit; they enjoy sweet and constant union with each other, and the holy angels; they have unity of design, work, and enjoyment. Seek those things which descend from above; as faith—which believes, trusts, and prefers God's word; love—which has God for its author, Christ for its principal object, and spiritual things for its chosen subjects; fellowship—with Father, Son, and Spirit, and all spiritual subjects.—In a word, all spiritual gifts, graces and operations. Seek them earnestly, principally, and constantly. Think much and often upon them. Highly value and esteem them. Constantly prefer them to earthly things. Labor to possess and enjoy them. God giveth liberally, and upbraideth not. You have not, because you ask not. Ask and receive. Receive and be happy. Your God bids you “Rejoice.”

“Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,

Thy better portion trace;

Rise from transitory things,

Towards heaven, thy native place.”

—Rev. James Smith.

## COMFORT IN DEATH.

The pleasures of the world cannot comfort a man when he draws near death. The brilliant ball-room,—the merry dance,—the midnight revel,—the party to Epsom races,—the card table,—the box at the opera,—the voices of singing men and singing women,—all these are at length distasteful things. To hear of hunting and shooting engagements gives him no pleasure. To be invited to feasts, and regattas, and fancy fairs, gives him no ease. He cannot hide from himself, that these are hollow, empty, powerless things. They jar upon the ear of his conscience. They are out of harmony with his condition. They cannot stop one gap in his heart, when the last enemy is coming in like a flood. They cannot make him calm in the prospect of meeting a holy God.

Books and newspapers cannot comfort a man when he draws near death. The most brilliant writings of Macaulay or Dickens will pall upon his ear. The most able article in the *Times* will fail to interest him. *Punch* and the *Illustrated News*, and the last new novel, will lie unopened and unheeded. Their time will be past. Their vocation will be gone. Whatever they may be in health, they are useless in the hour of death.

There is but one fountain of comfort for a man drawing near to his end, and that is the Bible. Chapters out of the Bible,—texts out of the Bible,—statements of truth taken out of the Bible,—books containing matter drawn from the Bible,—these are a man's only chance of comfort, when he comes to die. I do not at all say that the Bible will do good as a matter of course to a dying man, if he has not valued it before. I know, unhappily, too much of death-beds to say that. I do not say whether it is probable that he who has been unbelieving and neglectful of the Bible in life, will at once believe and get comfort from it in death. But I do say positively, that no dying man will ever get real comfort, except from the contents of the Word of God. All comfort from any other source is a house built upon sand.

I lay this down as a rule of universal application. I make no exception in favour of any class on earth. Kings and

poor men, learned and unlearned,—all are on a level in this matter. There is not a jot of real consolation for any dying man, unless he gets it from the Bible. Chapters, passages, texts, promises, and doctrines of Scripture,—heard, received, believed, and rested on,—these are the only comforters I dare promise to any one when he leaves the world. Taking the sacrament will do a man no good so long as the Word is not received and believed. It was a true confession of the learned Selden, “There is no book upon which we can rest in a dying moment but the Bible.”

I might easily confirm all I have just said by examples and illustrations. I might show you the death-beds of men who have affected to despise the Bible. I might tell you how Voltaire and Paine, the famous infidels, died in misery, bitterness, rage, fear, and despair. I might show you the happy death-beds of those who have loved the Bible and believed it, and the blessed effect the sight of their death-beds had on others. Cecil,—a minister whose praise ought to be in all churches, says, “I shall never forget standing by the bed-side of my dying mother. ‘Are you afraid to die?’ I asked. ‘No!’ she replied ‘But why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?’ ‘Because God has said, “Fear not; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.” I might easily multiply illustrations of this kind. But I think it better to conclude by giving the result of my own observation.

I have seen not a few dying persons in my time. I have seen great varieties of manner and deportment among them. I have seen some die sullen, silent, and comfortless. I have seen others die ignorant, unconcerned, and apparently without much fear. I have seen some die so wearied with long illness, that they were quite willing to depart, and yet they did not seem to me at all in a fit state to go before God. I have seen others die with professions of hope and trust in God, without leaving satisfactory evidences that they were on the rock. I have seen others die, who I believe were in Christ, and safe, and yet they never seemed to enjoy much sensible comfort. I have seen some few dying in

the full assurance of hope, and like Bunyan’s “Standfast,” giving glorious testimony to Christ’s faithfulness, even in the river.

But one thing I have never seen. I never saw any one enjoy what I should call real, solid, calm, reasonable peace on his death-bed, who did not draw his peace from the Bible. And this I am bold to say, that the man who thinks to go to his death-bed without having the Bible for his comforter, his companion, and his friend, is one of the greatest madmen in the world. There are no comforts for the soul but Bible comforts, and he who has not got hold of these, has got hold of nothing at all, unless it be a broken reed.

Reader, the only comforter for a death-bed is the book about which I address you this day. Surely it is no light matter whether you read that book or not. Surely a dying man, in a dying world, should seriously consider whether he has got anything to comfort him, when his turn comes to die. I charge you, I entreat you, to give an honest answer to my question. What art thou doing with the Bible?—Dost thou read it? *How readest thou?*—*J. C. Ryle.*

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#### DR. DUFF’S EPITAPH.

In his farewell address before leaving India, Dr. Duff said he should work for India as long as the breath was in his body, and then he adds:—

“And when at last this mortal body is consigned to the silent tomb,—while I myself think that the only befitting epitaph for my tombstone would be, ‘Here lies Alexander Duff, by nature and practice a sinful, guilty creature, but saved by grace, through faith in the blood and righteousness of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’—were it by others thought desirable that any addition should be made to this sentence, I would reckon it my highest earthly honor, should I be deemed worthy of appropriating the grandly generous words, already suggested by the exuberant kindness of one of my oldest native friends, in some such form as follows:—

‘By profession, a missionary; by his life and labors, the true and constant friend of India.’ Pardon my weakness; nature is overcome; the gush of feeling is beyond control: amid tears of sadness I must now bid you all a solemn farewell.”

## LEAH.

*(Concluded from page 292.)*

One sunny Sunday, after church service, as Mrs. Hillis passed the low paling that bounded the garden of her neighbour, she observed her "walling" a monthly rose over an arbour at the end of her garden. Hastening to the gate, Mrs. David begged her to enter for a moment, and as they passed on to the arbour where she had been working she said, "I suppose you are shocked to see me gardening on Sunday?"

"No," replied Mrs. Hillis; "you have kept your own Sabbath, and I cannot expect you to keep ours also."

"Well, to say the truth, I am keeping yours even better than I kept my own, for I went a little journey into the country yesterday, to a nursery garden, and bought those pretty pots of flowers you may see in the front of the conservatory. Some people may say that it is not allowable; but what am I to do? I cannot be always moping about here, and naturally I wished to have some of the pretty flowers that were to be sold by auction; so I went, and there they are."

"Yes; but we must 'remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,'" replied Mrs. Hillis.

"Why, is it possible that you think it necessary to keep our commandments?" asked Mrs. David, in unfeigned astonishment. "I thought you believed in nothing but Christ."

The sound of that name from the lips of a Jewess thrilled through the heart of Mrs. Hillis, as she replied, "Yes, we believe in nothing but Christ, who has died for our sin, and lives for our justification; but we also believe that Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."

"Well, you amaze me," said Mrs. David. "I thought you threw the Old Testament overboard altogether."

"How could we do so," cried Mrs. Hillis, with animation, "when there we have types and prophecies of our blessed Lord so full and so powerful, that they fill our souls with comfort as we read them?"

"It is very strange; but we will talk of this again," said Mrs. David, as she found the subject becoming too serious for her—more especially as she never troubled herself to read any part of the Bible except the Psalms, and was now inclined, like Felix, to put off the serious conversation she saw impending, to "a more convenient season."

But that season—the season for thought and anxious care—was to come sooner than she anticipated. Her treasured idol, her darling Leah, was suddenly struck down by a malignant fever. Night and day the wretched

mother sat by the bed of her child, incapable of doing anything but listening, with agonised thoughts—if the whirling tumult of her brain could be called thoughts—to the ravings of her unconscious daughter. At the first appearance of the illness, Mrs. Hillis had come to the assistance of her friend, and she still remained her faithful helper, and the tender nurse of the suffering patient, who was seldom conscious, and for very short periods when she was so.

Of course, all communication with the next house was cut off, except by the waving of a handkerchief, to assure Ada that her mother was well, and that her friend still lived. Day after day Leah continued to hover between life and death, and still no change for the better or worse took away from or added to the suspense of the two anxious watchers that sat beside her bed; for next to her own mother, the heart of Mrs. Hillis yearned over the young girl who, now on the verge of womanhood, and lovelier than even her early beauty promised, had twined herself round the very fibres of the loving hearts of the Hillis family. But among that family group one form was absent. Edward Hillis had passed a distinguished examination as an engineer officer, and bid fair to rise to the highest rank in his profession; but his heart turned to Vernon Villas, where he had left not only his beloved mother and sister, but the being whose lightest look was treasured in the cells of his memory, and heeded as a miser hoards his gold.

Young as she was, Edward had discovered in her a spirit that suited his own, and which beamed through every feature of her expressive countenance. No word of love had yet been spoken, but Edward knew that her guileless heart was his as truly as she felt that his life was devoted to her; and although no open profession of her change of faith had taken place, he knew that she was a Christian in the fullest sense of the term.

In the wildest ravings of poor Leah the name of Jesus was uttered with awe and love, and an old Jewish lady who came sometimes to see her noted it quietly, to be brought forward at a more proper season.

At length the nearly worn-out watchers were blessed by seeing the steady light of reason beam from the languid eyes of their beloved Leah, and though slowly, it soon became apparent that every day brought an increase of strength, and advanced her step by step towards convalescence. But another and agitating cause of alarm lay before poor Mrs. David, who had scarcely begun with trembling to rejoice in the apparent recovery of her child, before a deputation from the synagogue waited upon her to inquire into



the state of her daughter's mind, through the talkative spirit of the old lady, who had conveyed the intelligence to the rabbi of her frequent mention of the name of Jesus. Leah was made acquainted with the visit of the deputation, and its object, and, fearing that her mother might be compromised, she requested that she might be permitted to receive the gentlemen herself. With much reluctance Mrs. David acceded to her request, but yielded at length, thinking that by a simple denial of the charge her darling Leah would be freed from their intrusion. She accordingly retired to an adjoining room, leaving Mrs. Hillis, whose hand was clasped in that of Leah, to assist her in receiving the grave men that composed the deputation. Perhaps she agreed to her child's proposal the more readily, as she felt that she might possibly receive some blame for want of strictness of late in her own observance of her religious duties, and was not unwilling to avoid an interview that might admit of a rebuke being administered.

On the entrance of the gentlemen, a few words as to her health were addressed to Leah by the rabbi, who then proceeded to a command that she should disavow any knowledge of, or belief in, Jesus.

Mrs. Hillis felt the frail hand tighten on hers as the youthful believer sat upright in her chair, exclaiming, "Say I do not know Jesus! That I do not believe in Jesus! Never! He is my joy, my hope, my ALL in this world and in the next!"

"Shame on you, girl!" cried the rabbi, in a voice of extreme anger; "you should be ashamed to speak the name that you so boldly glory in."

"Ashamed of Jesus!" burst from the very heart of Leah:—

"Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may  
When I've no guilt to wash away;  
No tear to wipe, no good to crave,  
No feat to quell, no soul to save.

"Till then, nor is my boasting vain,  
Till then I boast a Saviour slain;  
And, O! may this my glory be,  
That Christ is not ashamed of me."

And having thus replied in the beautiful words of a hymn that exactly described her feelings, she sank back in her chair, overcome by contending emotions.

As she lay thus, as it were, at their mercy, the most fearful anathemas were hurled against her by the now furious rabbi and his followers; but suddenly Mrs. David rushed from the inner room, and indignantly drove them from the house, perfectly regardless of their threats of expulsion from the synagogue; and leaving called to the gate, to put them

outside the gate, she closed the hall door, and hastened to her child in an agony of love and apprehension. Leah was just raising her head from the shoulder of Mrs. Hillis, and looking round, half in doubt, for her mother, when that tender mother drew near and pressed her to her breast, exclaiming, "Believe what you like, my darling, as long as you love your mother; never again shall you be asked by mortal why you believe anything."

Leah sighed as she kissed her mother fondly, yet she felt that the Spirit of God could touch that heart, now so bound up in her, and fill it with the glorious life-giving influence of the Saviour's love.

No further molestation was offered by the rabbi, and once more the families fell into the quiet way of life that had distinguished their long intercourse. Two years passed by, in which Leah and Ada became still more endeared to each other. Edward wrote long letters to both, and received equally long, cheerful letters in return. Mrs. David had for some time noticed that Leah went in every morning and evening to the house of their friends, and, on inquiry, found that it was for the purpose of attending family prayer. Sometimes, especially on Sunday evenings, she heard the sweet voices that sang the hymns, appealing, as it were, to her inmost soul; and one Sabbath evening, as her own Leah took her place at the piano, and struck the opening chords of the *Jubilate*—"Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious"—her mother glided to her side, and, in the prayer that followed it, knelt in lowly humility beside her, with bowed head, listening to the petitions that were urged in the name and for the sake of Jesus.

\* \* \* \* \*

Years have gone by, and still in the two houses known as Vernon Villas reside Mrs. Hillis and Mrs. David; but the houses can scarcely be called *two* houses now, for there are upper and lower doors of communication between them, and various sweet little voices call both ladies "grandinamma." Both families assemble morning and evening in the drawing room of Mrs. Hillis, when the manly voice of Edward is heard reading the Word of Life, and ascending in prayer and praise to the throne of the Most High; and the sweet voices of his wife, his children, and his two mothers—as he calls them—blend with his own and the domestics' stronger voices, as they sing the cheering songs of Zion.

Ada, the fair English blossom, is labouring zealously in the East with her husband, who is a missionary among the Jews; and often her heart fills with love as she gazes on that interesting people, and thinks of her sister—her beloved Leah, the first fruit that God had

given her of his own peculiar people. Well may the divided family exclaim, "Lord, hasten the day of thy coming!" "Make beautiful upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, 'Thy God reigneth.'" "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people; he hath redeemed Jerusalem."—*English Paper.*

### REACH OUT FOR HEAVEN.

You long for the bread of God to come down from heaven, and give you life such as the angels enjoy, do you? You long for a warmer, tenderer, more unselfish, and sympathetic heart, for more of true neighbourly love, do you? You yearn for it and pray for it? Then go out of yourself, and try to live for others. Try to do something to dissipate the darkness, to lessen the burdens, to alleviate the sorrows, to multiply the joys, to smooth the rugged pathway of some neighbor. Try to extract some rankling thorn, or to pour a little oil and wine into some bruised and wounded soul. Seek out some friendless and needy object, on whom to bestow your sympathy, your generosity, your offices of kindness. And you need not go far: such objects exist in scores all around you—objects needing sympathy and comfort, if not material aid. Do this, and see how your cold and hard-hearted selfishness will begin to diminish, and your neighbourly love to increase! See how the windows of heaven will be opened within you, and your before waste and barren soul begin to be flooded with the gracious outpourings of love from on high! It is the outgoings of our own thoughts and feelings, with intent to bless, that cause the plentiful incomings of the divine love and mercy; agreeable to that divine declaration, "Give, and it shall be given unto you."—*Religious Magazine.*

### THE GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES.

Bishop Simpson said recently, in an imaginative discourse on the words, *No man looketh unto himself*: "While I was in Europe I stood in a grand cathedral, admiring the paintings and statuary, when a friend called my attention to the dome overhead; I looked upward to the ceiling far above us, but could see only a cloud-like hue. Soon, however, the confusion vanished, and angelic faces were looking down upon us from every part of the magnificent dome. It was a beautiful thought of the artist. And so the great cloud of witnesses gaze lovingly upon every worker for Christ. Sometimes, I see only clouds about me; but they melt away, and behold the saints who loved gone before,

with looks of encouragement and affection, filling the heavens around and above me."

The eloquent passage gave new interest to an old truth. Is there a more glorious and animating glimpse of the celestial host in sympathy with the humblest believer—looking through the smoke of battle upon the dying Christian soldier—than that alluded to in the "great cloud of witnesses?" Once appreciated, and habitually in thought, how it would lift the soul above trial and temptation; and invest with honor and dignity the lowliest labor for Christ! Heaven and earth are very near each other when we think of "the church universal."

"One army of the living God,  
To his behest we bow;  
Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now."

### Jesus Christ the Resurrection and the Life.

Jesus lives, and I with Him,

Wherefore, then, should death appal me?:  
He who did my soul redeem

From the grave will also call me,  
And my body clothe with light;  
This my hope is day and night.

Jesus lives to whom all power

Both in heaven and earth is given;  
And with whom for evermore  
I shall live and reign in heaven.  
What He saith He will fulfil;  
This my trust and hope is still.

Jesus lives—a fearful heart

God dishonoureth and grieveth,  
Who doth grace to him impart  
That repenteth and believeth;  
None in Christ will God cast out;  
This I know beyond all doubt.

Jesus lives; He died for me,

Mine His full and free salvation;  
His may I from henceforth be,  
Pure in heart and conversation!  
He will not forsake the weak,  
Who His help in earnest seek.

Jesus lives I know full well,

Naught shall me from Jesus sever;  
Life nor death, the powers of hell,  
Nor ought else shall part us ever;  
God alone gives strength for this;  
This my hope and sure trust is.

Jesus lives—to me is death

But the entrance-gate to heaven;  
Oh, what joy in his lust breath  
To the faithful soul is given,  
Who can then believing say,  
"Jesus thou art my sole stay."

—*British Herald.*

R. M.

**PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.**

Is it not a solemn thing to think of death? Is it not a still more solemn thing to die? It is even a solemn thing to see another die. You may have watched for days and nights at the death-bed of one you loved, and followed the march of the tyrant as from hour to hour he tracked his footsteps on the furrowed brow, in the throbbing pulse, in the emaciated countenance, and the glistening eye. You may have witnessed the struggle between death and his victim, heard the rattle that proclaimed his victory, and seen his triumph in the fixed gaze and bloodless skin of the one you loved. Did you not feel solemnized at the change that death had wrought—at the stillness that reigned around? Yea, it was solemn to be in the presence of the dead—to witness the remains wrapped in the folds of its winding-sheet—to see them laid slowly and cautiously in their coffin, and to hear the grating of the screws that shut the world out from them, and them from the world *for ever*. You felt it solemn, as draped in the habiliments of mourning, you joined the procession that with slow and stately steps bore those remains to their last resting-place; and as you stood on the brink of the grave, and heard the thrilling sound of dust returning unto dust, you thought of the cold damp chill of the house appointed for all living—you thought of the worms that would feed on the dust that was dear unto you—and you wondered where the Spirit was, now that it had returned to the God that gave it. O death, it is a solemn thing to look on the ravages that thou dost make. But it is not invested with its full solemnity till we meditate on its influence on ourselves. Reader, think! Soon sickness and death will lay their hands on you. Soon you will be summoned away from your present enjoyments and your present em-

ployments. Soon those eyes of yours will be closed in darkness—those limbs will be stiffened in death. Your body will be laid in the cold, chill grave for worms to feed upon, and your soul that feels and thinks, that hopes and fears, will go alone, alone, alone, to see sights, and hear sounds, and understand things, which as yet eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. For “your body shall return unto dust, and your spirit unto God that gave it.”

If this be so, how important the injunction,

**PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD,**

**TO MEET GOD.** How solemn! God has often met you. He has often met you in His Providence. From the earliest years until now he has watched over you. His hand laid hold of you when exposed to danger—his help was ready in the hour of extremity. He scattered away your fears, and exceeded your expectations, causing you to see His goodness every morning, and His faithfulness every evening. He has often met you in His grace, sending His servants to teach and to warn you, and His Spirit to strive with you. But to meet God is something different from God meeting you. When God condescends to meet you, it is for purposes of mercy—to shed upon you the dew of His compassion, or apply the rod of fatherly chastisement. When, however, He demands of you to meet Him, it is for purposes of judgment. He commissions the angel of death to cut you down, and in due time shall cause the trumpet of judgment to summon you before Him, to render an account of the deeds done in the body.

**THE GREAT ASSIZE.**

**SINNER, CONCEIVE**—time as no more—the wheels of this world's machinery stopped—the tumult and toil of this world

buried in universal stillness—the throne of justice established for judgment—the stern Judge seated thereon, having the sceptre of righteousness in His right hand, and the balance of equity in His left. Around His throne ministers of justice stand—executors of His vengeance ready to do His will, and an assembled world looking on and listening with breathless interest and attention. YOUR TURN for judgment has come. Your name is pronounced, and the universe is still. The trumpets bring you forth for judgment. Your position is awful. The eyes of the Judge, like a flame of fire, are piercing through you. The eyes of thousands of angels and of just men made perfect are upon you. The books of judgment are opened, and your transgressions are read over with a minuteness and a point that make you quail. Your whole past life is brought to your vivid recollection. Your childhood, your youth, your riper years, pass before you as a panorama. Sins of omission, and sins of commission, sins in secret, and sins in open day, are laid to your charge, and under the accumulation of your transgressions, you tremble and cry out, GUILTY, GUILTY.

### THE SENTENCE.

LOOK, SINNER! The Judge rises—majesty is in His mien—sorrow rather than anger expressed in His countenance. With solemnity He says: Hear, O Heavens! and give ear, O Earth! What could I have done for this transgressor that has not been done? I cast his lot in a land where My name was known and My worship established. I caused his parents to instruct him in the knowledge of my ways. I caused My faithful servants to speak to him about his soul's salvation, and to warn him publicly and privately of the wrath to come. I sent My Spirit to strive with him, yet he resisted. My Spirit, he disobeyed My

instructions. Though he was convinced that it was wrong to delay, dangerous to put off, and his duty to prepare to meet his God, yet he ran the risk of a more favourable opportunity, he put it off for a more convenient season, and is now subject to a sentence of condemnation.

LOOK, SINNER! Sad solemnity pervades the universe. The heavens are clad in mourning, the earth in sable, while the Judge, putting on the black cap, pronounces your doom: DEPART from ME, ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The universe re-echoes the sentence. The executors of vengeance seize hold of you, and you are borne away where all happiness is ended and all hope lost.

Sinner, thank God that this is but a representation, and that you are still in the land of the living and the place of hope. It might have been otherwise. "Hell is already paved with good resolutions." Many who were once in the world, and who who made up their mind to prepare to meet their God some time before they died, delayed and lost their soul. Theirs is the DOOM of the DAMNED, and it might have been so with you. For remember the striking providences in the past, the sudden death of your companion, and the hair-breadth escape of yourself. Remember the stirring sermons you heard that led you to resolve that you would make your peace with God. But your resolutions vanished; your good impressions like the morning cloud and early dew passed away, and though weeks and months and years have rolled over your head, you are still unprepared to meet your God.

### UNFORGIVEN SINNER.

Seeing it is the case that you *must meet* your God, be persuaded to prepare without delay. Is that not reasonable? Were you to appear before a human judge in case

of our courts of law, you would prepare your case, and be ready to appear to the best advantage. That could not be done, however, in a moment. Were you summoned to appear before an earthly monarch, you would change your attire and prepare yourself to appear in a becoming costume—in such costume as would become a kingly court. That costume could not be procured, however, in a moment. Now, you must appear before God as a Judge and as a King, and you cannot leave the preparations to the last moment. Some seem to think that the time they will have on their death-bed is enough for preparation, and they act as if they were sure that they would have a death-bed. We a few days ago read of a man who said that all the preparation for death he wanted was to be able to say, "Lord have mercy on me a sinner." But one day riding home drunk, his horse in the dark fell over a bridge, and it and its rider were killed. He had not even the short time he wished for preparation, and he was a fool to put it off. Ah, preparation should not be put off. It is too momentous a thing to be thrust in a corner, for it is the most momentous work we have to do in our lifetime. Sinner, your reason requires you, your interest requires you, your comfort requires you, but most of all your God requires you to prepare to meet your God.

Now, we presume that some sinner reading this, feels that he is unprepared to meet his God, and is anxious to "escape for his life." He asks, how shall I prepare to meet my God? How can I who am a great sinner, ever be able to stand up before the living God?

### RENOUNCE YOUR SINS.

Hear what saith the scripture, "*Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon*

*him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.*" Isa. lv. 6. All men have power to do evil or refrain from doing it, albeit they cannot do good. And you as well as others can leave off practising your wickedness. And if you would "seek the Lord" to be reconciled unto him, you *must* leave off your sin. If you are a drunkard you must leave off your drunkenness, or a sensualist, your sensuality, or a sweaver, your swearing, or a scoffer, your scoffing. If you are not one of the wicked, but one of the unrighteous, in whose heart vain thoughts lodge, you *must* forsake your thoughts and turn unto the Lord and the Lord will turn unto you. You remember the prodigal son, who is but a representation of a sinner at enmity with his God, after he had revelled in the pleasures, and had sunk into the mire of sin, says, "I will arise and go to my father."

In arising he forsook his sin and turned unto the Lord who had compassion upon him.

You must not only renounce your sin, but you must also

### CONFESS YOUR SINS.

The mere renunciation of a wicked way or sinful thought, though necessary for forgiveness, is not in itself sufficient. It must be linked with confession. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose *confesseth* and *forsaketh* them shall have mercy," Prov. xxviii. 15. Confession is just as necessary as forsaking, and the confession implies that you are heartily sorry on account of your sins, and that you make a clean breast by telling God about them.

Now, if your confession is of this complexion and associated with renunciation, you have a glorious promise to appropriate to yourself. "If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighte-

ness," 1 John i. 9. He is faithful to forgive you, because he has promised to do so. He is always as good as his word, and often a great deal better. He is just to forgive you because Christ has once suffered for all his people, and when you confess your sins, you in the act of confession transfer your sins upon Him. Your sins are imputed unto Him, and He has by His atonement satisfied divine justice, God is simply just in forgiving you your sins, and afterwards in cleansing you from all your unrighteousness—

"There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains."

SINNER, seek the Lord this hour. "Seek him while he may be found." Retire to your closet, and "call upon Him." Tell Him that you have been a great sinner, and that you are nothing but a sinner. Ask Him to accept of you for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered, and plead with Him till He imparts to you the blessed assurance that your sins are forgiven, and your iniquities blotted out—  
All you are able to say,

"I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."

### PARADISE.

Yet once more let the words of our Lord be repeated, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But where this Paradise; what this Paradise? We can say, in answer to those questions, that with this heavenly Paradise into which the redeemed at death do enter, the ancient, the earthly Paradise is not fit to be compared. In the one, the direct intercourse with God was but occasional; in the other it shall be constant. In the one, the Deity was known only as he revealed himself in the works of creation and in the ways of his providence; in the other, it will be as the God of our redemption, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus, that he will be recognized, adored, obeyed

—all the higher moral attributes of his nature shining forth in harmonious and illustrious display. Into the earthly Paradise the tempter entered; from the heavenly he will be shut out. From the earthly Paradise sad evils once were driven, from the heavenly we shall go no more out for ever. Still, however, after all such imperfect and unsatisfying comparisons, the questions return upon us, Where, and What is the Paradise of the redeemed? Our simplest and our best answers to those questions perhaps are these—where is Paradise?—wherever Jesus is. What is paradise? to be for ever with, and to be fully like our Lord. We know—for God has told us so, of that Paradise of the redeemed—that it is a land of perfect light; the day has dawned there; the shadows have forever fled away. It is a land of perfect blessedness; no tears fall there; no sighs rise there; up to the measure of its capacity each spirit is filled with a pure, never-ending joy. It is a land of perfect holiness; nothing that defileth shall enter there, neither whatsoever loveth or maketh a lie. But what gives to that land its light, its joy, its holiness in the sight of the redeemed? it is the presence of Jesus. If there be no night there, it is because the Lamb is the light of that place; if there be no tears there, it is because from every eye his hand has wiped off every tear. The holiness that reigneth there is a holiness caught from the seeing Him as He is. And trace the tide of joy that circulates through the hosts of the blessed to its fountain head, you will find it within that throne on which the Lamb that once was slain is sitting. To be with Jesus, to be like Jesus, to love and serve him purely, deeply, unfliningly, unfliningly,—that is the Christian's heaven.

I love, says one, to think of heaven; and as I repeat the words, they will find an echo in each Christian heart:

"I love to think of heaven; the cloudless light,  
Its tearless joys, its recognitions, and its fellowships  
Of love and joy unending; but when my mind anticipates

The sight of God incarnate, wearing on his hands  
And feet and sides marks of wounds  
Which he for me on Calvary endured,  
All heaven beside is swallowed up in this;  
And he who was my hope of heaven below  
Becomes the glory of my heaven above."

— Dr. Flann.

## A GOSPEL WITHIN THE GOSPEL.

AN EXPOSITION OF LUKE XV. 11-32.

(Continued from page 230.)

### PART III.—GOD'S GRACE TO THE RETURNING SINNER.

"And he arose and came to his father."

There can be only one sequel, *only one invariable issue*, when a sinner returns to God with his whole heart. He shall be received graciously, and forgiven freely; without one word of reproach or upbraiding on the part of God, for all his past sin and transgression. It has never yet been known that any sinner, so coming, failed to receive such a welcome back. See here,

#### THE SINNER'S RETURN TO GOD.

There was once a King in Israel; the son of a godly father, whose sins were the means of hastening the ruin of his country. He seemed to delight in undoing all the good wrought by his father Hezekiah. He set up false gods in Jerusalem, he seduced his people to become partakers in his sins, he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; directing his wrath especially against those who were still faithful to God. The divine record respecting him is summed up in these terrible words, "He did much wickedness in the sight of Jehovah to provoke Him to anger." When God sent His servants the prophets to warn and plead, he would not hearken. At last the Assyrian, the rod of God's merciful judgment, "caught him among the thorns, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him." MANASSEH had continued long in his apostacy; he had grown old in sin; he had wrought evil which he could never hope to undo or repair. But yet, when he "came to himself" in the

dungeon at Babylon, and when he remembered that God whom he had so long forsaken and forgotten, he said, I will arise and return; "and he prayed unto Him: and God was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.*" A love and compassion altogether divine awaits the returning sinner. He indeed, in his heart-apostacy and alienation from God, *knows it not*. Destitute himself of a son's love and trust, he cannot conceive of the father's love and grace. O sinner, only when you return to God with your whole heart, shall you know Him: only then shall you know that "His thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are His ways your ways."

"And he arose and came to his father." He came in rags and misery, driven back to his father's house by utter want. He felt that his unworthiness was as great as his wretchedness, yet he came. His heart misgave him somewhat. Perhaps he began to think *such* a return home a base thing on his part; to return, after having spent all time, talents, money, strength: to return a ruined man, without the credit of any high or worthy motive, but *merely: driven back by want and misery*. How mean; what an overwhelming sense of unworthiness oppressed him, as he came. His heart misgave him; and more and more as he drew nearer home; and his steps began to linger. "But, when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." *This is*

#### GOD'S RECEPTION OF THE SINNER.

The father does not draw back from the wretched object before him. He does not wait for a single word of confession or supplication. Even on the public way, he is not restrained from embracing him, for he

sees in that tattered and naked beggar a *long lost son*.

"When he was yet a great way off the father saw him." This reaches very far back, considered in its true meaning as it respects God and the sinner; though, in the figure of the parable, this cannot be so fully brought out. It seems to express the whole method of God's grace in dealing with sinners, and to indicate its foundation in His omniscience, and foreknowledge—It is written, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." When he is yet "a great way off," in all his wanderings, however far from Him, God sees the sinner. His mercy follows in all those crooked ways into which he has gone aside. Sometimes his way is hedged up with thorns, sometimes it leads him only to sorrow or disappointment. The sinner, in his apostacy, cannot discern his Father's hand in these things, but yet they show the hand and the eye of God upon him in mercy. And thus, in the first movement of true repentance, God meets the sinner: by God's grace it has been brought about.

While yet a "great way off," God sees the sinner. It is only, however, when we have returned to Him, that we are able, in any measure, to realize and acknowledge this truth. When we have found our resting-place under the shadow of His wing, and look back from that blessed dwelling on all the way we have come, then we can discern, in all our past way, traces of the guiding hand of our heavenly Father. But the whole method of His grace with us we shall not know fully, until we stand before His face in our home above. Then shall we know even as we are known.

But this also indicates the method of God's dealing with every sinful man yet numbered among the living. He looks down from heaven upon all the children of men. His compassionate eye follows them in all their wanderings in ways which do not profit. His mercy delays the judgment which might justly overwhelm. God does not contend with them, nor is He stirred up to anger. With goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, He seeks to lead them to repentance. He looks upon them with fatherly pity amid the want and degradation of the land of famine, and "if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He shall deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."

O reader, yet far from God, *His eye is upon you*. He knows already all your sin; He sees your want and misery. He is looking on, with a Father's eye, watching to see if your heart shall incline to Him. And though, perhaps, to you in your sin, God may seem to be a great way off, and though there may seem to be a long course of service and duty to run, before you can reach Him, and find grace,—yet, even at your distance from God, if your heart inclines to Him, its contrite cry shall reach the heart of the all-merciful Father, and bring Him to your side. During all his self-communing, the father saw him; when he arose, and was coming back, he saw him; and when he was yet "a great way off, he ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." There is a picture of God's grace in the reception of a returning sinner, whatever may have been his former sin and unworthiness. We now see the sinner receiving

#### THE GIFTS OF GOD'S GRACE.

Welcomed thus, with a grace and love which far transcended all his thoughts, the son now makes his free confession of



sin and unworthiness. "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." This confession is not drawn from him unwillingly, and as a means to propitiate his father. He has been received graciously as a son, already, before he uttered a word. But all the more, *because* of this, he makes his confession, and with a depth of earnestness, humility, and contrition, never felt till now. For God brings down the pride of a sinner's heart by making him know His mercy and grace. Hear His own word: "I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt *know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest* remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, *when I am pacified toward thee* for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Mercy and grace are God's very first gifts to the returning sinner—most *fruitful* gifts; for, a deeper sense of our own unworthiness, and a more perfect knowledge of the vileness of sin, are at once produced by the reception and enjoyment of them.

Moreover, they form the true main-spring to a holy life of new obedience. The son here does not follow up his confession of sin with the unworthy request he had purposed making: he omits the petition, "make me as one of thy hired servants." The fatherly embrace which had met him when yet a "great way off," and the fatherly tenderness displayed in his reception thus far, had, as it were, given him an insight to his father's heart; and the love he saw there began to call up in his own heart the love of a son. The bond of filial love, severed so long, was formed again; the heart-apostacy, which had lain at the root of all his past sin, and the secret feeling of dislike which had driven him from home, were now destroyed;

his heart once more was moved with the love and duty of a son. He could not now, therefore, propose to enter his father's house as a hired servant. Stronger and worthier motives had just been created within him for a life of holy obedience. The spirit of the hireling, who labours only for his hire, had been cast out, and *now, as a son*, he was ready to give a willing and loving service.

And so, reader, must it be with you, before you can hope to render any *true or acceptable* service to God. Such service cannot spring from a desire to be saved. God cannot accept of any service performed merely from dread of punishment, or in hope of a reward. *There must be no hirelings in His house.* It is only the loyal and loving obedience of *children, of sons and daughters*, which He can receive. You must, therefore, *know Him*—you must *know His fatherly mercy and love*—and that blessed knowledge must beget in your heart the spirit of adoption, whereby, with open face, you look up to God, saying, *Abba, Father, before* you can render such a service. God's first demand of the sinner is, "return ye now unto Me." In returning, the divine compassion and love meet him while yet a great way off. Mercy and grace are the very first gifts of God to a repenting sinner; and, reader, *it is after this*, after you have *got mercy and grace*, not *before*, that you shall be able, with full purpose of heart, to endeavour after a new and holy obedience. *The true spring of a godly life is love.* And only when love to God has been begotten in your heart, by the faith and knowledge of God's love to you, shall you be able to live for Him, to do unto God any true or acceptable service.

The other gifts—the *robe, the ring, the shoes*—which are bestowed on him, have their own special significance. Thus, the *robe of honour* which displaced his beggar's

raggs, seems to symbolize the primary justification of the sinner—the robe of righteousness wherewith God invests His children. “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.” In such like words of adoring gratitude does the justified sinner utter the fulness of his heart, when first clothed in that glorious dress. The *ring*—which in ancient times was used as a token of investiture with any high or honourable office—seems to indicate the full acknowledgement of the poor sinner as a son, and the gift of the spirit of adoption. The *shoes*—which, as a rule, were not allowed to the slaves of a household—point most significantly to the freedom and power of the new life of grace—that “glorious liberty” which belongs to the children of God, that power to “run in the way of His commandments,” which is a result of God’s grace. “The converted son receives all these gifts of grace at once, under the condition—unexpressed, indeed, in the first superabounding assurance—that he will now, from henceforth, sustain these honours aright, and fully meet their obligations.”

After the first scene between the father and son, and that loving embrace, which was the seal of a free and gracious forgiveness to the returning sinner, the narrative in the parable takes us to the father’s house, and gives us a picture of the rejoicings over the prodigal’s return. This shows forth

#### THE JOY OF GOD OVER THE REPENTING SINNER.

In answer to that free, yet deeply humble and contrite confession of sin, made by the son, the father, calling on the servants,

says, “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry.” In the joy of his heart, because of the recovery of his long lost son, the father prepares a feast, and calls upon the whole household to rejoice with him at the event. “For,” he adds, in pregnant words, “this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” “This my son,” he says at the outset, which, as thus spoken by the master, would secure the prodigal from any future scorn from the household. This poor apostate, reduced to the most sordid depths of misery and want, and who had just emerged from a state of vile degradation and bondage; this poor beggar, who had come in rags and wretchedness to the floor, was none other than a son to his father’s eye. “This my son was dead,” is God’s word concerning the sinner. Dead, while lying in the degradation of the land of famine; dead to me, while in that far country; *dead*, in the most awful truth of that word, while living in that course of ungodly pursuits and pleasures to which he had given himself up. “He was lost.” Lost to everything worthy and noble, to all that was pure and holy, while he wasted his substance in that far country; lost, by his apostacy, to all his great prerogatives as a son. The gold had changed, the fine gold had become dim. But now he was recovered and saved. “This my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.” That son himself, with a heart full of the highest joy, springing out of the deepest abasement, now sits in the place of honour as king of the feast in his father’s presence.

“There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” There is joy in the heart of the Father. There is joy in the heart of the Saviour. In that saved soul, He

sees the fruit of His own sore travail; of His pains, and toils, and death,—and is satisfied. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God! And, let us rest assured, that it is no inadequate cause which makes the note of jubilee resound through all the courts above.

In spiritual things, sin darkens our vision; and we discern, but very imperfectly, the *true magnitudes of things*. Some paltry object, near at hand, often hides from view the great features of the landscape. Things local, or matters directly personal, often assert for themselves an interest and importance greater than those decisive events which determine the destiny of nations, and affect the whole human race. How insignificant, in reality, are all those concerns which begin and end in time, compared with those which have their issues in eternity; and yet, "things seen and temporal," compassing us about, may materially intercept the view, or even hide from us altogether, those far greater, though "unseen and eternal things." We must enlarge our view, and take in the very widest scope, if we would judge rightly of things. And is it not just because there is a wider range of vision, and a truer appreciation of the real importance of things, in the courts above, that there is joy *there* because of the conversion of a sinner to God? an event which some men, in senseless ignorance, make a subject of mockery, and which, by all of us, is too little regarded.

The shifting scenes of politics; the conflict of parties in a state, their brief ascendancy and downfall; the shock of armies, decisive victory and defeat; and the overthrow of thrones and dynasties; these are the great things of earth. Sometimes the name of statesman or warrior floats on the surface of the troubled waters, and is taken up and wafted on the breath of fame to the ears of all men. Engraven on brass and

marble, that name is transmitted to coming generations surrounded with the halo of earthly glory. But we cannot imagine the holy angels watching in deep interest these changing scenes, and *hasting* back to their home above to proclaim each turn of fortune, or to carry each famous name in triumph through all the regions of heaven. With their higher intelligence, and wider range of vision, they have a better knowledge of the true magnitudes of things. They know that that name, now on every tongue, shall soon be forgotten; that these monuments of enduring brass and marble shall crumble into dust; nay, they know that the very earth itself, the scene of all that glory, shall be dissolved and utterly pass away. The great things of this world must appear to them vain and evanescent, like the world itself. But yet, "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." With untiring interest the hosts of heaven watch the conflict between good and evil, between God above and the god of this world, in your soul, reader. We can imagine their palpitating eagerness as they look on the various turns of that strife. They see the mighty interests in suspense. They see the everlasting issues of the conflict. And when the victory is won, in that saved soul they see a trophy wrested from the hand of the great adversary of God and man, a trophy of victory, which shall remain a monument of God's mercy and grace for ever. And *then*, there is joy in heaven!

The events of any strife—whether the conflict of parties in the political arena, or the shock of armies on the field of battle—have a fascinating interest for the hearts of men. When our own countrymen are in the field, and our own interests at stake, what anxious expectation waits on tidings. As the hostile armies approach, with what absorbing eagerness we watch each movement. When the day of battle comes,

with what feelings we learn the details of the strife! how we dwell upon the smallest incidents, everything connected with such a scene being invested with the deepest interest. We see them entering the dust and smoke of battle. We hear from afar "the thunder of the captains and the shouting." As the embattled ranks advance and close in the deadly shock, our feelings are like the warrior's own; an intense emotion stills the very breath, and the throbbing pulse beats responsive with his. The stern excitement of the strife masters every feeling, and sweeps away every other consideration, until we can join in "the earthquake shout of victory." We ask not if this feeling be righteous or Christian. Right or wrong, such is the feeling of almost all men: a feeling needing no art of poet or orator to call forth: for the highest effort of the poet often fails to evoke the intense enthusiasm produced by the dry details of a dispatch from the field of battle. The interest is in the facts themselves.

But while, regarding such a strife, few if any have not experienced such a feeling, how very few are alive to the interest of a more important and eventful war—that moral and spiritual conflict waged in us and around us. Reader, you are not a mere spectator of that warfare; you are in the heart of the battle; and consider the unspeakable issues which hang on the strife. Our nature is now more intimately connected with the Godhead than any other. In Christ, it is seated on the throne of the heavens; and where He is there shall all His people be. The way is open, for men, to a higher exaltation than the highest of the angels; but, failing that, the lowest hell. In a few years, at most, you shall occupy that place to which angels may look up with admiration; or else that place on which devils may look down with the conviction that they have been less

guilty. O consider these unspeakable issues—higher than angels, lower than devils; a brighter glory, or a deeper damnation, to all eternity. Who can utter the joy of victory in this warfare; who can imagine the woe of defeat! O reader, call forth your every energy to the conflict; rise to the greatness of the occasion; above all, cast yourself on Him who is the Almighty. He is on the side of your best interests. And if you do indeed arise, and return to Him with all your heart, then the victory is sure. And amid the joy of heaven over the blessed result, none shall have cause of gladness so deep and full as you, yourself—the once lost, but now saved one.

"God was in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." In this history, so far, we have a picture of God's grace to the sinner. We see His love and compassion, His long-suffering and forbearance with us in all our sin, His tender mercy to those who return to Him, and more marvellous still, His joy—the joy of God, over the saved sinner—like the joy of a father over a once lost, but now recovered son. But, reader, you over whom there has been, as yet, no joy in heaven, shall all these words of grace, and that revelation of divine love and compassion, be altogether in vain to you? Shall you not be persuaded to arise and to return to God your Father? Shall the thought of your eternal interests, in such awful suspense now, not bring you to the point of a right and speedy decision? O reader, do not make common cause with the great adversary, whose end is to dishonour God, and to destroy you: and do not turn your back coldly on a beseeching God. Far too long already has He been stretching out His hand to you, while you have paid no regard. O turn at last. Even to-day, while it is called to-day, "if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart."

## FLATTERY.

Flattery leads one to suppose that we cherish in regard to him a better opinion than we do in point of fact. It consists in praising him to his face beyond our estimate of his merits. It puts soft words in his ear. Its motive is generally sinister and selfish. It is a wilful deception.—The book of God refers to it as a vice.—“A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.” “A flattering mouth worketh ruin.” “Therefore meddle not with him who flattereth with his lips.”

As a general fact, we believe that a mind weak enough to desire flattery, will be found both weak and bad enough to be injured by it. True, there are circumstances in which it is highly proper to express to our neighbour our favourable opinion. Sometimes he needs it for the support and encouragement of his heart. It may also be the artless tribute of genuine affection. But there are no cases in which we are justified in the sin of flattery. It is always a contemptible falsehood, justly odious in the eyes of all sensible people. It is no mark of sense, and no proof of friendship. Those who practise it, are quite likely to backbite on one side and flatter on the other. It is, moreover, an exceedingly nauseous vice, requiring on the part of the flattered very strong nerves, or a great amount of folly, to relish it.

Even the civilities of courtesy may be carried so far as to make them really offensive—a species of *acted* flattery. This is not common; yet it is the fault of some persons. They are in perfect raptures when they see you, and judging from external manifestations, in perfect agony when you leave them. On the outside they have more kindness than one knows what to do with. Supposing this necessary to politeness, they woefully overact the matter; they act out ten times as much feeling as they really possess. Judge not of their real views or feelings towards you by this excessive parade; for bear in mind that no small part of it is nothing but parade. It is hollow. Rap on it for any practical purpose, and it will be found to be so. It is either an educated misfortune, or a natural defect;—not a genuine politeness.

If one does not wish to see another, he will do the latter a favour not to “die of a rose in aromatic pain;” and he if does wish to see him, then nature’s simple and unsophisticated expression of the fact will be abundantly sufficient. Any thing that goes beyond this is useless, and generally deceptive.—*Evangelist.*

## TAKE HEED.

“Take heed how ye hear!” cried the one infallible Teacher and Saviour of the race. And we suppose that warning to say virtually to all who pursue after knowledge, “Take heed how ye read in the varied, and often frivolous, and often baleful productions of the human intellect. Take heed how, and in what mood—prayerless or prayerful, heedless or obedient—ye peruse even my own pure utterances. Take heed how ye see; and make a covenant with your eyes that they turn away from beholding and desiring the vanity which cannot fail to meet your vision. Take heed how ye think; for out of the secret chambers of meditation, the covert labyrinth of thought, comes forth at last the overt act, and there stalks out to the noonday light the unveiled character. Knowledge should minister to temperance. Let not your knowledge minister only to licence, and folly, and error, and sin, and death.”—*Dr. W. R. Williams.*

## DYING TO SELF.

The pious Mr. Berridge says, in a letter to Mrs. Wilberforce, when she was in dying circumstances, “Live as near to Jesus as you possibly can, but die, die to self. ’Tis a daily work; ’tis a hard work. I find myself to be like an insurmountable mountain, or a perpendicular rock, that must be overcome! I have not got over it, nor half way over! This, this is my greatest trial. Self is like a mountain! Jesus is a sun that shines on the other side of the mountain; and now and then a sunbeam shines over the top; we get a glimpse, a sort of twilight apprehension of the brightness of the sun; but self must be much more subdued in me before I can bask in the sunbeams of the ever-blessed Jesus, or say, in every thing, ‘Thy will be done.’”

## THE CEDAR CHRISTIAN.

Strolling one bright summer morning over the velvet carpet of "Chatsworth Park," we came suddenly upon a CEDAR OF LEBANON! It was the first and only one we ever saw; our first impulse was to uncover our head, and make obeisance to this monarch in exile, this lone representative of the most regal family of trees upon the globe. Every bough was laden with glorious association to us. Broad, gnarled, severe, rough old tree as it was, yet it blossomed with poetry, and hung golden with heavenly teachings. As we gazed through our tears at the exiled sovereign, the voice of the Psalmist was in our ears—*"The righteous shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."*

With that hardy veteran of Chatsworth in our mind's eye, let us say a word about the style of cedar Christians that we need in our day. Of pliant, willowy Church members—of brash and brittle basswood professors—of pretentious, fashion-following, bay-tree Christians, we have quite too many. Give us more cedars for the pulpit, for the elders' and deacons' seat, and for the pews.

1. And the first quality of the cedar is that it *grows*. It is a living tree. Where there is hearty life, there must be growth. And it is the lamentable lack of inward godliness that makes the stunted professor. There is not vitalizing sap enough in his heart-roots to reach up into the boughs of his outward conduct. There is not vigour enough in the trunk of his character to stand erect. No answering showers brought down by fervent prayer to cleanse the dust of worldliness from his yellow, sicklied leaves. There he is—just as he was "set out" in the Church a score of years ago, no larger, no broader, no brighter in graces than he was then; the caterpillars of lust having spun their unsightly webs all over his branches. He has not grown an ell in any one Bible trait. He has not yielded one single fruit of the Spirit. He is a lumberer of the ground—in the way of a better man—all the while drinking up God's pure air and water, and yet fulfilling Satan's purpose. Not of such a prayer-neglecting professor, not of such a time-wasting, money-loving, fashion-worshipping

professor, could we honestly say, "He grows like a cedar in Lebanon."

II. But the cedar not only grows; it has a peculiar style of growth which God's people may well imitate. It grows through all weathers. It is a *hardy* tree, or else it could not live a month in the Arctic climate of Lebanon's sky-piercing summits. Delicate plants might thrive on the warm lap of southern exposures, but not up among the rifts of whirling snows, or where the steel-like air gleams under the silent moon. Sudden hurricanes may twist off the gorgeous magnolias of the vale, or crack the brittle bay-tree, but let the gale rage ever so fiercely on Lebanon's blustering heights, let the snow squadrons join battle in the hurried air, the cedar tosses the tempest from its elastic boughs, and *stands* like the everlasting mountain under it. In God's Church there are to be found just such lignumvitæ characters—storm-proof, gold-proof, temptation-proof. What a plantation of such cedars were the early apostles! What a coronet of stalwart storm-defiers graced the summit of God's Zion in Reformation days! Zwingli of Switzerland—John Knox, who never feared the face of man—burly Latimer, who marched singing to Smithfield's kindled stake—John Huss, gazing up into the open heavens from the suffocating snake and flame which are wrapping his tortured limbs—all these were cedars through whose branches the very gales of persecution made glorious music. Here and there is such a cedar Christian discoverable in our century. They never bend. They never break. They never compromise. To such Christians, worldliness cometh, and snooty-tongued expediency cometh, and sensual pleasure cometh, and slavery cometh, but "findeth nothing in them." Popular hurricanes come down, smiting a Hopkins, or a Dudley Tyng in the pulpit—smiting a Wilberforce, a Jay, or an Adams in the legislative hall—smiting a Jonathan Edwards in his quiet study—a missionary Lyman in his lonely toils—a Neal Dow in his labours for the drunkard, and a Jonas King in his labours for the basotted bigots of Athens. But the cedar of principle prevails an overmatch for the hosts of substance, spite, or superstition.

Persecution only made the roots of resolution strike the deeper, and the trunk of testimony stand the firmer.

III. The greatest peril to such Christians as read these lines will not come in the form of persecution; but rather from those insidious worms that gnaw out the very heart of Gospel piety. Secret influences are the most fatal in the every-day life of the every-day unobtrusive professor. There is a whole colony of busy insects that will try the quality of a believer's timber. And when the community is startled by the spiritual defalcation of some prominent man in the Church or in a religious society, it is only the crack of a beam or a pillar that was worm-eaten by secret sin long before. He only is a cedar of Christ's training and polishing who is sound to the very core. For the pride of Lebanon was not more famous for its vigor or its hardness, than for its *solidity of wood*. It knew no decay. It afforded asylum to no stealthy insect turning its aromatic wood into dust and ashes. Therefore did Israel's royal temple builder select it for the most conspicuous and important portions of the edifice on Mount Moriah. With its fine grain, its high polish, and delightful fragrance, every lintel and every door-post was at once a strength and an ornament to the temple of the living God. So stand the faithful, fearless minister of Christ, the incorruptible Christian patriot, the unflinching testimony-bearer for the truth as it is in Jesus. They bid defiance to the worm of sin while they live, and to the worm of calumny when they are dead. Centuries hence, their memory will be as sound and as fragrant as the chests of sandal wood in which the Oriental kings were wont to conceal their treasures.

IV. The last noticeable thing with the cedar is its *breadth of limb*. The verdant veteran of Chatsworth had a diameter greater than its height. Elliott informs us that he saw cedars on the top of Lebanon that were thirty feet in circumference of trunk! Their limbs were so wide spreading that the diameter of the branches from the extreme of one side of the tree to the opposite extreme, was one hundred feet! Under that majestic canopy a whole regiment might find shelter. Now we need not go far to find just such a broad-armed

Christ. Broad in his catholic sympathy with all the "faithful in Christ Jesus"—of every sect—broad in his love of MAN, irrespective of clime, colour, or condition—broad in his pecuniary benevolence, is our cedar brother. Hundreds of happy beneficiaries lie down under the shadow of his liberality. The poor scholar whom he helps with books—the poor orphan whom he helps to a home—the poor harlot and the inebriate, for whom he builds the asylum—the poor sin-struck heathen man of far-away India, to whom he sends the "good tidings," are each and all the richer for his broad-limbed beneficence. There is room for regiments of sufferers to bivouac under such a man. It will make a sore and sorrowful void when that imperial CEDAR is transplanted to the banks of the Crystal River, in the Paradise of God.—*T. L. Cuyler.*

#### PULPIT GLEANINGS.

There are some thoughts in the sermons that we hear that ought not to be confined to the one pulpit, and to the few listeners, but should be sent as missionaries to stations where perhaps the preacher's voice seldom comes, and souls may be yearning for the comforting word.

Our minister said to us the other day, that God's love is manifested to us in the very decay of our physical nature, which is smoothing our way to the tomb. He gently prepares us for the grave, by dulling our senses to earthly pleasures, dimming the eye, unnering the vigorous frame, and causing us gradually to lose our hold upon this life, while our spiritual nature grows more and more sensitive to the joys of heaven, and looks forward at last, even with longing, for the blessed change that is to come; grasping, in sweet anticipation, the eternal blessedness.

If we take this view of the infirmities that come upon us with the advance of years, how much of gratitude for what we have hitherto termed "afflictive dispensations" will take the place of murmurings! And how generally shall we say, concerning what others might call "grievous chastisements," "It is of the Lord's mercies."—*British Messenger.*

## INDIVIDUAL APPROPRIATION OF THE CROSS.

"He shall put his hand on the head of the offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him."

"Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me," (instead of me.)

Paul says, "Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." The words present a glorious truth, too feebly realised by most Christians for their own peace and joy. The truth that *Christ loves believers individually*—that He loves *each* of His people with an eternal, infinite, unchangeable, personal affection, and that He gave Himself as a substitute for His people *individually*—that is, instead of *each one* of them. This statement is not in opposition to other statements, but their complement. He died for sinners; He died for the ungodly; "He loved the church, and gave himself for it"—all are equally true; but the broad and more general aspects of His love, and of the sacrifice to which it led, are too often allowed to exclude the more special and personal one. The full sweetness of being loved by Jesus, and the full comfort and peace of knowing Him as a substitute, are lost in consequence.

Scripture elsewhere asserts that Christ loves individuals. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" "He calleth his own sheep by name;" "The disciple whom Jesus loved," and other passages, prove it. And yet we find it hard to think that He loves us as individuals with such an affection as to give Himself to death for our sakes. Whence this difficulty? Trace it to its source, dear reader; and you will find it springs from *unbelief*. "Christ love me in particular, and die for me as an individual? Impossible! I am not worth!" That is want of faith in the *free and perfect grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ; He died for the *ungodly*. He loved the lost. If we were *worthy*, that indeed would be a proof He had never died for us; but our *unworthiness* never can be!

Again, "How can I know He loved me, and died for me? Paul, and John, and Martha, and Mary had seen and heard Him, and received proofs of His love: He knew them, and they knew Him. It would be a very different case if I were here; but it is long since He dwelt among men—He is infinitely distant now." Ah,

beloved reader, if you feel so *remote* of a stranger to Christ as this, it must be owing to want of habitual and intimate *communion* with Him; and that, again, must be owing to want of faith in His continual presence with you,—in His own promise, "I will love him, and manifest myself unto him. My Father will love him, we will come to him and make our abode with him." Does He intend His friendship to be *unfelt*, His indwelling to be *unknown*? No, no. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Surely we should be intimate with an indwelling Saviour as were Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus with an occasional guest? Unbelief feels as if He were absent, far off, intangible; but to faith He is ever present, ever near, a most real and precious friend and companion, whose personal love makes itself felt too plainly to be doubted.

Again, "I am but *one* in a multitude; no man can number; one drop in an ocean; one star in a galaxy. How can I flatter myself to have been distinguished by a special love, or made the special object of a ransom which avails for many?" This is unbelief in the infinite ability of God, or in the divinity of Christ, one or other; it is making our capacity the standard of His! Is anything too hard for the Lord? Are not the very hairs of each of His people numbered? Dear Christian reader, silence all such objections; quench such fiery darts of the wicked one; take to you the shield of faith; and say, "Unworthy as I am, difficult as it is to prove it to others, unlikely, impossible as it seems, yet I know CHRIST LOVES ME." Then, remembering that love leads to the communication of good, according to the *greatness of the love*, the *resources of the lover*, and the *need of the object*; and knowing Christ's love to be infinite, His resources infinite, and your need beyond description vast and endless, you will feel no incredulity concerning the immense gift bestowed on you; but be able to add with joy and confidence, "HE GAVE HIMSELF FOR ME!" Oh, wondrous ransom! how thoroughly *I must be redeemed*! Oh, righteous substitute! how completely *I must be justified*! Oh, peerless, priceless, unmeasurable gift! how truly Christ must love me!—*British Herald*.



## SEEKING AND TRUSTING.

I rang the bell at my pastor's door.— Looking upon the golden sunset, I strove to calm my throbbing heart; but the peace and beauty without mocked by inward agony—the agony of a divinely awakened accusing conscience.

Satan tempted me. "Make some excuse," he whispered as I heard a step in the hall; "borrow a book, and go home; do not commit yourself as an anxious inquirer, for to-morrow you may go back to the world."

But one more powerful than Satan constrained me, and I asked calmly, as my pastor himself opened the door, "Can I see you alone, sir?"

Then he led me to his study, then I said quickly, lest temptation should prevail, "I am a great sinner. What must I do to be saved?"

He told me of Christ, of his full and free salvation, and bade me believe and be saved. I listened. As one struggling, with blinded eyes and failing strength, amid the fearful rapids which hurry him on to the fatal cataract, listens to the voice which tells him of a last and only way of escape—so, as for my life, I listened.— Still all to me was rayless darkness. Then my pastor said he would pray with me, and begged me, as he did so, to strive to cast myself upon an all-sufficient Saviour. Kneeling, I followed, word by word, the fervent, trustful prayer, in which he strove to commit my soul to Christ. But my spirit shrank affrighted back. I would not trust. I could not be saved.

As I rose to go, still bearing the burden of my guilt, I sought relief from my agony, in making, and uttering, a "good resolution." "One thing I am determined," said I, "I will never cease to seek Christ, even if I never find Him." Seeing the delay and danger, perhaps fatal, which lurked in that resolve, so seemingly fair, my pastor said to me, with an earnestness and assurance I shall never forget, "Seeking Christ will never save your soul, you must trust Him."

Astonished beyond measure, and grieved, at this reply, I "went away sorrowful" indeed, but thoroughly convinced that I must trust, or perish. Still words cannot

tell, (such blinding power have sin and Satan,) the thick darkness, the impenetrable mystery, which hung round the act of faith, till God, in sovereign mercy, opened my eyes to see the enormous sin and folly of unbelief, and the simplicity of that-saving faith which, taking Jesus at his word, yields the soul to Him in unquestioning confidence.

It is a fearful thought that the breath of mortal lips may turn an immortal soul to heaven or hell. May God, by his open and omnipresent Spirit, mercifully teach those who are called to guide inquiring souls. Let the truth sink into every heart, that it is not *seeking* but *trusting*, which saves the perishing.

"Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—*Congregationalist*.

## THE FRETTING BELIEVER.

A fretting believer is a daily dishonor to God and his service. He proclaims to the world that Christ's yoke is a hard one, and His burden heavy. Be sure the world will take note of it, and set it down to the discredit of religion. "See how unhappy it makes a person," will be their conclusion.

We cannot have the excuse for it, that it lightens a single burden of care. It rather binds a heavier one, and lays it on our shoulders day by day. It embitters the happiest life, and sips the poison from the very flowers, where others find only crystal honey.

Go, Christian, take for your pattern your beloved Master, who endured all His fearful suffering without one repining word. Like a gentle lamb brought to the slaughter, "so he opened not his mouth." If he bore such a heavy cross for us, can we not take up every day the little ones he has appointed for us? Not the smallest of them all but is ordered by Him. Only realize this, and it will be a powerful check to murmurings over it. And remember, it is those only who bear the cross, who will ever wear the crown.—*Chronicle*.

## THE DIAL.

There my Master bids me stand,  
And tell the time with either hand,  
What is his will, is my delight,  
To tell the hours by day or night;  
Master, be wise, and learn of me,  
To serve thy God, as I serve thee.

THE REV. CESAR MALAN, D.D., OF  
GENÈVA, SWITZERLAND.

A brilliant light has just set. A great man, a man of genius, a Christian man of great efficiency and power, has gone to his rest!

Dr. Cesar Malan, whose beloved name awakens in our hearts sweet and tender memories, has, after a protracted and severe illness, left vacant a place which cannot again be filled. That faithful champion of the truth was a remarkable combination of rare gifts and superior endowments; in him nothing was ordinary. A man of natural genius, he was also a man of the finest mental culture; and there was, within the range of moral philosophy or moral science, scarcely any topic which embarrassed him. A logician of the first power, he was too, a scrupulous student. As an amateur artist, his paintings bear the stamp of creative talent. As a musician, the great number of melodies composed by him are full of beauty and pathos. He was an author of no ordinary merits, a poet, an able theologian; while in his leisure hours he would find relaxation from too close study by carving on wood, or turning on his lathe; and in his house was a small book-binding, a lithography, and a printing press. As a lover of nature, he was genial and sympathetic; and how well we all recall the numberless instances of his deep sympathy for his fellow beings, his compassion towards the poor, and how his beautiful countenance would glow with charity when he beheld suffering or sorrow.

Abraham Cesar Malan was born on the 7th of July, 1787, in Geneva, Switzerland, where his father, Jacques Imbert Malan, was professor in the college founded by Calvin. His grandfather had emigrated from Provence at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes under Louis the Fourteenth, when the family mansion had been pillaged, and the estate confiscated, and he had to give up his title in order to keep his faith; to this day the ruins of the castle of Malan de Merindol bear witness for the truth. There, too, an aunt of Dr. Malan's grandfather, who was too aged to see, was buried alive with her Bible and a loaf of bread.

His mother was also of old Huguenot descent from Nîmes, residing in the castle of Clavieres, above Nyon, on the Lake of Geneva; and his first years were spent mostly in her society. It was from her he inherited the charm of character and sweetness of disposition, which made it impossible for those who saw his heart not to love him. Mrs. Malan was a remarkable woman, of very noble appearance, with much knowledge of the world, of life, and above all with that perfect gentleness reproduced in her son.—Prof. Jacques Imbert Malan was a man of note in his country, from his erudition and quick wit; in their youngest child these diverse elements blended.

At three years old, he received at the College "Commencement or "Promotions," a prize for reading. It was delivered with all the others in the old Cathedral, before an immense concourse of people—little Cesar being carried in his nurse's arms, the crowd having some danger for so young a competitor. He used to tell how, when having received the medal from the hands of the Syndics, he was so delighted, that instead of retreating

facing them according to the etiquette, he forgot the instructions carefully given to him by his mother, and ran into her arms, the crowd enthusiastically cheering the little child in his scarlet dress.

His studies were continued at the same college till his eighteenth year, when the desire to aid his parents made him enter a mercantile house at Marseilles, but not to remain there long; he soon came back, finished his studies, and at the age of twenty-three was ordained by the *Venerable Compagnie*, at once showing that wonderful eloquence which is believed to have had no equal in the pulpit since Bossuet and Massillon.

As a young man, he remained what he had been when a child—the same upright, sincere disposition, generous with gratitude, loving to aid the poor, the fear of God being the basis of all his actions; when he gave, it was with his whole heart, truly delighting to make others happy.

It was shortly after his installation as preacher of the Cathedral, when the vibrations of his powerful genius were spreading all over Europe, that among other distinguished travellers drawn by his fame, was Dr. Mason of this city; to him whose memory he cherished, Dr. Malan loved to ascribe, under God's great goodness, his conversion from Rationalism to the true Gospel. Mr. Bruen, and Mr. Haldane of Scotland, were also among the means of his change of feeling, and he never spoke of either of them without the deepest veneration and gratitude.

What his career has been we all know, for he never wavered, never flattered whatever opposition might overtake him, and one could not name another servant of our Divine Master who has done more for the glory of H.M. be loved. We feel, indeed, as if the marvellous scenery which surrounded him in his home, and in which he delighted so continually, had lost its greatest charm, and the eternal mountains seem less glorious, now that one so worthy of admiration and love will no more be there when we go to visit them.

Dr. Malan had an only brother, a man of superior learning and ability, who, having become the tutor of young Russian princes, the relations of the late Emperor Nicholas, had his family title restored to him and to his sons, who have remained and settled in Russia.

On the 25th of April, 1811, Dr. Malan was married to Miss Schonberg, who survives him, with eleven of their twelve children.

At various times publishers from different lands have requested Dr. Malan to write his autobiography, but he feared, if doing so, to fall into a snare of personal eulogium, and refused. We can but regret the loss of what would have been of such rare interest, as he was brought all through his life into close and intimate contact with heads of nations, and that fact of itself would have captivated many; at the same time can we not remain assured that that noble existence is inscribed where it never can be effaced, on the hundreds of redeemed souls to whom he was the opener of the prison? A bright and eternal crown is now resting on that pure brow where so many thoughts of genius seemed to dwell, and those eyes, so tender, so penetrating, so wonderful in their power, contemplate, with beatitude that Saviour who loved us, and who had blessed his faithful servant with such incomparable and numberless mercies.—*New York Observer*,

## MARGARET BROWN.

## PART I.

Hard by the brook, beyond the town,  
Where stands the leafless chestnut tree,  
There is a cottage, old and brown,  
Which rearward looks upon the town,  
But faces to the sea.

The walks with grass are overgrown,  
And weeds fill up the garden bed;  
The moss clings to the stepping-stone,  
And from the tree the birds have flown—  
Now that the tree is dead.

'Mid all these dreary signs without,  
And scarce a sound of life within,  
The passer stops and looks about,  
As half in fear, and half in doubt,  
Of what may here have been.

Ah! 'tis a simple tale and rare,  
Of life the stranger cannot know—  
There is a presence in the air,  
As if of angels watching there,  
Or passing to and fro.

Here Margaret lives—"Old Margaret Brown,"  
Thus doth the clerk her name record,  
On dole supplied her by the town,  
And deems each present sent her down  
A present from the Lord.

Here she was born and here was well,  
Here grew her children by her side,  
Till one by one they from her fled;  
And there they laid her husband dead.  
Brought shoreward by the tide.

Thus blessings came, thus from her went,  
God's love by sun and shadow shown;  
You say a heart so torn and rent,  
With all its loving forces spent,  
Might harden into stone?

Ah! years did follow, all unblessed,  
How bleak was all the world, how dark?  
Her wandering soul in search of rest,  
Only the gloom and wave possess'd  
Nor found the only ark.

O faithless soul that would not know  
Jesus who watched and went before,  
And sought in all those waves of woe,  
By all their flood and overflow,  
To give thee peace once more.

## PART II.

O happy day, but all too brief,  
And night more precious still than day,  
When she obtained the dear relief,  
That left her still the sense of grief,  
But stole the sting away!

She sat in silence with her dead,  
When Jesus came and called her name;  
One answering word, and fear and dread  
Went out, and unto her, instead,  
A holy quiet came.

O change, that did her soul astound!  
The Lord had come and talked with her,  
And all her grief with comfort crowned;  
She had once more the Master found  
Beside the sepulchre.

Long years have passed—poor, blind, and old,  
She waits until God's will is done;  
And yet her closed eyes behold:  
That world of glories manifold,  
And Jesus as the sun.

What if the sea roar up the beach?  
The leafless tree the sound prolong?  
Her soul its resting-place can reach,  
Still tune the common words of speech  
Into a thankful song.

What if the stone no more be pressed  
By steps that woke a welcome sound?  
Her loving heart is full of rest,  
With her abides a heavenly guest,  
The Lord whom she has found.

And if the birds have spread the wing,  
The walk with grass be overgrown,  
She seems to hear the downward ring  
Of songs, such as the angels sing,  
Where sorrow is unknown!

O world, with all thy pomp and pride,  
So poor, so full of doubt and fear;  
Lo! Christ, with gifts to thee denied,  
Has every longing satisfied,  
And built his temple here! *Anon.*

“WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE  
CHASTENETH.”

“God's children are like stars, that look most bright  
When foes pursue them through the darkest night:  
Like riches beat, they more resplendent shine:  
Like grapes when pressed, they yield luxurious  
wine;  
Like spices pounded, are to smell most sweet;  
Like trees when shook, that wave but not retreat:  
Like vines, that for the bleeding better grow;  
Like gold, that burning makes the brighter show;  
Like glow-worms, that shine best in dark attire;  
Like cedar leaves, whose odors gain by fire;  
Like the palm tree, whose humors force removed;  
Like chamomile, which treading on improves;  
Like everything that can withstand the test,  
Are those God loves, and who loves God the best.”  
—From the Baptist Martyre.

## Sabbath School Lessons.

July 3rd, 1864.

## RUTH AND BOAZ.

Read Ruth ii. 1-17.

## I. Ruth, ver. 1-3.

Naomi seems to have got no assistance from those who recognised her on her return, and to have sought none from her rich kinsman. Indeed, she does not seem to have remembered that she had rich relations.

Immediately after their return, ch. i. 22. Ruth seeks permission to go and glean, for it was harvest time. Notice her industry—she would work, not beg; her gentle obedience—she seeks permission, and that from a mother-in-law; her humility—she was willing to do anything; her cheerful faith—she doubts not God will help her to find a field to glean in. God did guide her to Boaz's field.

## II. Boaz, ver. 4-7.

Boaz himself, though rich, looked strictly after his own property. He was on most friendly, Christian-like terms with his servants. *The Lord be with you.* Such salutations were common in Judea, see Ps. cxxx. 8. *The servant set over the reapers.* The servant seems to have been like his master. Boaz had a well-arranged establishment. He is told who Ruth was, that she had asked leave, and that she had been very diligent. *Among the sheaves.* Gleaning there was forbidden generally, lest the corn should be plucked from the sheaves.

## III. Boaz and Ruth, ver. 8-17.\*

Boaz showed his kindness, by inviting Ruth to glean with his reapers all the harvest, by charging his maidens and his young men to befriend her, by supplying her with meat and drink, by applauding her conduct towards her mother-in-law, and her adherence to Israel's God. *The Lord under whose wings thou art come to trust.* A most beautiful emblem—as the tender, feeble nestling hides under its parent's wing, so had Ruth left the idols of her native land, and puts her trust in Israel's God. She had become a proselyte, ver. 12. Perhaps this was Boaz's motive for his kindness. These little acts of kindness prove the goodness of Boaz's heart more than a great gift would have done. They are

\* The scene in the harvest-field is very interesting. The bright harvest day—the half-cut field of barley—the joyous band of young men and maidens reaping and binding the yellow grain. Boaz enters, riding on a mule, the salutations are exchanged—“The Lord be with you”—“The Lord bless thee.” The creature stands by his side among the sheaves; and looking towards Ruth, who bends diligently over her work, they speak softly, concerning her.—Boaz advances. She fears afraid, till his kind welcome dispels her fears—she makes her obeisance and reply.

more difficult to perform. *Ephah of barley,* about four pecks.

## APPLICATION.

1. *Learn what is due to a mother,* from Ruth's conduct to Naomi, her aged mother-in-law. She loved her—the motive of all her conduct; obeyed her, though able to judge for herself, was kind and respectful in all her words and actions; wrought for her willingly and cheerfully, did not even ask her to go out with her. “How does he treat his mother?” is an excellent test of character, Prov. xxiii. 22; xxx. 11-17; Solomon, 1 Kings ii. 19. “Show piety at home.” Jesus, Luke ii. 51.

2. *Learn to be industrious.* None have a right to eat who do not labour, 2 Thes. iii. 10. God will call idlers to account—rich or poor; “the talent” in the napkin. To beg when you can work is just one way of stealing. Learn while young. All honest labour is honourable. “The carpenter”—“the fisherman”—“the tentmaker.”

3. *Learn contentment.* Ruth was humble; yet, though they seem to have been very poor, almost starving, no complaint is heard. She humbly trusted that God would help them, Hab. iii. 17, 18. Many lose all the enjoyment of the comforts they possess by fretting because they have not more.

4. *How good it is for master and servants to serve Christ.* If the salutations in the harvest-fields were not mere words, how good a master Boaz would be! how well served! Serving Christ keeps all in their right places, Eph. vi. 5-9. The centurion, Matt. viii. 5. Cornelius, Acts x. 2. Be you such a servant or such a master.

5. *Learn how to give.* Boaz knew this. He gave kindly, did not treat Ruth like a beggar; gave attention and sympathy, gave without hurting her feelings. How beautiful the words, ver. 16, “let fall some,” &c. Seek the spirit of Christ to teach this.

## SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. He who notices and admires what is good, is likely to be good, ver. 11.

2. Do your duty, and leave God to give you favour with men if he pleases.

3. How beautiful is modesty! It is “the shadow that precedes true worth.”—Edin. S. S. Lessons.

July 10th, 1864.

## THE YOUNG RULER.

Read Luke xviii. 15-30.

I. The Children Blessed, ver. 15-17.

Infants. They were very young. They

were brought to be touched or "blessed" by Christ.\*

None of the ancient philosophers or teachers had anything to do with children. The disciples thought it beneath their Master's dignity, or that he was too busy to be troubled with them; they did not know him; "He was much displeased!" Mark x. 14. Nothing ever made him so angry.

*Of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Christ seems to mean that he had secured heaven to all such little ones who, by their own sins do not reject it.

*As a little child.* With that simple earnest faith in God which a child exhibits towards his father.

II. The Young Ruler, ver. 18-21.

*Good Master.* Few ever sought Christ with so much respect or sought eternal life so earnestly. *What must I do?* He felt he had not yet done enough.

*Jesus said.* Christ "loved" this young man, and in his reply taught him, that in accepting the title *good*, he accepted the homage due to Divinity, and that obedience to God is the way of life.

Ver. 21. Probably the young ruler thought to have kept God's law. So Paul, Phil. iii. 6. He had been very strict and moral; yet he felt he lacked something.

III. The Danger of Riches, ver. 24-30.

*Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful.*—How Jesus pitied him! Evidently Christ meant that wealth so increased a man's temptations that it was most difficult to escape being ruined by them.

#### APPLICATION.

I. *Christ's love to Children.* He knows their souls are as valuable as those of the old. The love of a father, mother, brother, or sister, all combined, cannot equal Christ's, Mark iii. 35. David's love to Absalom, Jacob's to Joseph, Jonathan's to David, is not equal to Christ's, Isa. xl. 11; xlix. 15.

Christ's love far exceeds man's. The apostles were kind men, but they pushed back the little ones. Man, do not care for children. No minister, teacher, or parent, loves you like Christ.

2. *Seek Christ's blessing.* "Seek him early." All are "children of disobedience." None too young to die. Christ can make the youngest an heir of heaven. Abijah, 1 Kings xiv. 13. Samuel, 1 Sam. ii. 26. Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 2. Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15.

• Picture the scene:—Some grassy bank; Christ seated in the midst; the mothers pressing through the crowd with their little ones in their arms. Christ's kindness encourages them; the disciples frown; the children, frightened, cling to their mothers' breasts; the little ones first gaze with wonder, and then, with a timid smile, venture into his arms and are blessed.

3. *Parents and Teachers should bring their children to Christ.* By prayer. Is he so willing to receive them, and will we not take them to Him? By example; Let us go ourselves. Imitate Christ's winning manner. His manner drew the mothers near before he spoke; the children looked in his face and went into his arms. Seek his Spirit to teach us to love-like Him.

4. *Beware of preventing any from coming to Christ.* If by neglect, coldness, ignorance, or sin, a child is kept back or discouraged, Christ will be "much displeased," Matt. xxiii. 6.

5. *How near you may come to Christ and yet lose Him.* The young ruler, 1. Came when he was young, and though he was rich; 2. Thought much of Christ; 3. Cared for his soul, and did much for it; 4. Was better than most people, yet wished to be better still; 5. Went to Christ to be taught; Christ loved him, and yet he was lost! You expect to go to heaven, and what have you done? Matt. vii. 14.

6. *If you love anything more than Christ, you are lost.* That which is best loved is your god. Christ will not be second in your heart, Matt. x. 37. This young man would have liked heaven and his money, too, Matt. vi. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 21. Would you leave all for Christ?

7. *If you wish eternal life obey Christ.*—"Believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another," 1 John iii. 23. There is no other way. You know what he bid you do.

8. *How foolish to come to Christ to be taught, and not to do what he bids you.* Yet many do so; many Sabbath-school scholars do so, ver. 22. Christ knew the ruler was deceiving himself. He loved the world more than he loved God. He went away very sorrowful. He did not pretend to leave his riches as Judas, Demas, and Ananias did, but he was very rich, and could not give them up. He had better been beggar! How sad never to hear of his again!—*John. S. S. Lessons.*

VALUE OF LABOUR.—God is constantly teaching us that nothing valuable is ever obtained without labour; and that no labour can be honestly expended without our getting its value in return. He is not careful to make everything easy to man. The Bible itself is no light book; human duty no holiday engagement. The grammar of deep personal religion, and the grammar of real practical virtue, are not to be learned by any facile, Hamiltonian methods.—*Binney.*