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THE CEASELESS ACT OF THE ALMIGHTY.

BY REV. WILLIAM BURGESS, L. C. P.. EDGEWORTH, C.W.

And God divided the light from the darkness."—Gen. i., 4.

"The works of the Lord are great; sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." And those works are not merely creative, but restorative,—works of salvation and of regeneration: great in their design—great in their accomplishment—great in their results. Such were his works of creation, as set forth in the chapter containing our text,—the visible heavens—the earth—the waters under the earth—the light—the darkness; these display his wisdom, power, and goodness. It is of a very small but distinct portion of his doings in the stupendous work of creation that we purpose to speak; not, properly speaking, a creative act, but an arrangement of that which had already been created. "God divided the light from the darkness." What Jehovah then did, in the exercise of his wisdom and power, he still performs throughout all his vast arrangements. "I form the light, and I create darkness; I the Lord do all these things." It is his *ceaseless act* to divide the light from the darkness.

Let us consider,—

1. The things spoken of in the text; and,—

2. What is affirmed concerning them.

1.—The things spoken of in the text, light and darkness. To each of these terms there are different significations.—There is what we term natural light; there are also mental and moral light (the illumination of the understanding and of the heart); there are also providential, spiritual, and eternal light: each of these has its opposite state of darkness. It is true that our text speaks only of light natural; yet, as the works of God in nature are often typical of his works of grace, we may follow the example of Scripture, and in tracing out the truths it teaches, may endeavour to prove, that in the whole economy of nature, providence, and grace, it is the practice and prerogative of God to divide the light from the darkness.

Light is a creature of God, without

which we could not well exist; yet, perhaps, we have never been sufficiently sensible of its value; perhaps we have not received it, walked in it, enjoyed it, and rejoiced in it as the gift of HIM who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Like all the gifts of our Heavenly Father, it is beautiful, and that beyond description. It cheers the heart of the prisoner when it shines through the grating of his solitary cell. It glitters in the frozen skies of Lapland, and sheds its golden lustre on the inhabitants of the torrid zone. It makes manifest, "for whatever doth make manifest is light." It enables us to avoid dangers and obstacles, and to travel safely in the most intricate paths. It frustrates the designs of wickedness: without it no profitable or useful occupations could be pursued; all would be confusion and danger; creation would be one viewless, cheerless, colourless, unvarying blank, and our lives would terminate in despair; for no ground could be cultivated—no harvest reaped—no commerce carried on—no word of God perused,—no knowledge of God conveyed to heathen lands. But Jehovah said, "Let light be, and there was light." The lovely transparent fluid sprang from nothing, into existence—glittered amidst the darkness—shone in the firmament—was treasured up in the sun, and for thousands of years has flowed thence as waters from a fountain, unceasing in its emanations, free to all and without diminishing in quantity or lustre. It is true the revolution of our earth around the sun and on her own axis gives us various gradations of light—the twilight, the morning, and the meridian day; but the sun is ever the same, like that Saviour whom he feebly shadows forth,—always glorious—always a blessing to mankind. "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun." But light is also pure; though it dwell in the most polluted places and shine on the filthiest dunghills it contracts no pollution.—it cannot be defiled. Such is light upon earth; what must it be in

heaven! *There is excess of light.* How feeble and how faint are the rays of the sun compared therewith! There it cheers every soul and clothes every object with glory and with beauty. It sparkles in the diadem of Jesus; it composes alike his sceptre, his robe, his throne; and all in that world of love, is brightness ineffable and eternal.

But we live upon earth, and have therefore darkness as well as light; natural darkness. Not that there is any substantial darkness in our world: darkness with us, we apprehend, is a mere negation—the mere absence of light. Like light it has its degrees; there are dark days; there is the common darkness of night; and there is the black gloom of an exceeding dark night. But in hell, there is, we apprehend, material darkness, horrible and utter—darkness that may be felt. In this world there is perhaps, no place or time so utterly dark as not to have some small degree of light mixed with it, but there, is the blackness of darkness, for ever. These, light and darkness, were mingled with the chaos of materials which God spake into existence when “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light; and God divided the light from the darkness.” It was his work to banish the one, and to shed abroad and display the other.

Thus far in reference to *natural* light in darkness. There are also mental and moral light (in the understanding and in the conscience). Wisdom and knowledge are light, and the absence of these (folly and ignorance) is darkness. “If the light that is in thee be darkness,” said Jesus to the Pharisees, “how great is that darkness.” *i. e.*, “If your very understanding is perverted by the influence of sin, how great must be the darkness that reigns within you, and hinders your reception of the truth.” Mental and moral darkness are the sad consequences of the fall; so that in a state of fallen nature the very light within us is darkness. It is wilful ignorance in the understanding—it is error in judgment—it is perverseness in the will—it is corruption in the heart—it is pollution and death in the soul. What

shall we say of errors in the judgment?—Are we entirely blameless in judging wrong concerning things of the utmost importance, in putting a wrong construction upon the divine commands, or in forming a wrong estimate of the relative value of the things of time and eternity, or in judging wrongly concerning the way of salvation by Christ Jesus? Are we blameless in judging wrongly about these things when our Heavenly Father, in compassion to human ignorance, is holding out to us the torch of truth, the light of his divine word? If we would form a correct estimate of any object in common life we bring it to the light, that we may examine it on every side: do so by all your pursuits, my friends; do so by your opinions, your motives, your hopes and fears, your souls and your circumstances, your plans and habits; all you have, all you are—bring all to the light,—the light of Scripture.—The individual whose judgment of things is erroneous cannot be innocent; his is guilty error, unless he has brought every thing to the light of divine truth, and has besought that light of heaven may shine into his soul. “Thy word is truth,” said the psalmist, “the entrance of thy word giveth light,” said he. Gospel light and truth then are one.

“When once it enters to the mind,
It sheds such light abroad;
The meanest souls instruction find
And raise their thoughts to God.”

The children of spiritual Israel still dwell in Goshen; light is in their dwellings and among them. Yes, there is a mental and a spiritual Goshen in which God causes his people for the most part to dwell. It still stands on record, “All thy children shall be taught of God.” “I am the light of the world,” saith Jesus, “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

There is also divine providence both in its bright and gloomy dispensations. If it is true (as it certainly is) that Jehovah fixes the bounds of his people's habitations—that the very hairs of their heads are numbered—that he has them under his special care and protection; it is equally true that their path through life is a chequered scene: it is not all light; not all enjoyments, and peace, and purity, and love with them in this world; but on the

other hand, neither is it all gloom and sorrow: there is light amidst the darkness. Job for a time enjoyed much prosperity and peace; and it was an affecting view he took of it afterwards, when he said, "Oh that I were as in months that are past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head; and when by his light I walked through darkness." The dispensations of providence with which he was visited were very gloomy and dark, so that he was brought to exclaim, "He hath brought me into darkness and not into light." All was obscurity: he could not see why God had so grievously afflicted him, nor could he see any prospect of an end to his afflictions; all was shrouded in mystery. Sorrows and suffering abounded towards him—yet light was sown for him, it sprang up and bare fruit even in this dark world: gladness and peace once more took possession of his heart; and such was his subsequent prosperity that it exceeded all he had known before.

Is it darkness with any of the Lord's people present? Are his dealings mysterious? Are their state and prospects full of gloom and obscurity? Child of sorrow, strive to bow with submission to the will of your Heavenly Father.

"Whate'er thy lot, whoe'er thou be,
Bow to affliction; kiss the rod:
And in thy circling sorrows, see
The hand of God."

"The bruised reed he'll never break;
Affliction all his children feel:
He wounds thee for his mercy's sake,
He wounds to heal."

Let patience have her perfect work."—
"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." "Why art thou cast down oh my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me?" "Hope in God, for thou shalt yet praise him who is the health of thy countenance." "At evening time it shall be light." Yes, then, when you are expecting the darkness to increase—when the sun of enjoyment seems to have set for ever,—then, "at eventime it shall be light." "Who is among you that feareth the Lord and obeyeth his servant: that walketh in darkness and hath no light; let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."

There are also spiritual and eternal lights, with their opposite states of darkness.—
"With thee is the fountain of life," said the sacred writer, and "in thy light shall we see light." While we are in the darkness of natural corruption and alienation from God, we know nothing aright, nothing of the evils of sin, nothing of the astonishing love of Jesus, we have no just conceptions of the amazing and stupendous work of redemption, or of the work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of man. But when infinite compassion Jehovah enlightens the understanding and touches the heart, we see and feel the reality and vast importance of eternal things—we see at what an awful distance sin has placed us from a God of spotless purity—we feel how deeply we are steeped in the poison and pollution of iniquity—we adore the infinite wisdom manifested in the plan of redemption, that stupendous plan, which while it redeems, pardons and sanctifies the sinner: satisfies also the high claims of divine justice, magnifies the divine perfections, and brings "Glory to God in the highest." Some of us, we trust, have been made partakers of this spiritual light; it has shewn to us our need of salvation and of sanctification, it has revealed to us the Redeemer—his suitability to our soul's need, the preciousness of his blood, the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, and the utter worthlessness of any remedy but this for the woes of a sin-stained world.

Permit us to ask each of you, has the Sun of Righteousness arisen upon your soul? If so, his bright beams have chased away the night of sin, of error, of rebellion, and of unbelief. "Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Need we inform you what spiritual darkness is? Alas! it is to be feared that in most assemblies there are some who are living in darkness, with souls dead to the experimental knowledge and enjoyment of spiritual things; and a state of death is a state of darkness—we say dead to all *experience* and *enjoyment* of spiritual things, because there may be a theoretic

knowledge of them without experience—we may comprehend and explain that which we do not possess; but the light Jesus imparts to his followers is the light of experience: they know, because they feel—they believe, because they experience—they have the witness *within*; and the spiritual they possess leads on to light eternal: it begins on earth, it is perfected in glory. My friends, there is also eternal darkness; we warn you that you may escape from it. “Flee from the wrath to come.” We read of those to whom the blackness of darkness is apportioned for ever,—but that eternal state of bliss which is in reverse for the people of God has no cloud of error, sorrow, sin, or pain; no darkness of soul or of dispensation, for the former things are passed away, are exchanged for light and joy eternal.

2.—We have now to consider, more briefly, in the second place, what may be affirmed concerning the objects here set before us: God divides the light from the darkness. He is accomplishing this upon earth by a mysterious but infinitely wise process. Much light and darkness dwells in the minds of individuals—in the various religious sects throughout the land, and among the different nations of the world. Whatever true light is in the world, it is of God. He is its Author. By nature all are under the dominion of the prince of darkness, and are enslaved by him. But a stronger than he comes upon him and delivers the captive from the dark dungeons of iniquity. Speaking of some of the most notorious sinners, the apostle says, “Among whom we *all* had our conversation in time past, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.”—Jesus came to be a light to them that sit in darkness; he sends his Spirit with his word to subdue the rebellious heart, to awaken the insensible heart—to pour the light of celestial day upon the benighted spirit—to shew the sinner to himself, and to reveal the saving mercy of God in Christ to reveal the dangers that lie in his pathway to eternity—to give him right views of every essential truth connected with salvation and eternal life—to teach him everything it is requisite he should know and experience ere he can inhabit the realms of light above—in short, to separate the light from the darkness. Hitherto the

very light had been darkness; there had been light in the intellect perhaps, but darkness in the soul (for in many an unrenewed character the one is strangely mixed with the other). There may even possibly exist a theoretic knowledge of divine things where the blackest crimes dwell in the heart and are perpetrated in the life. But where Jesus shines forth in mercy—where the Holy Spirit exerts his power, the light is separated from the darkness; there is no longer that heterogeneous mixture of knowledge and sin, of divine truth in the intellect and sin in the life, which formerly existed. Jehovah has wrought his wondrous work, has divided the light from the darkness, has separated the sinner from his sins, “and behold all things are become new.”

Is there a soul in this audience that feels its own state to be a state of spiritual darkness? a soul only saying, “Oh, that God would regenerate me!” Let him turn that wish into a prayer, “Let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”—Yes, while our gracious God, the fountain of light, imparts wisdom and knowledge in answer to prayer, “he upbraideth not,” he will never upbraid us for our ignorance, if it be not wilful ignorance *i. e.*, ignorance in which we allow and encourage ourselves. There are those who choose to remain ignorant of religious truths, that by their ignorance they may extenuate their guilt; but ignorance is no excuse for guilt. It is written in holy scripture concerning some who wished not to retain God in their knowledge, that “this they willingly were ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing in the water and out of the water.”—They did not wish to know this, or anything else respecting God, or to retain him in their knowledge; what a sad and a ruinous state of mind—yet alas! how many there are now who wilfully put from them the remembrance of Jehovah, desiring not the knowledge of his ways. Will their ignorance excuse their guilt? it will not, because their ignorance is wilful. Let us never shun the light of truth, let us seek to know truth even though truth should condemn us, seeing that there is no state of darkness from which Jesus is not able

and willing to deliver us if we come unto God by him.

Allow us to ask, my friends, what is the state of your souls in the sight of God? (for all our hearing is of little use unless the word is applied to the conscience.)

Those of you who attend the preaching of the gospel in this place, certainly have the light of truth in your intellect. If you are still ignorant of the doctrines of divine grace, of the character of Jesus, of the way of salvation by him, of the corruption of your nature, the value of your souls, the vast importance of eternal things, it must be your own fault. There is light in your intellect, but where is your heart? Is it grovelling in the darkness and pollution of iniquity? or have you experienced the sweetness of spiritual light—light from Mount Calvary, revealing to you the love of Jesus? Light from Mount Tabor, revealing the Saviour's excellent glory?—Light from the Spirit and the word, pointing out the pathway to eternal bliss! filling you with love to God, and with desires to be conformed to the image of HIM that died for you? Has light imparted shown to you by contrast your natural darkness and pollution? Has it caused you to repent, to confess, to forsake, and loathe iniquity, and carefully to avoid all appearance of evil? If not, the light that is in thee is as yet darkness. Go, poor sinner, go to him who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, and he will shed it abroad in your heart, separating you from your sins, and bringing you into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But darkness and light are strangely mixed in our own gospel land. What glorious truths are proclaimed every Lord's-day from thousands of pulpits! What hundreds of thousand hear these truths and rejoice in them! What numbers of souls are brought every year out of darkness into God's marvellous light, by the preaching of the word, and other instrumentalities! What multitudes of books containing pure gospel truth are put into the hands of childhood and of youth in the present day! What a profusion there is of the word of life! What numbers of excellent christians, of various denominations, adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour, are to be found in various parts of the nation! All this is

good, this is the progress of light, this is cause for rejoicing, this is from God, this is the work of the Spirit. But then, on the other hand, what numbers live in the land as if there was no God. What profanation of the Sabbath! What unblushing profligacy! What opposition, covetousness, and deceit! What empty profession, substituting the forms of religion for religion itself! What numbers have their minds poisoned by infidel publications, corrupting fictions, or pernicious errors, circulated through the land! All this is darkness, and it emanates from the prince of darkness. But God, "who moves in a mysterious way," is even now separating the light from the darkness; truth is from heaven, and it must prevail. Jehovah frequently accomplishes his gracious designs by his preached word. Hence he said to the first preachers of the gospel, "Ye are the lights of the world." It is the duty of those who have received the divine light to impart it to others. Ye who are stewards of the mysteries of God, it is yours to point out what is truth and what is error—what sin is, and what is true righteousness, and thus distinguish between and separate the light from the darkness.

But consider the world at large—contemplate China; look at India; turn to the isles of the vast Pacific; regard Madagascar, and Africa—the mysterious and merciful process is carrying on among these; they shall not always lie in darkness, the divine word is beginning to illumine them, souls are being won to the Redeemer, there is a gathering in of those who are to be heirs of salvation, separating the heathen from their abominations—shewing them the difference between light and darkness, pouring the bright beams of gospel day upon millions who had hitherto sat in the region of the shadow of death, and thus hastening on the period of final separation. The most superficial observer of transpiring events may see that things are tending to a greater and more effectual display of gospel truth, especially in reference to China, Madagascar, and India. All this is the work of God; his providence is removing every obstacle to the triumphs of his grace; even in the cloud which overhangs Europe at present, Jehovah is at work; swaying the sceptre of his omnipotence over the kingdoms of this world, he is bending all

the affairs of nations, all transpiring events, all the designs of sovereigns, into subservience to his gracious designs; causing all improvements in art, all discoveries in science, all increasing facilities for international intercourse, to further his vast designs of mercy in the regeneration of a dying world. The conversion and restoration of that world unto himself, is as solely and truly his work, as creation was at the first. What is the apostle's account of it? "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus;" thus light was given to them, that they might impart it to others. They preached and wrote the word under divine inspiration, that word and spirit are now the instruments of spreading divine light throughout the earth, and thus all things are of God.

To conclude,—The day of final separation is hastening on, then, for ever and at once, God will divide "the light from the darkness," truth from error, holiness from iniquity, the righteous from the wicked. Truth and righteousness shall dwell in heaven, error and iniquity, shall sink to hell. The wicked will then be all darkness, the righteous will then be all light. Yes, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Who hath a heart to feel, or a mind capable of reflection, let him consider what will then be his portion; let him not dismiss the thought, let him ask himself whether he is now in the light, walking in light, loving and reflecting divine light, or whether he loves the deeds of darkness, the ways of error and of sin, and if he does, how he will bear to dwell amidst the horrors of eternal darkness.

"But, beloved, we hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

PAUL GERHARDT.

PSA. xxxvii. 5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass."

This distinguished hymn writer of Germany was a preacher in Brandenburg. His style of preaching did not please the Elector, who ordered him to quit the coun-

try or change his doctrine. Gerhardt chose the former course, and left the scene of his labours, accompanied by his wife and children. The sequel is thus related by Rev. J. Curwen, in a little book for children, entitled "Sketches in Nassau:"—"At the end of their first day's journey they came to a wood, and rested at a little inn they found there. The little children were crying and clinging to their mother, and she, too, who had kept up all day, began now to weep. This made Paul Gerhardt have a very heavy heart, so he went alone into the dark wood to think and pray. While he was in the wood, this text came into his mind and comforted him, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.' He was so happy that he had remembered that text, and so thankful to God, that he tried to make the text into a hymn as he paced up and down beneath the trees. When he went into the house, he told his wife about the text, and began to repeat to her his hymn. She soon dried her tears (the children had already gone to sleep), and became as hopeful and trustful as Paul Gerhardt himself.

"They had scarcely retired to rest, when they heard a great noise at the door. It was a man on horseback, who said, 'I come from Duke Christian, of Museburg, and I am in search of Paul Gerhardt; do you know whether he has passed this way?' 'Paul Gerhardt!' said the landlord, 'yes, he is in this house!' 'Then let me see him instantly,' said the Duke's messenger. And the messenger handed to the good man a large sealed letter; it came from the good Duke Christian, and it said, 'Come into my country, Paul Gerhardt, and you shall have church, and people, and house, and home, and livelihood, and liberty to preach the gospel to your heart's content.'"

PRAYER.—Sometimes there passes over the fields a wind which parches the plants, and their withered stems will droop toward the earth; but if watered by the dew, they recover their freshness, and lift up their languishing heads. So there are always burning winds which pass over the soul, and wither it. Prayer is the dew which refreshes it again.

THE WHOLE HEART.

BY REV. T. L. OUYLER.

A FEW years ago a distinguished American naturalist was discovered by one of our vessels wandering alone on the silent shores of the Pacific Ocean. He was strolling by the water side on a sharp search for specimens of natural history for the cabinet of Harvard University. Five thousand long miles separated him from his comfortable Boston home. But what were privations, or loneliness, or scanty fare, or the absence of loved faces to him? Was not his whole soul embarked in the search for rare flowers, such as flame on Californian plains, and for the cunning shells that the Pacific waves cast up on the pebbly strand? His *heart* was invested in the enterprise: he was a self-devoted missionary of science.

This was the secret of Newton's imperial success. He gave his days and nights to physical science. And when his magnificent discoveries had been achieved, and the heavens had yielded their hidden secrets to his telescope—when the solid globe had been weighed by him as in a balance—then the genius of truth crowned his honoured head with the benediction—"Thou hast sought me, and found me, for thou didst search for me with *all the heart*."

Show me the effective Christian, too, and I will show you a man whose whole heart is in love with Jesus. The will to serve God (implanted by the converting Spirit) is at no loss to find ten thousand ways to do it. He is "always abounding in the work of the Lord." On the Sabbath he always manages to get to church, however fiercely the sun streams down its fire, or however violently the rain-cloud pours its deluge upon the pavements. His heart so aches for the poor waifs gathered into his mission-school class, that a headache is no hindrance to him. When the Wednesday night comes, it finds him weary with a long day's work; but the bell rings for the weekly lecture, and a *heart-bell* within responds to the welcome music. He says, "I cannot afford to miss my soul's food to-night;" no more can his pastor afford to have him absent. It is soon the night for the prayer-gathering. He will be missed if he takes counsel with tired limbs or sleepy eyes.

His soul will miss the meeting too, and be the leaner for the loss. So he fires up the engine once more, and with a wide-awake heart in a weary body, he sallies off to the prayer-circle. The neighbour who dropped in to go over the news, or to inquire about stocks, or to take a game of chess, does not detain him. His *heart* is with Jesus and the disciples in the prayer-meeting already, and his body "follows suit." Does a lover ever find the night too cold, too stormy, or too dark for him to venture off to find her "in whom his soul delighteth?"

Such service of Christ is downright enjoyment. It is a daily luxury. It is none the less enjoyable because it entails some hardships and self-denial—because it sometimes sends a head-wind of unpopularity into his face—because it requires him to wear an old coat the longer, in order to have a few extra shillings for a work of charity—or because it involves some sacrifice of money-getting or of social comfort. He turns work into play. His soul lives in a constant sunshine; and the bad digestion of a spiritual dyspeptic he knows no more of than of the plague or the Jewish leprosy. But take the *heart* out of a man's religion, and it becomes the most pitiable penance and the dreariest of drudgeries.

Perhaps too, we may find in this very spot the reason why so many awakened and once anxious sinners have never yet found the Saviour. They only sought the infinite blessing with but a fraction of the heart. God was in earnest when he invited them; they were not. The Spirit of grace was in earnest when he strove with them; they were not. A fragment of the heart, a few hours of the Sabbath, an occasional fitful thought, they were willing to give to Christ, if he would ensure them a safe escape from perdition. But the very least and lowest terms which the blessed Saviour could offer them were—"Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye search for me *with all your heart*."

Unconverted reader! does not this touch the very "sore spot" with you? Is not this your very sin and danger? You ask everything from God; you will not give everything to him. Just as surely as the day of judgment comes and finds you hopeless and Christless, you will take up a bitter lamentation in words like these—"I am

lost—lost for ever. I might have been saved. I often came near to heaven; I was more than once at the threshold. Others passed by and went in. My intimate friend went in. A brother entered in at my very side; my wife, with a tearful pleading to me to follow her, passed through the open door. I *might* have gone. Conscience bade me go. Reason urged it. A crucified Saviour, with pierced hand, opened wide the gate. I *expected* to come in ere it should close. The Spirit strove with me, to give God my heart. But the conditions of salvation were—“Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye search for me with *all the heart*.” This I would not give. I kept back what God asked, and I have *lost everything!*” To sink into perdition is a fearful doom at best, but infinitely more harrowing and awful for the soul that remembers that it fell there from the very threshold of heaven!

FORGIVENESS.

That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Surely the recipients of mercy should be ministers of mercy, and the mercy which follows them, in divine bestowment, should be the mercy they follow in human imitation. When He forgives, it is with no reservation. It is not a qualified thing, carrying with it some terrible adjunct, which cuts off from the value of the gift, dimming its lustre, and embittering its sweetness. But it is clear, and pure, and rich, and comes streaming down from the heaven of heavens—a flood of light. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” And thus human mercy is to show itself without that cruel abatement, “I can forgive, but not forget.” Frank, cordial, hearty, should be every pardon of another’s offence; thus carrying the stamp of heaven’s mint upon it, and having in it a ring of love as the coin of God.

God will multiply pardons. For thousands and thousands of years has he been forgiving rebels, and acquitting debtors. Think of the pardons which fill a lifetime, the pardons which cover a century, the pardons bestowed on the individuals of a nation or a race! On the other hand, how soon is our pardoning power exhausted!

Some one offends; we forgive him. He offends again; we forgive again. But now the fountain ceases; the water in our mercy’s well fails. Yet the Saviour teaches us that merciful love in us is to be the counterpart of the merciful love of our Father in heaven. “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.” Not only do pardons come when the children of men turn to their heavenly Father, saying, “I repent;” but while they continue obstinate and rebellious, he forbears to strike them with the rod of his fierce anger. He is long-suffering, and not willing that any should perish. If that be a model for us, then our wrath is not to be let loose against our enemies until they come and submit themselves; but rather mercy is to curb resentment, and to triumph over judgment. Let no one say, “I will wait till some overture of repentance be made;” for God’s method is to anticipate by overtures of forgiveness. It is common to cry, “He ought to be the first to come to me;” but a Christian should not be loth to say, “I will be the first to go to him.” Allay irritation—pacify tempestuous temper—send an embassy—invite reconciliation.

THE JEWS.

When we see gas pipes laid through a city, waiting only for the gas to be turned on, we see at once the design, although at present the pipes are buried and apparently useless. So it is with the Jews. They are laid in every nation of the world, speaking its language, familiar with its usages, penetrating to its utmost core. At present they seem buried and useless. But they are to be the great future preachers of the gospel, and when the light is turned on, they will illuminate the whole world. It will require God’s miraculous power to produce this; but it has required God’s miraculous power to place them where they are. Shall we refuse to see that purpose in the preparation, which we would at once recognize in the result?

The longest meditation on our evil fortunes will not better them. An act, in the right direction, outweighs a century of good resolutions.

"WHAT AM I WORTH!"

A FEW months ago, a poor working mason, a foreigner, and a Frenchman, a stranger in London, went to a builder's yard, in that city, and requested work. The foreman to whom he applied hesitated at granting his request, but the foreigner persevered. "If I am not worth sevenpence an hour," said he, "give me sixpence; if I am not worth sixpence, give me fivepence; if I am not worth fivepence, give me what you think I am worth, only let me have some work." He gained his point, and received work, at first at a low rate of pay, but proving himself to be a good workman, his wages were advanced, and he is now getting on very well. This man knew what he was worth, and felt sure that if he were tried, others would soon know also. He was willing to stoop at first that he might rise at last. His example appears to me worthy of imitation, and that we may gain something by asking the question, "What am I worth?" Perhaps the answer may not be so favourable as we expected, but let us be honest and willing to work for what we are worth. False appearances never answer; if we try to pass off ourselves at more than our real value, we shall soon be detected. False coin will not long pass as genuine, and we shall soon sink to our true level. But let us not be discouraged, even if we are not worth so much as we thought we were—"It is never too late to mend." Every day we may learn something, no matter how little; and as "many a little makes a mickle" we may soon find our value to ourselves and to others greatly increased. So much for our business value, but let us ask the question, "What am I worth" with another meaning—"What am I worth?" What is the value of my real self, of that part, without which the most powerful frame becomes so much lifeless clay—we are at a loss for an answer, it has been furnished to us by One who spake as never man spake. These are his words, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"—(Mark viii. 36.) This estimate must be correct. The soul is worth more than the whole world. Let us then be deeply im-

pressed by the value of our souls. Let us not barter them for pleasure, not sell them for gold, but commit them unto Him who is both able and willing to keep them in safety, both here and hereafter. Truly we may return a solemn answer to the question, "What am I worth?"

GOD IN ALL, AND ALL IN GOD.

Thee in the loving bloom of morn,
Thee in the purple eve we see:
All things in earth and heaven, O Lord,
Live and move in Thee!

Thee in the spring's fresh joy of life;
Thee in the May-dew's timid glow;
Thee in the autumn's mellow blush;
Thee in winter's snow!

Life is not life without Thee, Lord;
Thou fill'st creation's wondrous whole;
Light is not light without Thy love;
Blank this boundless soul!

Thee, Lord, without, this seeing eye
Looks on a mist, a void, a blot;
Thee, Lord, without, this hearing ear
Hears, yet heareth not!

No, not the beauty of the earth,
Not the wide splendour of the sea;
No, not the glory of the heavens;—
Save as seen in Thee!

No, not the fragrance of the woods,
Nor the deep music of the breeze.
Not all the hues of field and flower;—
But Thyself in these!

No, not the valley nor the hill,
The lake, the stream, the waterfall;
No, not the girdling zone of blue;—
But Thyself in all!

No, not the flash of diamond,
The glow of pale or rosy gem;
Not the fair marble's polish'd front;—
But Thyself in them!

Without Thee day is darkest night,
With Thee the deepest night is day;
Earth's only sun, O Lord, art Thou;—
Shine our night away.

Being of beings, Lord and God,
Thee in all things these eyes would see,
And all things round, beneath, above,
Lord in Thee, in Thee!

Most blessed Lord, great God of all,
My dawn, my noon, my day, my eve,
My light, my glory, and my joy,
Lord, in whom I live.

Give me every day and hour,
Some newer, holier, happier ray,
The earnest to my longing heart,
Lord, of Thy true day.

HORATIUS BONAR.

THE LAMB OF GOD.

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in His blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

"I lay my wants on Jesus;
All fulness dwells in Him:
He heals all my diseases;
He doth my soul redeem.
I lay my griefs on Jesus,
My burdens and my cares;
He from them all releases,
He all my sorrows shares.

"I rest my soul on Jesus,
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on His breast recline.
I love the name of Jesus,
Immanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes
His name abroad is pour'd.

"I long to be like Jesus,
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;
I long to be like Jesus,
The Father's holy child.
I long to be with Jesus
Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints His praises,
To learn the angels' song."

THE BOOK OF BOOKS.

AMID the duties and difficulties, the cares and perplexities of life, how many a pang and tear would it save us, if we went with chastened and inquiring spirits to these sacred oracles! How many trials would be mitigated, how many sorrows soothed, and temptations avoided, if we proceeded every step in life with the inquiry, "What saith the Scripture?" How few, it is to be feared, make (as they should do), the Bible a final court of appeal, an arbiter for the settlement of all the vexed questions in the consistory of the soul? God keep us from that saddest phase and dogma of modern infidelity—the sacred volume classed among the worn and effete books of the past—God keep us from regarding his lively oracles with only that misnamed "veneration," which the antiquary bestows on some piece of mediæval armour, a relic

and memorial of by-gone days but unsuitable for an age which has superseded the cruder views of these old "chroniclers," and inaugurated a new era of religious development. Vain dreamers! "For ever, O God, thy word is settled in heaven." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." "The word of the Lord is tried." "Thy word is very sure, therefore thy servant loveth it." What a crowd of witnesses could be summoned to give personal evidence of its preciousness and value. How many aching heads would raise themselves from their pillows, and tell of their obligations to its soothing messages of love and power! How many death-beds could send their occupants with pallid lips to tell of the staff which upheld them in the dark valley! How many in the hour of bereavement could lay their finger on the promise that first dried the tear from their eye, and brought back the smile to their saddened countenances! How many voyagers in life's tempestuous ocean, now landed on the heavenly shore, would be ready to hush their golden harps, and descend to earth with the testimony that this was the blessed beacon-light which guided them to their desired haven!

Ab, *Philosophy!* thou hast never yet, as this book, taught a man how to die! *Reason!* with thy flickering torch, thou hast never yet guided to such sublime mysteries, such comforting truths, as these! *Science!* thou hast penetrated the arcana of nature, sunk thy shafts into earth's recesses, unburied its stores, counted its strata, measured the height of its massive pillars, down to the very pedestals of primeval granite. Thou hast tracked the lightning, traced the path of the tornado, uncontained the distant planet, foretold the coming of the comet, and the return of the eclipse. But thou hast never been able to gauge the depths of man's soul, or to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

No, no: this antiquated volume is still the "Book of books," the oracle of oracles, the beacon of beacons; the poor man's treasury; the child's companion; the sick man's health; the dying man's life; shallows for the infant to walk in; depths for giant intellect to explore and adore! *Philosophy,* if she would but own it, is indebted here

for the noblest of her maxims; poetry for the loftiest of her themes. Painting has gathered here her noblest inspiration. Music has ransacked those golden stores for the grandest of her strains. And if there be life in the church of Christ, if her missionaries and ministers are carrying the torch of salvation through the world, where is that torch lighted but at these same undying altar fires? When a philosophy, falsely so called, shall become dominant, and seek with its proud dogmas to supersede this *divine* philosophy; when the old Bible of Joshua, and David, and Timothy, and Paul, is clasped and closed; the only morality and philosophy worth speaking of will have perished from the earth. Dagon will have taken the place of God's ark; the world's funeral pile may be kindled.

Love your Bibles, as they are the *souvenirs* of your earliest childhood; the gift of a mother's love, or the pledge of a father's affection; so let them be your last and fondest treasure; the keepsakes and heir-looms which you are most desirous to transmit to your children.—*J. R. Macduff, D.D.*

LABOUR FOR CHRIST.

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord."—
1 Cor. xv. 58.

Come labour on!
Who dare stand idle on the harvest plain,
While all around him waves the golden grain;
And to each servant does the Master say,
"Go, work to day!"

Come, labour on!
The labourers are few, the field is wide,
New stations must be filled, and blanks supplied;
From lands far distant, from our own at home,
The call is, "Come!"

Come, labour on!
The work is pleasant, the reward is sure,
And blest are those who to the end endure:
How full their joy, how deep their rest shall be,
O, Lord with Thee!
Church Miss. Juv. Instructor.

"PERFECT PEACE."

A mind at "perfect peace" with God;
Oh, what a word is this!
A sinner reconciled through blood;—
This, this, indeed, is peace!

By nature and by practice far—
How very far—from God;
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him
Through faith in Jesus' blood.

So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For in the Person of His Son,
I am as near as he.

So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be:
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me.

Why should I ever careful be,
Since such a God is mine?
He watches o'er me night and day,
And tells me, "Mine is thine."

A TOUCHING SCENE.

Rev. Horace Bushnell, who is blind, a city missionary for twenty years in Cincinnati, in his last report relates the following;

"Leaving the omnibus one day, and feeling for the sidewalk with my staff, a woman's voice inquired;

"Are you blind sir?"

"Quite blind."

"Well, here's the sidewalk; but can you guess where you are?"

"Yes, at the corner of — and — streets."

"Well, you are good at guessing; but can you tell why God has deprived you, a holy man, of sight and left me, a drunken sinner, with my eyes?"

"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"Yes, he may be your Father, but he is not mine."

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us all?"

"One God created us, but I am now an enemy and not a child."

"It may be so, yet through the blood of Jesus they who were sometimes alienated and enemies by wicked works, become reconciled to God."

"It may be you would be offended if I offered to lead you over this rough place?"

Now Simon, the Pharisee, said silently in my heart, if this man were of God, he would know what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner; but the scene of Bethany was present, and I said, "I will not be offended; take my arm."

She did so, saying, "Thank God! thank God!"

"For what?"

"That I may guide the feet of one of

his servants, for I am not fit to touch the hem of his garment. I had a brother once, and he was a minister of God like you!"

She was weeping. The hearse passed before us. She said, "You can't see that?"

"No, what is it?"

"That is the pauper's carriage. Even we drunken paupers ride home in that when life ends."

"To what home?"

"The grave."

"Is the grave the sinner's home?"

"Would to God it were; then I could have a hope of rest at last."

"Have you no hope?"

"No hope! Their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched."

"But you *should* hope?"

"Why should I hope?"

"God is good!"

"But I have abused his goodness."

"God is merciful!"

"I have despised his mercy."

"But God is love!"

For a short time she was silent, and then resumed: "How can such a sinner as I have hope?"

"It is a faithful saying that Jesus Christ came to save sinners."

"But I am a *great sinner*."

"His blood cleanseth from all sin."

"I'm a lost sinner!"

"But he can save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Now go and put this trembling hand into the hand of Jesus. At his feet confess your sins and ask for mercy, and you shall obtain it."

She wept aloud, and with a voice of agony exclaimed, "Oh! that I knew where I could find him. I would kneel at his feet and wash them with my tears, and never leave the place till the paupers' carriage came to bear me to the grave."

Here I parted with the despairing stranger, whom I had never met before; but, recently, when passing an unfrequented street, that same voice called, "God bless you, sir! God bless you! Let me help you over this broken way, for I have found him!"

"Found whom?"

"He that can save to the uttermost; and blessed be his holy name, for his blood cleanseth us from all sin."—*Congregationalist*.

SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGIAN.

To the speculations of the cloistered thinker, on all spiritual questions, we attach but little value. His God is in danger of becoming a theory—salvation a theory, sin a theory—everything a theory. One single day's actual contact with the world as it is, and of real endeavour to raise it, or to chase its woes from its saddened heart, would explode the dreamy creation. It is like some theoretic machine with hidden flaw, which no sooner becomes embodied in steel than it is seen that it has not a lever which will lift nor a wheel that will revolve. And if we must take our theology from any man—which God forbid!—give us the village pastor who is living in intimate fellowship with God by prayer, and is instant in season and out of season in the preaching of the Word, and in the private ministration of its warnings and consolations to his flock, rather than the most learned professor, whose speculations and researches, carried on in seclusion from all the tests and checks and connections of actual life, may be as false as they are brilliant and as deceitful as they are profound. If, then, we would have strong faith let us not forget that this depends far more on spiritual sympathies than on intellectual penetration; that it is rather by prayer than by thinking that we rise into the light—that the culture of the affections and the conscience must not be accounted of less value, but rather of more, than that of the logical understanding, and that he alone who doeth the will of God can know of the doctrine. Give us a strong faith in the gospel, and a corresponding enthusiasm, and other qualifications, will grow out of these, in many cases, as their natural product. Possessing these a preacher will feel constrained to free himself as far as possible from every defect which impairs his usefulness, and to acquire every element that will increase it. He will not waste his time in collecting flowers of rhetoric, often faded or artificial, when the people are famishing for want of the living bread. He will not strain after an intellectualism which is neither intelligent nor intelligible, and which, instead of revealing profundity, betrays shallowness and conceit. He will know that the highest teacher is he who can simplify the great, and not he who obscures the little; that he who would hit the heart must not shoot above the head. A plain gospel, delivered to our people in plain English, with a plain purpose, will, with the benediction of Heaven, give us a ministry that will crowd the narrow way with pilgrims and fill our Redeemer's heart with joy.—*Rev. E. Mellor, Liverpool.*

THE PRAYING WIFE.

Years ago in our western country a young couple were united in marriage. They at once entered their humble abode, containing two rooms, one serving as kitchen and dining-room, and the other as sleeping apartment. The bride was a simple-hearted child of God, but the husband knew of religion only by the hearing of the ear. It was not long before the latter discovered that at a certain time every morning his wife disappeared, and was nowhere to be found. The mystery was soon solved. This was her hour of secret prayer. Here was a new and no very welcome revelation. One in affection, one by ordinance of God in bonds which only crime or death could sunder, between them yawned a gulf wide as between heaven and earth. To the wife was open a world of hopes and joys to which the husband was a stranger. While he was engaged in such reflections, every day the silent sermon was preached. At length he could endure it no longer. By divine grace he was drawn step by step to faith and repentance, and ere long he found himself by the side of his companion at the same mercy-seat, and at the same communion-table.

NAME AND SURNAME.

"I FIND my name and surname in the Bible," said one. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Lost Sinner; that is my name and surname." Christ did not come to save righteous people—if there are any of them anywhere—His errand is not to them; but if there are sinners anywhere, the gospel is for their souls. It was not Jews Christ came to save. It was not grown-up people Christ came to save. It was sinners, be they Jews or Gentiles, men, or women, or Children. It was not great sinners, old sinners or young sinners; it was not any particular sort of sinners, but sinners simply. If any person be a sinner, Christ is a Saviour for him; for the word is, *Whosoever* believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

Do you observe Paul's note, appended to the true, good, plain saying of the gospel? He says, "Sinners, of whom I am chief." Was Paul, then, so very bad a man? Was he worse than all others?

Well, he felt so about himself, especially because he was once a persecutor of Christ in his people. Most people who know their own hearts have a feeling that no one can be worse than themselves. But did Paul shut himself out from the good news that Christ came to save sinners, because he felt that he was so very bad—because he called himself the chief? The very contrary. He immediately goes on to say, "I obtained mercy." If he did, why not others? Why not any one? "Why not," said the poor man about whom a well known tract has been written, "why not poor Joseph?" "Why not I?" each of you should say. The good news is for you—your very selves; for you, John; for you, James; for you, Mary; for you, Elizabeth; for you, —; fill up the blank with your own name, whatever that be, and still the sentence would read true. "To you is the word of this salvation sent."

THINE.

It is the language of the believer to his God, I am *thine*. Not my own to live for the mere indulgence of selfish feelings, nor the world's, to be devoted to its empty pursuits and pleasures, but *thine*. Not only so, but *thine altogether*, with no divided heart, no two masters, no double allegiance, part earthly and part heavenly, but supremely, exclusively *thine*. *Thine*, too, at all times, whether flattered by the world, or frowned on by it, engaged in business, or employed in worship. *Thine* in affliction and prosperity, in sickness or health, life and death. *Thine*, too, in all places; not only when surrounded by congenial Christian friends, but amidst the hostile elements of the world; whether in thy holy temple, or in the solitude of the desert; whether in the quietude of the family, or in the fierce conflict of the battle-field. Thou art the ever-present God in all places; and in all places I find Thee, even in the most unlikely and improbable. *Thine*, also, *forever*. I have given myself to Thee beyond recall, not for a season, but for all seasons. The bond is indissoluble; earth cannot wean from it; Satan cannot break the tie; death cannot dissolve it. Now *thine* by a willing surrender, eternity will perpetuate the union. Glorious distinction! *Thine altogether*, *thine at all times*, *thine in all places*, *thine forever*.—*Presbyterian*.

THE GOOD NEWS.

JUNE 15th, 1863.

AN ADDRESS TO THE CHILDREN.

ON THE TWO BOOKS.

My young friends, I wish to draw your attention to the two Great Books,—the two greatest and best books in the world.—What books do you think these will be? Books, you all know, differ in their merits; and surely none of you are so foolish, as to estimate a book simply by its size. It is not the number of pages which determines their value, but it is what is written upon these pages. There are many books published, and some of them large ones too, that only live a few years in the world, and then they are laid past upon the shelf, to lie unnoticed, amid cobwebs and dust.—There are only a few, such as the Bible, the Pilgrim's Progress, Homer, Milton, and Shakespeare which will be handed down to the end of time. But what do you ask are the two great books, amid so many good ones? I have heard of an old woman, and she was a good old woman too, who said if she had the Bible and Shakespeare, she would ask for no more. In this woman's choice we have one of the great books, but Shakespeare is not the other. The Bible is undoubtedly one, and the other is that book to which the North American Indian referred, when the missionary asked him to accept of a Bible, as the book that would make him wise. "Dat book," he said, "be good enough for white man," but Red skin no need such book." "Red skin's book lie all around. It be on 'de ground, where he can track de buffalo and 'de deer. It be up on 'de tree, where he can find out where 'de coons and 'de bears sleep. It be up in 'de blue heavens, where he reads in 'de clouds 'de coming storm, 'dat sends him running to his wigwam.—

'Dat be Indian's large book, in which 'de Great Spirit speaks to him." This book which the wild Indian claims as his, but which is yours as well, is the other book of which I am to speak. It is called the Book of Nature. By the Book of Nature is meant everything that you can see around you,—the earth and all that it contains. It is styled a book, because it teaches us many things just like other books. And it is better than all other books in this respect, it is always open, and every one of you can read much of it, without going to school. It was God who gave us the Bible, and it was he also, who spread out wide for us the pages of the Book of Nature. Both coming from the same author, we would expect in them similarity of style. We would expect them to agree in many points; and so they do. It is to a few of these points of resemblance that I intend to turn your thoughts for a little.

I. BOTH BOOKS HAVE AN OLD AND A NEW ECONOMY.

If any of you have ever been in a museum, you might there have seen plants, shells, fishes, and bones of strange animals, such as do not now exist, all turned into solid stone. These which are called fossils, have been dug up out of the rocks. They once lived upon the earth's surface, and although they have been buried for thousands of years, geologists, who have studied this obsolete language of the Book of Nature, can decipher the writing upon these old stray leaves. Baron Cuvier was so expert at this, that if a single bone were given to him, he could give a correct drawing of the animal to which it belonged, even although he had never seen anything similar. And Hugh Miller, the stone mason, spent the greater part of his life, in studying the ancient part of the Book of Nature, and he has told us much about the rocks and their formation, but after

all that has been said about them, this part of the Book of Nature is misty and obscure. It is the present state of affairs, which we can read best, and by which we can best understand the present, where no stone fishes lie sleeping in stone shells, and where no stone birds are perched upon stone boughs, but where all is life, and beauty, and harmony. That the Book of Revelation has also got two distinct parts, every Sabbath school scholar knows. And you are also all well aware that, of the Old Testament and the New, the latter is the most easily understood. And it throws immense light upon the old, which would have remained to us a sealed book, had it not been followed up by the new. Its prophecies, its types, and its symbols would have been a riddle to the world, had the babe of Bethlehem not been born, and the Galilean carpenter not been crucified, when the fulness of time arrived. The Old Testament without the New would have been a lock without a key, no one could have opened it. But blessed be God, the New has been given, and the wayfaring man, though a fool cannot err therein. "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

II. BOTH BOOKS ARE FULL OF WONDERS.

They are so replete with wonders, that the difficulty is to make a selection.—Let a few random illustrations in each suffice. But where shall we turn to in the Book of Nature, for all God's works are wonderful? We ourselves are fearfully and wonderfully made, more so than any anatomist has ever yet told us of. We have each two eyes, and yet we do not see double, neither do we see things in a reversed position, although they are so painted upon the retins of the eye. And is it not also strange, that the fair European, the swarthy Ethiopian, the copper coloured Indian, the

yellow Mongolian and the Malay have all sprung from the same stock, although they differ so much in appearance and in color? Every little seed is a great wonder. Life lies wrapt in it, in a mystery. To look upon it, one would think it was completely shrivelled up, and withered, and yet life has been known to lie securely lodged in the seed, for thousands of years, and then the plant to which it has given birth, came up fresh and beautiful like a person from the grave. For you may have read that a few grains of wheat were once found in a mummy case in the pyramids of Egypt, and, although ages had elapsed since they had been placed there, when taken out and cast into the ground, they sprang up and grew, giving to the world one of the best kinds of wheat which we now have. You all know the name of nature's green carpet, the grass, where the crickets dance and sing all the long summer days, and where children love to play. You may be able to tell a volume about it,—that it is a plant of the same nature as the tall sugar cane, the reed that sighs to the breeze by the river side, and the yellow corn that waves in the meadow—how that, unlike other plants, the oftener you cut it down, the thicker and the greener it grows—how that it is at once the couch and the food of hundreds of thousands of living creatures. You may know a vast deal about it, but one thing you cannot tell, how a blade of grass grows. This is a wonder, which the most learned have not been able to solve. The learned and vain-glorious Buffon caused to be inscribed upon his own statue, "a genius equal to the majesty of nature," but a blade of grass was a problem too much for his boasted pretensions. It would be an endless task to enumerate all the wonders in Nature's Book, and instead of disappearing, they thicken around us when we turn to the Bible. There we see its bushes burning, but remaining un-

consumed. Its iron contrary to nature swims like a feather on the wave. Its rivers run blood, and its waters bubble into wine. Its lions crouch like timid lambs before its prophets, and its ravens bring them food. God's people walk unscathed amid its fires, and find for themselves an high way paved with deep sea weeds, and shell-fish. They feed upon the dews of the night, and drink of the rock-born stream. At one time, its cities disappear amid the flames of heaven, at another, they fall down fast at the trumpet's blast.—Angels, equipped for war, come forth as the captains of its armies, while the sun and the moon stand still to see its victories won. But why enlarge? What are all these wonders compared with the great one it contains? The greatest wonder that the world ever saw is to be found in the Bible. Go to Bethlehem, and you behold the God of Nature born, surrounded by the meanness of a stable. Follow him to Calvary, and you find him dying upon a tree.—Surely this is the wonder of wonders!—the king of wonders! And well may you exclaim, "Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, that the Lord of life and glory should thus empty himself for rebel man!"

III. BOTH BOOKS ARE FULL OF RICH VARIETY.

In the Bible we have diversity without end, histories, biographies, plain truths, profound doctrines, poetry, songs, and keen cutting proverbs. We have an account of births, marriages, deaths and murders, honest actions and dishonest actions. We have sweet promises, and severe threatenings, rejoicings, and wailings. It tells us of gardeners, shepherds, ploughmen, butlers, bakers, warriors, fishermen, sailors, custom-house officers, doctors, priests, princes, and kings. There is no other book in which there is such variety, except the Book of Nature. There we have the

mighty swelling river, the dew-drop and the ocean, the green hillock and the snow-clad mountain; the yellow gold, the white silver, the brown copper, and the grey iron, the plant which the hand of a child may uproot, and the oak with its fibres striking straight and deep into the soil, grasping tightly the rock, laying the foundation for a tree, that is to laugh at the winds for a hundred years.—The fir, with its roots running along the ground, scarce buried in the soil, while its trunk rises straight like an arrow pointing heavenward, emblem of an upright man, and like him too when storms shake the forests, it is the first to fall a victim to its violence, while the crooked bough sneaks low until it is past, when it again lifts its proud head, as if it had braved it all. But time would fail us to speak of the willow, weeping by the river side, where the flag and bulrush nod, of the apple, the cherry, and the palm-trees, with fruit cooked by nature's own hand,—of the maple, sucking sugar from the soil, and the wild vine, clasping them all in its arms, and trailing its tendrils through the flowers, whose name is legion; and how beautiful are these flowers!—Like boys and girls, and I mean colored ones as well as white skins, all are beautiful, and when I speak of flowers, I do not mean those only that are found in the nicely cultivated garden; there are as beautiful flowers scattered broadcast on every village common, trampled down by the horse's hoofs, as ever graced a lady's flower bed. And I like them all the better because every boy and girl may gather them by the bunch, and every one knows that children like flowers. The reason probably is, that like draws to like, for children themselves are flowers, and pretty flowers too, and like the wild flowers they are heaven's favorites, and you find them everywhere. But returning to our subject from which I have wandered.

IV. BOTH BOOKS PRESENT GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT, AND COMPLETE HARMONY IN ALL THEIR PARTS.

Although the Bible speaks to us of many things, it dwells upon one in particular, *salvation* is its great theme. This is the good news—the gospel, which pervades the whole book. No sooner had our first parents fallen, than we hear of it. It beams forth clearer and clearer, from the first promise made in the sinless garden, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, down to the fulness of time, when symbol and type vanish, as it bursts forth into a bright halo of splendour, on Calvary's Mount, in that unmistakable tragedy, when the earth trembled to its centre, and the sun hung black in air at high noon. So in the Book of Nature, life which may be fitly likened unto the gospel, may be traced from its first dawn in the vegetable kingdom, until it merges into perfection in man. And the different phases of it are also gradual.—Vegetables grow and live, but life with them is ever on the ascending scale. And that there be no gap between them and the animals, which might have betrayed a lack of resources, on the part of the Creator, vegetable life is elevated, and animal life depressed. So that they may blend into one another harmoniously. There are some animals so low in the scale of existence, that philosophers are not yet agreed, whether they belong to the animal kingdom or not. And there is one plant that seems to partake of animal life, for if you touch it, it shrinks back, as if it felt, hence it is called the sensitive plant. Again, we have the flying fish, linking the fowls and fishes together. So with the bat, it unites the birds and the quadrupeds, partaking of the nature and the formation of both. Life, still on the ascending scale, brings us to the monkey and ourangoutang or wild man of the woods, having “the human form

divine,” and fable tells us that they would speak, were they not afraid that they would be made work. In the instinct of the dog, we see man's sagacity oozing out, and in the parrot we hear his voice. Man, however, is the cope-stone of the whole. His reason sets him high above all the others, and connects him with the throne of God, and with him who sits upon it.

V. BOTH BOOKS DISPLAY A GLOBBIOUS SUN.

You all know the sun referred to in the Book of Nature. It is that orb which you see rising every morning in the east, and setting at night in the west. It is this sun which enables us to read the Book of Nature, and without it every one would die, all the rivers would soon get bound up with ice, and our beautiful earth would become a wilderness of darkness and desolation. But wonderful as this sun is, there is another sun which is far more glorious. And if you would see it, you have to turn to the Book of Revelation. There you behold the Sun of Righteousness, arising upon the nations, with healing under his wings. And, but for this Sun, moral darkness would have still reigned supreme; for Jesus Christ is the true light, which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He shines with a glory, all his own. Like the bright luminary of day, “He gives, but borrows none.” The excellent of the earth, like attending planets, shine only with a reflected light from him, who is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. And just as the rays of the natural sun, make bright wherever they find an entrance, so do the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. There is no heart so black, or so hard, but if opened to receive them, will be illuminated and cheered; for Christ's language is “Behold I stand at the door, and knock, and if any man open I will come in.”

But to conclude, it must now be evident

to each of you, that the Two Books are very much alike: they are both full of instruction, and they both demand our careful study. The Book of Nature tells us much about God, and if we love him, we will not fail to peruse it. Everything in it was made for a purpose, and he who discovers the nature and use of even the smallest of God's works, whether it be a snowflake of winter, or a summer insect, honours God, no less than he, who enlarges our knowledge of the Bible. God is, and can be worshipped, everywhere. And while you enjoy yourselves amid the works of his hand, if you are led, through them, to contemplate his goodness, his wisdom, or his power, you are worshipping him as truly, as if you were singing psalms in his praise. While you gambol on the lea, then, think of Him who decked the green sward for you to frisk upon. While you listen to the songs of the merry birds, up in the branches, think of Him who taught them to sing. While you chase the butterfly from flower to flower, think of Him who painted its wings. And as you gaze at the bright sun, think of Him who hung it out in the sky, in all its glory, and tell me, is not the God of Nature, good, and wise, and great? Is he not a God worthy to be feared? But if we are to study the one book, we are not to neglect the other.—The Bible is God's second issue to us, and if we may so speak, it is his best. It is a gift from the heart, and it is stamped with *Love*. He has sent it down to us from heaven, on different occasions, and the least we can do, is to read it, and to read it all. If a friend were to send you a letter from a distant country, what would he think of you, if he heard that you never had taken the trouble to peruse it? He would have just reason to be offended.—And so has God if you never read his Bible. It is the bounden duty of each of us, to study it well. Many of its consoling passa-

ges should be committed to memory, and laid up in the heart; for when the sight begins to fail, the almond tree to flourish, the silver cord to be loosed, and when the wheel is giving way at the cistern, they will then be to us sweeter than honey, than the honeycomb, better than rubies; and all the gold that is to be desired is not to be compared to them. Go and learn wisdom from that little Irish boy, who had his Bible burnt. A priest once entered his cabin, and found him busily engaged in reading. He asked him what book that was, which was so engrossing his attention. The boy replied "It is the Bible." The priest told him to throw it away, for it was not a book for boys. The boy refused, adding that it was the best book in the world, and the best book for boys. At this, the priest snatched it out of his hands, and threw it into the fire, and stood by, until he had seen the last of it. But on turning round to the boy, he saw him smiling. "Why is it, he asked," that you smile, while I burn your book?" "Ah!" said the little boy, "you have burnt the book, but you cannot burn that verse, that I learnt about Jesus, how he says, 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' you can never burn that verse out of my mind." O! be advised to imitate that boy, get the precious texts of Scripture riveted in your hearts, when you are young, and they will go with you through life, and land you safely in eternity. Study the Scriptures, for they alone are able to make you wise unto salvation.

X. Y. Z.

Knowledge and good parts, under the management of grace, are like the rod in Moses' hand, wonder-workers; but turn to serpents, when they are cast upon the ground and employed in promoting earthly designs.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

A TRUE STORY.

Not many years ago, in a small German village, there lived a poor woman named Martha, with her little boy. Her husband was dead, and she often felt lonely and sad, as she remembered the happy days that were past; but still amid her tears, she could thank God for even the bitter drops which he had seen it right to mingle in her cup of joy; and with a strong brave heart could go forth to meet the uncertain future in simple dependence on him whom she had long known and trusted.

Content was the atmosphere of Martha's dwelling; true, it was very small, but then, there were but herself and her boy; the little garden supplied her with vegetables, while in the adjoining meadow she kept a cow, and by the sale of its milk generally earned sufficient to supply her simple wants from week to week; and this was enough for her, although she had nothing to lay by.

Trusting in Him whose ear is ever open, even to the hungry raven's cry, her daily prayer was that she might be enabled to "provide things honest in the sight of all men;" and so she lived from day to day. Her faith was simple but it was genuine, and daily did she find fresh reason to trust the loving kindness and the tender care which through life had been her constant shield and guard. At last, however, a time came when her faith and courage were to be tried to the very utmost.

It was the close of the year 1847, the price of provisions kept rising higher and higher, while at the same time the rate of wages remained as low as before.

Martha was a hard-working, industrious woman; it had always been her pride to keep out of debt, but she could now no longer do so. She rose earlier, and worked on to a late hour of the night; but with all her diligence she was never able to earn more than a bare subsistence, and could save nothing towards the rent of her little cottage.

Martha's well known character for honesty and punctuality weighed much in her favour, and her landlord, while he pressed others for payment, promised he would

wait for her convenience; but now a whole year had passed, and fearing he might lose the whole amount, he said he could wait no longer, and threatened to proceed against her unless the amount were paid at once.

In vain the poor woman entreated for a little further respite: she told him exactly what her circumstances were, and showed how absolutely impossible it was for her to pay. He would not listen.

"I have already waited too long," he said, "I believe you might have paid it long since if you had chosen to do so.—For my part, I believe that truth and honour are no more to be found amongst men; every one seeks his own interest, and you are not one bit better than other people, so far as I can see, though you profess to be so good and honest. To speak plainly, once for all I tell you, that unless I have the rent to-morrow, I shall either bring the case before the magistrate, or send the bailiff to take what he can find."

He went away, and poor Martha was left alone in her distress; yet not alone, for He who was with the lone widow of Zarephath, was nigh and ready to deliver, though as yet she saw him not.

The landlord's cutting speech dwelt upon her mind, and as in the bitterness of her grief she paced up and down her room, she could not help murmuring to herself: "Oh dear, oh dear! how is it that we poor people are so hardly dealt with? Why do they blame us as if we had no feeling?—As if we did not suffer enough in not being able to pay our debts honestly, as we would so gladly do! If only I knew where I could get the money! but in times like these who is there that would be likely to lend it to a poor widow woman like me? Haven't I been already to every one I could think of, and been refused everywhere?"

Notwithstanding this, poor Martha did try again, but without success; and the next day came a summons for her to appear in court.

The magistrate, however, was a reasonable man, one who feared God, and had learned consideration for others; and when he had heard the case, he appointed a time by which she must endeavour to obtain the money; but, failing this, there was no help—the cow, her only

remaining means of subsistence, must be sold.

"I pity you very much, Martha," said the kind man, "and would willingly have spared you, but I have not the power to do so. I can only bid you go to Him who is the refuge of all his people, their very present help in trouble. He may yet open out a way, by which you may get the money before the time which has been fixed."

But the days passed only too quickly on,—no help came; and, on the last, poor Martha sat silently weeping by her little table; her head resting on her hand, brooding over her poverty, and thinking what she could possibly do, now that the cow, her only means of support, was going to be taken from her.

Sharing her grief, though hardly able to understand it all, her little boy stood close beside her; but she seemed to take no notice of him, and her tears flowed faster and faster. At last he broke the silence: "Mother, you have never heard that last hymn I learnt; may I say it now? it is so pretty."

There was no answer, so the little boy began—

"Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into his hands,
To his sure truth and tender care,
Who earth and heaven commands.

"No profit canst thou gain
By self consuming care;
To him commend thy cause, his ear
Attends the softest prayer.

"Through waves, and clouds, and storms,
He gently clears my way:
Wait thou his time; so shall the night
Soon end in joyous day."

Martha raised her head; the sweet words had come with strength and power to her heart, as a message of comfort from One who really cared for her, and she knew that one was mighty. Then she remembered in how many ways he had already appeared for her help, when the way had seemed so dark that she could not see the faintest ray of light; and had she not sinned in doubting his present power to deliver? Oh yes, she knew she had; but she would seek him again, for had he not said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will answer thee!"

So kissing and thanking her little boy, and making him happy by permission to go and play in the garden, she knelt down, and with a full heart spread out all her trouble before her God. She told it all to him whose ear is never closed to the cry of the needy; and sweet peace filled her heart. Thus lightened of the heavy load of care which she had borne alone for so many weary days, she felt no longer forsaken and desolate, now she had shared her sorrow with her truest Friend.

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour spent in thy presence can avail to make. We kneel, how weak; we rise, how full of power. We kneel, and all around us seems to lower; We rise, and all the distant, and the near, Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear! Why should we ever do ourselves this wrong, Or others—that we are not always strong? That we should ever weak or faithless be? Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer, And joy, and strength, and courage, are with Thee?"

Meanwhile, the little boy was playing in the garden. He had very often noticed a large molehill just beneath the apple tree, and he thought this would be a capital opportunity to level it with the ground.

Accordingly he set to work. One heap of earth was soon shovelled away, then a second, and a third; and just as he was going to take his little pickaxe to cut through the harder soil, he saw something shining amongst the earth he had already thrown up; he stooped to pick up the glittering thing—a second lay below.—Although he had never before seen these round, bright yellow pieces, he thought they must be money; and it was because she had no money that his mother cried.

With sparkling eyes he ran to the cottage, and held them exultingly before his mother's eyes; "Only see what I have found in the garden! gold! pieces of gold! and now, mother, you can pay the landlord, and we can keep our cow!"

Martha looked at the coins, the stamp was unknown to her, but they were evidently gold. She followed her boy, bid him show her the place where he had found them, and taking the pick, she dug up ten more similar pieces bearing the same mark.

Oh how inexpressibly happy did she now feel! Her heavenly Father had indeed appeared for her; he had heard her prayer. Tears of joy stood in her eyes;

she folded her hands, and from her inmost soul thanked him for this new proof of his love and care. While she stood thus, giving free utterance to her happy, grateful feelings, the gate opened, and the bailiff entered with his men to take her cow; but now a bright smile was on her face, as she showed the glittering pieces and told him there was no need to part with Schatzlein, for she could pay the rent in full.

The bailiff carefully examined the pieces, and returning them to her with a smile: "I congratulate you, my poor woman; you can now certainly keep your cow, and when you have paid the rent, you will still have a little fund remaining, to lay by for another rainy day. These are real genuine ducats, which were coined towards the end of the Thirty Years' War. I think, my friends," continued he, turning to the men who accompanied him, "we may now go home and leave this poor woman to enjoy her ducats." But when the men were gone and Martha was alone with her boy, a doubt came over her, whether this money were really her own. In her perplexity she remembered her minister, a kind, true-hearted man, and determined to set off at once, to ask his advice and tell him all about it. The good man received her kindly, assured her that she might safely keep them, as they were honestly hers, promising at the same time that if she liked to leave the coins with him he would exchange them for her. "Some of them," he said, "appear to me to be very rare, and therefore more valuable than the rest; and any one curious in such things will be likely to give you far more than the mere worth of the gold."

A few days after this, the minister brought her one hundred florins. "There, my good woman," said he, "is a nice little sum of money which will not only suffice for your present necessities, but make a little store for future need. It is your heavenly Father who has so wonderfully delivered you from your trouble by means apparently so simple; learn, therefore, to love and trust him more than you have ever done before; never again, even in your darkest hours, doubt his power to scatter the clouds, and bring the sunshine back. Be assured he has some wise purpose to fulfil in every want or pain he suffers you to feel. He never forsakes or forgets his children. The

heart that trusts in him can never be wholly desolate."

Now, dear readers, this little tale is ended; may I hope that to some of you it has been a word in season, bidding you hope on, and trust even when you cannot see.

Perhaps, even now, like this poor woman, you feel forsaken of all; difficulty and distress hem you in on every side, and you see no way of escape—oh then turn to the Saviour, he is all powerful, and he is all loving; he can and he will deliver. In all your afflictions he is afflicted, the angel of his presence will save you; but it needs that you ask him, that you come in the full belief that he has the power to deliver. Only draw nigh to God, and he has promised to draw nigh to you.

But some of you, perhaps, do not yet know the Saviour as a friend. Oh, then, I would tell you of a treasure, a hidden treasure, which each one of you may make his own; a treasure far better than silver or gold, one which can make the poor of this world rich for ever—heirs of a glorious kingdom. That treasure is the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; it is to be found in God's holy word. Seek for yourselves—seek earnestly, and the pearl of price is yours. The earnest of the fair inheritance awaiting you in your Father's house above, where you shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.

"JESUS ONLY."

"And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."—MATTHEW, xvii. 9.

WHAT a mine is here! In these two words what wonders upon wonders rise. How great, how grand the announcement, "Jesus only!"—And whither shall we look, and not see it inscribed, when by "Jesus only" were the worlds made.

On rock, and hill, and vale, on river, sea, and ocean, on firmament, with all its population of suns, and moons, and stars, this sentence is inscribed, "Jesus only."

And what stamps such value on the Bible, what exalts it above all other books, what glorifies it above all God's great name as displayed in the books of nature and of

providence! It is that "Jesus only" is its theme. From Genesis to Revelation, "Jesus only" is its text. In its doctrines and sacrifices, its types and ordinances, its predictions and promises, "Jesus only" is held up to view as all our hope, all our salvation.

In the experience of the Christian, also, it is "Jesus only." Is he quickened—it is Jesus only who did it. "You hath he quickened," &c. Is he pardoned, but it is by "Jesus only," in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Is he justified, but he is so freely by the grace of "Jesus only." Is he adopted, but he is brought nigh by the blood of "Jesus only." Is he glorified, but it is by "Jesus only," who comes again and receives him to himself.

Thus it is "Jesus only" who of God is made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

In all the Christian's acts of worship and devotion, it is "Jesus only" he would enjoy. It is "Jesus only" in the closet. "Jesus only" at the family altar. "Jesus only" in the sacred Scriptures. "Jesus only" in the sanctuary. And "Jesus only" at the communion-table he would meet, behold his glory, and rejoice in his salvation.

In all of these the outspoken language of his heart is, "Sirs, I would see Jesus."

In heaven it is "Jesus only." What makes heaven so desirable to the Christian? What is to him its chief attraction? "Jesus only." Take him away, and with all its crowns, and harps, and robes, angels, and arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim, to the ransomed soul what would it be without him? "A place of weeping."

"Jesus only" is likewise the subject of all gospel preaching. The preaching, wherein Jesus is not the Alpha and Omega is no gospel preaching. It is "Jesus only," which constitutes the gospel; "Jesus only," who brings "good tidings of great joy" to man.—Away from Jesus, the accredited minister of the cross cannot, dares not turn aside and be guiltless, there being "none other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved." Under no temptation, therefore, at the solicitation of no one, must he turn aside from Jesus, to meet some question or novelty of the day. He may be told of its vast importance, of its great influence on the mind

of the public; but compared with the gospel of Christ, all such things are really nothing but bubbles of an hour.

The theme of the ambassador of Christ is not a discretionary one, but one put into his mouth by his great Master, to which he must stick, and by which he must abide. Nor is it made up of odds and ends, of this thing, and that thing, and the other. It is one—only one. It is "Jesus only."

But though one, it is an infinite one. It is nothing less than the "Word of Christ."—O what height and depth, and length and breadth is in the "Word of Christ!" Who has ever explored it? Who has over exhausted it by preaching? Ah! the half of it has never yet been preached.

"Jesus only" is a theme for eternity.—There thought can never feel hampered—reiteration can never weary inquiry. It is a large place, a mine of wealth, a firmament of power; whither would the ambassador of Christ go from it? It is the unwinding of all great principles, the expansion of all glorious thought, the capacity of all blessed emotion.

O Calvary! O Lamb of God: there made the "sin-offering" for guilty man! we turn to thee—to thee only. Where can we go but unto thee; thou only hast the words of eternal life. Our eyes are still lifted up to thee as to the hills whence cometh our help—"Jesus only."

"None but Jesus

Can do helpless sinners good."

Rev. John Gray.

David Brainerd said, that when God awakened his whole congregation of Indians, he stood by amazed, and felt that he was as nothing—that God alone was working. Oh! it is this, dear friends, that we desire and pray for; that the Lord, the Spirit, would himself descend, and with his almighty power tear away the veil from your hearts, convince you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that Jesus himself would take his sceptre, and break your hard hearts, and take all the glory—that we may cry out, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

Sabbath School Lessons.

June 21st, 1863.

BALAAM'S JOURNEY.
Numb. xxii. 15—35.

I.—THE SECOND MESSAGE TO BALAAM.

Princes and more honourable—To flatter still more the vanity of the prophet. *Let nothing hinder thee*—neither the fear nor the love of God. He had been told that God had hindered him. *His house full of silver and gold.* Balaam's words were fair. He calls God the Lord, and his God. He professes a strict determination to follow the word of God; but his heart was given to covetousness. *Tarry ye here this night.* Instead of bidding them at once, Begone! he would parley still further with his tempters. His language seems to imply the blasphemous wish that the Lord would change his purpose.—*Rise up and go with them.* His mind was already with Balak, God allowed his body to follow. *Rose up in the morning*—He could not wait till the men called him.

II.—THE JOURNEY.

God's anger was kindled because he went. Balaam's sin was in the motive—he loved the wages of unrighteousness. God accounts his own enemies, the enemies of his people.—Balaam was now separate from his company. *The ass saw the angel of the Lord* thrice; thrice she saved her master's life; thrice he smote her. *The Lord opened the mouth of the ass*—Surely such a miracle should have humbled and instructed Balaam if he had not been infatuated by passion. *Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam.* Balaam now saw his awful danger, and fell down. He is first reproached for cruelty, and then reprov'd for his determination to sin. *I have sinned.*—His confession indicates fear of punishment, but no sorrow for his sin. *That thou shalt speak.* This is rather a prediction than a command.

Learn 1. *Never cherish secretly a sinful desire.* By a fair exterior you may, while indulging in secret a sinful propensity, impose upon others, you may deceive yourself, but you cannot deceive God.

2. *That God is angry at sin though he may permit it in his providence.* For good and holy ends the Lord is often pleased to permit sin; nevertheless his anger is kindled against it, he cannot look upon it but with abhorrence.

3. *Beware of seeking God's leave to sin.* By the mist of evil desires many become so blinded as to think the sin they cherish "not

so bad after all." They may even seek by a wresting of Scripture, to excuse their errors, from the word of God. Take the first word of conscience, the first meaning of the Bible—the second is often made to please ourselves.

4. *Never make religion a cloak for covetousness.* Balaam did so. Simon Magus sought to purchase the Spirit, that he might make religion a means of gain. The hypocrites who thus acquire riches will ultimately find that their gold and silver will perish with them.

June 28th.

JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND
RESURRECTION.—MATT. XVI. 23—28.

1.—CHRIST FORETELLS HIS SUFFERINGS.

To show unto his disciples—Jesus began now to instruct his disciples in a most difficult lesson—to foretell to them his sufferings.—This doctrine was particularly unpalatable to them, being opposed to their Jewish prejudices. That Christ knew every detail of his sufferings from the beginning, and that it was ever his fixed deliberate purpose, from which he never for a moment shrank, to drink the bitter cup of sorrow to its very dregs for guilty man, should greatly enhance our idea of our Saviour's love. *Raised again*—to comfort himself and them, he tells them of the glory that was to follow.

2. PETER REBUKED BY CHRIST.

Peter took him. Urged on by his natural temperament, and perhaps inflated by the commendation he had just received, ver. 18—19. How frail are even the best of men! Peter, take it upon him to be the Lord's adviser! *Be it far from thee, or as it is in the original, pity thyself. Get thee behind me*—This was Christ's sharp rebuke to his erring disciple for presuming to divert him from his great object in coming to this world—salvation to the human race.—*Satan.* When Peter acted like Satan Christ gave him Satan's name. It was one of our Lord's great trials, that those who loved him sometimes helped the enemy unwittingly.

3 All are invited to share Christ's sufferings and glory.

If any man. From Mark viii. 34; we learn that this was addressed to all the people.—*Deny himself.* The language of the human heart, and of Satan is "pity thyself." Christ says, "Deny thyself" whatever is in the way of duty. *Take up his cross.* Christ makes our cross light, he helps us to bear it.—Christ's cross was heavy—he had to bear the curse. The consideration of the judgment to

come, and of a future state of rewards or punishments, should make us the more willing to close with Christ's gracious terms. The coming of the Son of man, v. 28, probably refers to the wide-spread Christianity which some, who were standing there, lived to see established.

Learn.—1. *Satan often tempts us through our nearest friends.* Adam was tempted by Eve, Job by his wife, and here Christ by his beloved Peter.

2. *The things of the devil and of man are alike.* The natural man resembles Satan in pride, vanity, enmity to God and man's salvation.

3. *No cross no crown.* The internal conflict, the opposition he meets with from Satan and the world, his temporal sufferings, are the Christian's cross; the peace, the joy, the favour of God which he experiences in this life, and the glory he enjoys in the next, are the crown. The two are intimately connected: it was through the cross that Christ himself was exalted. Phil. ii. 9.

4. *Whatever we lose for Christ's sake is gain.* Nothing that is sacrificed for Christ, from a cup of cold water to life itself, is lost. If it were possible, the martyrs, in heaven would die again for Christ.

5. *The soul is most precious.* Though wrecked it bears God's image. It is immortal. It is capable of unspeakable bliss, or of unspeakable woe. So precious was it in the sight of Christ, that he redeemed it with his own blood—gave his life as its ransom. O barter it not away for the fleeting vanities of time!

MOTH-EATEN.

In great dwellings there are many apartments. There are long and dusky halls.—There are closets and storing-rooms that are not often visited. There are spare-rooms, attics, lumber-rooms. While the faithful house-keeper watches in the living-rooms against dirt and insect foes, the insidious enemy has silently retreated to these remoter camps where broom and brush seldom come. There they rear their undisturbed families. They nest in corners. They brood in old garments. They make cities of refuge of rolls of cloth. These children of moth wake to raven and fatten upon the juiceless thread. Dust and sweepings are good enough for their ordinary food, but woolen is a high living, while feathers and fur are a banquet and a luxury to them. The old man dozes below, and dreams his battles over again, while the silent moth up stairs is eating his feathers, piercing his hat, and wasting

the threads of his uniform. So, while men doze and dream, their honours fade away, and their glory is consumed. For when on some anniversary day, the garments are brought forth, the feathers fall to powder, the coat is cut with a sharper tool than the sword, and the whole suit is perished away forever. Sharp is the needle, but sharper is the invisible tooth of the moth, and no needle-skill can repair its cunning desolations.

And so it comes to pass often that enemies, individually weak, are more dangerous on that account. We can watch against a thief, scarcely against the miller. We suspect the sounding elements. Sun and air are our friends against mould and must. But these soft-winged moths that hover between day-light and dark, that bring forth without wafts, that rear their brood by their teeth, that hide by the very process of eating, and build burrows by the very masonry of their teeth—these are most fatal to our hidden possessions. How many carpets are cut and scissored that still look fairly to the eye, and reveal no mischief! How many apparelings of reserved rooms hang in all their folds with seeming soundness, that needed but to be shaken to show all the mischief done.

Could there, then, have been selected a figure more pertinent, more striking in its analogies than this? Could anything more clearly show to us the power of sins of neglect; of sins of indolence and of unuse; of sins of soft and gentle presence, that in themselves are not very harmful, but that are the breeders of others that are; of silent mischiefs, or the unused faculties or rooms of the soul, that are not ventilated, and are not searched with the broom or the brush. Men do well to watch and fight against obvious and sounding sins. They are numerous. They are on every hand. They are dangerous. They are armed and are desperate. They swarm the ways of life. Not one vice, not one crime, not one temptation, and not one sin of which the Son of God warns us, is to be lightly esteemed. They are to be esteemed, and in armor, we are to be proof against them.

But these are not our only dangers. Tens of thousands of men perish, not by the lion-stroke of temptation, but by the insidious bite of the hidden serpent; not with roar and strength, but with subtle poison. More men are moth-eaten than lion-eaten in life.—And it behooves us, at times, to give heed to these dangers of invisible and insidious little enemies.—*H. W. Beecher.*

Consider mine enemies, for they are many. Ps. xxv. 19.

If God be for us, who can be against us!

TO THOSE CHURCHES

WHICH HAVE NOT

Experienced "Times Of Refreshing."

DEAR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,—Any of you who have noticed the course of events preceding the gracious blessings mercifully bestowed upon many places, must have observed that those reviving showers have been—as I hesitate not to say—invariably sent in answer to prayer: a manifest proof of the Lord's faithfulness to his Word. And how has it affected us who have not shared in those blessings?

I belong to a church that has about as much life as a zoophyte: we have the gospel faithfully preached, but no quickening, no awakening; and why? Because (as I verily believe) there is amongst us the absence of the spirit of prayer. I need not enumerate the many indications of this, but one I must mention, our week evening prayer-meeting is not attended by five per cent. of our church members. How can there be a blessing! And this, or nearly this, is the case with many churches.

Oh, my dear fellow Christians, let me affectionately urge a few considerations. In all candour let me ask you are you QUITE SURE that you cannot spare *one hour* in six days to join in supplicating that blessing which you doubtless feel that both yourself and your fellow-members need. Is it consistent with your profession of dependence on divine assistance, when you do not seek that assistance in his appointed way? and not only so, but disregard his POSITIVE COMMAND—"Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together."

Am I uncharitable in saying that if you were well assured that your being there would materially further your worldly interests, your seat would not be so constantly vacant? I candidly confess I believe so. And I appeal to your own conscience—am I not speaking truth? In all solemnity and seriousness let me ask you, is it not patent to you that the world has more of your heart than your Redeemer? or, in other words, that you love the world and therefore not your Saviour (1 John ii. 15). I am well aware of the constant excuse, "We must live," "competition compels such extra exertions," etc., all of which simply amounts to this—that the progress of CHRIST'S kingdom, and your

own personal piety, are not of sufficient interest to claim from you *one hour* or so in six days. I will not permit myself to call it (as others have done) a sacrifice of time; and I am well assured there would be no pecuniary sacrifice that would not be more than compensated for by "the blessing that maketh rich." Has HE not said, "Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and *all these things* shall be added"?

The constant neglect of united prayer is a *certain* indication of the absence of private devotion; and I may say too, of personal dedication to the cause of CHRIST: in fact, the absence of heart service. How, then, I entreat you to solemnly ask yourself, can a ministry be blessed, or a church grow in grace or in numbers? Oh, my dear Christian brethren, do let us get out of this rut of *Sunday piety*—this kind of conscience service that many must feel grows more and more stunted every day.

I grieve to know that many Christians make the prayer-meeting the last thing to be considered in their arrangements, instead of making everything bend to it. They ask parties, and go to parties on that evening, but *never* can find time to go to the prayer-meeting. Oh consider! what contempt of God's mercy! and think also of the incalculable injury your example must exert upon others; its depressing and chilling effect upon our ministers is immense.

Let me very solemnly entreat of you to take this matter with you into your closet, and there, seriously, before the "Searcher of hearts," make it a matter of constant and deep earnest self-examination; and God in his mercy guide you to that decision which He will approve on that great day when all hearts shall be laid bare.—*From the "Revival."*

"IF THOU KNEWEST THE GIFT OF GOD."

A weary one sat at Jacob's well; He had left the land of the Pharisees. It was Jesus. He came in love to His own, to save them from their sins; but they received Him not. Weary and grieved was His tender heart as He sat about the sixth hour at Jacob's well.

There is a woman coming with her

water-pot to the well. She is one to whom the proud Pharisee would scorn to speak. She is a despised Samaritan, and that is not all, she is a poor wretched being, living in open sin. She little knows that she is about to meet the eye of Him who knows *all* that ever she did. She arrives at the well, and is astonished that Jesus, being a Jew, should ask her to give Him to drink. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If *thou* knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; *thou* wouldest have asked of Him, and *He would* have given thee living water."

He did not say, if thou wert not so great a sinner. He did not say, if thou wilt reform and become a holy woman, then I will give thee living water. No! No! No! He let her know, that He knew all that ever she had done. But there was such a depth of pity, grace, and compassion in the wondrous countenance; such tender love to the sinner in those words, that it won her heart, it converted her soul. Christ was revealed to her; and leaving her water-pot she went to the city so full of Christ, that forgetting her own shame, she said "Come see a man which told me all that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

My reader, can you meet the eye of Him who knows every thought of your heart from childhood? All that ever you did, open and naked to His eye. And can you say that you are not a sinner? How was it, think you, that there was nothing in Jesus to repel this wretched sinner? And what can those words mean, think you—"If thou knewest the gift of God, &c.?" Is this the one great thing needed by a poor wretched sinner? It is; there can be no mistake about it, for Jesus says it. Of whatever nation the reader may be; whatever the sins you may have committed, the first thing you need, is not the waters of the Ganges, or intercession of saints, or works of amendment; no, the thing you need is to know the gift of God.

Do you ask who and what is that gift of God? The man that met that poor Samaritan sinner; Jesus the Son of God; as also it is written, "For God so loved the world that *He gave* His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "THE GIFT of God is eternal life."

"He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

My reader it is *a gift, a gift, a gift*; oh if thou knewest this! Thou canst not buy it; thou canst not merit it. He that knows all that ever thou didst; all that thou art; sets before thee Jesus the crucified; Jesus the risen one; Jesus the glorified. Dost thou know Him, the gift of all gifts?

Dost thou say, "But my sins are heavy, they press me down, what must I do?" "If thou knewest the gift of God." Yes, if thou hast committed every sin that has been done in this dark world; yet God's gift, "redemption through his blood," abounds above it all. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." His very business was saving just such burdened, weary, heavy-hearted sinners as thou art. Blessed be His holy name, the work is finished. May God reveal to thy soul, my reader, Christ Jesus. Change of life and holiness of life will follow. But the first thing is *The Gift of God*.

C. S.

GRANDEUR OF THE BIBLE.

INTERESTING TESTIMONY.

If you have ever tried it, you must have been struck with the few solid thoughts, the few suggestive ideas which survive the perusal of the most brilliant of human books. Few of them can stand three readings; and of the memorabilia which you had marked in your first reading, on reverting to them, you find that many of those were not so striking, or weighty, or original as you thought. But the Word of God is solid; it will stand a thousand readings; and the man who has gone over it the most frequently and carefully, is surest of finding new wonders there.—*Rev. James Hamilton.*

When I commenced my duties of professor of theology, I feared that the frequency with which I should have to pass over the same portion of Scripture would abate the interest in my own mind in reading them; but after more than fifty years of study, it is my experience that with every class my interest increases.—*Prof. Leonard Wood.*

I have always found in my scientific studies, that when I could get the Bible to say anything upon the subject, it afforded me a firm platform to stand upon, and another round in the ladder by which I could safely ascend.—*Lieut. Maury.*

I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year. My custom is to read four or five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history or to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge.—*John Quincy Adams.*

I can easily conceive why the Bible was one of the four volumes which always lay on Byron's table; and it would be easy to fill a lecture with testimonies, written or unwritten, which painters, sculptors orators and poets, have rendered to the most thought suggesting book in the world.—*Hamilton.*

From the time that, at my mother's feet, or on my father's knee, I first learned to lip verses from the Sacred Writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures.—*Daniel Webster.*

I am of opinion that the Bible contains more true sensibility, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may be written.—*Sir William Jones.*

I will hazard the assertion that no man ever did, or ever will become truly eloquent, without being a constant reader of the Bible, and an admirer of the purity and sublimity of its language.—*Fisher Ames.*

I rest in the Bible as the only Book in which is found true eloquence and wisdom.—*Picus Mirandula.*

There is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom and use.—*Sir Matthew Hall.*

No writers, from the invention of letters

to the present time, are equal to the penman of the books of the Old and New Testament, in true excellence, utility, and dignity.—*Dr. Hartley.*

Every word and syllable of the Bible ought to be adored; it not only cannot be enough admired, but it cannot be too much admired.—*Boileau.*

“NOTHING.”

It is very hard for even many truly saved ones to cease trying to be *something* in the flesh, and be willing to be reckoned *nothing* in the world. “Though I be **NOTHING**,” was the language of one who had been in “*the third heaven*,” and who could say, “*I knew a man in Christ.*”

To be “**NOTHING**” here, and glory in it, we must know our position as “*quickened together with Christ*,” and seated with Him in heavenly places. If we know that “our citizenship is in heaven,” we can afford to be *nothing* here. But there can be no peace for our restless hearts unless we are “*in Christ Jesus*,” and consciously lifted out of self, sin, and circumstances, and are living above the good or bad opinion of “*this present evil world.*”

Oh, how sad that any follower of the rejected Jesus should court the smile of His murderers, and regard it as a great point gained to stand well with the world that despised and crucified their Lord!

When heartily willing to be *nothing* in the flesh and to be *nowhere* in the world, the peace of God shall rule in our hearts, and we shall then live above the power of circumstances, as pilgrims and strangers seeking a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Jesus, our beloved Redeemer, “made Himself of *no reputation*,” and He said, “The servant is *not greater* than his lord.” If “He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross,” surely we ought to do the same. We are followers of one whom the world put to death on a cross, as an expression of its hatred and rejection of Him; and are we not by faith identified with Him? What says the apostle? “*I am crucified with Christ. . . . God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ whereby the world is crucified unto me,*

and I unto the world." We are risen with Christ, and His cross stands as the measure of separation between us and the world.

*A pilgrim through this lonely world,
The blessed Saviour pass'd
A mourner all His life was He,
A dying Lamb at last.*

That tender heart that felt for all,
For all its life-blood gave;
It found on earth no resting-place,
Save only in the grave.

*Such was our Lord—and shall we fear
The cross with all its scorn?
Or love a faithless, evil world,
That wreath'd His brow with thorn?*

*No! facing all its frowns or smiles,
Like Him, obedient still,
We homeward press through storm or
calm,
To Zion's blessed hill.*

In tents we dwell amid the waste,
Nor turn aside to roam
In folly's paths, nor seek our rest
Where JESUS had no home.

*Dead to the world with Him who died
To win our hearts—our love,
We, risen with our risen Head,
In spirit dwell above.*

The British Herald.

A WILLING SAVIOUR AND UN- WILLING SINNERS.

"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"—JOHN v. 40.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the only almighty, and loving Saviour of fallen, guilty and lost mankind. He came into the world to save, he died on the cross to save, he is exalted in heaven to save, and "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him"—Heb. vii. 25.

And his love is as great as his power; he is as willing as he is able. Do you doubt this? Then why did he come into this world at all? why the labours of his life, and the sorrows of his death? and why this language of his lips, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life?"

Yes, life, eternal life will be found by all

who come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek for that inestimable blessing, that saving, sovereign and crowning good.—"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"—1 John v. 11. 12.

But coming to Christ is indispensable to the obtaining of eternal life by Christ. "Come," he says, "and I will give you rest." "Come unto me and drink," and in no wise shall any be cast out who do come. The Spirit says come, the Church says come, and all hearing the word are authorised to repeat it until the whole world shall hear. All who come shall live, but all refusers are doomed to die, and to perish for ever.

O then, for the grace of a willing heart and mind to listen to the Saviour's voice, believe in his name, and trust in his blood and righteousness for forgiveness, cleansing and acceptance in the sight of God! Surely each possessor of that grace will say—

"Now, Lord, I would be thine alone,
And wholly live to thee;
But may I hope that thou wilt own,
A worthless worm like me?"

Yes; though of sinners I'm the worst,
I cannot doubt thy will;
For if thou hadst not loved me first,
I had refused thee still."

But on the other hand, how infinitely deplorable is an unwillingness to come to Jesus Christ for life—life eternal! No groan is deep enough to deplore it, no power of language is sufficient to depict it—the ignorance, insensibility, ingratitude, madness and wickedness, of such unwillingness here, and the frightful consequences hereafter. Ye backward, unwilling, delaying sinners, will ye hear and heed the Saviour's language of rebuke and lamentation, as with mournful attitude, having heart streaming eyes, he says, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life."—*Gospel Trumpet.*

If good people would but make goodness agreeable, and smile instead of frowning in their virtue, how many would they win to the good cause.—Archbishop Usher.