

GOD IN THE SEASONS;

or, how to reap the blessings of the Covenant made with Noah.

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Gen. viii. 20—"And Noah builded an altar, &c. . . . ver. 21—And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake. . . . ver. 23, While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, &c., . . . shall not cease."

It is sad to observe how soon the history of man becomes a history of sin and suffering. The preceding chapters record the melancholy extent to which human depravity had developed itself in the days of Noah, and the judgments which, as might have been expected under the government of a righteous God, it brought down upon the existing race. A deluge of water swept the entire generation, with a few exceptions, from the face of the earth. The event remains in history a monument of God's distributive justice. It is referred to in later Scripture as a token of a yet coming retribution, and of the suddenness as well as certainty with which destruction shall overtake the impenitent. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man."

Yet judgment was not unmixed with mercy. We see the forbearance of God, in his striving long with those antediluvian transgressors. During a hundred and twenty years, while the Ark was preparing, the servant of the Lord warned his ungodly contemporaries of the approaching catastrophe. But all in vain. Yet, the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation. And we see mercy in sparing a remnant, as well as in warning the mass. "Come thou," it was said to Noah, "and all thy house into the Ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Noah was saved, and his house with him: not only so, but mercy so far rejoiced over judgment, that through him words of comfort were spoken to the races to come after him. The heart of God, yearning over the folly of his children, found utterance in the assuring words of

our text; and by a condescending pledge that the course of nature should go on undisturbed again by such a catastrophe, the hand of industry was encouraged which else might have been paralyzed, and the earth, instead of being destroyed, was turned into a theatre for the manifestation of long-suffering and mercy. Here is the promise by which the husbandman is encouraged to till the ground, in the hope that he shall gather the fruits of his labours. Here is the guarantee for seed-time and harvest, of which even the irreligious who walk the earth, reap the benefit. Here is the promise which the pious husbandman pleads, and here is the intimation to others of that goodness by which the Father of all would lead them to repentance.

I. Before examining more particularly the import of the promise, it may be profitable to consider the act of faith on the part of Noah, with which this promise was given.

II. We may consider what the promise amounts to—what it does not mean, as well as what it means.

I. The act of Noah mentioned in the text; or more largely the gospel of Noah's day, as it appears in his faith and worship.

(1.) It claims our notice that Noah was eminently "a righteous man," and his safety was connected with his righteousness. This is testified concerning him very plainly. Jehovah recognises his righteousness, when assuring him of exemption from the general judgment, "for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (chap. vii. 1). The character of "perfect" is applied to him, as to Job:

that is, he was comparatively perfect. He was "a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (chap. vi. 9). He was faithful among the faithless—devout towards God, and conscientiously just in his dealings with men. And surely it is well with the righteous. The singular preservation of Noah illustrates this.

'But (2.) We must not suppose that Noah's personal worth justified him before God, or was the meritorious cause of the distinction conferred upon him. It is observable that before we are told of his righteousness, we are told that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (chap. vi. 8). From grace as the source, all his goodness proceeded. His own righteousness was not previous to grace, nor independent of it. His goodness was not indigenious any more than that of other men. He was a sinner like others; yea, when made a child of grace, evinced his liability, like all the rest, to fall into sin. And—

(3.) As grace was the source of his goodness, so faith was its immediate spring or root. To faith and not to works he owed his acceptance with God; though the fruits of his faith, as in all believers, were pleasing and acceptable. But Noah was no exception to the rule that our persons must be accepted first, and then our works; and both through Christ, and for His sake. See accordingly the testimonies to this patriarch's faith. Is he not enumerated in the epistle to the Hebrews (chap. xi) among the elders who by faith obtained a good report? And, lest we should suppose that his faith justified him, by its inherent virtue, as simply being a disposition acceptable to God, see how the apostle distinguishes the object of Noah's belief from the belief itself—telling us that he became "an heir of the righteousness which is by faith." In other words, he was accepted on the ground of a righteousness without

himself—the same which makes every sinner who receives it just. Add to this, that he is called a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. ii.); and can we doubt that the testimony of Jesus was the spirit of his prophesying as of all other prophecy? The act of worship here recorded in connection with Noah confirms this. For, whence this early rite of sacrifice? whence its value with God? Can it be that in smelling a sweet savour, Jehovah had regard to the blood of an animal, or its flesh burnt at his altar, as a thing of any inherent worth? Does He need to eat the flesh of bulls, or to drink the blood of goats? No! "The cattle (says he) on a thousand hills are mine." There is no accounting for the ancient use of this bloody rite but by admitting its reference to the true Lamb of God, the real propitiatory sacrifice of Christ. In Him it is that God is well pleased; and it may be observed that the very words denoting the acceptance of the typical offering, are applied in the New Testament to the antitypical: "walk in love (Eph. v. 2), as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour"—Not in the blood of a mere animal, clean or unclean; not in the fire which consumed its flesh, did Jehovah rest complacent; but he took well at the hand of his worshipper as expressed by these symbols, the confession of sin's demerit on the one hand, and the faith in the provision for its expiation by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, on the other. This alone reconciled God—this made the sky serene over the head of Noah—this averted wrath—this—faith in this—obtained the blessing—the promise of temporal as well as spiritual blessing.

(4.) It follows from these views, that Noah, in receiving the promise in the text, is not to be considered a public representative head of mankind in any such sense

as Adam was, or as Christ is. It is true, the promise concerned others as well as himself; and in a certain sense Noah was a second father of the human race. The blessing was connected, in the way of gracious reward, with his faith; and others are blessed along with him. So it is in the case of many a good man. He believes and is saved; and "his house" with him. But we do not say, *in* him; or that his righteousness is directly imputed to them. In the strict sense of representatives, whose acts affect others directly, Adam and Christ stand alone. They are the "*first*" and the "*second*" man: Adam the head of the entire race; Christ of a spiritual seed. The covenant with Noah concerned one matter simply, and that rather a temporal than a spiritual matter. It was indeed made with him for the benefit of many; but it was not a covenant of works; nor was it the covenant of grace, though to Noah it was a certain development of the latter; a leaf of it—an appendage to it. It was a promise having an important relation to the designs of grace; and to all who have Noah's faith, it comes with the other and better blessings of that covenant—comes as itself a spiritual benefit, though concerning earthly things. To others,—to the unbelieving—it is not such; it is but in the forbearance of God they share in the earthly good, to which believers have the covenant right, and which is to them only a real and promised blessing. Noah received the promise as a believing and accepted man; others enjoy it with him for good or for evil, in the love or only in the long-suffering of God, just according as they are, or are not, heirs with him of the righteousness which is by faith.

II. Let us examine the promise itself. The terms of it are remarkable. It is a promise of mercy: "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake." Yet the reason given for it might seem more fitted to

preface an announcement of judgment; "*for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth,—(for, or though, as some prefer to translate). Strange reason! but how worthy of God! He fetches an argument from man's weakness for the restraint of his own power. He will not contend with his poor sinning creature at such odds. Man's depravity—his inveterate, and, except by grace, incurable depravity, might warrant judgment without measure; but the Creator sees in it an appeal from his power to his mercy in man's behalf: "I will spare him; by goodness will I try him, and not again destroy the earth as I have done." Behold the relentings of a Father's heart!—of one who loves to bless rather than to curse—to whom judgment is "his strange work"!*

It is not implied that the original curse on the earth is totally removed. What is said is that he will not again curse the ground in such sort:—so, one clause explains another,—"*neither will I again smite everything living as I have done.*"

It is an assurance that the course of nature shall not again be suddenly interrupted, or the elements confused, as when the fountains of the great deep had been broken up, and the windows of heaven opened. Sun and moon should fulfil their revolutions with constancy; earth and sea should obey their assigned limits; day and night, summer and winter, should observe their vicissitudes. How great is the power which has ordained these laws, and controls these elements! How surely, by the removal for one moment of the Creator's upholding hand, would the order of the universe be again exchanged for uproar and wild misrule! How slight the change necessary in the position of the earth's axis how small the derangement in its relation, to the sun, to affect injuriously those alternations of day and night, of cold and heat, of seed-time and harvest! How easily by

a retardation or acceleration of the earth's movements, might a flood return again, and the waters at the equator be precipitated on the poles, or those at the poles on the equator! But how gloriously constant are the ordinances of heaven! with what unbroken regularity has the clock of time proceeded in its rounds! Not a day's variation, not an hour's, in the sun's returnings, in the moon's waxings or wanings, during all the generations since Noah's day. The most perfect chronometer of man's constructing has its deflections—what touching, what correcting is requisite to check these! But no variations here. Have you ever seen the morning when the looked-for orient beam failed to break upon the mountains? Have you ever seen the winter which did not usher in the spring? Has it ever failed that Earth has put on its verdure, and trees and flowers have bloomed again? Has the cherishing glow of summer been denied to the tender herb, the product of earth's cold womb? Have the appointed weeks of harvest failed to gladden the expectant husbandman? Have the fields failed to wave with their yellow treasures, wherewith the mower has filled his hand, and he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

But we must consider what the text *does not* warrant us to expect as well as does. It does not mean that seed-time and harvest shall always bless alike every locality. While keeping truth with the race, the God of judgment has not surrendered his right to deal with communities of men, or with individuals, as befits a moral administrator. Day and night, summer and winter, so regular in their vicissitudes, are not unvarying in their character. The heavens may be made to be as brass, and the earth as iron, for the transgressions of a land. Famine, as well as pestilence or the sword, may be the rod of God's indignation. "Your sins," says Jeremiah, speaking of

the appointed weeks of harvest, "have withholden good things from you" (chap. v.). Yet the remark may be justified that, as if in regard to the literality of the promise, it is seldom that, among the threatenings of the Word of God, inundations are mentioned, or alarming overflows of water. Drought—the absence rather than the excess of water—has been commissioned to plead the quarrel of his covenant. Still, not in Ezra's time alone, the rain of heaven has fallen alarmingly. Brooks have portentously swollen; neighbourhoods familiar to us have seen fields and flocks and dwellings swept away by the mountain torrent. The lowering sky has emptied its dreaded waterspout on the frail bark of the mariner. God has not promised that the heavens shall not gather blackness; but he has promised that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and that he will remember his covenant with all flesh.

The chapter following that where the text lies, tells us of this sign or token by which, in gracious condescension, God confirmed His covenant. Not surely that the simple promise of God requires confirmation. Yet the better to allay man's fears, he adds the sign, just as he added to his word his oath for the abundant consolation of the heirs of greater promises:—"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. . . . I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 13-16).

Shall we notice the cavil of the sciolist that Moses seems to date only from the time of the flood the occurrence of such a phenomenon as the rainbow? It is enough to say that the sacred historian by the term "set" or "appoint" does not describe the rainbow as now for the first time to appear. Granted that in certain dispositions of the

watery cloud in relation to the sun, the phenomenon must often have been visible before,—though after all we do not know those previous dispositions—the words do not necessarily mean any more than that what was already a familiar sight should now and henceforth be a sign. In giving or appointing seals on other occasions, things already existing were taken: the materials were not created of new. So it was with the sacramental bread and wine. So with Joshua's stones of memorial. Ver. 16,—“The bow shall be in the cloud; I will look upon it (says God) that I may remember.” How graciously assuring! Again, “The bow shall be in the cloud;” he repeats it and repeats it—“This is the token of the covenant which I have established between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth—and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh” (ver. 15). How does the security thus given increase in interest, when the stability of this covenant with Noah, can be with God's own warrant applied to illustrate the stability of the better covenant, and made a pledge of the divine faithfulness for the accomplishment of its greater promises. So does he declare by Isaiah (chap. liv.), “This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.

The practical lessons of our subject are—

1. That we ought to see God in the seasons; and beware of abusing the constancy of nature, by resting in second causes, or giving to nature's laws the glory

that belongs to Him who ordained them. How many under the name of nature practically worship the idol of necessity or chance! Strange that He who gives us all our blessings, should be hidden from us, or unacknowledged, just because the flow of his goodness is so constant, his mercies so innumerable! Many walk God's earth, and drink every hour at the streams of his benignity, yet scarcely invoke his blessing on the bounties they partake of—scarcely name the Giver but to curse by that holy name, or to bless by it, in as irreverent accents and as meaningless. To the devout man, who walks with God, every mercy is seen to come from God's hand. Where others at best discern a power which they fear rather than love, he recognizes the faithfulness and goodness of a covenant God and Father. So,

2. We are taught by the example of Noah, what are the real conditions of earthly enjoyment, or to whom it is that the blessings of the seasons are blessings indeed. The fact of Noah's acceptance first, ere the promise of the text was given to him, instructs us that an interest in the Saviour's sacrifice, or acceptance in the Beloved, gives the real title to the temporal as well as spiritual good of the covenant. Otherwise we may indeed share in the fruits of the field—in the blessings brought forth by sun and moon. Day and night, and summer and winter, may pass us over us in their grateful alternations. But are we contented to be merely monuments of God's long-suffering, and to remain strangers to his love? shall we be in the world, only as the place of Divine forbearance, from which we must soon pass away, relinquishing for ever the mercies we have abused, and with no foundation secured for the time to come? What avails earthly good if alone? The seasons shall not revolve for ever. The sun shall no always shine. The promise to Noah secures, at

most, that "while the earth remaineth," day and night, seed-time and harvest shall not cease. It is not always to remain. But there is a covenant whose blessings never fade:—"things present and things to come" are alike secured to all within its bond. Happy indeed are they who take hold of it! death shall not terminate their enjoyments, but enhance and augment them. But folly unutterable it is to rest in a temporary, fading portion, when by faith in the Saviour we might be assured no less of earth than of heaven, and of heaven than of earth. To whom is the world promised? It is to them that are Christ's, it is said, "All things are yours." "Seek first, said Christ, the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

3. The subject instructs us in the value both of personal and of social righteousness. Indirectly, thousands reap the fruits of Noah's faith—themselves strangers to his piety—and blessings innumerable crown the lot of the irreligious for righteous men's sake. But if the explanation, as we have seen, of the apparent failure of the promise in our text, be that God has, while assuring us of day and night, and summer and winter, reserved in his hands the rights of a moral administrator, we learn where to place the blame of unpropitious seasons—whether backward springs, or deficient harvests. It is sin that is the cause. It is the prayerlessness and unthankfulness and ungodliness of men. These seal up the heavens—these bring the moth, the caterpillar, the worm, the rust—God's great army, the ministers of his displeasure. I do not assert that personal righteousness or social is the title to life. Life in the full sense of the term is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. No sinner may hope for it otherwise. Union to him, as has just been said, is the tenure by which

earthly as well as heavenly good is alone held. Still, with personal and social righteousness as the fruit of faith, the promise connects both private and public prosperity. We must give proofs of faith; our walk must be with God, by faith. We have seen that Noah was a righteous man; not in the sense of being a believer only. And in many a passage of the Word of God we find the truth illustrated that righteousness, in the sense of holy living and holy walking, exalts, whether the individual or the nation. We conclude with a few proofs, out of many. Hear Isaiah. How describes he the man who has around him the everlasting arms? Chap. xxxiii.: "He that walketh righteously and speaketh up rightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." And of a land or people, as of an individual, hear Hosea, or Joel, or Malachi. The first, after this threatening of judgment on idolatry, "Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof—my wine—my wool—my flax"—thus assures and comforts his nation in connection with a time of revival and reform: "I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth. . . And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field; . . and I will break the bow and the sword, and make them to lie down safely. . . Thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel." So Malachi (chap. iii.). The nation had been cursed with a curse—the prophet

explains why. They had robbed God—he had neglected his house and polluted his offerings. He assures them of returning providential favours—only in connection with their return to God. “Return unto me, and I will return unto you. . . . And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before her time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Keep Religion in its own Place.

“You are always talking about religion when I meet you; speak about something else, can't you, and keep religion in its own place.” So replied a young woman to one of her companions, one day, who, with a heart overflowing with love to Jesus, was in the habit of speaking about Him to others.

“Yes,” she answered, “keep religion in its own place; but what is its own place? The place where God puts it surely, and that is the first place; for the Bible says, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness:’ therefore religion is not to be put in the second place, or third place, but in the first place, and that is its own place. But as we have entered on this subject, what place does religion hold with you?”

“Well, that is a matter which does not concern you, and I do not intend to make you my confessor.”

“Nor do I desire to be so. The believer confesses unto God; but while he does so, he has also to confess Jesus before men; for Jesus saith, ‘Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven,’” (Matt. x. 32.)

“Ay, but that means to be a church member, to observe the Sabbath day, and to lead a good, sober life, and thus to ‘let our light shine before men,’” (Matt. v. 16.)

“You may apparently do all that, and yet be only a Pharisee, and have no true

religion. The candle must be *lighted* before it can *shine*; the branch must be in the vine ere it can bear *fruit*. Three words are needed to make up the true Christian—Possession, Profession, and Confession. He must first *have* Christ (Rom. viii. 9;) second, *live* Christ, (Phil. i. 21;) and, third, *confess* Christ (Rom. x. 9.) This confession is with the mouth; for thus says the Word:—‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’ So, you see, friend, when I spoke to you about the love of Jesus, and asked you what place his religion held in your heart, I only asked you to do what the Bible says every Christian has to do, or ought to do, *confess Jesus with the mouth before men.*”

“Well, but one need not always be speaking about it.”

“No, true; yet it is ever uppermost in the believer's mind—‘the first thing,’ ‘the better part,’ ‘the other thing needful,’ and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; or, as our national proverb has it, ‘near the heart, near the mouth.’”

“Yes; but every one cannot speak, and we are not heard for our much speaking,” (Matt. vi. 7.)

“That is in prayer to God, not in conversation with your neighbour. But the Word says, ‘Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard,’ (Mal. iii. 10.) So, you see, that true Christians do speak often to one another; and it cannot mean about frivolous, foolish, or worldly things, but about heavenly things; for such only can approvingly engage the notice of our blessed Lord in heaven, who says of the speakers, ‘They shall be mine in the day I make up my jewels; and, for ‘every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment,’ (Matt. xii. 36.) But let us return to the question I first put to you, ‘*Is religion indeed the first thing with you?*’”

“No, indeed; I must confess it is not. I have often thought about it, intend yet to be religious, and in truth wish to be so.”

“That is a good wish; yet God is more

willing to give than you are to desire. Thus He speaks: "Seek ye me and ye shall live," (Amos v. 4.) Nay, Jesus in His love is seeking you; and as a proof of this, has laid down His life for you, Himself suffering the sentence God had passed upon your guilt, and spending as man a righteous, holy life on earth, which God accepts as your life—a spotless robe—to fit you for His presence. 'By grace are ye saved through faith,' (Eph. ii. 5.) Accept salvation at God's hands on these terms. Free, you cannot merit it—you cannot earn it—God gives it through Jesus, and to every one who will accept. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good!' (Ps. xxxiv. 8;) blessed is the man who trusteth in Him. And if you do this,—if you know Christ, have Christ in you, and give your heart to Jesus,—you will love to speak about Him, and, as an obedient child, strive in all things 'to do that which is well pleasing in his sight.' (John xiv. 15.)"

—*British Herald.* J. I.

GIVING OUR HEART TO GOD.

One day a lady was teaching a class of little girls. She was talking to them about giving our heart to God. "My dear children," she said, "how soon may we give our hearts to God, and become true Christians?" They didn't answer at first. Then she spoke to them one by one. Turning to the oldest scholar in the class, she asked, "What do you say, Mary?"

"When we are thirteen."

"What do you say, Jane?"

"When we are ten."

"What do you say, Susau?"

"When we are six."

At last she came to little Lillie, the youngest scholar in the class.

"Well, Lillie," she said, "and how soon do you think we may give our hearts to God?"

"Just as soon as we feel that we are sinners, and know who God is," said Lillie.

How beautiful an answer that was! and how true! Yes, "as soon as you feel that you are a sinner and know who God is," you may give him your heart and become a Christian.

THAT SIN!

"The worst of all diseases
Is light compared with SIN."

MY READER,—Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain: (Ex. xx. 7.) Under any circumstances it is an awfully solemn thing to mention the name of the Most High, even in connection with sacred things; but how exceeding sinful must it be to connect that name with a profane oath. And yet how commonly this is done. Still more frequently is that great and holy name mentioned in the most familiar and irreverent manner in connection with the most trifling things.

Profanity is not only one of the commonest sins, but one of the worst. God has declared in the most pointed and solemn manner, that he who commits it shall not be held guiltless.

Mark the following declaration of Jesus in relation to idle words: "But I say unto you, that every *idle word* that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment: For by thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. xii. 26, 27.)

If men are to give account for every *idle word*, will they not also have to give account for every *profane* one? How careful should we be to keep the door of our lips lest we sin against God. Nothing escapes his notice, not even our thoughts. Profane swearing is objectionable on other grounds. It is exceedingly offensive, and is never tolerated in good society. The swearer shuts himself out from all virtuous association, and thereby sustains great loss. A profane man can never be a virtuous one. Let a man only allow himself to swear habitually, and he will soon commit almost any other kind of sin, without much compunction; consequently he unfit himself for all virtuous society. It is one of the hopeful signs of the times that men who indulge in profane language are shunned; but few will risk their reputations by being seen in their company.

As the influence of the religion of Jesus, and good morals extend, swearing will cease, men will drop the habit from very shame. Let us then labor and pray for its rapid extension.

Reader, I think you will admit that nothing is ever gained by swearing. There are certain sins which are regarded as being profitable by those who commit them. Gain is the motive by which they are actuated in the commission of these sins. But there is no sense whatever in which it can be said that swearing is profitable. Men generally swear without a purpose, and without a motive, and it is somewhat difficult to discover why they indulge in a habit which they gain nothing and which is so foolish and offensive to all good men.

But suppose men did get rich by it. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.) No swearer can enter the kingdom of God.

But what is the effect of the habit on the swearer himself? The effect is bad. He begins with a simple oath and trembles when he utters it, but soon the habit gains almost imperceptibly upon him, until he hardly knows when he does swear. He goes on adding sin to sin and when his cup of iniquity is full, he dies a swearer's death, and is buried in a swearer's grave. The writer once stood by the death bed of such an one—a young man—whose last words were profane oaths. *How dreadful such an end!

This is not the worst. The evil effects of the habit do not stop with himself. The corrupting power of his example is felt in others, and often to a sad and ruinous extent, and probably will continue to be so felt to the end of time. One profane person, says an excellent writer, makes multitudes, corrupts his professed friends, his daily companions, his near relations and all with whom he corresponds, so far as they are capable of being corrupted. They again corrupt others, and they in their turn spread contagion through successive circles of mankind, increasing continually in their numbers and expansion. Like certain diseases of the human body, profaneness descends from person to person; and like the plague, is regularly caught by infection. As a regular stream of pollution it flows on blighting and withering everything in its course. May the swearer ponder these things in his heart.

The habit is so self-evidently wrong that one would think it needs only to be seen

to be hated. No one will attempt to defend or even justify it, not even the swearer himself. He will admit that it is perfectly inexcusable, and serves no good purpose whatever. Nay, the universal conscience of man condemns it, and yet it prevails almost universally. How are we to account for this? Because the depravity of the human heart is such that it loves to revel in iniquity. Men take pleasure in sin, and glory in their shame.

My reader, if you have followed me thus far, and are in the habit of swearing, I beg you will read the following closing lines with serious attention. They were written by a great and good man now in heaven. "*Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways.* Ask yourself what you gain; what you expect to gain; what you do not lose. Remember you lose your reputation, at least in the minds of the wise and good, and all the blessings of their company and friendship. That you sacrifice your peace of mind; that you break down all those principles on which virtue may be grafted, and with them every rational hope of eternal life; that you are rapidly becoming more and more corrupted day by day; and that with this deplorable character you are preparing to go to the judgment. Think what it will be to swear and curse; to mock God and insult your Redeemer through life, to carry your oaths and curses to a dying bed; to enter eternity with blasphemies in your mouth, and to stand before the final bar, when the last sound of profaneness has scarcely died upon your tongue."

If these considerations do not move you; if they do not make you tremble at the thought of what you are doing; if they do not force you to a solemn pause in the career of iniquity; if they do not compel you to retrace your downward steps, and return while it is in your power, to reformation and safety, I can only say, that you are hurried by an evil spirit to destruction, and that you will soon find yourself in the eternal dungeon of darkness and despair. What meanest thou! Arise, call upon God, if so be that He will hear thee, that thou perish not. Repent; and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 31.—*S. Massey, Montreal.*

HOW GOD FORGIVES.

Contrast our ordinary mode of forgiveness with that of our God. You will recollect that Christ, when he had given his disciples a form of prayer made a commentary upon it. The only commentary he made was on the subject of forgiveness. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." As I grow older, and know more of life, I learn a great deal more on the subject of implacableness than formerly I knew. There is a great deal of sin in this direction, and I see more of it than I ever thought existed. Our forgiveness is generally selfish. It generally seeks our own good, and not the offender's. God's forgiveness is benevolent. He seeks not his own good, but the good of those whom he forgives. Our forgiveness is slow, and grudging, and reluctant. It is wrung out of us at last, in view of all the circumstances; and very frequently under the mediation of friends, we conclude to let a thing go. God's forgiveness is ever ready. Not the arms of a mother ever opened so quick to her repentant child as God's heart opens to us. No reluctance is with Him. He—the highest, the noblest, and the best—forgives impurity, wickedness, transgression, and injustice. We, that ourselves are offenders, are the ones that refuse to forgive those that offend against us. Having God to forgive us, we turn to him that has offended against us, and take him by the throat, and say, "Pay me that thou owest." Is there to be no lesson learned from God's treatment of us?

An unforgiving spirit puts a man further from God than any other thing. It is one of those dispositions that provoke even God to retaliation. And I think it is often far more criminal before God than that sin over which it domineers. It is a perilous thing for a man to carry in his heart a spirit that refuses to forgive. And when you forgive, let the forgiveness be large; let it be clean; let it be thorough; let it be like that which God, for Christ's sake, forgave you.—*Beecher.*

LEAH.

"Leah, my child, the Sabbath is commencing; it is time to put away your embroidery."

"So soon, mamma?" cried Leah; "why, the sun is quite high yet."

"The sunset is approaching, Leah; do as I have told you, my darling."

Leah rose from her chair near the window, and having folded up her work, placed it in her neatly kept workbox, which she locked carefully.

"You can go into the garden until it is time to recite the prayers," said Mrs. David; "you need not come in until I ring for you."

Kissing her mother, Leah sprang lightly through the open window, which reached to the ground, and was speedily pouncing over her favourite rose-bush, her long black hair hanging in clustering curls on the roses that gleamed blushing through so rich a veil.

Leah was a beautiful child of thirteen years of age; her large, dreamy Oriental eyes, black as night, were fringed by long thick lashes of equal blackness, and her delicately shaped features, curved upper lip, and thin nostril, spoke of quick feeling and a high spirit. Rather small for her age, her tiny figure seemed to dilate when she spoke of any heroic deed or generous action of which she had heard or read, and tears of wounded sensibility sprang quickly to her eyes if any one she loved misjudged her. Beauty and talent, connected with a high spirit, and ardent imagination, and warm, sensitive feelings, are doubtful gifts, if not regulated by a firm, judicious guide at that early period of life when the young mind is soft and pliable, and capable of taking almost any impression that is sought to be made upon it.

Leah was the only child of her widowed mother, and in danger of being made an idol by her lovingly-devoted parent. Her father had made a large fortune by a mining speculation, and before his death had settled it all on his wife and child. The little Leah scarcely remembered her father, nor did she miss his love and care, so completely was she enfolded, so to speak, in the very heart of her mother, and she repaid that mother's tenderness with all the fervency of her own ardent, loving disposition.

Mrs. David had lately come to live in a semi-detached residence, three sides of which were surrounded by a large garden. In the adjoining house lived a lady with her two children, and before very long the little Jewess was a great favourite with the Hillis family. For some time it was a strange thing to Edward and Ada Hillis, to see their neighbours

observe the Saturday until the evening as their Sabbath, and also to find that Friday evening was considered part of it. Edward was now preparing for his examination for the Engineers; but he often found time to walk out with the little girls, and frequently read for them while they worked or helped them to manage their little gardens, besides supplying them with pretty bouquets from his own. Mrs. Hillis was a gentle Christian woman, and she took a pitying interest in the little Jewish girl thus thrown into such close intimacy with her own children. She, too, was a widow, and tolerably well endowed with the riches of this world, a portion of which, and not a niggardly one, was devoted to the service of her Master. One Sunday evening she was sitting in her drawing-room window reading the Bible, when the sweet strains of a musical-box, playing in Mrs. David's house, struck her ear. The tune was a lively polka, and it jarred on the holy quiet of the thoughts she had been indulging in. But the recollection that her neighbour had already kept her Sabbath, and could not be expected to observe that of the Christian world, speedily dissipated the slight feeling of disturbance that the music had occasioned. At the same moment, she looked from the window, and her eyes rested on a scene that was calculated to restore the full evenness of her spirit.

On a grassy bank just before the window sat, half reclined, her own blue-eyed, golden-haired little Ada, the soft blue of whose dress was in as strong contrast to the scarlet cloak of Leah, who rested beside her, as were her fair hair and laughing, sunny eyes with the black tresses and dark radiant orbs of her companion. Together the children leaned over a book, in deeply thoughtful study; but after a few minutes the low, sweet voice of Leah inquired, "Who was this Jesus, of whom we have been reading?"

"Do you not know who Jesus is?" asked Ada, in an awe-stricken tone of voice. "Oh, Leah, he is the Saviour of the world. He came and lived on this earth, and did such wonderful miracles; and then He died to save us from our sins."

"Why, that is something like our Messiah, Ada, only that he has not come yet; and when he comes he will be a great king, and will not die at all."

"Our blessed Saviour is the Messiah, dear Leah," said Ada, softly; "and he was called 'the King of the Jews.'"

"That is very strange. I know that our Messiah will be a king; he is called the 'Prince of Peace' and the 'King of Kings.'"

"So is Christ, our Redeemer. He is the only son of the Father, and is called also 'Christ the Lord.' Oh, Leah! he loved little children,

and had them brought to him when he was on earth, and took them in his arms and blessed them. I have a sweet little hymn about that; shall I repeat it for you?"

"Do, Ada. I love your hymns."

"I am sure you will like this one, it is so beautiful:—

"I think, when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How he called little children as lambs to his fold,
I should like to have been with them then,
I wish that his hand had been laid on my head,
That his arm had been thrown around me;
And that I could have heard his kind voice, when
he said,
'Let the little ones come unto me.'

"But still to his footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in his love;
And if I thus earnestly seek him below,
I shall see him and hear him above;
In that beautiful place he is gone to prepare
For all that are washed and forgiven;
And many dear children are gathering there,
For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

"It is a lovely hymn," said Leah, after a pause. "I wish I understood more of what you have told me about Jesus; but I must go in now. You will tell me more, or let me read out of your book to-morrow, will you not?"

"Certainly, if you like," replied Ada, kissing her, and slowly entering the house as Leah passed through the garden gate.

Mrs. Hillis had been a deeply-interested auditor of the conversation of the two little girls, and she offered up a silent prayer that the Lord might make her family instruments of his mercy, in leading this precious lamb of his chosen flock to receive Jesus, the Good Shepherd, as her Saviour.

After a few minutes Ada entered the room, and her mother asked her what it was that she had been reading with Leah.

"The second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, dear mamma; and Leah seemed so struck by it."

"Yes, dear, I heard all your conversation from the window, and I trust that you will do all in your power to lead this dear little girl to love Jesus."

"Oh, yes, dear mamma, I shall tell her everything I know about him, and when she reads of all his love and goodness, surely she cannot help loving him in return."

Bright tears stood in Ada's eyes as she spoke, and her mother felt her own eyes overflow as she kissed her child and prayed the Lord to strengthen the missionary spirit of love that filled her young heart.

As month followed month, and winter and summer alternated, the visits of Leah became more frequent and prolonged, and on every occasion she learned more of Jesus, and joined

more fervently in the hymns of praise that dwelt upon his adorable name.

Mrs. Hillis often feared that Mrs. David would become alarmed, and try to put a stop to the work that God had begun in the heart of her child, but these fears were almost silenced when Mrs. David said to her one morning, "Do you hear Leah's voice, how sweetly it sounds? She is singing one of the hymns your Ada has taught her; she often walks in that path between the rose trees for a good part of the day singing like a bird, and always those pretty hymns. Hark! there is another."

The sweet young voice rose on the air as she spoke, and the words were plainly to be heard as the singer paced slowly to and fro:—

"Jesus! lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the billows nearer roll,
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour hide,
'Till the storm of life is past.
Safe into the haven guide,
Oh, receive my soul at last!"

As the last notes died on the air Mrs. Hillis drew a deep breath. "She has a sweet spirit, my friend," she said, "and it breathes in all she does."

"Yes," replied Mrs. David, "her heart is full of love, and I do not know how it is, but I like better to hear her sing the slow, solemn tunes of your hymns than the light songs of the day."

Mrs. Hillis read at once in this speech the reason of the toleration that had been extended to Leah's singing of Christian hymns. They had been classed with profane music, and their simple, solemn strains had caught the ear of Mrs. David, while the words had quite escaped her attention. Still she could not but perceive that Mrs. David, while strict in fulfilling to the letter the rules laid down for her observance, was exceedingly lax in any feeling that the spirit of them could convey. For instance, she had meat from the authorised Jewish butcher, but she bought strangled fowl, and ate lobsters, shrimps, and oysters, without any qualms of conscience. She would scarcely stir the fire on her Sabbath, but she would go to a concert, or attend a flower show, while, unless on very rare occasions, she never entered a synagogue. All these things indicated that she only as a matter of form observed certain rules, and felt no interest in them beyond the mere observance.

(To be continued.)

My dear readers, God's threatenings are God's doings.

Many are complaining of their weakness who ought to be complaining of their worldliness!

GLEANINGS.

OF CHRIST.

A man may go to heaven without wealth, without honour, without learning, and without friends; but he cannot go to heaven without Christ.

Christ is better with his cross than the world with its crown.

The sufferings of Christ's soul were the soul of his sufferings.

What the law commanded Christ did; what the law demanded Christ gave; and what the law threatened Christ endured.

Christ thinks no man too bad to receive, if he does not think himself too good to come.

Christ died for the chief of sinners. A dying Christ for a denying Peter! A crucified Christ for a crucified thief!

You should keep steadily looking to Christ, until the burden falls off your back.

Christ is the righteousness of sinners with God, and the righteousness of God with sinners.

Carry your good things to Christ, and he will keep them; carry your bad things to Christ, and he will cure them.

Judge not of Christ by providences, but by promises.

If you love Christ with a perfect love, you will hate sin with a perfect hatred.

Love is the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, and the livery of his household.

The reason why Christ is more precious to a believer to-day than he was yesterday is, because he sees more and more the need of him.

A believer's comfort in living is to live to Christ; and his comfort in dying that he shall go to Christ.

You may yourself ebb and flow, wax and wane, rise and fall: but your Lord is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

The old man will never die whilst we live.

It is all folly that does not lead us to Christ, and it is all true wisdom that does.

Do not be afraid to part with anything for Christ; it is unbelief that persuades you there is more pleasure, satisfaction, and happiness, in anything than in him.

The enjoyment of Christ is really paradise.

It is the believer's complaint and prayer—“O God, my heart is too narrow; enlarge it, that it may hold more of the love of the holy Jesus!”

Old Christians are much in praise.

As you received Christ at the first as your prophet, priest, and king, so walk in him all the way to heaven.

The Lord is forced to blast our fruit sometimes, lest we should look at it, and fall in love with it.

Jesus is a treasury without locks or bars, and stands open night and day; he has gifts on purpose to bestow, they are not meant to lie and rust.

TEMPER.

We were one day sitting at dinner, says a friend of the late Mr. Simeon, when a servant stirred the fire in so clumsy a way, that Mr. Simeon turned round and hit the man a thump on the back to stay his proceedings. When he was leaving me, on horseback, after the same visit, my servant had put the wrong bridle upon his horse. He was in a hurry to be gone, and his temper broke out so violently that I ventured to give him a little humorous castigation. His cloak-bag was to follow him by coach; so I feigned a letter in my servant's name saying how high his character stood in the kitchen: but that they could not understand how a gentleman who preached and prayed so well should be in such passions about nothing, and wear no bridle upon his own tongue. This I signed “John Softly,” and deposited it in his cloak-bag. The hoax so far succeeded, that at first he scarcely discovered it; but it afterwards produced this characteristic note:—“I most cordially thank you, my dear friend, for your kind and seasonable reproof. I feel it to be both just and necessary, and will endeavour, with God's help, to make a suitable improvement of it. If it do not produce its proper effects, I shall be exceedingly thankful to have a second edition of it. I trust your ‘precious balm will not break my head;’ but I hope it will soften the spirit of your much-indebted friend, Charles Proud and Irritable.—To John Softly.”

THANKFULNESS.

“Every creature of God is good,” St. Paul says to Timothy, “and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God”—that word, or mandate, of God, which expressly gave it in the beginning for human food, and which now in the Gospel has added, for the Christian, His special blessing—“and prayer.” Thanksgiving is the consecration of food.

Hence that pious custom which still (thank God) lingers in Christian homes, of “grace before meat.” Alas! it is a mere custom, a barren form, for many. In great houses it has almost died out. Unless there be present the chaplain of the house, or the clergyman of the parish, it is seldom called for, seldom uttered, by him who ought to be the priest of his own family—the husband and father and master. And when grace is said, with what haste, what unconcern, what indifference, is it got over, or just suffered! Amongst us, my friends, in humbler life, the custom lingers—and may it linger! But let us think more of it—let us mean more by it! Let the poorest and scantiest table, if it have but bread upon it, be thus blessed, thus consecrated! Let those who are present join in it in their hearts! And let the form be only expressive of a deep reality—our sense of God's goodness, of His minute Providence, of His fatherly love! This food, here set before us, is the fulfilment to us, in its lowest meaning, of the perpetual prayer, “Our Father, which art in Heaven, Give us this day our daily bread!” God has opened His hand once again, this day, and is filling all things living with plenteousness.

Such thoughts, obvious to all, are yet full of significance, and full of blessing. If we can once receive our daily food as from the hand of God; seeing in it His care for us, His concern in us, His Almighty and wonder-working power in sustaining the life which He first breathed; all else will follow. Temperance will not be far, where thankfulness is present; and the table sanctified by prayer will be also crowned with blessing.—*Dr. Vaughan.*

The French Canadian Missionary Society.

AN APPEAL TO ITS FRIENDS.

Twenty-five years have now elapsed since the organization of this important institution. It was commenced on a catholic basis, and its constitution remains unaltered, so that Christians of all Evangelical denominations may here find ample scope for united and zealous co-operation in efforts to evangelize the French Canadians.

It is true that this is not the *earliest*, or the only effort made for this purpose.—The Grand Ligne Mission, under the control of our Baptist brethren, had somewhat an earlier origin; and within the last few years, other Denominational missions have originated in connection with the Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church. On this account, the society under notice, has for some time been mainly supported by the Canada Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, although there are many individuals, belonging to other Protestant communities, who contribute to its funds, and take a lively interest in its varied operations.

But whatever the facts with regard to its origin, its constitution, and its supporters, abundant evidence exists that its operations have been signally blessed, and that with renewed and increased sympathy and prayerfulness on the part of its friends, associated with cheerful and enlarged liberality, more extensive and triumphant issues may be anticipated.

However arduous and difficult the work we have undertaken, God has smiled upon it, and rendered it successful. Our missionary stations, and our schools at Pointe aux Trembles, have not only been instrumental in diffusing knowledge especially of Jesus and His salvation, but spiritual fruit

has followed, gladdening many hearts, and bringing glory to God. About fifteen hundred children and youth have been taught in our schools from the commencement to the present time; about four thousand, or more, young persons and adults, have been converted from the errors and superstitions of Romanism; six French Protestant churches have been organized; these have a membership of about one hundred and fifty, and the number is increasing; above one thousand copies of the Scriptures are circulated annually by our colporteurs, catechists, and evangelists; a delightful work of grace has been going on among our pupils during the last two sessions, the *first* yielding twenty-seven converts to the Saviour, who have been received into church fellowship; the *latter* ten converts, also received into the church, with others in an enquiring and hopeful state of mind; and three of the converts have been teachers during the session just terminating, and have devoted themselves to studies for the work of the ministry.

Increased acquaintance with these and similar facts, will prove that our mission has the strongest claims upon its friends, whose pure and scriptural Protestantism should prompt them to more earnest and vigorous exertions to sustain and extend its operations. Hitherto we have been crippled in our pecuniary resources, and we are crippled still. The liberality of individuals and churches, with rare exceptions, have not been such as might be expected, and certainly not equal to our demands. Many more pupils might be educated, and our missions be greatly extended, should there be a hearty response to the appeal now made.

Christian friends! We ask your frequent, earnest prayers in behalf of this mission. Encourage your children, and all around you, to do the same. Let the

subject be brought more prominently before their minds. Welcome intelligence of its doings from every quarter. Be not indifferent to the encroachments of Romanism. Be true to Bible principles. Hold fast the truth as evangelical Protestants.—Be still more determined to do your utmost in behalf of our French Canadian fellow-subjects. Eschew the lukewarmness and apathy by which some are characterized, in relation to this field of missionary labour which God has opened before us. Give liberally, give from principle, give to honour Christ in the extension of His glorious kingdom, and the overthrow of the empire of darkness. Ministers of the Gospel! Christian families and churches! Sabbath Schools and Bible classes! Teachers and friends of the mission generally, whatever your relations, and occupations in life, we solicit your kind, cordial, and zealous co-operation. "Arise, O God; plead thine own cause." "O Lord, revive thy work." "Send now prosperity."

JAMES T. BYRNE.

WHITBY, MAY 25, 1864.

CHARITY.

On a narrow dingy street of the city is the abode of wretchedness and want. No cheerful sunbeams play upon the floor, but all is desolate, gloomy, and sad. On a couch of straw lies one whose features speak of former beauty, but which bear the sad impress of guilt. The sunken eye and hectic flush upon the cheek tell that Death will soon claim her for his victim. She is thinking of the past; and as her thoughts dwell upon her childhood's happy days, her heart becomes tender—a tear starts from her eye, and a sigh comes from her heart as she yearns for some one to whom she may confess the story of her faults and ask for pity.

Presently the door opens and a woman enters. She wears a beautiful silken robe, which contrasts sadly with the rags of the sufferer, and a beautiful well filled purse is in her hand. With an air of scorn she looks around on the desolate walls and gathering up her silken robes she stands like a statue while words of reproach rather than kindness fall upon the ear of the lost one. With bitter words she dwells upon the disgrace she has brought upon her sex, and of the misery she should suffer on account of her sin; as she talks the tear which before had started to the eye of the lost one goes back to the depths from whence it came, and the fountain is sealed up more closely than before. Alas! her words do not satisfy the yearning spirit of her who still pines for sympathy; but feeling she has done her duty she lays a few pieces of silver on the broken table and departs to make another charitable visit. O mockery! As she passes along the street in her splendid carriage, many look upon her as an angel of mercy, and wish she may long remain to minister to the wants of the poor. Such is the world's charity.

Again the door of that desolate room opens and a gentle maiden enters, whose countenance carries sunshine wherever it is seen. Going up to the bed on which the sufferer lies, she takes her hand in hers and speaks words of kindness. At the music of her voice the haggard countenance of her auditor becomes brighter—a tear is in her eye and a sunny spot is once more in her heart. Then she tells of her happy home; of the bright departed past when all was sunshine; of kind and loving parents who have long since gone, broken-hearted, to the grave; of loved ones who sported with her in her own sunny home ere sin had left its dark impress on her brow. Then, while a deeper flush dyes her cheek, she confesses her sin and tells

of her great sorrow—of her struggles to break the bond that held her—of the world's cold scorn when she tried to reform, until the last spark of hope died out in her breast, and she became the wretched being that she now is, with no hope in this world nor yet in that which is to come. Then, with words of sweet comfort, does that gentle maiden tell of Him who came to seek and save that which was lost. She tells of that better land where sin can never enter and where sorrow casts not its withering blight; and mingling her tears with those of the poor lost one, she urges her to lay hold of the precious promise, "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." As she talks, the heart so long callous to anything good becomes still more tender, and while she grasps by faith the blessed promise, the swift winged angel carries the joyful news to the Throne on High, "Another sinner has repented." And when the light of life went out in that eye, bright spirits in Heaven hailed another one redeemed from earth.

And when she who in the last hour had led the wanderer to the feet of the Saviour went forth on her errands of mercy, though the world published not the story of her acts, nor mourned when these were over, yet, as we followed her to her long home, a voice from the "Spirit Land" fell gently on our ear: "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Such is the charity of heaven.—*Winthrop.*

There is something unutterably sweet in the consideration of the jealousy of God—that He should so regard the affections of his child, as to be jealous of occupying the second place!

As the Head hath travelled the stony path, so must his suffering members do the same. It were not meet that He should find the world a wilderness, and they only a garden of flowers.

JOTTINGS BY THE WAY.

BY THE EDITOR.

It is not pleasant to start on a journey when it is the hour for going to bed; but railway trains wait for no ordinary men, and as we belong to that category, we had to leave home on the night of the 13th ult., with the purpose of having a short preaching tour in the Peterboro' district. The weather was mild and agreeable. The rain had fallen in torrents in the morning, but at night the clouds had vanished and the sky was clear. The train was up to time. The passengers were peaceable and quiet in the embrace of Morpheus, and we flattered ourselves that early in the morning we would reach Port Hope.

"Man proposeth but God disposeth." The train reached Belleville, and there, to our dismay, we learned that the great rains which had fallen in that locality as a deluge the day before, had swept away the embankment of the line in several places, and that the train would be indefinitely delayed. What disappointment to all around. One man had a bill to meet in Toronto, and must be there before the bank was closed. A second required to be in Buffalo that night, or it would be the loss of so many dollars. A third had a situation depending on his being forward at a given time. And all the others had something else as a reason why it appeared to be the greatest misfortune that they were detained. No doubt, however, it was all for the best; and though it could not be perceived at the time, it may afterwards appear to many as a fortunate thing indeed.

It is a prudent thing to carry an interesting volume or two, when you set out on a journey. If we omit to carry a book with us, we fret and murmur over the time we lose, that might have been occupied in reading. Though when we do take one, it is as likely as not to be brought home unread. Travelling is not very favourable to reading, but when delays like the one we met with on the journey occur, an interesting book becomes an agreeable companion. The book we happened to have, was

THE OLD HELMET,

published in two volumes of over 300 pages each, by Messrs. Carter and Bros., New York. The title "Old Helmet" is certainly neither a very taking, nor a very expressive one. It does not convey any idea, before you commence to read, and after the volumes are perused, it does not appear to be very appropriate. It is written by Miss Weatherall, author of the *Wide Wide World*. It is many years since we read that volume, and have it not beside us to refresh our recollection, but so far as we remember its structure and style,

The present work is in some respects superior to it. *The Old Helmet* is not so long as the *Wide Wide World*, though brevity is certainly not a characteristic of its talented author. It is a novel, founded on fact, but designed and calculated to recommend evangelical religion. The heroine is a young lady of great personal attractions, the eldest daughter of worldly-minded parents, whose highest ambition is the possession of worldly fame and glory. Her attractions and accomplishments won the regards and attentions of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, whose worldly position was greatly superior to her own—whose talents, wealth, and manners were such as to make him a desirable prize to young ladies; and who was most assiduous in his efforts to secure the heroine for his wife. The glory of this world was presented in the most alluring and attractive form for her acceptance. A glimpse of a more enduring glory, however, was revealed unto her, which ultimately led to the rejection of this tempting offer, and to the renunciation of the world, not by going into a nunnery, but by accepting in marriage a poor but faithful Methodist Preacher, and following him to the Figian Islands, where he had gone as a missionary.

The latter part of the second volume gives a very vivid life-like account of the duties, hardships, and work of Christian missionaries in the islands, and is well calculated to awaken a desire in the breasts of many to carry the light of the glorious gospel to these poor benighted people.

This book and others which have been recently published is calculated to show very clearly what is the

POST OF HONOUR.

The exhibition of this is necessary, not only for the benefit of those who are not Christians, but also for those who are Christians; and especially Christian ministers need to be reminded of what they well know, but what is apt to slip from their memory, that the post of difficulty is the post of honour. That the position of service which demands the greatest amount of self-denial, which affords the smallest amount of worldly admiration and glory, all other things being equal, is the one that is most desirable, when considered in the light of eternity. Yet these are not the positions sought after. If an English Bishop dies, the aspirants for his office are numerous; but if a vacancy occurs in Africa or in Asia, it is with the greatest difficulty that the place can be supplied. If a city congregation becomes vacant, the number of aspirants for it is so great, that months and sometimes years are required to give them all a hearing, and the congregation the opportunity to choose one from among so many. While this is

taking place almost every day, missionary boards are driven to despair at the repeated calls from distant lands, for men to "come over and help them." It is not for want of men that are able to go. It is for want of men who are willing. They exhibit this want of willingness in accepting spheres at home, far below their capacity and education, with remuneration barely necessary for their own and their children's necessities. The experience of missionary boards in general is, that it is easier to get money than men. At home it is easier to get men than money. There is something wrong when this is the case. As it is, we seldom hear the heartfelt cry to the Lord to send forth labourers.

Owing to the injuries done to the line between Colborne and Cobourg, the train could not proceed to its destination, and we were under the necessity of spending the Sabbath in

COLBORNE.

Colborne is a neat little village of about 1000 inhabitants, covering a considerable extent of ground. The land around and particularly behind, is high and rolling, from which the surrounding landscape is exceedingly agreeable and artistic. The village has three substantial churches, belonging to the Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and Episcopal denominations. It can boast of as neat a printed newspaper as any published in the province, and can also rejoice in the possession of a Mechanics' Institute.

Leaving Colborne on Monday we reached the township of

CAVAN.

through which the Port Hope and Peterboro Railway passes. To the eye of the stranger, as he drives along, this township appears to be one of the finest in the province. The land is rolling. The soil is good. And at the season when all nature looks lovely it appears a desirable place to live in. The substantial character of the buildings indicates that the residents are on the whole comfortable and prosperous. Among those whom we met and whose society we enjoyed, was the aged and venerable

REV. JAMES DOUGLAS,

Presbyterian minister of Cavan. This gentleman is one of the few ministers now remaining, who were gospel pioneers. Thirty years ago, when he first settled, there was no Presbyterian minister nearer than Toronto on the one side, and King stone on the other. Now they are thickly studded all around. And many of the places now regularly favoured with Gospel ordinances were first established by himself.

In the township of Otonabee the village of

KEENS

is the principal place of business. As we approached it the number of houses, large and white painted, gave the idea of general prosperity. The churches are not conspicuous from the Southern approach unless we except the Roman Catholic Chapel, a small building, used some three or four times a year. The Wesleyan Methodist and Presbyterian interests are said to be strong in the locality, and the cause of temperance is flourishing.

The Indian river runs past the village in its course to the Otonabee, the view of which, as seen from the Presbyterian Manse, together with the appearance of the large bridge that spans it, and the land seen in the distance, is as fine as can be seen in any village we have visited. The village is not, however, as flourishing as it appears.

We had to pass through the township of

DOURO

in our way to Warsaw, and again in our way from Warsaw to Peterboro. This township is for the most part settled by Roman Catholics from the South of Ireland. They occupy the southern and central part of the township, while the north is occupied by Protestants. In this respect it is not unlike the Erin isle. It is not unlike it in other respects, for among the same class as are in the majority in Ireland, rowdyism, violence and bloodshed rule. Two murders have been committed within it, and the murderers have not been discovered. One or two isolated Protestants live in the South. They have been seriously annoyed on account of their faith, and but for the interference of the Priest, serious results might have been produced. The surrounding townships have a large number of Orangemen, and as sure as any persecution should result to any Protestant on account of his faith, civil war would commence, and it is impossible to say to what dimensions it would grow.

The village of

LAKEFIELD,

in the township of Douro, is one of the pleasant we have seen for some time. The buildings are fresh, clean and tasteful. The river Otonabee, which flows through it, fed by nearly a hundred lakes, was at the time of our visit in full spring flow, rushing and fretting and foaming with impetuosity. As the cribs came over the slide, and darted like an arrow under the bridge, in the midst of angry surges, the activity of the men, the movement of the timber, and the splashing of the waves, appeared a most

exciting and dangerous scene. And we were sorry to learn that on this and on other places along the river, many lives are lost during the lumbering season. It is so common that when the event happens, the intelligence travels around, and when it is asked who was drowned? "Oh, only a raftman; only a raftman!" It is lightly said; nevertheless, it is a serious thing. A raftman is somebody's son, somebody's relation, probably a husband, a father, a brother, or the only support of a widowed mother. Whether or not, he has an immortal soul, and his sudden transition from this world to the next—perhaps unprepared—is an event of tremendous importance to him.

THE THINGS THAT PASS AWAY.

My friends, there is one more solemn thing. If sin, suffering, labour, change, and death are among the things that shortly shall have passed away, remember, life is also among the things that will have shortly passed away; and death will be found in its place. God is a God of justice, and He is certain to set two things in everlasting contrast; the one, Hell with its flames, the other, Heaven with its glory; the one, Hell with its groans, the other, Heaven with its songs—the blackness of darkness, the glory of brightness—Heaven and Hell. Now, we address sinners. As a sinner I speak. O, look—look at those multitudes. O, look at those young sinners! O, look at those parent sinners! O, look at those hoary-headed sinners! How may a child speak with these? O, sinners, hear the cry, the cry of one saved, one whom God has hold of, and one who will shortly be dead and gone! Sinner, hear one who would see you safe in the arms of Christ. We tell you your opportunities will be shortly passed away. Preaching will be shortly passed away; prayer will be shortly passed away; pardon will be shortly passed away; peace will be shortly passed away; hope will be shortly passed away. Your day is a fleeting one; it will set in clouds, and night cometh. Your joy is a fading one; it dies—it is short-lived. Hell cometh, pain cometh, suffering cometh, woe cometh, anguish cometh, torment cometh, night cometh, and eternity cometh. How shall we address you? O, might the dead speak to you! O, that we might call upon those who are among the lost to address you! God knoweth. Let them stand up; let them stand here, and we will leave this place, and go elsewhere. O, that the mouldering dead might come forth and tell you that all "former things" to them "are passed away." Might we but bid some of the lost in the deep pit to come up—might we but bid the sinner in

burning chains come up, sheeted with fire, and, with trumpet tongue, testify to you of the solemn, awful truths which God shall reveal! Methinks, your souls would tremble within you. Mark me, you are dying. There is not a man here, a child here, or a woman here, that is not dying. The hand of Death is upon you. The pale rider is after you. The arrow is put into the bow; it is pointed and winged, and it must pierce the heart. For Death cometh. The Judgment cometh. And in that awful day, think what thou shalt do. In that day where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? When the book is opened and the trumpet sounds, when the earth is departing and God is coming, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? When Jesus is blessing the saints and cursing the ungodly, ah, where shall you appear? I close God's book—my time is gone. God will shortly close His book, for your time shall be gone. If I could, my outstretched hand should pluck you all as brands from the burning. I cannot; it is God's province, it is God's work. We warn you, therefore, to seize the present moment, to lay a mighty and tight grip—the grasp of faith—upon the hope set before you. O! remember that presently, after a few more nights and days, a few more hours and moments, these “former things” shall have “passed away.” He that believeth in the blood of Jesus shall be saved when these things have passed away. He that believeth not in the blood of Jesus shall be damned when these things have passed away.—*Guinness.*

A COMMON ERROR.

From the window at which I am sitting (says an American writer), I can see over the fields a little brown cottage. A few weeks ago, a grey-haired man passed down the brick pathway in front of it, every morning, accompanied by his little grandsons—one of whom was blind—bade them good-bye at the gate, and went forth to his daily toil. On the Sabbath, the neighbours loved to watch the kind old man, as he guided the sightless boy to church; and every one who met them had a pleasant word for old Mr. C.

Several weeks ago, at the close of a bright, pleasant Sabbath day, Mr. C. was stricken with sudden illness. Before many hours had gone by, the physician pronounced his case hopeless. The minister was sent for, and came to pray at the bedside of the dying man.

“What are your hopes of heaven?” said the minister. “Are you resting on Christ? Is your faith firm?”

“Ah,” said the dying man, “I am sure I

will go to heaven, for I never did any one any harm that I know of.”

This the end of seventy years, in a land so flooded with light as ours! This the result of seventy winters of the Gospel—of seventy summers in the sanctuary! Poor old man—going down to the edge of the dark waters, leaning on such a bundle of reeds as this, trusting in the hour of death, not in the perfect atonement of the Blessed One, who died on the cross to expiate our sins, but in the negative merits of his own moral life, in which he had not knowingly harmed any one.

Alas! he is not the only one. No need of going far from our own doors to find heathenism as dark, as hopeless, and infinitely harder to overthrow than that which clouds the sunny shores of India, or deepens the shadow that broods over desolate Africa. No need of hunting through the squalid homes of the Five Points, or the wretched dens of vice and infamy in any city, to find those who know not Christ.

Jesus only! Oh! pastor, preacher, mother, be this the key-note of your instructions. Jesus, the author and finisher of our salvation!

“OPEN THOU MINE EYES.”

On the wall of a church in a foreign town, there hangs a wonderful painting of Christ's last hours on the cross. With a countenance full of love, of the deepest awe, and greatest sorrow, John is gazing on the spectacle, while our Lord's mother, supported by Mary Magdalene, lies fainting at his feet. On the curtain being rolled up that covers it, you cannot speak; you cannot take off your eyes; you forget the painter in the painting; and some such emotions of awe, pity, and wonder take possession of you as seized on the centurion, who feeling the earth quake, and hearing the cry of Calvary, declared as he left the scene, Truly this was the Son of God.

Yet take out of the blind mendicants who, cap in hand, beg by that cathedral door, and set him before the picture; unveil its wonders before his sightless eyeballs; and he stands as unmoved as the cold, hard, stony pillar on which the canvas hangs. Or, from the works of man, take the blind out to those of God. Guide him by the shore when the ocean shines like a silver mirror, or long white lines of breakers curl and foam on the sands; or the billows, swelling as they roll, and bursting with the roar of thunder, fling themselves in sheets of snow on the rugged cliffs; or lead him forth on a winter night, when a thousand stars are sparkling in the frosty sky; or take him on a summer day to meadow carpeted with flowers of every form

and the richest hues; he sees no wonders; not he! He only marvels at your admiration, and is disposed, as the world deals with those whose delight is in the word and service of God, to set you down for a hypocrite or a fanatic, a liar or a fool. You are neither.—There are stars in heaven and flowers on earth. The man does not see them, because he is blind; and so are we, if we have no relish for the word of God, nor see any gracious and glorious wonders there.

Open a blind man's eyes. With what amazement, admiration, happiness, overflowing joy will he gaze, nor tire gazing, on all above and around him, from the sun blazing in heaven to the tiniest flower that springs in beauty at his feet! And let God open a sinner's eyes, the Bible will seem to him a new book, and he seem to himself a new creature.

Wonders! He will see his heart and wonder at its wickedness.

He will see the Saviour, and wonder at his love.

He will see how God has spared him, and wonder at his long-suffering.

He will see sin in its true colour, and wonder he could love a thing so vile and so detestable.

He will see salvation as the one thing needful, and wonder he could have taken a night's rest, ventured to close his eyes in sleep, till he had found peace with God.

He will see the King in his transcendent beauty, and wonder, as he throws himself at Jesus' feet, that all the world does not do so—that all men do not go after him, saying, as he does, Jesus, thou art all my desire. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. Thou art chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely!—*Dr. Guthrie.*

THE RELIGIOUS PRESS.

A clergyman lately addressing a Christian audience on this subject, spoke as follows:—

I wish to tell you, my friends, how much I esteem, and how much every Christian minister esteems the religious press as his ally in doing good. And I wish to affirm that there is no other outward agency on earth which we prize so highly. The influence of a religious periodical in a family is valuable beyond computation,—as necessary, in the view of those who are accustomed to take and read it, as their daily bread; enlightening the minds of the religious public in respect to all religious operations; and, what is better, enlarging their hearts, making them Christians of large views

and large charities, because they thus learn what the world needs.

And to convince you, my brethren, of the interest I feel in this matter, and of the great importance I attach to the press as my helper in the ministry, I tell you that if I had the pecuniary ability I would pay for, and send regularly to every family in my congregation, a religious paper, rather than have them be without it. It is worth ten times more than it costs to any man. No head of a family ought to consent for a week to be without it. It will help you in every way. It will make you better Christians. I affirm that the Christians in every Church of largest views and most firmly established Christian character, and the most ready helpers of the pastor in every good word and work, are those who take and read a religious paper. Scarcely the extremest poverty should shut it out from your doors.

It will help to refine and train and Christianize your children. It will stir and warm your own hearts. It will inevitably and always do good. And, if it does not already spread its cheer around your firesides, I cannot but urge you not to let another week elapse before you enrich yourself by the possession of so great a treasure. Eminently as the religious press has been owned and blessed of God, it deserves a large place in every Christian household, in every Christian heart.

LET GO!

One great trouble with convicted sinners is that they don't believe in the grace of Christ and his willingness to save them just as they are. They long to acquire a sort of claim to mercy, by deep conviction, or long striving or great sacrifices. The idea of being saved wholly by the sovereign grace of Christ is not acceptable. Dr. Spencer, in his sketches, gives an illustration of this in a sermon reported by one of his inquirers:

"You know your sermon that you preached just before I came to have any hope—I don't remember the text—but it was about wandering sinners lost on the mountains."

"No, indeed, madam, I have no recollection of it."

"Well, I can't tell you what it was; I can't repeat it; may be I can tell you enough to make you remember it. I know you represented us in that sermon as lost sinners, lost in the woods, wandering over mountain after mountain, in dark and dangerous places, among the rocks and precipices, not knowing where we were going. It grew darker and darker—we were groping along, sometimes on the brink of a dreadful precipice, but didn't

know it. Then some of us began to fall down the steep mountains, and thought we should be dashed to pieces. I know I thought so.—But we caught hold of the bushes to hold ourselves up by them—some bushes would give way, and then we would catch others, and hold on till they gave way, broke, or tore up by the roots, and then we would catch others and others. Don't you remember it, sir?"

"Partly, but go on."

"Well, you said our friends were calling to us as we hung by the bushes on the brink, and we called to one another, '*Hold on, hold on.*' Then you said this cry, '*hold on, hold on,*' might be a very natural one to make, if one should see a poor creature hanging over the edge of a precipice, clinging to a little bush with all his might—if the man didn't see anything else. But you said there was another thing to be seen, which these '*hold on*' people didn't seem to know anything about. You said the Lord Jesus Christ was down at the bottom of the precipice, lifting up both hands to catch us, if we would consent to fall into his arms, and was crying out to us, '*Let go, let go, let go.*' Up above, all around where we were, you said they were crying out, '*Hold on, hold on.*' Down below, you said, Jesus Christ kept crying out, '*Let go, let go;*' and if we only knew who he was, and would let go of the bushes, of the bushes of sin and self-righteousness, and fall into the arms of Christ, we should be saved. And you said we had better stop our noise, and listen, and hear his voice, and take his advice, and '*let go.*'"

"Don't you recollect that sermon, sir?"

"Yes, only you have preached it better than I did."

"Well, when I remembered that sermon last spring, in my dark, backslidden state, I tried to obey it. I let go of everything, and trusted myself to Christ, and in a little while my heart was comforted—my hope came back again. I don't know how I found peace the first time, if that was not the way. I suppose we have to make our choice whether to hold on to something which can't save us, or let go, and fall into the hands of the Lord."

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Reader! mayhap you are now troubled and worried at heart about your sins: you have not been forgiven; but you would gladly give all the world, if you had it, to know you were really pardoned.

You oftentimes tell God—"I believe in the forgiveness of sins." What is your exact meaning when you tell him that? Here is a scripture which will show you what God means by it—"Ready to forgive." Do you

believe that? do you believe that he is ready now? or do you think that you honour him more when you make him occupy a long time in making up his mind to pardon you? Not long ago the writer was addressing a meeting in a town near London; and after telling them of a little boy who, going home one night from a meeting where he had seen people anxious about their sins, and others getting "peace in believing," said in a tone of great distress—"There's me! home again to-night without Christ!" he warned them that that night they must each take home with them either Jesus or their sins. Two persons present, who had been religiously brought up, were seized with a consuming terror, and got no peace till they found it at the feet of Jesus. Some months later the writer was gladdened to learn that, ever since, they had been happy in Christ, and were consecrating themselves wholly to his service. Lately, a clergyman down a long way in the country was awakened into great anxiety—he saw that he had been preaching a Christ whom he did not himself personally know; and he came up to London, hoping to find the Lord there. After a little he felt to return home, without having found Christ. But, on his way down in the train, this text came before him—"He was bruised for our iniquities;" and in that word the Lord met him, and he has been ever since a rejoicing Christian. It was just the Ethiopian over over again: he had come up to the capital seeking the Lord, and was returning home without having found him, when suddenly on the way a message came to him by the very same chapter; and he went on his way rejoicing, because the Lord had forgiven him so freely and so immediately all his sins.

And why should you, dear reader, continue in your sins? why not lay them on him, and leave them on him, and from this hour go on your way rejoicing? "Come unto me," Jesus says to you at this moment, "and lay your burden on me, and I will give thee rest." "Oh! the heart," exclaimed an old saint one day "the great heart that Jesus has to do us good!" No way is so open in all the world, as the way for a returning sinner back to him who died for him. Brother, will you come?—*Christ our Life*, by Rev. J. Baillie.

Jesus is called the "arm of the Lord." He is his working arm, his upholding arm, the arm which dispenses all his blessings. How blessed to have this arm to lean upon! still more blessed to know that this arm is beneath us—still more blessed to find his arm around us, clasping us to his bosom, and saying, "This is my beloved, in whom I, too, am well pleased."

SUBMISSION.

“Beye not as the horse or mule which, have no understanding;” &c. Pa. xxxii. 9.

We are here taught that the harbouring of a rebellious tendency against the Word and Providence of God, necessarily subjects us to *measures of restraint and correction*,—‘Whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.’ As the animal which manifests a refractory spirit requires the sharp application of the rein, and perhaps the rod, to bring him under control and render him manageable, so the reasonable being, if unwilling to submit his conscience to the force of truth, and his heart to the wisdom of God’s arrangements, requires similar treatment to bring him into subjection to the obedience of Christ; and it is often only by many and oft-repeated strokes that he is brought to submit his heart meekly to the teaching of God’s word and the discipline of his providence. But it is only when he is brought into this submission that he properly begins to learn. A haughty spirit will not learn, and must of necessity be removed before he will receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls.

We here learn the first step towards our being ‘taught of God.’ It is having every lofty imagination, and every high thought that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, brought down; and having the conscience and heart brought into a state of submissiveness to the truth of God’s word and the righteousness of his procedure. So long as we entertain lofty imaginations and high thoughts,—a confidence in our own wisdom, and a persuasion that we are right,—we can neither receive *instruction* from God’s word, nor training from his providence. So long as we are disposed to say, ‘Why hast thou thus dealt with us?’ our lesson will not be learned. ‘God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble’—‘the meek will he teach his way.’ And our Saviour, in calling upon sinners to *learn* of Him, requires that they, first of all take his *yoke* upon them,—that is, submit to the wisdom of his dispensations, and allow Him to do with them as

he pleases,—that they entertain a meek and lowly spirit like His own, when He said, ‘The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink?’—‘Not my will, but thine, be done.’ It is in such a state of mind, only, that the word of God falls upon our ears with pleasant and agreeable effect;—then only that it can be felt sweet to the taste, sweeter also than honey and the honey comb. It is then only that we are enabled to see that God doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men, and to say with the Psalmist, ‘In righteousness hast thou afflicted me,’ and ‘It was good for me that I was afflicted.’

But an opposite state of mind, indicated by the refractoriness of the horse or mule, leads us to cast God’s laws behind our backs, and to slight each one of his ways, to have none of his counsel, and to despise all his reproof. And so long as this opposite disposition is entertained, we have no grounds to expect that God will guide us in the way we should go, but rather to fear that He ‘will laugh at our calamity and mock when our fear cometh, seeing, he has called and we have refused, he has stretched out his hand and we have not regarded it.’

O! then, let covet earnestly, and strive to attain that beautiful and heavenly resignation of soul to the dispensations of providence, of which Christ Jesus has afforded us so perfect an example, and which has so often been copied by the people of God, to the astonishment of such as have no understanding.’ Let us seek grace at all times to hear what God the Lord will speak; and to say in the sincerity of our hearts, whatever may befall us,—‘It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.’ And in cherishing such a spirit we may expect to be taught and trained in the way we should go, till we reach the Jerusalem that is above.—*R. Brydon on Psalm 32nd.*—*Edinburgh, 1848.*

INSENSIBILITY TO DAILY MERCIES.—As the Dead Sea drinks in the river Jordan and is never the sweeter, and the ocean all other rivers, and is never the fresher, so we are apt to receive daily mercies from God, and still remain insensible of them, unthankful for them.—*Reynolds,*

SPECIFIC AND INTENSE PRAYER.

"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks."—
Ps. xlii. 1.

We lose many prayers for the want of two things which support each other,—*specificness of object*, and *intensity of desire*. One's interest in such an exercise as this is necessarily dependent on the co-existence of these qualities.

In the diary of Dr. Chalmers, we find recorded this petition: "Make me sensible of real answers to actual requests, as evidences of an interchange between myself on earth and my Saviour in heaven." Under the sway of intense desires, our minds naturally long to individualize thus the parties, the petitions, the objects, and the results of prayer.

Sir Fowell Buxton writes as follows: "When I am out of heart, I follow David's example, and fly for refuge to prayer; and he furnishes me with a store of prayer. . . . I am bound to acknowledge that I have always found that my prayers have been heard and answered; . . . in almost every instance I have received what I have asked for. . . . Hence, I feel permitted to offer up my prayers for everything that concerns me. . . . I am inclined to imagine that there are no *little* things with God. His hand is as manifest in the feathers of a butterfly's wing, in the eye of an insect, in the folding and packing of a blossom, in the curious aqueducts by which a leaf is nourished, as in the creation of a world, and in the laws by which planets move. I understand literally the injunction: 'In everything make your requests known unto God;' and I cannot but notice how amply these prayers have been met."

Again, writing to his daughter on the subject of a "division" in the House of Commons, in the conflict for West Indian Emancipation, he says: "What led to that division? If ever there was a subject which occupied our prayers, it was this. Do you remember how we desired that God would give me his Spirit in that emergency; how we quoted the promise, 'He that lacketh wisdom, let him ask it of the Lord, and it shall be given him;' and how I kept open that passage in the Old Testament in which it is said, 'We have no might against this great company

that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon Thee'—the Spirit of the Lord replying, 'Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's'? If you want to see the passage, open my Bible; it will turn of itself to the place. I sincerely believe that *prayer* was the cause of *that division*; and I am confirmed in this, by knowing that we by no means calculated on the effect. The course we took appeared to be right, and we *followed it blindly*."

In these examples is illustrated, in real life, the working of these two forces in a spirit of prayer, which must naturally exist or die together,—intensity of desire and specificness of object.

Let a man define to his own mind an object of prayer, and then let him be moved by desires for that object which *impel* him to pray, because he cannot otherwise satisfy the irrepressible longings of his soul; let him have such desires as shall lead him to search out, and dwell upon, and treasure in his heart, and return to again, and appropriate to himself anew, the *encouragements* to prayer, till his Bible opens of itself at the right places—and think you that such a man will have occasion to go to his closet, or come from it, with the sickly cry, "Why, oh! why is my intercourse with God so irksome to me?" Such a man *must* experience, at least, the joy of uttering hopefully emotions which become painful by repression.

On the contrary, let a man's objects of thought at the throne of grace be vague, and let his desires be languid, and from the nature of the case, his prayers must be both languid and vague. Says Jeremy Taylor: "Easiness of desire is a great enemy to the success of a good man's prayer. It must be an intent, zealous, busy, operative prayer. For consider what a huge indecency it is, that a man should speak to God for a thing that he values not. Our prayers upbraid our spirits, when we beg tamely for those things for which we ought to die; which are more precious than imperial sceptres, richer than the spoils of the sea, or the treasures of Indian hills."

The scriptural examples of prayer have, most of them, an unutterable intensity. They are pictures of *struggles*, in which

more of suppressed desire is hinted than that which is expressed. Recall the wrestling of Jacob,—“I will not let thee go till thou hast blest me;” and the “panting” and “pouring out of soul” of David,—“I cried day and night; my throat is dry with calling upon my God;” and the importunity of the Syro-phœnician woman, with her “Yes, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs;” and the persistency of Bartimeus, crying out “the more a great deal,” “Have mercy on me;” and the strong crying and tears of our Lord,—“If it be possible! if it be possible!” There is no “easiness of desire” here.

The scriptural examples of prayer, also, are clear as light in their objects of thought. Even those which are calm and sweet, like the Lord’s Prayer, have few and sharply defined subjects of devotion. They are not discursive and voluminous, like many uninspired forms of supplication. They do not range over everything at once. They have no vague expressions; they are crystalline; a child need not read them a second time to understand them. As uttered by their authors, they were in no antiquated phraseology; they were in the fresh forms of a living speech. They were, and were meant to be, the channels of living thoughts and living hearts.

Let a man, then, be negligent of both scriptural example and the nature of his own mind; let him approach God with both vagueness of thought and languor of emotion—and what else can his prayer be, but a weariness to himself and an abomination to God? It would be a miracle if such a suppliant should enjoy success in prayer. He cannot succeed, he cannot have joy, because he has no *object* that elicits intense desire, and no *desire* that sharpens his object. He has no great, holy, penetrative thought in him, which stirs up his sensibilities; and no deep swelling sensibility, therefore, to *relieve* by prayer. His soul is not reached by anything he is thinking about; and, therefore, he *has* no soul to pour out before God. Such a man prays because he thinks he *must* pray; not because he is grateful to God that he *may* pray. There is an unspeakable difference between “must” and “may.” It is his conscience that prays;

it is not his heart. His language is the language of his conscience. He prays in words which ought to express his heart, not in those which do express it. Hence arises that experience, so distressful to an ingenuous mind, in which devotion is prompted by no vividness of conception, rolling up a force of sensibility to the level of the lips, so that it can flow forth in childlike, honest speech.

Such an experience, so far from rendering prayer a joy either sweet and placid or ecstatic, can only cause the time spent in the closet to be the season of periodical torture to a sensitive conscience, like that of a victim daily stretched on a rack. For it is in such prayer that such a conscience is most vehement in its reproaches, and guilt seems to be heaped up most rapidly. Oh, wretched man that he is! Who shall deliver him?—*Still Hour.*

DIVINE EPIGRAMS.

From Richard Crashaw’s “Steps to the Temple,” 1646.

ON THE BAPTIZED ETHIOPIAN. (Acts viii.)

Let it no longer be a forlorn hope
To wash an Ethiopian:
He’s wash’d, his gloomy skin a peaceful shade
For his white soul is made:
And now, I doubt not, the Eternal Dove
A black-faced house will love.

ON OUR LORD’S SEPULCHRE.

Here, where our Lord once laid his head,
Now the grave lies buried.

THE WIDOW’S MITES.

Two mites, two drops (yet all her house and land)
Fall from a steady heart, though trembling hand:
The other’s wanton wealth foams high and brave,
The other cast away, she only gave.

“TWO MEN WENT UP TO PRAY” (Luke xviii. 10.)

Two went to pray? O, rather say
One went to brag, th’ other to pray:
One stands up close and trends on high,
Where th’ other dares not lend his eye.
One nearer to God’s altar trod,
The other to the altar’s God.

“NOW HAVE THEY BOTH SEEN AND HATED” (John xv. 24.)

Seen, and yet hated thee! they did not see,
They saw thee not; that saw and hated thee,
No, no, they saw thee not, O life, O love,
Who saw aught in thee that their hate could move.

ON ST. PETER CASTING AWAY HIS NETS AT THE SAVIOUR’S CALL.

Thou hast the art on’t, Peter, and canst tell
To cast thy nets on all occasions well;
When Christ calls, and thy nets would have thee stay,
To cast them well’s to cast them quite away.

“I AM THE DOOR” (John x. 7.)

And now thou’rt set wide open; the spear’s dead art,
Lo! hath unlocked thee at the very heart.

[For "The Good News."
THE GREAT ONES OF ETERNITY.]

They're not the favorites of fame—
The idolized by man,
With sculptured pile to guard the name
That's ever on the wan.

'Tis not the world's heroic ones,
Who've trod the death strewn plain,
Nor learning's long array of sums,
Who'll shine with honour then.

Earth's trappings shall be thrown aside,
By death's great lev'ling hand,
And in Eternity's cold porch,
The soul must naked stand.

How small shall rank and fame appear,
When thus alone with God!
They only then the great ones are,
Who paths of virtue trod.

Who, though their course with thorny cares,
Up to the grave was strewn,
Their lives ran clear through all its snares,
Reflecting Christ alone.

Who skulked not to their graves as some,
With fear and burning shame,
But in the hope of being raised,
To everlasting fame.

Who lived not for the passing hour,
But kept the goal in view,
They in eternity shall tower
With honors ever new.

Who, traveller like, aweary worn,
Looked for the evening rest,
When at the moral harvest home,
They'll sit down with the blest.

In book of God's forgiveness,
Their names are written down,
In heaven's bright ante-chamber,
They'll get the starry crown.

In records of eternity,
Their names emblazoned shine,
And death's but honor's spring tide flow,
To favors all divine.

With Calvary's young conqueror,
They'll highest honors share,
His spotless robe of righteousness,
For ever they shall wear.

With kindling lustre, like to stars,
The holy, wise and pure,
Revolving round this central Son
Shall evermore endure.

X. Y. Z.

THE PEACE OF GOD.

"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord;" &c.

The day is holy, and the hour
Is when the daylight doth decline;
The place is God's own house, and power
Speaks in those words—a power divine.

Peace in our hearts; the serpent war
Hath twin'd himself about our earth,
So that us mortals everywhere -
Doth meet him from the very birth.

Strangely that benediction prayer
Beats down the world beneath our feet;
Lord grant us thy peace evermore,
If what our heart feels now is peace.

Peace—'tis a gush of heavenly light,
Flooded upon our earth-dimm'd eyes;
It is the fire divine's descent,
Upon our evening sacrifice.

Peace—it is Heaven's approving smile,
For which our world hath no compare;
We know it Heaven's sunlight, and pray
Come quickly, Lord, and take us there.

Peace is a river flowing through
The eternal city of our God;
And this a wave ran over, and
Shed in our thirsty souls abroad.

Peace—'tis a foretaste of the bliss
Pervading yonder land of love;
Only a taste; our Lord prepares
A feast of better things above.

Peace passing understanding proof,
Our common faith is Heaven approved;
Lord make our peace abounding here,
Then us to Paradise remove.

—William Deacon.

The Captain of our Salvation.

When Antigonus heard some of his troops rather despondingly say, "How many are coming against us?" he asked, "But, my soldiers, how many do you reckon me for?" And whoever ever we think of our foes, and then of the Captain of our salvation, we may truly say, more are they that be with us than they that be with them. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Who goes before us? Who teaches our hands to war, and our fingers to fight? Who provides for us? Who renews our strength? What limits have His wisdom and power? Did He ever lose an action yet, or a single private in His army?—Jay.

Sabbath School Lessons.

June 12th, 1864.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

Read Luke xvii. 20-37.

I. The Kingdom of God is within you, ver. 20, 21.

The Pharisees, from Christ's miracles, probably thought that He might be the Elias, and asked "when the kingdom of God would come;"—his answer blighted all their expectations of worldly pomp;—it "cometh not with observation;" that is, with no outward show—"it is within you." It is a kingdom whose empire is the heart—whose laws are "righteousness, peace, and joy," Rom. xiv. 17.

II. The Coming of Christ will be sudden, ver. 22-25.

This was said to the disciples. The kingdom had come into their hearts, but their Master would come again in glory, and of that coming He seems now to speak. They would long for a day of the Son of Man—for another day of His presence. They need not seek it. He would come like lightning, and fill the world with His brightness.

III. Men will be unprepared for it, ver. 26-30.

As they lived in Noah's time, in spite of all his warnings, and as they lived in Lot's time, so men will be found living only for this world when Christ comes. It does not say they will be living in crime, but in deep ungodliness.

IV. We should be prepared for it, ver. 31-37.

1. By not loving this world. Let him who is on the housetop never mind his stuff. It was loving her stuff that made Lot's wife look back.

2. By loving and longing for Christ's coming. Willing to lose this life itself for His sake; thus, at His coming, we would find we had secured life everlasting. He who seeks to save his life—who counts this life and its enjoyments the only things worth having, will find he has lost his life.

3. Prepare now. Christ tells them His coming would be sudden, like that of a thief. It would separate many for ever. One taken—to be with Christ. The other left—without Christ. How awful!

APPLICATION.

1. Is the kingdom of God within you?—The Pharisees were always looking for some king to reign on the outside of their hearts. Christ tells them to look within. If God was their king, their hearts were His kingdom. Have you let Christ into your heart, and are you

thoughts, words, and actions, pleasing to Him? David, Ps. cxix. 11. Abijah had good in him, 1 Kings xiv. 13.

2. Learn what change of place cannot do, ver. 21-23. It cannot change your character. Many seem to think if they were only out of such a place into such another, it would be all right with them. Judas was not changed.

It cannot make you happy. How many wander over the world to get away from themselves! Get your hearts changed and all will be right.

3. Christ will come again. So Christ says, ver. 24. So the angels said, Acts i. 11. We cannot tell when or how He will come. You will see Him! Rev. i. 7. Will you rejoice?

4. See what ruins souls. Not great crimes, not using the world, but giving the heart to it.

This ruined the sinners at the flood, and those of Sodom. "They did eat, drink, and married," but neither loved nor obeyed God. They might plead that they were "honest, respectable, inoffensive people." "If any love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed."

5. Are you ready for Christ's coming at death? If Christ is your best friend, you would like to see Him—to see Him soon.—So Jacob longed for Joseph. Your heart will be with him already. It will not be with this world's "stuff."

6. How sudden, how sad the separations of that day! The husband and wife, brothers and sisters, companions and friends if not friends of Christ, will be separated then. This made David mourn so bitterly for Absalom and Saul.—Edin. S. S. Lessons.

June 19th, 1864.

NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS.

Read Ruth i. 6-22.

(Connection.—The scenes so beautifully described in this book must have taken place towards the latter end of that period when Judges ruled Israel—King David being the only great-grandchild of him and Boaz.)

I. The Sojourn in Moab.

Ver. 1-5. Elimelech and his family left in consequence of a famine—very likely to occur in any country where government was so unsettled, and where industry was discouraged by hostile invasions and frequent ravages (See Judges vi. 4-11.) Probably he had property in cattle, and was of some consequence at home. Went out full, ver. 21.

The marriage of his sons after his death with Moab's daughters was against God's law. Elimelech dreaded such society less than

Abraham did. (See Gen. xxiv. 1-6.) Death, in ten years, left Naomi, and her two daughters-in-law, three childless widows.

II. The Parting.

Ver. 6, 7. *The Lord had visited his people.* Naomi recognised God's hand in removing the famine. Her daughters evidently set out with a design to accompany Naomi. Probably she had won their affection, and weeping often together had united closely these desolate ones.

Ver. 8, 9. Now on the border of Israel, Naomi tries to persuade them to return—prays that God would bless them for their kindness to her and *the dead*. She dare not venture on these loved names!

Ver. 10-13. They still refusing, she urges them by the hopelessness of their situation; if they went with her, she could not do anything for them. She had no more sons. This refers to the law by which the brother was bound to marry a brother's widow. They had suffered too much already from their connection with her. *It grieveth me much for your sake, &c.* It is a burden to a generous spirit when others suffer through them.

Ver. 14-18. The scene becomes very interesting. Again they mingle their tears. JAPAH, hanging on the bosom of her kind mother, cannot say farewell, but, with one long, affectionate embrace, slowly turns her face and moves towards her native land. RUTH seems to have been affected by Orpah's departure, only to cling more closely to her fond Naomi, and in most pathetic and beautiful language refuses ever to leave her.*

From her references to God, and the sad expression of Naomi, Thy sister has returned to her gods, we would fain hope that the gentle Ruth had been brought to the knowledge and the love of Israel's God by her mother-in-law.

III. The Return to Bethlehem.

Ver. 19-22. How Naomi's saddest thoughts would be aroused by the objects she now saw around her! *All the city was moved—Is this Naomi?* It was only ten short years since they had seen her go out full; and while they gazed on her face, they could hardly recognize those well-known and loved features, for evidently she had the kind sympathies of her

people. Her answer is very affecting. She acknowledges God's hand in all her afflictions.

APPLICATION.

1. *Love secures happiness in a family.* They cannot be miserable—love lightens every sorrow—increases every joy. Such love as Ruth's, tender, self-denying, unchanging, will secure happiness. How beautiful it is! Psal. cxxxiii. 1. The family at Bethany. How miserable a family without love!—family quarrels. Isaac's and Jacob's families. Do you keep love in your family?

2. *See that affliction in your family makes you return to God and to duty.* Naomi's seems to have been blessed to her. Her mild, affectionate, and chastened spirit shines through the whole chapter. How sad it would have been to have suffered so much in vain! Has God afflicted another in your family? See that you benefit by the suffering, or it may be sent next on yourself. It was for you too. David's child, 2 Sam. xii. 14.

3. *Feelings will not serve instead of principle.* Orpah wept much, but yet she kissed Naomi, turned back, and broke her resolution. You will be judged by your actions, not your tears. Religion of mere feeling or sentiment is worthless. (See Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.) It is easier to weep for, than to forsake your sins.

4. *Cleave to Christ and your duty like Ruth.* Copy her resolution. Let the departure of others only strengthen your resolves. Christ is worthy of such love, Matt. x. 37-39. He will give you His Spirit.

5. *Death can part the fondest love if it is not the love of Christians.* Death has no pity. A babe on a mother's breast—a father, surrounded by his children, he tears away. See that those you love are all pledged to meet you where death never comes. "I shall go to him," &c., 2 Sam. xii.

6. *Time will change you.* It has changed you already. It changed Naomi so, that her friends hardly knew her. "Is this Naomi?" Time will spoil beauty and strength. What change will ten, twenty, or forty years make on your body? What change on your soul? For better or worse? Take care! See the change on Manasseh—Paul—Jonah.—Edin. S. S. Lessons.

June 26th, 1864.

THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE.

Read Luke xviii. 1-14.

(Connection—Was it the thought of how needed? prayer was as a preparation for His coming that led Christ to teach this lesson?)

I. Pray always, ver. 1-3.

A judge. One appointed for the purpose of protecting the oppressed. He was too

* Imagine under some shady trees—on a eminence from which you could see on one hand Judah's far-off hills, and on the other Moab's fertile plains—the aged Naomi, bent by grief more than years, her beauty wasted by watchings and sorrow, with her two young and graceful daughters, all three clad in widows' mourning—the mother, just released from Orpah's sad last embrace, is pointing her daughter Ruth to her sister, as covering her face with her mantle she slowly takes the road which led her back to you lovely plains—she says, "Return thou after thy sister." Ruth—her eye kindling with the energy of her resolution, her love shining bright through her tears—knelling, clasps her arms closely round Naomi, and most passionately exclaims, "Entreat me not to leave thee," &c.

great to fear men, and too foolish to fear God.

A widow, poor and friendless. God promises specially to care for the widow, Ps. cxlvi. 9. Man should do so, Isa. i. 17; James i. 27. Her prayers made the judge "thine within himself," while she thought they were totally useless. It was pure selfishness that made the judge do anything.

Fear what he saith. He only thought it, but God hears thoughts, and notes them down.

Shall not God? If one so wicked, so unjust, so selfish, could be moved by importunate prayer to help one whom he neither feared nor loved; how much more shall God, so good and so holy, answer the prayers of his own children, when they are in so much greater need of His help.

II. How to Pray, ver. 9-14.

Christ seems to have seen some Pharisees, who, hearing the lesson, "pray always," were filled with pride at the thought of "how often and regularly they prayed." Christ wished to show them that the prayer of pride was useless.

The temple. It stood on a hill. The time of the morning and evening sacrifice, 9 A.M., 3 P.M., was usually devoted to prayer, Luke i. 10.

The Pharisee. The Pharisees pretended to be, and thought themselves to be, very good; but few of them were so, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. Men thought them good, respectable, religious people. Paul was one, Matt. xxiii. 4, 7, 10, 14, 15.

His prayer—*He stood apart*, near the inner court, and spoke loud; he sought nothing, he only repeated a list of his own good deeds and other people's sins. *I thank thee*. Yet he was not truly grateful, for he was proud. His pride made all he did offensive to God. He compared himself with others, not with God's law, 2 Cor. x. 12.

The Publican. A tax-gatherer for the Romans. The publicans were generally very bad people. Matthew and Zaccheus were publicans, Luke iii. 12. *He stood afar off*. Perhaps in the outer court. Shame made him hang down his head, Ezra ix. 6. He thought himself a great sinner—worse than any one else; yet he cast himself on God's mercy. How humble, how earnest, how short his prayer!

He went home forgiven. The Pharisee—like Haman, Esther v. 10-12—went home full of pride, but with a sentence of death waiting for him.

APPLICATION.

This passage may well be divided, at the end of verse 8, into two lessons—

1. *Pray always*. This means, look to God continually for all you require. We can desire a thing from God, though we are not speaking about it; that is prayer, 1 Thes. v. 17. How much we need this lesson.

Are there any one here who used to pray, but does not now? God will answer. Pray to Him, as Jacob did. We can pray anywhere—on a sick-bed, Ps. xxx. 2; on a death-bed, 2 Chron. xiv. 11, xviii. 31. Jonah in whale's belly; Daniel in the lion's den.

2. *God will answer prayer when He pleases*. He promises to answer, but does not fix the time. Though we may think so, He will never be too late. When Lazarus died, John xi. 21. So when they prayed for Peter, Acts xii., Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 41.

3. *God's people cry unto Him day and night*. Do we? If we are prayerless, we are not His, Ps. cxvii. 2; Job xxvii. 10; Isa. xliii. 26.

4. *Take your complaint to God rather than man*. It is a good thing if affliction send us to Christ, James v. 13. He is ever ready to hear and able to answer. Men often will not listen, or cannot help us, 1 Kings vi. 27. The woman with the issue, Luke viii. 43.

5. *The proud trust themselves, and perish*. Whatever they may say, they trust themselves. You may be all the Pharisee was—respectable, honest, admired as religious, and despising others—yet God may abhor your proud heart, Prov. xvi. 5. You may be like the devil, and perish with him, 1 Tim. iii. 6.

6. *The humble trust God and are saved*. The publican presented nothing but his sin, Ps. xxxviii. 4; xl. 12. Thought others better than himself. Trusted only to God's mercy, and was safe. Are you willing to take his place and his prayer? Then here is mercy for you. The dying thief, Luke xxiii. 42.

7. *How hopeless the case of those worse than the Pharisee*. "Who are even as these men"—who are proud—who never pretend to be religious—to pray, to give alms, to who are unjust. The Pharisee was not pardoned, Matt. v. 20.

8. *God will not receive thanks from a proud sinner*. The Pharisees were rejected, so was Cain's offering of flowers, Gen. iv. 7. You must first seek pardon through Christ, Abel did so, Gen. iv. 3.; Heb. ix. 22.

9. *Beware of despising others*. It shows a proud heart—a heart unlike Christ's—for heaven.—Edin. S. S. Lessons.

To repent of sin is as great a work of grace as not to sin.—Brooks.