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ON THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS.

BY REV. J. B. DUNCAN, PERTH, G.W.

PART I.

"So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."—Matt. xviii. 35.

The parable of which the text forms the conclusion, was uttered in the hearing and for the benefit of the disciples. This is evident from the first part of the chapter. At verse 21st we learn what it was that led our Lord, at this particular time, to explain and enforce the duty enjoined in the text. To that duty, indeed, attention had been directed in a previous part of our Lord's discourse, as we gather from verse 15th. Remembering this, Peter, after revolving the matter in his own mind—in all probability without having arrived at any satisfactory result—comes to our Lord and asks the question, "How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" A very proper question, truly, touching a most important branch of Christian duty, of which it is of the utmost consequence right views should be entertained.

The disciples themselves, like most of their fellow-countrymen, had obscure and seriously defective notions of their duty towards those who had wronged them. Of old time it was said, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." It was thought right to retaliate. It was accounted a just thing that one should be avenged on him at whose hands he had suffered wrong. As a law designed to regulate the public administration of justice, the saying held good, and involved a principle strictly just. The saying, however, had been misinterpreted, and perverted to the worst of purposes. It was looked upon as expressly sanctioning private revenge, a thing which here and elsewhere our Lord

exposes and condemns. The mere fact that He does so, shows it to have been a prevalent sentiment at that time, and, we may suppose, one with which the disciples, in common with those of the same nation, were infected. This, in truth, is a subject that even now, and under the new dispensation, is imperfectly understood. This question of Peter, then, we may assume, was put with an anxious desire to know the right and true, and a sincere intention to act agreeably to it. He believed, as doubtless we all believe, that in some sense or other he ought to forgive an erring brother. But he seems to have been in doubt as to the frequency with which it was incumbent on him to do this. He appears to have thought there should be a limit to human forbearance—a point at which one might justly feel reluctant to extend forgiveness—a time, in short, when, without guilt, we could steel our hearts against the offender. If such was his idea, as it is undoubtedly that of many in the present day, then, clearly, he was, as they are, in grave error. For, in reply to his question, our Lord said, "Not until seven times, but until seventy times seven;" that is, as the words obviously teach, without restriction, and without reserve as to the nature and number of the offences.

Hereupon follows the parable of which our text forms at once the conclusion and practical improvement. And it must be a cause, not less of profound grief than of utter and unfeigned surprise, that any one laying claim to the name of disciple, and professing any regard to the Master's will, can read that parable, and at the same time continue to cherish and display resent-

ment or anger towards a fellow-mortal. His character is described to the life in the servant's who, though forgiven himself, refused to forgive his fellow-servant. He can see himself in this gospel mirror. Let him trace his own features in this vivid representation. Let him reflect how hideous is the aspect he presents as thus practically exhibited. And let him consider also the inevitable result, provided he undergo no change. "So likewise," says the Lord, "shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

1. In explaining and enforcing the doctrine of the text, I shall notice first the duty itself; then the spirit in which it is to be discharged; and lastly, the motive used to ensure attention to it.

The duty here inculcated is to "forgive every one his brother their trespasses." That is, as I understand the meaning of the command, to regard and treat the offenders, at whose hands we have endured real or imaginary wrong, as if they had never committed an offence against us. He who does this expels from his heart and mind all recollection, and effaces from his aspect, acts, and language, every trace of that offence. In proof of this he will study, on every suitable occasion, and in every possible way, to do them good in soul, body, reputation, and outward estate. He who fails to do this, or does the very reverse, does not remit but resent the offence, or affront, or injustice. It is not, in this case, like a wound that has been so thoroughly healed, you can hardly, on a close inspection, tell that it ever existed; but, like one that has been concealed, or over which a thin, glassy, transparent skin has grown, and which the least exposure or gentlest touch serves to irritate and inflame and cause to bleed afresh. It is not like a

guished; but like one which, though hidden from view, has continued to smoke and smoulder, until, at an unexpected moment, it burst out in a sheet of flame. It is not like a poison injected into the human frame, which, ere it has had time to spread its deadly infection, has been extracted; but which has been permitted to insinuate itself and circulate through every vein, carrying pain and death in its silent, stealthy course. A poison, a fire, a wound—these terms but feebly express the magnitude of the evil implied and involved in the lodgment in the human soul of an evil thought or passion. On and by the dislodgment of that thought or passion, the wound is healed, the fire quenched, the poison ejected.

This duty, then, it may be assumed, is one not easy of performance. And some find it harder by far than others. Much depends upon the natural disposition, early training, habits, pursuits, associates, and surroundings. These and such like considerations may serve to explain—in some measure at least—why in one instance as compared with another, the pardon of an offence becomes a sort of death-struggle. But although a difference does exist amongst Christian men and women as to the ease and promptitude with which pardon of an offence is extended, yet it is in reality a difficult effort or exercise for any one of them; that is, on the supposition that the offence has been or is of such a kind as to touch them to the quick. No one is naturally possessed, or can, or will of his own accord, display the right spirit. On the contrary he will manifest a temper the exact opposite of that God requires and enjoins. In this respect we all closely resemble each other, or bear the family likeness.

The fact that any particular duty is very hard to discharge, is no proof that it is not a present and most urgent one—essential

to our peace of mind, spiritual profit, and fellowship with God. The true and fair inference to draw from the circumstance of its being difficult, would be this, that it is our immediate and imperative duty! While it is always right and safe, the path of duty is often an unpleasant, rough, thorny, obstructed path. And it ought to excite misgiving in our hearts that all is not as it should be with us, when we find ourselves avoiding that path, and selecting instead one less offensive, less uncongenial, less antagonistic to our views and feelings. Any path that permits the existence, promotes the growth, or prompts to the manifestation of corrupt affection, is wrong and ruinous. For our part, we should be inclined to think that he is in the right way who is bent on doing that which he feels to be difficult and repulsive, and from attempting to do which evil thoughts and passions strive to hold him back.

But, though difficult, this duty is neither unreasonable nor impracticable. If it were so, it would be but just to assume or infer that our Lord and Master would not have enjoined it upon us. So far from being out of our power, Scripture records notable instances of its practicability, which it holds up to our view, as examples for us to follow.

David was persecuted by Saul, to whom, undesignedly and causelessly, he was an occasion of offence. Often was the life of the youth in the utmost jeopardy. And he himself feared he should one day perish by the hand of Saul. On being put, one time when in pursuit of him with hostile intent, in his power, David did not venture or even desire to stretch forth his hand to touch the Lord's anointed. He departed unscathed!

The proto-martyr Stephen, before breathing his last, "kneeling down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Like his Lord, for whom, and in defence of whose truth he died, his last

breath was spent in prayer for his murderers. Forgiven himself, he could and did forgive his deadliest foes.

Paul affirms of himself and fellow-laborers in the gospel ministry, "being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat."

These and similar cases demonstrate the propriety and possibility of cultivating and displaying such a disposition as shall not only enable but constrain us to pardon, habitually, each and all the injuries done to us. To doubt this, or deny it, is not only to question the wisdom of His own illustrious example, and the justice of his own express precept, but virtually to set bounds to the invincible and all-subduing power of His grace—this being one of the "all things" that the Christian can do through Christ strengthening him.

If any of us really wish to possess and exercise this Christ-like spirit,—if we would rather get rid of than retain a grudge against a friend,—if we love better to crush than cherish this evil feeling, then there is no reason why we should not now and here, by the uplifting of our hearts in prayer to God for promised grace, leave from us, wholly and for ever, the load of sin that burdens, and embitters, and enslaves our souls!

2. Not only the duty itself is here stated, but also the manner or spirit in which it is to be performed; to which it becomes us carefully to attend. It is our duty to "forgive" "from the heart" "every one his brother their trespasses." That is, as it can hardly be necessary to say, sincerely, openly, fully, gratuitously, and once for all. Unless it be of this stamp, it is not entitled to be designated such at all, being, in fact, nothing else and nothing less than downright hypocrisy. The language of the lips and the actions of the life must be the just and suitable expression or embodiment of the state of mind and heart;

otherwise they will do us and others no good, and give God no glory. We shall not, in the event of this holding true respecting any of us, allow our minds to revert to what is past for the purpose of reviving and re-opening old causes or sources of grievance and strife; or suffer these to give a bias and complexion to our speech or behaviour: or in any way hinder us from doing, fully and cheerfully, and with affection, our duty towards them.

For the sake of helping you to determine a matter, anxiety about which is not only permissible but commendable, I ask you to examine—

(1.) The kind of thoughts you entertain of the character and conduct of those of your brethren whom you believe to have affronted, or injured you. We may do great injustice to one another by thinking unkindly and uncharitably of their persons, services, attainments, actions, motives, designs, desires. Thus unconverted sinners do God great injustice in the thoughts they have and utter concerning His character, which he resents and threatens to punish. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

So one Christian disciple may, when under the influence of temptation, or blinded by passion, or misled by evil counsel, or laboring under misapprehension, think very ungenerously of another. This is especially apt to be the case where any variance exists, or injury, real or fancied, has been inflicted. "Charity," or love, as Paul tells us, "thinketh no evil"—does not admit into or cherish in the heart an evil thought; but repels and resists it, as a base and wicked intruder into the domain and temple of Christ our Lord. Now, examine yourselves in this way and by this test, in order to ascertain whether your hearts be right towards those with whom

you have been or still are at variance: whether the relation in which you stand to them is such as the Word of God and an enlightened conscience, and a renewed heart, do sanction: whether it be such as helps or hinders you in the life of faith, and diminishes or increases your happiness: whether, in a word, it prove a bond uniting you more closely to, or a barrier separating you from God and God's people.

If you continue to think ill of him—harbor suspicions against his character—insinuate doubts of his integrity—disclose and magnify his defects; if, when there is anything about him you do not fully understand, you put an evil construction, or found an injurious impression, or circulate a damaging report upon the ground thereof; or even, if, to your own mind, though you never express it in words, you give an explanation that is unfavourable—if, to sum it all up in one sentence, you are more, far more strongly disposed to *think ill* than *well* of a brother who has offended you, and to believe what is *evil* rather than what is *good* about him—then it is just as clear as if written in sunlight—as certain as if it were audibly announced from heaven, that you have not forgiven him!

Again, ascertain the state of your feelings towards your supposed or alleged offending brother or brethren, to help you to determine this question. Just observe how you feel when themselves or families are mentioned in your hearing, either with approbation or disapprobation. Suppose you hear them severely censured, their faults pointed out, their weaknesses held up to ridicule—how would you feel? and what would you do?

What kind of sensation would you experience provided intelligence were conveyed to you that they had got involved in difficulty, or that they had been left to expose themselves to the displeasure of the wise and good? Or with what sentiments do

you regard them as you see them pursue, undisturbed and undismayed, the even tenor of their calm, consistent, loving, tender life.

Whether do you like *best* those who *side* with you against them, or those who side with them against you? And on what ground does this like or dislike respectively rest?

Whether do you, consciously to yourselves or not matters not a straw, lay more stress upon a testimony that agrees or that disagrees with your own opinion of them?

Whether are you most inclined to get angry with them, or others, for any cause whatever, real or groundless?

Test yourselves thus: watch the current of your feelings; consider what it is in connexion with them, that gives you pain or pleasure—that excites opposition or conciliates goodwill.

If you are pleased instead of pained at hearing an evil word said of their character, or of opposition shown to them, or of a growing dislike, on the part of any, of their persons, or a diminution or withdrawal of their countenance and friendship, then this is another proof that cannot be gainsaid or overthrown, that you have not forgiven them!

Further, notice *how, when,* and to *whom,* for the most part, you speak of those with whom you have been so unhappy as to disagree and differ.

You will with certainty know whether those differences have been settled, dissensions allayed, misunderstandings removed, by observing what it is you say of them, how you say it, when you say it, and where and to whom.

Do your tones and language savour of respect and affection? or of sullenness, reserve, and bitterness? Is it your habit, when stating what is true, to keep back part of the truth, which is explanatory and exculpatory, thus leaving, of design, a false

impression? Do you, in speaking of them, employ terms stronger than the actual facts of the case warrant, or those, under any circumstances, right feeling would dictate? Do you say all this in their absence, and when they can urge nothing in self-defence, and to those whom they never conversed with and could not put right? Do you try to poison and prejudice their minds against them, so as to lead to a disesteem and even dislike of their persons, and friendship, and services? If you do this—if the tendency of what you do or do not do or say, is to issue thus, as regard the brother or brethren whom you say to assume has or have done you evil, of design or through inadvertence—then I cannot imagine anything more plain, more self-evident, more conspicuous than this that you have not forgiven him or them; and that therefore this duty has yet to be discharged by you towards them, as the Lord here and elsewhere emphatically and solemnly declares.

It but remains to notice the motive by which this duty is enforced, or rather to state the consequences of neglect or non-compliance therewith.

“So likewise,” *i.e.* in some such way, in a manner closely resembling this, on a principle precisely similar, “shall my heavenly Father do also unto you.” This is affirmed of the unmerciful servant mentioned in the foregoing parable, who, though having every conceivable reason or inducement to do so, refused to deal with another as he had been dealt with by his lord;—who absolutely declined to mete out to his fellow-servant as it had been measured out to himself;—who, while himself the recipient of signal and undeserved mercy, showed an indisposition to exercise it on a much more limited scale to one who needed and asked it. This circumstance attracted the notice and excited the indignation of his friends and associates, and by them was

reported to the kind and indulgent master himself. The offence was of so flagrant a character as to expose him to bitter reproach, and draw down upon his devoted head condign punishment. As a just expression of his displeasure, the lord of that servant exacted from him to the uttermost farthing all that debt which otherwise would have been remitted. That is, the rule or measure that he had made use of in the case of his fellow-servant, was, by one to whom he was under obligations, applied to himself.

"So likewise," adds our Lord, applying and enforcing the great truth he had been teaching; "so likewise shall." &c.

It is foolish and profitless to attempt to trace resemblances where none really exist, or to deduce other lessons than such as are evident to the simplest reader of Scripture.

The parable in its general bearing is plain and intelligible. The great principle that underlies and pervades it—the grand reason that it is designed to teach, is this, that "with what judgment we judge we shall be judged, and with what measure we mete it shall be measured to us again;" or as it is thus otherwise expressed, that "he shall have judgment without mercy that showed no mercy;" or as we have it in Old Testament phraseology, that "with the merciful God will show Himself merciful, and with the upright show Himself upright."

This, then, manifestly, is the central truth which it is the design of the parable to render conspicuous and luminous, like some glittering and costly gem, on which, to enhance and exhibit its beauty, the light is made to converge and concentrate.

What, then, we are next led to ask, is meant by God's dealings with His servants as this master dealt with his? or, as it might be put thus, How does God deal with them in substantially the same way

as that in which he dealt with him? Thus, perhaps—

(1.) By making use of this circumstance, that he is not of a forgiving disposition; or that there is a brother or that there are brethren whom he does not freely and from the heart forgive, to convince him that he is not a disciple of Christ at all. For what right, indeed, has he to regard himself as such, or to be regarded by others as such, while in this particular he not only does not resemble him, but is the exact reverse. This truth may be so forced upon his attention, as that he shall be compelled to the conclusion that he has never been forgiven his sins, and, except in this and other respects he undergo a change, never will be. This, should it actually take place, will be for his lasting benefit!

(2.) By depriving him of the comfortable persuasion or sense of forgiveness, inasmuch that he shall feel in much the same way as those feel who have never tasted that the Lord is gracious. Worse, indeed, by far than they can possibly feel; for as they know not the happiness of possessing, so neither know they the misery of losing the favor of God. With a mind at enmity with or estranged from any brother, no one can offer to God any acceptable service, or derive any real benefit from prayer, praise, the study of the Scriptures. It distracts and agitates the heart, mars enjoyment, vitiates every service, extinguishes affection, obscures our perception of the truth, fetters thought, alienates the soul from God, and hinders it from rising in faith and prayer to Him "whose favour is life." This ill-feeling induces and ends in a kind of spiritual paralysis, that leaves the soul benumbed and lifeless.

(3.) By such providential visitations as shall tend to deepen in his mind a profound and most painful sense of the grievous sin he has been guilty of, in cherishing and manifesting such a spirit—a spirit so glar-

ingly inconsistent with his avowed discipleship, so entirely repugnant to Scripture precept, and so directly antagonistic to the example of the Lord Himself. Assuming that he is a disciple, it is only here, in this present life, that he can be subjected to discipline, and that which is wrong rectified. Now He may be pleased to accomplish this work in him, or when, we can never know, and should not venture to specify. Beyond the simple fact that He will do this, and do it in such a manner as that the person dealt with shall know it right well—save and except the general truth that He will “purge” every fruit-bearing branch “that it may bring forth more fruit,” this loving, gentle, and forgiving temper among the rest—besides, save this elementary, self-evident truth or fact or principle, we know absolutely nothing. It is not we who can or ought to go to him, and standing up or over him in his hour of trial, and say, “Now, brother, God is dealing with thee for this or that offence: repent of it in the dust of humiliation and self-abasement.” It is God alone who is entitled to say this; and when He says it, as say it He will soon or late, the poor wayward, wilful, blinded, erring mortal will hear—aye, and give good and earnest heed thereto.

“Can thine heart endure? or can thine hands be strong in the day that I will deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it and will do it.” Amen.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT.

“In this life we grow up to our full stature; and then we decrease till we decrease, we decline and die. In the other, we come at first to ‘perfect stature,’ and so continue for ever. We are here subject to scrowes and sins; the first grievous to us as we are men, the other as we are good men; lo, we shall one day be freed, be perfect. It is a sweet meditation that

fell from a reverend divine, that many vegetable and brute creatures do exceed men in length of days, and in happiness in their kind, as not wanting the thing they desire. The oak, the raven, the stork, the stag, fill up many years; in regard of whom man dies in the minority of childhood. This made the philosophers call nature a step-dame to man, to the rest a true mother. For she gives him least time that could make best use of his time, and least pleasure, that could best apprehend it, and take comfort in it. But here divinity teacheth and revealeth a large recompense from our God. Other creatures live long, and then perish to nothing; man dies soon here, that hereafter he may live for ever. This shortness is recompensed with eternity. Dost thou blame nature, O philosopher, for cutting thee so short that thou canst not get knowledge? Open thine eyes—perfect knowledge is not to be had here, though thy days were double to Methuselah’s. Above it is. Bless God, then, rather for thy life’s shortness, for the sooner thou diest the sooner thou shalt come to thy desired knowledge. The best here is short of the least there. Let no man blame God for making him too soon happy. Say rather with the Psalmist, ‘My soul is athirst for God; O when shall I come to appear in the glorious presence of the Lord?’ Who would not forsake a prison for a palace, a tabernacle for a city, a sea of dangers for a firm land of bliss; the life of men for the life of angels?”—*Thomas Adams.*

FAITH.

I know Thee, who Thou art, Thou Holy One;
Oh, leave me not,—Thou shalt not leave me,—I
Will grasp Thy sacred mantle with the hand
Of faith, and wrestle with Thee till I die.

My soul is dark,
And without Thee,
My God! my Light
I cannot see.

Deep in my inmost heart corruption lies;
In me no good exists—all, all is sin;
I cling to Thee. My being’s stony gates
Do Thou unbar, O Lord, and enter in.

My soul is dark,
And without Thee,
My God! my Light!
I cannot see.

Death has no power, the world’s grave no glory
To him whose soul holds Thee within its shrine.
Time loads me onward with remorseless haste,
But Thou hast conquered Time, and thou art mine:

My soul is light,
O Christ, for Thou,
My God, and Lord,
Art with me now.

—*J. J. Hatch.*

"THE NEW OR NEGATIVE THEOLOGY."

Restless minds have not been satisfied with the gospel preached by Paul, but would ingeniously modify it. What is called "the new or negative theology," resembling Paul's in little but in name, has been satirized by an American essayist in the form of a parody on the "Pilgrim's Progress," averring that, by the expertness of modern engineering, the old and difficult footpath has been converted into a railway; that the Slough of Despond, into which "twenty thousand cart-loads of wholesome instructions had been thrown without effect," has been filled up with numberless tomes of French philosophy and German rationalism; that the burthen which lay so heavy and galling on the traveller's shoulders till he saw the cross, is snugly deposited in the luggage van; that the roll, which of old was sometimes cumbersome, has been pared down to a neat and elegant ticket; that the Hill of Difficulty has been tunnelled, and with the rock and rubbish excavated from the heart of it; the Valley of Humiliation has been filled up; that the defile of the Shadow of Death is lighted with innumerable jets of brilliant gas which itself exudes from the soil; and that the last chilly river which Christian waded with no few anxieties is now regularly crossed by a capacious steam ferry-boat. The satire is too true. Are not men taught that faith in Jesus is a vanity—that a vague confidence in all-giving Goodness is enough—that sage resolution supersedes change of heart—that the old struggle between flesh and spirit may be neutralized—that the oppression of sin is a self-created dream and burden—that spiritual progress is only daily experience—and that death is but the debt of nature, which no one can grudge to pay?

Alas! for the delusion. Still must each one feel his guilt and look to his Saviour's cross; still must each one enjoy the vital change by which he is born into "newness of life;" still must each one battle with unsubdued appetites and passions, that he may be more than a conqueror; still must each one by himself meet death, and only through Him that died obtain a triumph. It is not every one that hopes for heaven who will enter it; for it is no accidental

destiny, neither is it a necessary termination of our career. It is by no law of nature; as the fruit succeeds the blossom, or the insect bursts from the chrysalis, that we come into possession of it. Christ has died to open up the path, and is Himself "the way, the truth and the life." Our moral nature is appealed to; that it may credit the testimony of God. Faith, as it secures forgiveness, reunites us to the source of life; the Divine Spirit imparts life to the soul and fosters it there; the Kingdom is promised only "to them that love Him"—and faith worketh by love: "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." O that all of us in humility accepted the Lord; and gave our souls to him—learned at his feet, and leaned upon His bosom—implored, possessed, and never grieved His Spirit—subdued every lust, and flung off every weight—grew into His likeness, and revolved in fellowship with Him—felt His presence to be our chief joy and strength—and were prepared "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." Salvation and heaven are ours only by faith like the centurion's tears, like those of Mary, earnestness like that of the Syro-Phœnician mother, and prayer like that of the thief on the cross. Christ, and He alone, is Saviour: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

—*Dr. Edie.*

RISE AND FALL OF EMPIRES.

After the fall of the Portuguese Empire in India, a Portuguese ecclesiastic was asked by an Englishman when he thought his nation should become able to resume its power. "As soon," replied he, "as the wickedness of your nation shall exceed that of mine." This man was master of the true key to the interpretation of history, and of the causes of social prosperity, and rise and fall of empires. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people." Great Britain, or any other country, is truly "great, glorious, and free," just in proportion in which her people walk worthy of Christianity, and maintain among one another the peace and influence of religion, and diffuse throughout colonial and conterminous territories the civilizing and enlightening knowledge of the Gospel. "Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord."—*British Workman.*

GOD'S WAY OF PEACE.

By Rev. H. Bonar, D.D.

Man's own Character no Ground of Peace.

If God testify against us, who can testify for us? If God's opinion of man's sinfulness, his judgment of man's guilt, and his declaration of sin's evil be so very decided, there can be no hope of acquittal for us on the ground of personal character or goodness, either of heart or life. That which God sees in us furnishes only matter for condemnation, not for pardon.

It is vain to struggle or murmur against God's judgment. He is the Judge of all the earth; and he is right as well as sovereign in his judgment. He must be obeyed; his law is inexorable; it cannot be broken without making the breaker of it (even in one jot or tittle) worthy of death.

When the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the soul it sees this. Conviction of sin is just the sinner seeing himself as he is, and as God has all along seen him. Then every fond idea of self-goodness, either in whole or in part, vanishes away. The things in him that once seemed good appear so bad, and the bad things so very bad, that every self-prop falls from beneath him, and all hope of being saved, in consequence of something in his own character, is then taken away. He sees that he cannot save himself; nor help God to save him. He is lost, and he is helpless. Doings, feelings, strivings, prayings, givings, abstainings, and the like, are found to be no relief from a sense of guilt, and, therefore, no resting-place for a troubled heart. If sin were but a disease or a misfortune, these apparent good things might relieve him, as being favourable symptoms of returning health; but when sin is *guilt* even more than *disease*; and when the sinner is not merely *sick* but *condemned* by the righteous judge; then none of these goodnesses in himself can reach his case, for they cannot assure him of a *complete* and *righteous* pardon, and, therefore, cannot pacify his roused and wounded conscience.

He sees God's unchangeable hatred of sin, and the coming revelation of his wrath against the sinner; and he cannot but tremble. An old writer thus describes his own case, "I had a deep impression of the

things of God; a natural condition and sin appeared worse than hell itself; the world and vanities thereof terrible and exceeding dangerous; it was fearful to have ado with it, or to be rich; I saw its day coming; Scripture expressions were weighty; a Saviour was a big thing in mine eyes; Christ's agonies were earnest with me, I thought that all my days I was in a dream till now, or like a child in jest; and I thought the world was sleeping."

The question, "Wherewith shall I come before th' Lord?" is not one which can be decided by an appeal to personal character, or goodness of life, or prayers, or performances of religion. The way of approach is not for us to settle. God has settled it; and it only remains for us to avail ourselves of it. He has fixed it on grounds altogether irrespective of our character; or rather on grounds which take for granted simply that we are sinners, and that therefore the element of goodness in us, as a title, or warrant, or recommendation, is altogether inadmissible either in whole or in part.

To say, as some inquiring ones do at the outset of their anxiety, I will set myself to pray, and after I have prayed a sufficient length of time, and with tolerable earnestness, I may approach and count upon acceptance, is not only to build upon the quality and quantity of our prayers, but it is to overlook the real question before the sinner, "How am I to approach God in order to pray?" All prayers are approaches to God, and the sinner's anxious question is, "How may I approach God?" God's explicit testimony to man is, "You are unfit to approach me;" and it is a denial of the testimony to say, "I will pray myself out of this unfitness into fitness; I will work myself into a right state of mind and character for drawing near to God." Anxious spirit! Were you from this moment to cease from sin, and do nothing but good all the rest of your life, it would not do. Were you to begin praying now, and do nothing else but pray all your days, it would not do! Your own character cannot be your way of approach, nor your ground of confidence toward God. No amount of praying, or working, or feeling, can satisfy the righteous law, or pacify a guilty conscience, or quench the flaming

sword that guards the access into the presence of the infinitely Holy One.

That which makes it safe for you to draw near to God, and right for God to receive you, must be something altogether away from and independent of yourself; for yourself and everything pertaining to yourself God has already condemned; and no condemned thing can give you any warrant for going to him, or hoping for acceptance. Your liberty of entrance must come from *something which he has accepted*; not from something which he has condemned.

I knew an awakened soul who, in the bitterness of his spirit, thus set himself to work and pray in order to get peace. He doubled the amount of his devotions, saying to himself, Surely God will give me peace. But the peace did not come. He set up family worship, saying, Surely God will give me peace. But the peace came not. At last he bethought himself of having a prayer-meeting in his house as a certain remedy. He fixed the night; called his neighbours; and prepared himself for conducting the meeting, by writing a prayer and learning it by heart. As he finished the operation of learning it, preparatory to the meeting, he threw it down on the table, saying, "Surely that will do, God will give me peace now." In that moment, a still small voice seemed to speak in his ear, saying, "No, that will not do; but Christ will do." Straightway the scales fell from his eyes, and the burden from his shoulders. Peace poured in like a river. "Christ will do," was his watchword for life.

Very clear is God's testimony against man, and man's doings, in this great matter of approach and acceptance. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," says Paul in one place (Titus iii. 5). and "to him that worketh not," says he in a second (Rom. iv. 4); "not justified by the works of the law," says he in a third (Gal. ii. 16).

The sinner's peace with God is not to come from his own character. No grounds of peace or elements of reconciliation can be extracted from himself, either directly or indirectly. His one qualification for peace is, that he needs it. It is not what he has, but what he lacks of good that draws him to God; and it is the conscious-

ness of this lack that bids him look elsewhere, for something both to invite and embolden him to approach. It is our sickness, not our health, that fits us for the physician, and casts us upon his skill.

No guilty conscience can be pacified with anything short of that which will make pardon a *present*, a *sure*, and a *righteous* thing. Can our best doings, our best feelings, our best prayers, our best sacrifices, bring this about? Nay; having accumulated these to the utmost, does not the sinner feel that pardon is just as far off and uncertain as before? and that all his earnestness cannot persuade God to admit him to favour, or bribe his own conscience into true quiet even for an hour?

In all false religion, the worshipper rests his hope of divine favour upon something in his own character, or life or religious duties. The Pharisee did this when he came into the temple, "thanking God that he was not as other men," (Luke xviii. 11). So do those in our day who think to get peace by doing, feeling, and praying more than others, or than they themselves have done in time past; and who refuse to take the peace of the free gospel till they have amassed such an amount of this doing and feeling as will ease their consciences, and make them conclude that it would not be fair in God to reject the application of men so earnest and devout as they. The Galatians did this also when they insisted on adding the law of Moses to the gospel of Christ as the ground of confidence toward God. Thus do many act among ourselves. They will not take confidence from God's character or Christ's work, but from their own character and work; though in reference to all this it is written, "The Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them," (Jer. ii. 37). They object to a *present* confidence, for that assumes that a sinner's resting-place is *wholly* out of himself,—ready-made, as it were, by God. They would have this confidence to be a very gradual thing, in order that they may gain time, and, by a little diligence in religious observances, may so add to their stock of duties, prayers, experiences, devotions, that they may, with some *humble* hope, as they call it, claim acceptance from God. By this course of devout living they

think they have made themselves more acceptable to God than they were before they began this religious process, and much more entitled to expect the divine favour than those who have not so qualified themselves. In all this the attempted resting-place is self,—that self which God has condemned. They would not rest upon *unpraying*, or *unworking*, or *undeavouring self*; but they think it right and safe to rest upon *praying*, and *working*, and *devout self*, and they call this *humility*! The happy confidence of the simple believer who takes God's word at once, and rests on it, they call presumption or fanaticism; their own miserable uncertainty, extracted from the doings of self, they speak of as a *humble hope*.

The sinner's own character, in any form, and under any process of improvement, cannot furnish reasons for trusting God. However amended, it cannot speak peace to his conscience, nor afford him any warrant for reckoning on God's favour; nor can it help to heal the breach between him and God. For God can accept nothing but *perfection* in such a case, and the sinner has nothing but *imperfection* to present. Imperfect duties and devotions cannot persuade God to forgive. Besides, be it remembered that the *person* of the worshipper must be accepted before his *services* can be acceptable; so that nothing can be of any use to the sinner save that which provides for personal acceptance completely, and at the outset. The sinner must go to God as he is, or not at all. To try to pray himself into something better than a condemned sinner, in order to win God's favour, is to make prayer an instrument of self-righteousness; so that, instead of its being the act of an accepted man, it is the purchase of acceptance,—the price which we pay to God for favouring us, and the bribe with which we persuade conscience no longer to trouble us with its terrors. No knowledge of self, nor consciousness of improvement of self, can soothe the alarms of an awakened conscience, or be any ground for expecting the friendship of God. To take comfort from our good doings, or good feelings, or good plans, or good prayers, or good experiences, is to delude ourselves, and to say peace when there is no peace. No man can quench his thirst

with sand, or with water from the Dead Sea; so no man can find rest from his own character however good, or from his own acts however religious. Even were he perfect, what enjoyment could there be in thinking about his own perfection? What profit, then, can there be in thinking about his own imperfection?

Even were there many good things about him, they could not speak peace; for the good things which might speak peace, could not make up for the evil things which speak trouble; and what a poor, self-made peace would that be which arose from his thinking as much good and as little evil of himself as possible. And what a temptation, besides, would this furnish, to extenuate the evil and exaggerate the good about ourselves,—in other words, to deceive our own hearts. Self-deception must always, more or less, be the result of such estimates of our own experiences. Laid open, as we are, in such a case, to all manner of self-blinding influences, it is impossible that we can be impartial judges, or that we can be "without guile" (Psa. xxxii. 2), as in the case of those who are freely and at once forgiven.

One man might say, My sins are not very great or many; surely I may take peace. Another might say, I have made up for my sins by my good deeds, I may have peace. Another might say, I have a very deep sense of sin, I may have peace. Another might say, I have repented of my sin, I may have peace. Another might say, I pray much, I work much, I love much, I give much, I may have peace. What temptation in all this to take the most favourable view of self and its doings! But, after all, it would be vain. There could be no real peace; for its foundation would be sand not rock. The peace or confidence which come from summing up the good points of our character, and thinking of our good feelings and doings, or about our faith, and love, and repentance, must be made up of pride. Its basis is self-righteousness, or at least self-approbation.

It does not mend the matter to say that we look at these good feelings in us, as the Spirit's work, not our own. In one aspect this takes away boasting, but in another it does not. It still makes our peace to turn upon what is in ourselves, and not on

what is in God. Nay, it makes use of the Holy Spirit for purposes of self-righteousness. It says that the Spirit works the change in us, in order that he may thereby furnish us with a ground of peace within ourselves.

No doubt the Spirit's work in us must be accompanied with peace; but not because he has given us something in ourselves to draw our peace from. It is that kind of peace which arises unconsciously from the restoration of spiritual health; but not that which Scripture calls "peace with God." It does not arise from *thinking about* the change wrought in us, but unconsciously and involuntarily from the change itself. If a broken limb be made whole, we get relief straightway; not by thinking about the healed member, but simply in the bodily ease and comfort which the cure has given. So there is a peace arising out of the change of nature and character wrought by the Spirit; but this is not reconciliation with God. This is not the peace which the knowledge of forgiveness brings. It accompanies it and flows from it, but the two kinds of peace are quite distinct from each other. Nor does even the peace which attends the restoration of spiritual health come at second hand, from *thinking about* our change; but directly from the change itself. That change is the soul's new health, and this health is in itself a continual gladness.

Still it remains true, that in ourselves we have no resting-place. "No confidence in the flesh" must be our motto, as it is the foundation of God's gospel.

HEAVENLY MEETNESS.

Meetness for heaven does not mean a meriting of heaven. It only implies that He, who has prepared a place for his people, does, of his mercy, prepare also his people for that place. Christ, our kinsman, has redeemed our forfeited inheritance (Lev. xxv. 24, 25; Ruth iv.; Jer. xxxiii. 7, 8); and having acquired it, he holds it now at his own disposal. He gives it to his own kin. Their restored title rests with his purchase, and their possession with his gift. They have no other claim. But there is a meetness (likewise his gift) whichever accompanies the title, and proves

its real communication. This meetness is the work of the Holy Spirit.

And it is accomplished in them in this present state. It was not on Mount Moriah, when the temple of the Lord was being reared, that the stones which composed the building were cut and fashioned. They were prepared before. In their native quarry their excrescences were removed, and their symmetrical fitness imparted. Then, as they were made ready, they were successively transported to Jerusalem; and the glorious fane gradually raised its head to the skies, until at last the headstone was brought forth with shoutings. Even so now are the lively stones being prepared for a spiritual house. Each believer looks with wonder at the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged. Each finds a work going on, not of himself, nor by himself, but wrought by a Master's hand. It is the fitting him for his place in that building of the Lord. It is the work of adaptation for the noblest use, the placing him in that house which shall yet be consecrated for the immediate indwelling of the Lord of glory.

The first and easiest way of discovering the meetness of any particular stone of this living temple for the design of the great Master Builder, is by proving it after the chief corner-stone. How far is it shapen after this model? Will the lines perfectly accord? Doth it lie firm and smoothly all along "the foundation that is laid?" Is there no rocking? It is a slow process, this accuracy of fitting it; but there is infinite skill in the hand that is carrying out the design. The work, when it is begun, will not be suffered to remain unfinished. Our meetness for heaven will be found in our assimilation to Christ, our title to heaven in our faith in Him, our enjoyment of heaven in our fellowship with Him. Such is the heaven of the Bible; and separated from Christ we could have no heaven.

But in the Lord's temple there are many stones; and it is out of these, fitly framed together, the magnificent structure is growing. Here is another mode of discovering our meetness. Heaven is a communion of saints. When brought to Christ we are made members of his family; and, according as we are established in our new posi-

tion, we are growing more and more in love towards the members of the household. How can we enjoy heaven in their converse hereafter, if we do not enjoy communion with them now? Happily for us, the very same process that fits the living stones of the temple to the chief corner-stone, assimilates them also to each other. The more we grow like to Christ, the more our differences with each other will disappear. Believers are being now adapted for each other's company throughout eternity, not by being moulded after exclusive fashions, but by being fashioned after Christ the Lord. And into the same image they are individually changed, and thus acquire a family likeness, growing like each other, as each resembles the Redeemer.

Heaven is a holy place; and they only can be brought into it who are washed, who are sanctified, who are justified. Most plainly does the Lord testify that "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." Sanctification is meetness for heaven. The Holy One presents his people holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight. He clothes them in spotless raiments. They walk with him in white, for they are worthy.

The Lord's dear children, who are heirs of his kingdom and glory, and who shall, ere long, enter upon their full possession, are being prepared in this world for all these things. And to quicken their desires, they receive some foretaste of the good things provided for them. The grapes of Canaan they are permitted to see, even while they are yet in the wilderness. They are brought nigh to Christ, instead of being left separated. They are admitted into the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. They are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Their conversation is in heaven. Their hopes are in heaven. Their home is in heaven. They are raised up above this world, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And God's gracious work and purpose, already begun in their souls, shall be carried forward until it be accomplished, and they are made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—*Tract Magazine.*

HYMN TO THE SEA.

Who shall declare the secret of thy birth,
Thou old companion of the circling earth?
And having reached with keen poetic sight
Ere beast or happy bird
Through the vast silence stirred,
Roll back the folded darkness of the primal night?

Corruption-like, thou teamest in the graves
Of mouldering systems, with dark weltering waves
Troubling the peace of the first mother's womb;
Whose ancient awful form,
With inly-tossing storm,
Unquiet heavings kept—a birth-place and a tomb.

Till the life-giving Spirit moved above
The face of the waters, with creative love
Washing the hidden seeds of infant light;
What time the mighty word
Through thine abyss was heard,
And swam from out thy deeps the young day heaven-ly bright.

Thou and the earth, twin sisters, as they say,
In the old prime were fashioned in one day;
And therefore thou delightest evermore
With her to lie and play
The summer hours away,
Curling thy loving ripples up her quiet shore.

She is a married matron long ago,
With nations at her side; her milk doth flow
Each year; but thee no husband dares to tame;
Thy wild will is thine own,
Thy solo and virginal air—
Thy mood is ever changing—thy resolve the same.

Sunlight and moonlight minister to thee:—
O'er the broad circle of the shoreless sea
Heaven's two great lights for ever set and rise:
While the round vault above,
In vast and silent love,
Is gazing down upon thee with his hundred eyes

All night thou urestest forth thy solemn morn,
Counting the weary minutes all alone;
Then in the morning thou dost calmly lie,
Deep-blue, ere yet the sun
His day-work hath begun,
Under the opening windows of the golden sky.

The Spirit of the mountain looks on thee
Over a hundred hills, quaint shadows flee
Across thy marbled mirror; brooding lie
Storm-mists of infant cloud,
With a sight-baffling shroud
Mantling the grey-blue islands in the western sky.

Sometimes thou liftest up thine hands on high
Into the tempest-cloud that blurs the sky,
Holding rough dalliance with the sibil blast,
Whose stiff breath, whistling shrill,
Pierces with deadly chill
The wet crew feebly clinging to their shattered mast.

Foam white along the border of the shore
Thine onward-leaping billows plunge and roar;
While o'er the pebbly ridges slowly glide
Cloaked figures, dim and grey,
Through the thick mist of spray,
Watchers for some strack vessel in the boiling tide

Daughter and darling of remotest eld—
Time's childhood and Time's age thou hast beheld,
His arm is feeble, and his eye is dim;
He tells old tales again,—
He wearsies of long pain—
Thou art as at the first; thou journeyest not with him.

—*Dock of Canterbury.*

PICTURES FROM THE BOOK.

THE REMARKABLE LION AND ASS SCENE.
I KINGS XIII.

What strange group is that, on the road that leads through the wood near Bethel? A lion and an ass, with instincts alarmingly reversed, standing by a dead man! Such a sight is more than strange! The fierceness of the lion and the timidity of the ass are gone! Could not the lion have allowed the man and the ass to pass, instead of springing out and tossing the rider from his saddle, for apparently its appetite has not impelled it to slaughter, else why has it stopped short now? And why does the ass not take to its heels, when it sees its master stretched a corpse upon the ground, while the king of the forest, with glaring eye-balls, sits by within a death-bound? Each heedless of the other, and of astonished wayfarers, and congregating crowds, who have come from Bethel to stare and wonder, there they are—a strange triplet! The scene of Lot's wife, standing in all her spectral whiteness, scarce surpasses this! What does all this mean? Ah, the secret is this. That young man who lies stretched in death was sent by God to go and cry against the idolatrous altar at Bethel; and he was strictly charged simply to deliver his message, but to eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again to come by the way that he had gone. Having been deceived by an old and wicked prophet, he disobeyed; and as he was returning, a lion sprung from the jungle and brought him to the ground a lifeless man. But God suffers not the noble animal to dip its fangs in the blood of disobedience. It sits beside him in proud disdain. The lions crouched as dead at the feet of Daniel the prophet, but here a prophet lies dead at the feet of a lion that scorns to eat him. And the ass he rode upon sees not now the pasture on the wayside, but stands

snuffing at its fallen master. The old prophet, having heard of the sad disaster which he had been instrumental in bringing about, comes and mourns over him, and makes a great ado, as if he had been innocent of his blood. He takes up the man whom his lies had murdered, brings him into the city and lays him in his own grave, and he and his sons mourn over him, saying, "Alas, my brother! Ah! had the character and source of the message which was delivered to the king of Israel not been at stake, it would have been the old prophet and not the young one that would have fallen in disgrace. But as it is, the story teaches us this, that sinners only laugh at our fall, even although they have enticed us to sin. Their tears for us, like those of the old base prophet at Bethel, are crocodile tears, and their sympathy is only meant to mock us.

E. Y. Z.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST.

"One day," says Bunyan, "as I was passing into the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, 'Thy righteousness is in heaven,' and methought withal I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand. There, I say, was my righteousness: so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, 'He wants my righteousness,' for that was just before him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ himself, 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'—Heb. xiii. 8.

"Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed,—I was loosed from my afflictions and ionic temptations also fled away; so that from that time those dreadful scriptures of God left off to trouble me. Now went I also home rejoicing, for the grace and love of God. So, when I came

home, I looked to see if I could find that sentence, 'Thy righteousness is in heaven;' but could not find such a saying. Wherefore my heart began to sink again; only that was brought to my remembrance, 1 Cor. i. 30, 'Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' By this word I saw the other sentence true.

"For by this scripture I saw that the man Christ Jesus, as he is distinct from us as touching his bodily presence, so he is our righteousness and sanctification before God; here therefore I lived for some time, very sweetly at peace with God through Christ. O, methought, Christ! Christ! there was nothing but Christ that was before my eyes. I was not now only for looking upon this and the other benefit of Christ apart,—as of his blood, burial, or resurrection; but considered him as a whole Christ,—as he in whom all these, and all his other virtues, relations, offices, and operations, met together, and that as he sat on the right hand of God in Heaven.

"'Twas glorious to me to see his exaltation, and the worth and prevalency of all his benefits; and that because now I could look from myself to him, and should reckon that all those graces of God, that now were green on me, were yet but like those cracked groats and four-pence-half-pennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home! O, I saw my gold was in my trunk at home! In Christ my Lord and Saviour! Now *Christ was all*: all my wisdom, all my righteousness, all my sanctification, and all my redemption.

"Further; the Lord did also lead me into the mystery of union with the Son of God,—that I was joined to him, that I was flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; and now was that a sweet word to me in Eph. v. 30, 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone.' By this also was my faith in him, as my righteousness, the more confirmed in me; for, if he and I were one, then his righteousness was mine, his merits mine, his victory also mine. Now could I see myself in heaven and earth at once; in heaven by my Christ, by my Head, by my Righteousness and life, though on earth by my body and

"Now I saw Christ Jesus was looked upon of God, and should also be looked upon by us, as that common or public person in whom all the whole body of his elect are always to be considered and reckoned; that we fulfilled the law by him, died by him, rose from the dead by him, got the victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell, by him; when he died, we died; and so of his resurrection,—'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise,' saith he.—(Isa. xxvi. 19.) And again, 'After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.'—(Hosea vi. 2.) Which is now fulfilled by the sitting down of the Son of man on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; as it is written, 'He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.'—(Eph. ii. 6.)

"Ah! these blessed considerations and Scriptures, with many other of like nature, were in those days made to spangle in mine eyes; so that I have cause to say, 'Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.'—(Ps. cl. 1, 2.)"

WHO ARE SINNERS.

If I should ask you, Who are meant by sinners? you would, perhaps, give me a good many answers, and of different kinds. One would say, sinners are persons that curse and swear. Another would say, thieves and robbers are meant by sinners. Another would say, murderers are sinners. Another would say, sinners means those who get drunk and break the Sabbath. And so on. All these answers would be correct, for it is true that all the different persons named are sinners. But none of these would be the proper answers or the best answer to give to the question—who are meant by sinners?—When God speaks about sinners in the Bible, He does not mean *only* those persons who swear, or steal, or commit murder, or do such dreadful things, but He means *all persons who are not true Christians*. All men and women, all boys and girls whose hearts have not been changed, and who do not love the Saviour, are sinners in God's sight. Whenever we read about "sinners" in the Bible, these are the persons intended.—*The Safe Compass,*

PARABLE OF THE TWO DROPS.

Suppose Two Drops apart from the sea should reason together, and the one should say to the other,—

Fellow Drop, whence are we? canst thou conceive whence we came? or to whom we belong, or whether we shall go? Something we are; but what will in a short time become of us—canst thou tell?

And the other Drop should answer,—

Alas! poor fellow Drop, be assured we are nothing; for the sun may arise, and draw us up, and scatter us, and bring us to nothing.

Says the other again,—

Suppose it to do; for all that, yet we are,—we have a being,—we are something. Why, what are we? saith the other.

Why, Brother Drop, dost thou not know? We, even we, small and contemptible as we are in ourselves, are members of the sea! Poor Drops though we be, yet let us not be discouraged; we, even we, belong to the vast ocean!

How? saith the other, we belong to the sea, to the ocean; how can that be? We have heard of the mighty greatness of the ocean: We have heard that there is the huge Leviathan that sports himself therein, who is so great and terrible he feareth none; “whose heart is as firm as a stone, and as hard as a piece of the nether millstone; who feareth not the spear or the dart; who esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood; the arrow cannot make him flee; darts are as stubble, and he laugheth at the shaking of a spear: who maketh the deep to boil like a pot, and the sea like a pot of ointment; so that he maketh a hoary path to shine after him, and upon earth there is none his like.” what? that we are of the sea? How can it be? We have heard that the sea is great and wide, and in it “creeping innumerable;” that “therein is that Leviathan,” and huge and roaring waves that mount up to the heaven; and that therein are ships, and mighty rocks whose foundations are immovable. Thou sayest that we are of the sea, and that we belong to the ocean! Where is any such vastness or strength in us? where is any of those wonderful and mighty things in us?—

Therefore, whatever thou sayest, we cannot be of the ocean.

’Tis true, saith the other,—for the present we are not of the ocean, because we are not yet joined to it; and except we perish, and be dissolved (as it were) to nothing, we are nothing; but if the sun draw us up, scatter us, and dissolve us to nothing, so that we are not seen to be so much as drops, then are we like to be something, for then we shall return into the mighty ocean. And then we are those that have in us those rocks, and those ships, and that Leviathan, and those fish innumerable, both small and great! then we may lay claim and appropriate to ourselves whatever may be appropriated to the sea, or to the ocean, as well as any other Drop; for there are we united and made one with the ocean.

Why, Brother, what are we?

I’ll tell thee what we are:—we are “members of the very body of Jesus Christ—flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone,” and with Him we shall be made one spirit, and therefore be contented. Though we in ourselves are poor, and contemptible, and apart from Him nothing; yet, by the grace of God, “we are what we are:” we in ourselves cannot say I am, or I live; yet Christ liveth in me, and in time I shall see myself to live in Him, and then I may, and thou mayst, claim the same life with Him; for we shall return to Him who is almighty. True, we shall be dissolved in ourselves, but we shall be emptied into Him who is infinitely vaster than ten thousand seas!

Ay, brother, says the other, sayst thou so? how can these things be? We have heard that Jesus Christ is “God equal with His Father:” that He is almighty, incomprehensible, immense. We have heard that “He hath all power given Him in heaven and earth;” that He rules over His enemies, and treads them all under His feet; “that He rules them with a rod of iron, and crushes them as a potter’s vessel. And that He is set upon His throne, and triumphs in glory and majesty, and is set down in holy and heavenly places with His Father. In us, behold, there is none of these things: we are poor drops and weak creatures; full of nothing but sin.

and corruption; empty, vile, and despicable; not only because of our smallness and nothingness, but by reason also of our sinfulness and impurity. We are empty and changeable, and there is no stability in us,—all our actions declare us to be in a perishing condition;—but Jesus Christ, to whom thou sayest we belong, is glorious and blessed, and liveth for ever! And therefore, I will not believe I am part of Him,—it can never be.

Oh, saith the other, be contented: "Corn cannot bring fruit of itself, except it die; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Neither can a drop return to the ocean except it be dissolved in itself, and from its own proper being. So, even so we poor Drops are in ourselves nothing; empty, poor, despised, apart from the immense ocean. But if we can be content to die and forsake ourselves, then should we return and be made one with the ocean. Could we but be contented to annihilate ourselves, and be brought to nothing, then should we be made something. If that blessed Sun of Righteousness would arise and dissolve us, and draw us up into Himself then we, poor as we be, should be made one with Him!

Beloved, beloved, the only reason why we remain such empty drops is, because we esteem ourselves to be somewhat when indeed we are nothing; while we set such a great price upon ourselves, and look on ourselves as good, holy, and pure,—so much better than our brethren,—and take notice of ourselves, what a progress in religion we have made, and despise others. This, this keeps us from being united to Him. Oh! those high swelling thoughts must be brought down; those thrones, and powers and principalities set in us by Satan, the prince of this world,—those strongholds that keep us from being overcome, and brought to nothing, must be brought down, that so God Himself may take possession of us, that we may be joined to the Lord Himself, and be made partakers of His life and glory!—*Dr. Everhard. (Early part of the seventeenth century.)*

MARKS OF TRUE SAINTS. 9

1. When the mind retains its deep solicitude about salvation, and has it increased by the idea, that a lost professor is the most awful of all characters:

2. When there is a continued and increasing dread of sins renounced during concern; and sanctification in these very particulars is carried on with vigour:

3. When besetting sins are, if not totally eradicated, yet repressed and kept under, by watchfulness and prayer:

4. When the idea of being a professor makes the thought of sin committed more bitter, and renders us restless and uneasy, till we have obtained forgiveness, by renewed faith and repentance:

5. When the sins of others, and especially of professors, and their low state of piety, cause deep grief, and make us additionally anxious to attain to higher degrees of personal godliness, in order that we may preserve the credit of religion, and prevent dishonour from being cast on the name of Christ:

6. When we so love God as to feel that our great business and delight is to obey, serve and please him; and to find that no measure of service will satisfy us, short of absolute perfection:

7. When the motive to obedience, and to all we do in religion is, so far as we can ascertain it, a prevailing desire and aim to glorify God:

8. When the sins of other professors are matter of grief, humiliation, and distress, and the failings of scripture saints are read with awe, and regarded as beacons to warn us from the rocks on which they split:

9. When we are pleased, not only with comforting preaching, and such as dwells on the doctrines of grace, and privileges of believers, but also with close, pungent appeals to the conscience, and discourses that search the heart and lay open its corruptions, and are ever ready to co-operate with our pastors in promoting revivals of the church:

10. When we retire from earthly minded, fashionable, and lukewarm professors, to associate with those who are eminently holy, consistent and heavenly:

11. When no prospect of gain can induce us to engage in an unlawful occupa-

If there will be any grief in heaven, sure it will be for this, that we have done no more for God to death.

tion; or to carry on a lawful one by forbidden means; and rather than violate truth, honesty, justice and generosity, we would be content with poverty and a quiet conscience.

12. When we carry religion with us into the shop, to regulate all our business, and consider ourselves under solemn obligation to let our light shine forth before worldly men in all our transactions; to make the six days of labour, as well as the one day of rest, a time for glorifying God; and to consider ourselves his servants at all times and in all places:

13. When we feel not only an obligation, but a pleasure, in practising self-denial, and a willingness to give up the gratifications of appetite and feeling for the sake of Christ:

14. When, though diligent in business, and not careless about property, our chief pleasure in accumulation, is that we have more to do good with: and we avoid luxuries and splendour, that we may have more to spend for God; and while not unmindful of our families, consider that God has claims upon us, as well as they:

15. When we have a tender conscience easily roused, which will not allow us to engage in doubtful actions:

16. When we are as careful to abstain from all angry, resentful and malicious feelings, as we are from licentious and dishonest ones:

17. When our religion is not the spirit of fear, and slavish dread; the service rendered by a slave to a tyrant; but of power, and love, and of a sound mind; the service of a child to a father, in whom he confides, and for whom he has the strongest affection:

18. When there is a strong, steady and laborious desire to do good, especially in the way of converting sinners, by personal exertion, by property, by prayer, so that we feel it to be a part of our calling, and one great end of it to aid in saving souls from death; when we are distressed that little is doing in this way; are willing to make sacrifices to do good; are continually devising means for this purpose; and rejoice in what others are doing, even if they belong not to our party or denomination:

19. When the mind though not slavish, is ignorantly anxious about its state,

or safety, keeps up a jealous watchfulness over itself, and frequently examines itself before God:

20. When there is in affliction more anxiety to have it sanctified than removed, and a prevailing acquiescence in the will of God in painful circumstances:

21. When the soul feels an habitual drawing to heaven, as to its native country and home:

Then may the professor who has such evidences conclude, that he is indeed a true follower of the Lamb, and not self-deceived.
—Rev. J. A. James.

“OUR CHILD IN HEAVEN.”

“There will be spheres of action in the life that is to come,—vast orbits within which some will range, and lesser orbits in which others shall move. We cannot but believe that our children will be children evermore—that amid the great family of the redeemed, many children will be found. To us the thought is full of pleasure. Other of our children are growing up to be men and women; the very years, as they pass, seem to rob us of their childhood, but years can never rob us of the childhood of a child in heaven. In memory and in prospect the departed one remains our ‘child.’ And so, as old age comes creeping upon us apace, and those who were our children have now gone forth as men and women into the world, and we are left alone; we can sit by our fireside, and dream with unclosed eyes, and think how that when our little one left earth it was a ‘child’—then mayhap we shall be able to draw nigh the spirit-land; our timid hearts will shrink the less, when we see therein ‘a child’—our child. And if bright days have passed, we shall believe in bright days yet to come. O, think not for a moment that there is any pause in the being of thy child; that the music of its life is gone! Let no tear of sorrow start because thou seest other children at their sport; they gleam upon the waves of troubled waters, thine glitters as on a lake of glass.”—Rev. P. B. Power.

We would be seated in the heavenly Canaan, but are loath to be scratched with the briars and thorns of the wilderness.

JOHN LEIGH.

A standard-bearer in Aberdeen, has fallen, a good old man, at the ripe age of 73—John Leigh, pensioner on the Excise Department. He had, at one time, been a supervisor of excise, with an income of £200 a year, but had, through intemperance, been reduced to a lower rank. This, he used to say, became a blessing to him, for he was led thenceforward to seek the Lord, and find him to be precious indeed. For more than twenty-eight years he continued steadfast in his service, and while acting as an officer in his district, was remarked as one that spoke to people about their souls. One young man, now himself an active labourer for the Lord, relates how Mr. Leigh met him one day on his pony, and engaged him to seek the Lord. He promised, to get rid of him, but never forgot the circumstance.

For a number of years past Mr. Leigh had been living in Aberdeen on his retiring allowance, with more time than ever to work for the good Master whom he loved. A few years ago he felt it repeatedly laid on his mind, "Lift up a standard for the people."—And pondering what this might indicate, and praying over it, the thought came into his mind, that he should carry through the streets of Aberdeen a board with texts of scripture in large letters on it—just as many carry bills notifying amusements, &c. The thought of such an undertaking was, at first, a cross to him; but he prayed about it, and at last resolved to begin. Thinking how he should arrange to get a board and texts, he was led to call on a missionary, and found board and texts ready for him. They had been prepared for use on a special occasion some time before. He soon began to bear this standard through the streets of Aberdeen; and for years his familiar form might be seen daily in some parts of the city, holding up the banner bearing on one side or the other, the texts, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "Flee from the wrath to come." The first day he engaged in the work, his soul was filled with joy; and he was accustomed to say, "Well I am happier to-day than I was yesterday." "The outward man perisheth, but the inward man is renewed day by day." He never faltered, although, in his declining years, he used a shorter and lighter standard.

Feeling old age coming on, he was revolving in his mind how he might speak for the Lord after his death, and praying about the matter, as was his wont, some friends asked him to allow his photograph to be taken.—

To this he agreed, provided he was taken with board, texts, and all. Thus a memorial of him has been preserved, with the texts quite distinctly readable, and thus being dead he yet speaketh, and may long speak in albums and otherwise, those precious words of eternal life. The negative is still preserved, and applications are made for copies. One old gentleman applied for a copy—"Oh, sir, I did not value him enough, but now he is gone. He used to speak to me about my soul, which no one else did." A female laid down double the price, replying, "Oh, sir, he was worth more to me."

He spent a considerable time at his devotions. By agreement with others he had special parties to remember at a throne of grace. A few mornings ago, he had been at his devotions as usual, and on his wife coming into the room, she found him still on his knees, with his Bible open before him; but his head inclined to one side. He was insensible. The Master had come and called for him, giving him a token to be ready. He recovered a little, was able to recognize some friends, and tell them Jesus was precious.—He lingered but a little longer, and then departed, to be for ever with the Lord, whom he had loved and served.

His conversation was very spiritual. His motto might well have been, "Jesus only."—A lady having said to him one day, "Of course you speak to people about their souls as you pass on?" He had not been in the habit of doing so, and felt condemned. But he first prayed about the matter, and then resolved to speak to at least *three* every day. Going out to begin, the first he met and spoke to was a young woman. Asking if she was happy in Jesus; "No," she replied, "but I am anxious, and no one has spoken to me." Another day he was drawn to cross the street, in a retired part of the city, and speak to a finely dressed lady coming up. On his saying he hoped she loved the Lord Jesus, she felt deeply touched, and confessed she once had done so, but could not say so now. He spoke to her, and brought her to a private prayer-meeting; and soon she was again rejoicing in Jesus; thanking the Lord that Mr. Leigh had been led to speak to her. Although now removed to a distance, she still retains her affection for him.

A young officer one day struck Mr. Leigh's board with his cane. Mr. L. replied, "You will live to be sorry for that." When the officer returned from India, he came to him, and introducing himself, confessed what he had done, and was spoken to. He is now again abroad, but a believer in Jesus, the enemy taken away.

At various friendly houses Mr. Leigh was

accustomed to visit regularly, each on a fixed day weekly. Taking out his New Testament, which he always carried with him, he would read a portion, and then engage in prayer. At the daily prayer-meeting, at two o'clock, he was never absent, always occupying the same seat. He attended also various other more private meetings, and prayer-meetings; and on the night before his illness spoke at one of them with much vigour and earnestness. His private visits to the sick and others were numerous. Although his retiring allowance was small he freely gave away a part.

His usual salutation was, "Well, brother, is Jesus precious to-day? Praise the Lord," or the like; perhaps telling on what text he had been meditating. He was ever ready to distribute tracts; and on special occasions, such as fairs, markets, offered his services, and had always a word with each tract. His practice also was to distribute little cards with texts quoted, in his own handwriting.—He was accustomed to say we should be ready to die any moment. He had prepared a short epitaph for his own remains, with texts, to be placed on his coffin, that all visiting might read, and this as early as 1848, keeping it ready among his papers. In public prayer, one expression was pretty sure to occur, "Thy delightful service;" and he always concluded with the Lord's prayer. His conscience was tender. He said we should not lie under sin a moment, but always confess it. Some things that he felt to be sin, many would have overlooked.

At his funeral the shutters were put on the windows of the shops in the street in which he lived. A good many friends, ministers and others, attended, whether invited or not; and many women and children lined the street as the funeral passed. One woman was awakened while present near the grave. On the Lord's-day following more than one minister took notice of his death, and testified to his worth. He was a member of the Free Church, but was quite unsectarian in his sympathies. He was an Englishman by birth, and leaves a widow, children and grand-children, most of them, it is believed, following the Lord.

His familiar form will be missed from our streets. A standard-bearer has fallen or rather has been called home to his rest and reward.
—*British Messenger.*

Christian graces are like perfumes; the more they are used, the sweeter they smell; like stars, that shine brightest in the dark; like trees, the more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.

WHEN WE BEGIN TO SIN IT IS HARD TO STOP.

There was a boy whose name was Frank. He was in the orchard on the side of a hill. His father was in the yard, adjoining the orchard, at the foot of the hill. He called to him, "Frank, come here."

"Yes, sir," said Frank, and started to run at full speed down the hill. He ran over to far past his father, towards the house.

"Frank, come here, I say, didn't you hear me call?" asked his father.

"Yes, sir," said Frank.

"Well, then, what made you run past me?"

"Oh!" said Frank, "I got agoing and couldn't stop."

This is just the way in which people run into sin; "Sinners entice them," and they consent. "They get agoing and can't stop."

"I went a short time ago," said a gentleman to a friend, "to the jail, to see a young man who had once been a Sunday-school scholar. The keeper took a large bunch of keys, and led us through the long, gloomy halls, unlocking one door after another, and at length he opened the door of the room in which sat the young man we had come to see. The walls of the room were of coarse stone, the floor of thick plank, and before the windows were strong iron bars.

Without, all was beautiful; the green fields, the sweet flowers, and the singing birds were as lovely as ever, but this young man could enjoy none of them; no, noper could he look on them again, for he was condemned to death. He had killed a man, and now his himself was to die. Think of it, only twenty years old, and yet a murderer!

I sat down beside him, and talked with him. "Oh!" said he, as the tears rolled down his cheeks, "to think that I should come to this! I didn't mean to do it but I was drunk; then I got angry, and before I knew what I was about, I killed him. Oh, if I had only minded my mother, and listened to my Sunday-school teacher, I never should have come to this; I never should have been here!"

This young man "got agoing and couldn't stop." When "sinners enticed him" to break the Sabbath, to disobey his mother, to drink and gamble, he ought not to have consented. It would have been easy for him to take his stand then; but when he once began to sin, like a stone thrown down the side of a mountain, he found it hard to stop.

As the gentleman left him, he said; "Will you pray for me, sir? And oh! I tell boys everywhere to mind their mothers, and keep away from bad companions."

ASKING QUESTIONS OF THE BIBLE.

It is quite clear that what hinders a true understanding of anything is vagueness; and it is by the process of asking questions that vagueness is to be dispelled. For in the first place, it removes one great vagueness, or indistinctness, which is very apt to beset the minds of many; namely, the not clearly seeing whether they understand a thing or no; and much more, the not seeing what it is that they do understand, and what it is which they do not. Take any one of our Lord's parables, and read it even to a young child; there will be something of an impression conveyed, and some feelings awakened; but all will be indistinct; the child will not know whether he understands or no, but will soon gain the habit of supposing that he does, as that is at once the least troublesome, and the least unpleasant to our vanity. And this same vague impression is often received by uneducated persons from reading or hearing either the Scriptures or sermons; it is by no means the same as if they had read or heard something in an unknown language, but yet they can give no distinct account of what they have heard or read; they do not know how far they understand it, and how far they do not. Here, then, is the use of "asking questions"—asking questions of ourselves or of our book, I mean, for I am supposing the case of our reading, when it can rarely happen that we have any living person at hand to give us an answer. Now, taking the earliest and simplest state of knowledge, it is plain that the first question to put to ourselves will be, "Do I understand the meaning of all the words and expressions in what I have been reading?" I know that this is taking things at their very beginning, but it is my wish to do so. Now, so plain and forcible is the English of our Bible, generally speaking, that the words difficult to be understood will probably not be many: yet some such do occur, owing in some instances, to a change of the language; as in the words "let" and "prevent," which now signify, the one, "to allow, or suffer to be done," and the other, "to stop, or hinder," but which signified, when our translation was made, the first, "to stop or hinder," and the second, "to be beforehand with us;" as in the prayer, "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour," the meaning is, "Let thy favour be with us beforehand, O Lord in whatever we are going to do." In other instances, the words are difficult because they are used in a particular sense, such as we do not learn from our common language; of which kinds are the words "elect," "saints,"

"justification," "righteousness," and many others. Now, if we ask ourselves "whether we understand these words or no," our common sense, when thus questioned, will readily tell us whether we do or not; although, if we had not directly asked the question, it might never have thought about it. Of course, our common sense cannot tell us what the true meaning is; that is a matter of information, and our means of gaining information may be more or less, but still, a great step is gained the mist is partly cleared away; we can say to ourselves, "Here is something which I do understand, and here is something which I do not; I must keep the two distinct, for the first I may use, the second I cannot; I will mark it down as a thing about which I may get explanation at another time; but at present it is a blank in the picture, it is the same as if it were not there." This, then, is the first process of self-questioning, adapted, as I have already said, to those whose knowledge is most elementary.

Suppose, however, that we are got beyond difficulties of this sort—that the words and particular expressions of the Scripture are mostly clear to us. Now, take again one of our Lord's parables; say, for instance, that of the labourers in the vineyard: we read it, and find that he who went to work at the eleventh hour received as much as he who had been working all the day. This seems to say, that he who begins to serve God in his old age shall receive his crown of glory no less than he who has served him all his life. But now try the process of self-questioning: what do I think that Christ means me to learn from this? what is the lesson to me? what is it to make me feel, or think, or do? If it makes me think that I shall receive an equal crown of glory if I begin to serve God in my old age, and therefore if it leads me to live carelessly, this is clearly making Christ encourage wickedness, and such a thought is blasphemy. He cannot mean me to learn this from it; let me look at the parable again. Who is it who is reproved in those words, which seem to contain its real object? It is one who complains of God for having rewarded others equally with himself. Now this I can see is not a good feeling; it is pride and jealousy. In order, then, to learn what the parable means me to learn, let me put myself in the position of those reproved in it. If I complain that others are rewarded by God as much as I am, it is altogether a bad feeling, and one which I ought to check; for I have nothing to do with God's dealings to others; let me think of what concerns myself. Here I have the lesson of the parable complete; and here I find it is useful to me. But if I take it for a different object, and suppose

that it means to encourage waiting till the eleventh hour—waiting till we are old before we repent—we find that we make it out actually to be mischievous to us. And thus we gain a great piece of knowledge; namely that the parables of our Lord are mostly designed to teach some one particular lesson, with respect to some one particular fault; and that, if we take them generally, as if all in them was applicable to all persons, whether exposed to that particular fault or not, we shall absolutely be in danger of deriving mischief from them instead of good. It is true, that in this particular parable the gross wickedness of such an interpretation as I have mentioned is guarded against even in the story itself; because those who worked only at the eleventh hour are expressly said to have stood idle so long only because no man had hired them; their delay, therefore, was no fault of their own. But, even if this circumstance had been left out, it would have been just the same; because the general rule is, that we apply to a parable only for its particular lesson, and do not strain it to anything else. Had this been well understood, no one would have ever have found so much difficulty in understanding the parable of the unjust steward.

This is another great step towards the dispelling vagueness, to apply the particular lesson of each part of Scripture to that state of knowledge, or feeling, or practice in ourselves, which it was intended to benefit; to apply it as a lesson to ourselves, not as a general truth for our neighbours. And the very desire to do this makes us naturally look with care to the object of every passage—to see to whom it was addressed, and on what occasion; for this will often surely guide us to the point that we want. But, in order to do this, we must strive to clothe the whole in our own common language; to get rid of those expressions which to us convey the meaning faintly; and to put it into such others as shall come most strongly home to us. This I have spoken of on other occasions; and I have so often witnessed the bad effects of not doing so, that I am sure it may well bear to be noticed again; I mean the putting such words as “persecution,” “the cares and riches of the world,” “the kingdom of God,” “confessing Christ,” “denying Christ,” and many others, into a language which to us has more lively reality, which makes us manifestly see that it is of us, and of our common life, and of our dangers, that the Scripture is speaking, and not only of things in a remote time and country, and under circumstances quite unlike our own. Therefore I have a strong objection to the use of what is called peculiarly religious language, because I am

sure that it hinders us from bringing the matter of that language thoroughly home to us; our minds do not entirely assimilate with it; or, if they fancy that they do, it is only by their becoming themselves affected, and losing their sense of the reality of things around them. For our language is fixed for us, and we cannot alter it; and into that common language, in which we think and feel, all truth must be translated, if we would think and feel respecting it at once rightly, clearly, and vividly. Happy is he who, by practising this early, has imbued his own natural language with the spirit of God’s wisdom and holiness; and who can see, and understand, and feel them the better, because they are so put into a form with which he is perfectly familiar.

More might be said, very much more, but here I will now pause. In this world, where in heavenly things are, after all, hard to seize and fix upon, we have great need that no mists of imperfect understanding darken them, over and above those of the corrupt will. To see them clearly, to understand them distinctly and vividly, may, indeed, after all, be vain; a thicker veil may yet remain behind, and we may see and understand, and yet perish.—Only the clear sight of God in Christ can be no light blessing; and there may be a hope, that understanding and approving with all our minds his excellent wisdom, the light may warm us as well as assist our sight; that we may see, and not in our vague and empty sense, but in the force of the scriptural meaning of the word—may see, and so believe.—*Arnold.*

COME, MIGHTY SPIRIT.

Come, mighty Spirit, penetrate
This heart and soul of mine;
And my whole being, with thy grace,
Pervade, O Life divine!

As this clear air surrounds the earth,
Thy grace around me roll;
As the fresh night pervades the air,
So pervade and fill my soul.

As, from these clouds, drops down in love
The precious summer rain,
So, from thyself, pour down the flood
That frescens ail again.

As these fair flowers exhale their scent
In gladness at our feet,
So from thyself let fragrance breathe,
More heavenly and more sweet.

Thus life within our lifeless hearts
Shall make its glad abode;
And we shall shine in beauteous light,
Filled with the light of God.

REMEMBER ELI.

A SOLEMN CALL UPON PARENTS TO REMEMBER THE ACCOUNT WHICH THEY MUST GIVE FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S SOULS.

By the Rev. R. M. M'Cheyne.

"His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."—1 SAM. iii. 13.
 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."—REV. xx. 12.

There is a report in heaven, as well as among us that many of you are guilty of your children's blood. It is believed that many of you allow your children to perish miserably. We wish you to inquire whether or not you be really chargeable with this fearful crime.

You know that every minister and elder has a twofold account to give at the judgment-seat of Christ; and so has every father and mother. One of these accounts is to be regarding their own souls; and the other is to be regarding how they attended to those under their care. This last account will be as strict as the first; for one of the holy prophets declares that there is an unutterable woe lying upon those who "feed themselves, and do not feed the flock," Ezekiel xxxiv. 2. Now, parents, you "feed yourselves," and fall under this woe, when you are content with getting meat, and drink, and clothing, while you let your children become a prey to wolves, that is, to wicked companions, bad example, temptations to sinful amusements and pleasure, by which their souls are ruined for ever.

Oh! remember you have to give an account for your own souls! and that will be fearful enough, and sad enough! God will open the great book of judgment, and turn to the page wherein your sins are written. His bright light will shine on the page, and you will be forced to come up the steps of the judgment-seat, and read what is written against you. Your conscience will testify that every word is true; and the devil will be a witness, for he led you into the mire; and holy angels will declare how they saw and shuddered at your sin; and many of your neighbours will be brought up to tell how you and they sinned together; and God himself will speak, and declare it to be all true! Oh!

how awful is the prospect! You will, on that day, be damned, if all these things are found in the book! But there is another account even after all this is done, namely, the account you have to give for your children,—for each of your children, and each of their sins! You will be reckoned guilty of their sins, if you did not check them; you will be accounted chargeable with their follies and vices, if you agreed to let them go on in what way they pleased, 1 Sam. iii. 13. And who will be the witness against you here? Will it be conscience, and the devil, and your neighbour, and the Holy God? Yes, but in addition, your own little children! Your own children will face you at the judgment-seat, and condemn you! Alas their agonized looks,—their tears,—their cries,—their gnashing of teeth, will then awaken your conscience, and you will be proved before the universe to be murderers of your own children's souls!

The mother of a little girl used to teach her to pray, but only at times that suited her own convenience. One day this little girl looked in her mother's face, and said, "Mother, when I die and go to heaven, and God Almighty asks me, 'Did your mother teach you to pray?' I will tell him, 'yes, except on washing days.'" Was not this a case where the child seemed already to be beginning her office as witness against her parent's sin? But there was another girl, whose history was far more awful. She had once cared about her soul, and sought a Saviour, till her father led her away back to the world and its sins.

In the course of a year after he had succeeded in making his daughter thoughtless and gay, a rapid fever attacked her. She called for her father in her last moments, fixed her eyes on him, and was able to utter, "Father, last year I would have sought Christ, but now, father, your child is——." She had not time to finish the sentence, death arrested her! but, oh! what a witness she will be when she meets him again, and reproaches him with having ruined her soul! There is a hymn which has often struck us as being very solemn and alarming,—a hymn that represents lost children upbraiding their parents. They are crying from the lowest hell, telling their parents that if they had taken an

interest in their souls, they would never have come into that place of torment.

"Father, weep with shame and rueing,
Weep for thy child's undoing,
For the days when I was young,
And no prayer was taught my tongue—
I ran the world's race well,
And flad my portion, Hell!

Weep, mother, weep; but know
'Twill not shorten endless woe!—
Weep my lost spirit's fate,
But know thy tears too late!
Had they sooner fallen—well,
I had not wept in Hell!"

O parents! are any of you already stained with this crimson guilt? Have any of you cause to fear that you have sent some of your children to hell by your conduct? Or have you reason to fear lest you have set them on the way, although they are still alive? Up, and flee to the city of refuge! You are like the ancient slayers, (Numbers xxxv.) the avenger of blood is at your heels: there is no remission for your sin, except in the blood of Jesus. And Jesus has made so full and ample atonement that, on the ground of it, even a murderer of souls may be forgiven. Manasseh was a murderer of souls, and he was forgiven through this precious blood. (2 Chron. xxxiii.) You, too, may be forgiven, if your blood-stained conscience be washed in the precious blood of the Lamb. Your souls may now be sore vexed and at ease; your peace may be broken up, and remorse may have well nigh begun gnawing which shall never end; but hearken to the words that bring you glad tidings: "The chastisement of our peace laid upon Him." (Isa. liii. 5.)

We know that if you would bathe in the blood of Him who "his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree," would your souls be delivered from the oppressive and intolerable thought of the past, and you would be refreshed in the future by the glorious prospect of bringing those that remain, to the same Saviour that redeemed you. It is true you may feel like the South Sea murderers of their children, who, on being awakened, and taught the power of the blood of Christ, even then found the consciousness of that sin—murder of their children—the last which they could bring to his atoning blood. Some lamented in agony over seven,

over seventeen or twenty, whom they had destroyed. Yet even these did at last find their souls cleansed in that full, deep fountain. And you may find the same! You will then be like pardoned Manasseh, who, when justified from all things by bathing in the ocean of Immanuel's blood, could walk at evening round Zion, and look down into the very valley of Hinnom—the black, gloomy valley where he had made so many of his children pass through the fire to Moloch,—and still retain his peace with God, and say, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." (Rom. viii. 34.)

If you would thus try the power of Christ's sacrifice to purify your guilty conscience, you would soon care for and yearn over your children's souls. You would discover their guilt, and perceive their danger, and you would long to see them saved and made "accepted in the Beloved." We know, also, in regard to those of you that have sought Christ for yourselves, but have not been sufficiently careful to fulfil your baptismal promise, and comply with the demand of the Lord, by bringing your children to Christ; we know that the cause of most inadequate feelings of the Saviour's glorious work. Your sense of the heinousness of the sin which it purges away, is so dull, and your apprehension of its infinitely urgent necessity and overwhelming grace, is so dim, that your languid feelings are not stirred, though your offspring are living in the open neglect of the great salvation. Were you to die in your present unfaithfulness to your family and be saved yourselves, "so as by fire," you would need to take an eternal farewell of your children. Like Eli, you might be saved; but your feelings on reaching glory would be like this. No doubt he learned in heaven what he dreaded to think upon on earth, that his sons, Hophni and Phineas, were cast away as brands for the burning; and now all that he could do, as he stood before the throne himself saved, but none of his offspring—was first to adore the sovereign grace that had led himself to wash in the blood of the Lamb that removed even that sin of the crimson and scarlet dye, and next to join the hallelujahs of the company that were praising the righteous wrath of their God, against the lost souls of Hophni and

Phineas, while they saw the smoke of their torments rising up for ever and ever. (Rev. xix. 3.)

Bearing these solemn truths in mind, hear us when we propose to you that your children should be sent to the SABBATH SCHOOL.

I. You that care about your own and your children's souls. We believe you are seeking out the best means of benefiting those under your care. We, therefore, do no more than ask you to consider whether or not it would be useful to send your children to our schools. If other circumstances are suitable, then your example might influence some of your neighbours; and by your attention to your children, in preparing them at home for the Sabbath School, you would have the satisfaction of seeing your children become a pattern to others.

II. You that care about your children, though you are not yourselves converted. We know that this is no uncommon case; even infidels have wished their children to know Christ. Now, if you feel that you yourselves have got no change of heart, we entreat you to send your children to the Sabbath School. There, by the blessing of God, they may be led to Christ. The teacher's whole aim is to bring them to the cross of Christ, to carry them to the Shepherd who gave his life for the sheep, and to bathe them in the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. But if you allow them to spend Sabbath evening, and perhaps all the day too, in whatever manner they please, you may expect soon to hear them uttering oaths, and be grieved by their profanity, their contempt for the ordinances of God, their filthy and foolish deeds, and others signs of a hardened heart. But oh! if they were saved, you would be freed at the great day from the reproach of their ruin. And perhaps they might even carry home salvation to you! What if they should lead you by the hand to Jesus? What if your experience should be that of a parent who said, "I was thirty years old before I knew that I had a soul. But one of our boys went out on a Sabbath to play, and was brought in with his anklebone out of joint. Next Sabbath another of the boys got himself lamed. I resolved to send them to school to be out of the way.

It was there that they learned, and I learned through them, that I had a soul."

III. You that care neither for your own nor your children's souls. Whether you care or not, still it is true that there is a Saviour standing with open arms, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." (Mark x. 14.) Will you allow us to be kind to them, and lead them to this Saviour? You would wish them to be obedient, to be well behaved, to be useful; you would not wish to see them grow up to be thieves, drunkards, and pests to society. Let us, then, do what we can to lead them to Christ. Do not hinder us from showing kindness to your children. We entreat you not to be unmerciful to their souls. Let not your eye be evil toward the children of your own bowels. Would you wish that any of them should yet curse the day that ever they were born in your house, and had you for their parent?

And now that we have ended our few words of expostulation, we must say to those of you who agree to put your children under our care for a few hours on Sabbath, that we do not in any degree free you from the obligations you yourselves are under to attend to their souls. No; we cannot take upon us your responsibility, which became yours at your children's birth, and was sealed on you at their baptism. We cannot stand in your place at the judgment-day. You must yourselves at home watch over them, pray for them and with them, help them in their lessons for their classes, and speak to them on their returning home, as anxiously as if we had never said a word. We offer only to help you. It will prove you more sure condemnation at last, if it be the case that strangers cared more for your children's souls than you yourselves do,—the father that begat them, and the mother that bore them. But, oh! how blessed, if, led by the Holy Spirit yourselves, you become the means of leading your children to Jesus! We will stand by, rejoicing to hear you say, "Behold, Lord, I and the children whom thou hast given me."

Suffer me to come to Jesus,
Mother dear, forbid me not;
By his blood from hell he frees us,
Makes us fair, without a spot.

Suffer me, my earthly father,
At his pierced feet to fall;
Why forbid me? help me rather;
Jesus is my ail in all.

Suffer me to run unto him;
Gentle sisters come with me;
Oh that all I love but knew him,
Then my home a heaven would be.

Loving playmate, gay and smiling,
Bid me not forsake the cross;
Hard to bear is your reviling;
Yet for Jesus all is dross.

Yes, though all the world have chid me,
Father, mother, sister, friend—
Jesus never will forbid me!
Jesus love me to the end!

Gentle Sheperd, on thy shoulder
Carry me, a sinful lamb;
Give me faith, and make me bolder,
Till with thee in heaven I am.

WAVES OF FIRE.

A traveller in the Sandwich Islands, while visiting the volcano near Hilo, witnessed a wonderful phenomenon. As he was sitting at lunch on a high bank overlooking the crater, with his face turned to avoid the intense heat, he was startled by a noise like the rushing together of bodies of water, and was obliged to run to escape the great heat. The whole surface of the lake was in the wildest commotion, wave dashing on wave. Great billows of fire rolled from every side of the lake, meeting in fierce conflict, receding and rushing together again with increased force, shooting into the air, perhaps a hundred feet, a vast spiral body of red liquid lava, which finally combed over, and fell in graceful spray back into the lake again. When the lake was restored to its usual order, it seemed to have fallen at least ten feet.

On reading the above, we could not help thinking how forcibly it illustrates the fearful Scripture expression, "the lake of fire," and taking up our Bible we read the following passage: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

Reader! are you a believer in Jesus Christ? If you are not, do you not read

your character and doom in this dreadful portion of God's holy Word, which cannot be "broken," but must be "fulfilled?"—*Herald of Mercy.*

THE STATIONER AT THE FAIR.

"A stationer, being at a fair, hung out his pictures of men famous in their kind—among which he had also the picture of Christ. Divers men bought according to their several fancies. The soldier buys his Cæsar, the lawyer his Justinian, the physician his Galen, the philosopher his Aristotle, the poet his Virgil, the orator his Cicero, and the divine his Augustine;—every man after the dictation of his own heart. The picture of Christ hung by still, of less price than the rest; a poor shopman that had no more money than would purchase that, bought it, saying, 'Now every one hath taken away his god, let me have mine.' Thus, whilst the covetous repair to their riches, like birds to their nests; the ambitious to their honours, like butterflies to a poppy; the strong to their holds; the learned to their arts; atheists to their sensual refuges, as dogs to their kennels; and politicians to their wit, as foxes to their holes; the devout soul will have no other sanctuary, fix upon no other object, but Christ Jesus, not pictured in their chamber, but planted in the inner chamber of the heart."—*Salter.*

A FATHER'S ADVICE.

The Rev. William Jay, of Bath, in writing to his little daughter, said, "Search your head all over, and if you find two ears and only one tongue, be always more ready to hear and slow to speak; and when you speak, speak with diffidence and modesty. Always say little of characters, and let this little as much as possible be in the way of commendation. Gain some little addition every day to your mental stores."

The young reader may regard this advice as addressed to her, and may profit by it. It is a good plan to ask ourselves every night what good we have done during the day, and what we have learned. That is a lost day in which we have not done some good or learned something.

Sabbath School Lessons.

October 16th, 1864.

THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

Read *Luke xx. 1-18.*

Connection.—The incidents recorded here took place three or four days before Christ's death. His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, His authoritative expulsion of the traders from the temple, and the favour bestowed on Him by the people, had raised the jealousy of the chief priests and scribes, and led them thus to challenge His authority.

J. Christ's Authority Challenged, ver. 1-8. Christ taught in the temple from morning till night during those last days of His life, *Luke xxi. 37.* The chief priests seem to have come officially to put a stop to Christ's teaching. Christ's silence would have implied guilt or fear. How wisely He answered!—*The baptism of John*—meaning his whole teaching and mission. If they admitted John's inspiration, they could not deny Christ's, for John bore witness of Him.

They reasoned. Utterly regardless of what was true, they basely regulated their answer by their fear of man. Even the answer they gave, a deliberate lie, must have displeased the people, and tended to throw them more entirely on Christ's side. Christ's words were vouched by His works.

II. The Parable, ver. 9-15.

Christ evidently wished to break the evil influence the Jewish rulers had over the people, and to draw the poor people to Himself.

A vineyard—a beautiful figure of the constant, unwearying care with which God had watched over the Jewish nation. No species of husbandry requires such incessant labour as rearing grain. *Let it forth*—let His people to the care of their priests and teachers. *Went into a far country* may point to the fact, that God ceased so directly to interpose in the affairs of Israel after they had been separated in their own land.

The servants of the lord of the vineyard are evidently God's faithful messengers, who sought to bring the rulers and the people back to their allegiance to God—such as Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Zechariah; they were all disregarded and hated, though their sufferings were rewarded, *Jer. xxxiii. 6; 2 Chron. xxiv. 21; Matt. x. 35.*

My beloved son—Christ did not often so speak of Himself. He was more than a servant. He was hated in proportion to the kindness and boldness of His teaching, *John iii. 20.* The Jewish rulers thought if they could destroy Him there would be none left to disturb their usurpation, *John xi. 47-50.*

Cast him out. They would not recognize Him as the Son of God—incited the people

to reject Him, and at last to crucify Him "without the camp."

When the Lord cometh—He will come.—The rulers felt the force of the sentences people pronounced against the wicked husbandmen, and exclaimed, "God forbid." Christ turned His piercing eye on them, and quoted the 22nd verse of the 118th Psalm, which foretold all these things.

APPLICATION.

1. *When man dislikes the message, he is ever ready to question the authority of the messenger.* "By whose authority?" "Who made thee a judge?" was said to Moses; him who did the wrong, *Acts vii. 29, 51. 52.* "Is not this the carpenter?" *Mark vi. 3.* The question ought to be, "Is the message true?" If so, receive it even from an enemy, a child, or a fool.

2. *See how we learn to lie. We reason, "if we say this, so and so will happen." "We fear the people"—No love for truth, and no fear of God.* Peter's denial; Gehazi's lie.

3. *None will ever find the truth who love their sins better than it.* This kept the priests and scribes from receiving Christ. If you only believe what you like, you will often believe lies. The world loves darkness, *John iii. 19.* Do you? *Luke xii. 51.* The King, *Jer. xxxvi. 23.*

4. *Do we bear fruit to God? We are planted in God's vineyard. God has loved and cared for us more than for the Jews; given us Bibles, schools, churches.*

The fruit He expects is love and obedience. He has often sought it—He seeks it now.

5. *How do we treat those who try to make us do what is right? They are God's messengers, seeking fruit for God, whether they are parents, teachers, or companions. Do we listen and obey? or are we angry and disobedient, especially when an inferior tries to keep us right? Ahab and Micahiah; Herod and John.*

6. *Beware of the wrath of the Lamb, ver. 18.* This was threatened to the rulers who sought to make the people reject Christ. It will fall on some—beware lest it fall on you! *Rev. vi. 16.*

SUBORDINATE LESSONS.

1. God counts what is done to His messengers as done to Himself, *Matt. xxv. 45;* and will avenge their wrongs. Why persecutest thou Me? *Acts ix. 4.*

2. The closer God's claims are urged, the more will sinners rage against them and the messenger. Stephen—Christ.

3. Men use this world as if it was their own, as if they had no Master, and had no rent to pay.—*Edix. S. S. Lessons.*

October 23rd. 1864

THE ISRAELITES DESIRE A KING.

1 Sam. viii. 1-22.

The events recorded in this chapter are without a parallel in history—a nation without sufficient cause demanding a fundamental change of government, and that change brought about without commotion and bloodshed.

THE PARTIES DESIRING THE KING were the elders of Israel. They were the proper parties to move in this matter. They were the concentrated wisdom of the nation. They were the representative men, and they met in conclave to determine what they should do. In this matter, a matter of great moment to the welfare of the nation, they were unanimous, for it is said that they all gathered themselves together, and after having arrived at the decision, they all formed a deputation to visit Samuel.

The assigned reasons for this step were the age of the prophet Samuel, and the alleged misconduct of his sons. These were not adequate inasmuch as Samuel was still in the possession of much of his mental vigour, and could easily have appointed other judges in the place of his erring sons. But the mind of the nation was set upon a change. They were tired of the undemonstrative administration of the judges, and they made use of these reasons as mere occasions for gaining their purpose.

These elders deserve the credit of taking constitutional means for the accomplishment of their end. A right end may be sought by wrong means, and a wrong end may be sought in a right way. We should aim at accomplishing only right ends, and that in a right way.

TO WHOM THESE PARTIES EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRE. To Samuel. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, who had been in the service of the Lord from the time he was a little child, and during whose term of government the nation of Israel had peace, was now in his old age rejected by the people he had so faithfully served. This was a sad wound to his feelings. It was all the sadder that it was associated

with complaints against his sons; and all the sadder still that they rejected the prophet of the Lord, and through him the Lord Himself. This was the natural understanding and the Lord Himself so expressed it, ver. 7.

Samuel, like a wise prophet and a wise man, took their request before the Lord. And He told them his answer: The Lord granted them their request. But just as He sometimes denies his people in love, so He on this occasion gratified them in anger.

The natural results of their choice was plainly predicted, and was amply verified in their experience under the Kings which they got. The folly of their choice can be illustrated by the narratives of the different kings.

Learn—(1). That we ought to be useful in our early years, for when we grow old we are not as able to do what is required of us. Instance Samuel, who lived a long life of usefulness.

(2). That we may do well in a humble position, and be spoiled by preferment and power. It was so with Samuel's sons.

(3). That the rejection of a servant of God in his official capacity, is the rejection of God himself.

(4). That the Lord may grant our desires, as a means of punishing us, for what he disapproves.

THE REFUGE.

Jesus! I come to thee,
A sinner doomed to die;
My only refuge is thy cross,
Here at thy feet I lie.

Can mercy reach my case,
And all my sins remove?
Break, O my God! this heart of stone,
And melt it by thy love.

Too long my soul has gone
Far from my God astray;
I've sported on the brink of hell,
In sin's delusive way.

But, Lord! my heart is fixed,
I hope in thee alone;
Break off the chains of sin and death,
And bind me to thy throne.

Thy blood can cleanse my heart,
Thy hand can wipe my tears;
Oh! send thy blessed Spirit down
To banish all my fears.

Then shall my soul arise,
From sin and Satan free;
Redeemed from hell and every foe,
I'll trust alone in thee.

—Roxar.