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FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN. ABIDE, OH! LORD, ABIDE.

Abide with us, Thy presence Lord we need;
Thy tender, loving face we need to see;
Take up within our souls Thy dwelling place,
And strengthen us aright to live for Thee.
Abide, Oh Lord, abide.

Abide with us, Oh Saviour, leave us not,
But fill us with enduring faith and love;
That we may constantly and always serve,
And from Thy loving side wish not to rove.
Abide, Oh Lord, abide.

Abide with us when troubles darkly lower,
And hope, and faith, and love seem well nigh gone;
Still leave us not, though we would doubt and murmur,
But help us in the conflict to fight on.
Abide, Oh Lord, abide.

Abide with us 'till life's last lingering hour,
And then remove all doubt, and dread, and fear;
Vouchsafe to us Thy grace and strengthening power;
This fervent prayer, Oh Lord, our Saviour, hear.
Abide, Oh Lord, abide.

Abide with us, we need not pray in Heaven,
For there "we'll be forever with the Lord";
To serve, and love, and cast our crowns before
Him;
We have this precious promise in His word.
Abide, Oh Lord, abide.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN. REMINISCENCES OF PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERS.

BY AN OCTOGENARIAN.
No. 18.

DR. ASHBEI GREEN.

When a new President assumes the control of a college he generally wishes to turn over a new leaf. This was realized in Dr. Green, but the changes introduced would be of little interest to the reader. They resulted from the systematic habits of the Philadelphia divine, and were not intended in the least degree as any disrespect to his illustrious predecessor.

The new comer must have been familiar with all the localities of Princeton. He had been made Bachelor of Arts in 1783—than tutor, and then Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. He knew full well the site of the old stone building over which he was to preside, the market house that stood in the middle of the street, the brick kirk not then burnt, the Hall which held the library, and especially the dwelling in which he was married. The location of Princeton is high. It commanded an extensive prospect, but in my day the village was not handsome. It was not embellished by any country seats. There was a farm called Tusculum to which Dr. Witherspoon retired in 1795. We presume he admired Cicero, though Wirt in his spy has criticized him with severity. There was a difference between the rotund style of the Roman Orator, and that of the Kenfrew Divine. At the head of the village stood Morven, the highly improved residence of the Stocktons, a family of Scotch descent, who suppose, from the name of their dwelling. Morven is associated with Ossian and Fingal in the shire of Argyle. Jefferson says he and some Frenchmen sat up till midnight reading the sublime effusions of Ossian. Had they ever read Longinus? They were admiring the fustian rart of McPherson, who after his return from India paid down a plenty of rупees for a seat in Inverness. The Morven family went over to Prelacy, though their Caledonian ancestor was an elder of the Princeton church, but some people in their religion are like clay in the hands of the potter. But we believe that the eldest daughter did not succeed, or at least Dr. Benjamin Rice told me of her saying at the time that the Episcopalians could out pray us, but that we could out preach the Episcopalians. The latter assertion is true, but the other one we positively deny. One of Dr. Smith's prayers for elevation, and one of Dr. Alexander's for self-annihilation, would have outweighed a stereotyped Prayer Book when put on the scales in which God weighs his mountains, which he bade to rise. The lady alluded to was intelligent, witty, very stately, handsome, and would have made a good Queen of Carthage. We have said she was witty. In 1805, the Adelphe Society took all the honors of the class. Their badge was white, whilst that of the Olios was red, and that of the Whigs was blue. When ten or twelve of the Adelphe had appeared on the stage some one asked her what has become of the Olios? "Why they are off blushing," was he prompt reply. "Then what has become of the Whigs?" "Why they are off looking blue." Richard Stockton was as kind a man as ever walked on shoe leather. Strange then that he should have fallen in a duel near New Orleans.—But he would not fire at his antagonist. The Commodore, his brother, was not a quarrelsome man. And yet he had one little feud with his Episcopal Rector, and another with Dr. Van Rensselaer about a railroad accident. The son of the Patron was right. He wanted to save people from being mangled. Well; we have wandered. Dr. Green married into the Stockton family. But this was not the cause of the digression. Any reference to a semi-Scottish family conveys me away to the brown heath—gowans and glens of the covenanting country. My conjecture is that Dr. Green settled in Arch Street church about 1787, for at that time he resigned his Professorship. The kirk to which he went from the retreats of Science, was ninety feet long. Though he became a good pastor we suppose he still occasionally attended to Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, for it would be useless to deny that he was a proficient in these branches. By Philosophy we do not mean that he was a Botanist like Barton, or a Geologist like Miller, or an Ornithologist like Wilson, or that he concerned himself with the insect

world like Say; but we mean that he was familiar with the Planets, well posted up in orrery of Rittenhouse, and in terrestrial substances, and that when he pleased he could entertain his class with a phenomenology about the Earth. Beattie hated Mathematics. Not so with Dr. Green. He was a close thinker; but not so good a classic as Dr. Lindsley. He was a tolerable French scholar. He was well acquainted with much of the English literature. He had read Boswell's Life of Johnson with a fixed attention, and the Lives of the British Poets by the sage of Bolt Court. He admired Milton, but we know that his admiration was abated, when the Syriac Skinner manuscript was brought to light. The poet lost caste when he appeared as a divine. Who would have believed that the author of Paradise Lost would ever have denied the perpetuity of the Sabbath—the validity of the marriage tie—the spirituality of the Great Supreme, and the divinity of our Redeemer? What a fall for the eagle who had once soared beyond the convex clouds, and the blue firmament, left the stars of the Milky Way, and dispersed constellations that he might adore that I Am who said, "Let there be light," and I light rushed from chaotic night. Is Milton also among the Spencers—Mills—the Hasleys. Even so.

Milton is among our modern Spinosas, and the old Gothic Arias. Not so with our Doctor, who was a devout Christian, and a firm Presbyterian, ready at all times to defend our standards of doctrine and government. He was an experimental, practical preacher. We heard from him some delightful sermons, but especially one from the text, "Return unto thy rest, oh my soul." He introduced the Bible into the college curriculum. He was a careful manager, but when the church was consumed, he planked down his five hundred dollars with the dawn of the next morning. He was given to hospitality, respectful to rank, but never deaf to the cry of distress. Though a Presbyterian from conviction, he was no bigot. But how needless to enlarge, for visiting the General Assembly when not far from ninety, that distinguished body rose to their feet and stood through the impressive interview. This was honor bestowed on an aged divine by the spontaneous action of moral kings. Some thought him stern. A mistake. He was affable and facetious. Fond of occasional anecdotes, though he would have been annoyed by the incessant puns of Lamb, and the profane drollery of Rev. Sydney Smith. Though self-possessed, on one occasion we grant his sternness. Some unknown student was supposed to have entered the Prayer Hall, and the next morning when the tutor opened the Bible, that book was deprived of all its leaves. At evening prayer the President, after the service, made an appeal.—His dark eye seemed in a glow, but we can only remember the sentence with which it was closed. Looking steadfastly at the large picture on the wall, where Washington was standing over the dying Mercer, he said, "Could yonder illustrious man have spoken when that midnight deed was done, he would have thundered out those impressive words, 'wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way, but by taking heed according to that Divine Word?'"

We subjoin a few words touching the authorship of Dr. Green. After his return to Philadelphia he became the editor of a monthly work entitled the *Christian Advocate*. It was not discontinued till extended to ten or twelve volumes, which contain many interesting articles. They may be found in the Presbyterian library of Mr. Agnew. He wrote answers to all the questions in our catechisms, the Life of Eastburn, who preached a long time to the mariners of Philadelphia, also sketches of the College over which he had presided for ten years, and other occasional works. He gave articles on missions, particularly to the Sandwich Islands. He admired Horne on Missions, and loaned it to Dr. Rush, and he returned it, with the declaration that Grecian and Roman oratory had at last been eclipsed. This was somewhat extravagant, but it is indeed a most eloquent production. He pours forth

"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn." Dr. Green was always concerned about a History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. He was an industrious correspondent on this subject, and documents wherever found connected with its history found him an eager investigator. In 1848, full of years, he fell asleep in his home in the resurrection and the life, and his Memoir was written by the Rev. Mr. Jones, on whose ministry he attended.

A BREAKFAST WITH DR. BONAR IN EDINBURGH.—A correspondent of the *Presbyterian* says:

"We accepted an invitation to breakfast with Dr. Bonar, and accompanied our excellent friend, Dr. Samuel Hall, of Newark, at an early hour of the day, to the house of the poet pastor. Among others whom we met there were Rev. Dr. Bryson, of South Carolina, and Prof. Eaton of Brooklyn. Breakfast was preceded by morning prayer. Dr. Bonar himself read a portion of Scripture, in a devout manner and silver tones made it deeply impressive. Each one was then supplied with a Psalm-book, and we all joined in the morning song of praise. Then the venerable patriarch led us to the merry seat in humble, grateful prayer. The whole scene was peculiarly touching. Blessed is the household thus trained. The heartiness of the welcome, and the simplicity and piety that characterized our whole interview and entertainment were delightful. Before leaving the manse the beloved pastor presented each of us with one of his sweet little books, as a remembrance of the occasion, with his autograph."

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

BY REV. H. H. HAWES.
No. 1.

It is often thought, and boldly taught too, that Jesus was baptized as an example to us. Believers are strenuously exhorted to "follow Christ in baptism."

Now this is a very great mistake. All such thinking, teaching, and every exhortation of the kind is utterly wrong and unscriptural. To prove that assertion, is to be the purpose of these articles.

1. Those who say that "the Bible commands us to follow Jesus in baptism," cannot produce one word nor sentence of any such command in all the records of God's Word. This may seem to be "plain talk." But every letter of it is true. The proof is easily obtained by searching the Scriptures, and seeing that there is really no such command in existence. The Bible does not command nor teach any one to "follow Jesus in baptism." Many people solemnly believe that it does. But this belief is held by them because of two things; (1.) They have not searched the Bible on this point for themselves, and so are ignorant of its teachings. (2.) They have simply believed what others told them without demanding proof.

2. The notion that Jesus was either immersed or dipped in Jordan, or in any other water, is wrong. Yes, it is utterly wrong, unless Christ and John were guilty of saying one thing, and doing another. Was not John intelligent enough to know how he baptized? No one will venture to deny it.—Then hear what he says again and again. "I baptize you with water"—not in, but with water. And he never uses any other form of expression. "I baptize with water." Some one will say,—"If John strikes William with a stick, he makes that stick fall upon William, not William upon the stick." No one would ever think of interpreting the sentence so as to make William strike upon the stick. No one would think that John took up William and struck the stick with him. And it is no more sensible to say that the words, "I baptize with water," meant that John applied people to the water. Common sense says, "the stick was applied to William in one case; and the water was applied to the people in the other."

Now to show that this is John's meaning, take another sentence of his; "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Common sense here says also, that the Holy Ghost and fire were applied to those thus baptized. And the actual record in Acts it says that it was precisely so. The Holy Ghost and the fire came down upon the disciples. The disciples were not carried and put into, nor upon the Holy Ghost and fire. Now what is fact in one case is fact in the other. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost," means that Christ would cause the Holy Ghost to descend upon those whom he baptized with the Holy Ghost.

So, "I baptize with water," means that John caused the water to descend upon those whom he baptized with water. Christ himself used the same language in Acts i: 5, as Luke tells us. But if John had put him under or in the water, he would and could not have used this language. He would have been obliged to say, "John baptized in (or under) water." For surely He would not say one thing, and mean another. If He and John had intelligence enough to know what they spoke, then John did not do otherwise than apply water to those whom he baptized; and when he baptized Christ, he did not apply Him to the water, but the water to Him. There is the plain conclusion, and there is no way of getting around it, unless we say John and Christ said one thing and did another wholly contrary. Jesus Christ was baptized with water. He never was put under water. But do we not read: "He went up straightway out of the water?" Yes; and we'll talk that over in the next article.

From the Southern Presbyterian.

A Difficulty Met.

Mr. Editor,—The recent discussions in our always welcomed paper, touching the difficulties in the way of contributing to the various objects of benevolence at different periods in the year by planters and others who have an income only once or twice a year, and uncertain then in amount, prompts me to suggest a plan which has been tried and found to work admirably:

Let the Christian keep a box or purse, apart by itself as the Lord's treasury. Whatever part of his income he dedicates to the Lord in worship, whether it be one-tenth or more or less—whenever he has any money coming in, whether it be once a week, once a month, or once a year, or at irregular periods, then just at that time, without any reference to special calls, let him put the tenth into the Lord's treasury. Afterwards, during the year, let him distribute it with prayer and thankfulness as the Lord's almoner.

This simple plan suits every one's case who has or can get any income at all. It is just like the plan of the Christian planter as to the use of his wheat crop. It comes in only once a year. At the wheat harvest, he worships God and thanks him for his bounties. From time to time all through the year, he takes wheat out of the granary for daily bread, and every time he eats thereof, he "says grace" or thankfully worships God. Why is it not just as practicable to worship God all through the year from an income which flows in only in the fall or spring?—The real difficulty lies in a failure to feel that offerings from our income are required acts of worship, and like all other acts of worship are to be frequently performed.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN. THE SIN OF ANANIAS.

Ananias sold a possession and kept a part of the price, bringing a certain part which he laid at the Apostles' feet. Was there anything wrong in this? Peter tells him that the property was his own, and after it was sold that the money was still his to do with as he might think proper. David consecrated one-tenth of what he might accumulate, and it was accepted of God. What then was the sin of Ananias? Not in simply keeping for himself a part of the price of his land, for Peter distinctly asserted his power to have done that without sin. But he had, (by agreement with his wife), professed to devote or consecrate the entire price of the land, and while so professing, he had surreptitiously "a certain part," and had "kept back a part" for his own purposes. He professed to give it all, but the profession was a lie, and the bringing it to the Apostles was the act of a hypocrite.

Are there no Ananias's in our churches to-day? If there were inspired Apostles over the churches now, who should expose every case of this kind, it is to be feared that there would be found many guilty ones.—How often do we hear from the pulpit as well as from the pew, the most solemn professions of entire consecration of ourselves and all of our property, to the service and the glory of God! Are not these professions too often mere idle words? Is not this what Ananias and Sapphira did? Were they any more guilty of lying to the Holy Ghost than we are, when we profess to devote ourselves and all that we have to the glory of God, and yet hold back almost the whole of "the price," and occupy our time and thoughts largely, if not almost exclusively in working to add to our wealth? It is only by the infinite mercy of God that many amongst us are not visited with the vengeance of His wrath.

The Bible nowhere requires of us as a duty, that we shall devote ourselves and our property exclusively to the service of God or of His church. But it does require us to have and to hold all of these things in subordination to His will, that when there shall arise a necessity for it, we shall be willing to sacrifice ourselves as well as our property to His service. And if we love Him as we ought, we will cheerfully make great sacrifices for the advancement of His kingdom on earth. The extent of the sacrifices which we are willing to make, and do make, will measure the degree of our love. It is not the amount we give, but the love which prompts us to the act, which God looks at. Our property is our own to give or to keep and use according to the dictates of an enlightened judgment. But it is a fearful thing to stand up before the throne of God, in the presence of His church, and avowedly to consecrate ourselves and all that we have to Him and to His service, and then to keep back a part. We should be very careful how we make promises to God as well as to man, and when once made, we should be prepared to stand up to them at every sacrifice. Let us beware lest we too be guilty before God of the sin of Ananias. M. P. C.

FOR THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN.

IN CHURCH.

Will Christians please read this? What is here said is for them. For of all people on earth, they should be the last to hinder the work of Christ. Yet many of them are doing it continually. Of course they mean nothing of the kind. And here is the trouble. Long ago God said: "My people doth not consider." He might well say so now. For Christians often behave very badly in church, where they should set an example of good conduct.

1. Think why you should go to church.—Then, before going, prepare yourself for the duty. Pray in secret to your Father which seeth in secret, that He will reward you openly in the public services. Does your own soul need no blessing? How can you expect God to meet and bless you, when your thoughts are like the fool's eyes, in the ends of the earth. Avoid everything therefore which tends to take off your thoughts from God's service. What if Mrs. A. does come in late? Perhaps she could not do better. Then you ought not to make her feel badly, by setting or encouraging the ill-mannered example of staring at her from the door to her pew, as if she were a sort of menagerie. How many act in this way—and that too, while the minister is reading the Word of God, or while he is preaching the gospel.—We cannot call this "good manners." For it is rude, and it is sinful too. But perhaps it is Mrs. A.'s habit to come in late. People say she wants to be noticed. Then do not gratify her in such a low wish. Spare the modest face, rebuke the brazen face, by not looking upon either.

2. But have you no unsaved friend needing the blessings of the gospel? Then pray for him. Let him see also that you do believe in God's ordinances. What will be the result if you are inattentive? Especially if your conduct is full of levity? It is no matter of amusement if a little child speaks aloud, or cries, or walks up and down the aisle. Are you so foolish as to make merry over such things when they occur in your parlor?—Now the minister is pleading the message of salvation with that dear friend of yours.—God's Spirit is striving with him. This very day salvation is ready to come to him. But you see the movement of a restless child; or some peculiarity in Mrs. B.'s dress catches your eye; as a dog has strayed or followed his owner into church, and you spoil every hope of saving your friend by your folly.—There you sit whispering and giggling about such insignificant things as if eternal desti-

nies do not hang upon every moment! Such conduct is simply foolish and shameful!—What must God think of it! You are in His house,—ought to be absorbed in His service, and yet you are acting as if you were attending a circus or some lesser show! Thank God for every one to whom such remarks do not apply. But, sad to say, there are very many guilty ones. The exhortation, "Grieve not the Spirit," is addressed to Christians.—And by such conduct as the above, they do grieve Him very often.

3. Remember in whose presence you are—"Thou God seest me." Think of that. Many Christians show more respect to their fellow-men in visiting their houses, than they show towards God in His sacred temple. How can they expect that He will honor those who do not honor Him? Think, and answer that! We complain of the deadness and coldness of our churches. We are not revived. The Lord is doing no mighty works among us. Our own "flesh and blood" are going down to hell. What is the trouble? Let Christians who are always careless, irreverent, and full of levity in Church, answer! Surely God has a controversy with His people in this matter.

Influence of Sabbath Desecration.

Rev. Dr. M. D. Hoge, of Richmond, Va., who has been making an extended tour in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, etc., writes to the *Central Presbyterian*:

"I hope I have learned something of the domestic and social life of the people, and especially of what is doing for the promotion of evangelical religion on the Continent. I regard as the chief obstacle to the progress of vital Christianity the universal desecration of the Sabbath. This, in my opinion, is a more serious hindrance than rationalism, and all the prevailing forms of superstition.—Take away the Bible and the Sabbath, and religion soon degenerates into a system of idle and empty ceremonies—with its true life almost extinguished."

These remarks touch a subject of the gravest importance, and it is becoming a practical subject to the American Church. The question whether the Sabbath of the Scriptures—the Sabbath as it was observed and enjoyed by our fathers—is to be perpetuated in this country, or give place to the holiday of Continental Europe, is already before us, and during the next decade will practically be settled. The enemies of the Gospel are making the most desperate efforts to overthrow the Sabbath as a holy day, and in this country they are securing, as never before, the co-operation of a large class in the church. Infidels and heretics of every grade are laboring to convince the masses that the law of the Sabbath is without authority and a gross oppression, especially to the poor, and such nominally evangelical papers as the *Christian Union* are lending their support; by endeavoring to persuade their readers that the Fourth Commandment is not binding upon the Christian Church, and that the Sabbath of the fathers, or as they love to call it, the Puritan Sabbath, was born and perpetuated by their bigotry and superstition. But more than this even is the support that they are receiving from men occupying prominent positions in the evangelical churches. Men who are making haste to be rich are constantly trespassing upon the Sabbath in the prosecution of their ordinary business. Though their stores and shops are not opened, they travel for the purposes of business or pleasure, and they give the Sunday press their countenance and support by their advertising patronage. If they do not sell their goods on the Sabbath they use the day to inform their customers what they are prepared to do on Monday. And while all this is going on, those who love and reverence the Sabbath seem almost wholly unconscious of the progress they are making in breaking down, in the public mind, the authority of the Fourth Commandment and in destroying all reverence for the Sabbath as a holy day.

But no man who has given this subject any attention can doubt the soundness of the position taken by Dr. Hoge in the above extract. If the religion of the American people of the future is to be anything better than an empty form, they must be brought to reverence the Lord's Day. Possibly there may be exceptions in individual cases, but as a rule, if not invariably, the manner in which men keep the Sabbath is a true index of their religious character. Churches which fail to observe the Sabbath according to the commandment, not only fail to exert a saving influence upon those by whom they are surrounded, but as in the case of a large portion of the Reformed churches of Continental Europe, vital godliness within their own pale soon becomes well nigh extinct.

It is high time for our own Church to awake to the importance of this subject.—The anxiety of the enemies of religion to remove the restraint which hitherto the law of the Sabbath has imposed, should make every Christian extremely circumspect in his own observance of the day, and move him to an earnest resistance of their efforts to convert it into a European holiday.—*Presbyterian Standard*.

Oh, the Burdens.

To an ordinary observer the mass of people one meets seem happy and joyous.—Here and there, perhaps, we see a careworn, sad face, but the multitude pass on as sunny and smiling as if there was no trouble in the world. But could we lift the veil and look beneath this gay exterior, we should discover many a hidden grief, so many hearts there are that ache and make no sign, and that in the bitterest sorrow that the world sees and knows. Those griefs are the sorest and hardest to bear which must be kept concealed and never spoken of.

Mourning and crape may well be termed

"the luxury of woe," for it invites sympathy and permits the tender of friendly help and consolation. Even the world hushes its gay laugh and ceases its jest at the sight of the veiled mourner.

But the deeper grief must be hidden as much as possible from mortal sight, because the sensitive and agonized sufferer cannot endure the harsh comment of the world, nor the well-meant but torturing pity of friends. Only in secret, and when no eye but God's can see, can these sad ones weep.—*Christian Intelligencer*.

READING THE BIBLE IN COURSE.

More of this was done formerly than now. It was the practice of many families, it is of some still, to read the Bible in family worship, in course, the year through, a chapter or more daily, and when the whole was finished to begin again, and so pursue it from year to year. There are some objections to this plan, which has also much to commend it. There are many portions of Holy Scripture not strictly devotional, and other parts are more useful for reading in the midst of the family assembled for prayers. History, genealogies, and records of vice, having their uses, and profitable in their place, may not inspire the devotions of the household. It is better to choose for such a service those portions of the Book of Books that more directly lead the mind to the contemplation of the adorable attributes of Him in whom we live.

But the systematic perusal of the Bible, in its connection, book by book, is an essential part of religious education. Without such a study, no one will come to appreciate its wonderful adaptation to the human soul, its divine consistency, harmony and power, and the internal evidence of its supernatural origin. Besides, the Book itself is the most important of all historical records, and no man, either Christian or not, is educated who is not well read in this work. In the early history of the human family it is the only book that exists from which to learn the facts. And to be ignorant of what is here written is to be unfurnished. The ignorance is the more inexcusable, because the knowledge is so easily obtained, and is so intensely interesting to every person of thoughtful intelligence.

But this reason touches only those who do not read the Bible for religious instruction. The believer is very apt to read certain parts of it to the neglect of others. The New Testament is read far more than the Old. A Psalm or a chapter in the Prophecies of Isaiah is read much more frequently in the family, and in private, than any part of the Pentateuch or the Historical books. This is not to be censured as a bad practice. But it shows how and why some portions of Holy Scripture fall into disuse, and their importance is lost sight of. One who will take a copy of the Bible printed without divisions into chapters and verses, and will read it in books, or parts, and observe the relation of one part to another, and the continuity of the whole, will (even without the learning of a student) perceive a meaning and purpose that he fails to apprehend if he reads only in spots. This is still more clearly perceived when a Bible is used that has been chronologically arranged. Such arrangement is not to be received as absolutely correct. But it is very helpful to read the prophecies in the reign of the kings under whom they were written; to peruse the Psalms in connection with the events which suggested them, and many of these associations are matters of record, so that we can receive them with certainty.

Our suggestion is, and it is with a view to practical results we are now speaking, that the systematic reading of the Bible in course should be pursued from day to day, year in and year out; over and over again. It is the only book in the world that is more interesting the more it is read. It will not become tiresome or common, by being made familiar. New beauties and harmonies and relations will be discovered with every perusal. It is well to have a commentary at hand, but it is not well to read the text in the commentary. That too often leads to the critical study of vexed passages, when the grand purpose is to get the spirit and intent of the whole. The best commentary to have at hand for such reading is Matthew Henry's. And the busiest of men may readily go over the whole Bible twice every year, by giving an hour or two every day to its systematic perusal.—*N. Y. Observer*.

A Place for Hard Things.

It is by no means to be deemed an irreverence frankly to admit that the Bible has in it not a few "hard sayings." Neither is it to be reckoned an impiety to acknowledge that providence also has in it not a few hard things—things utterly inexplicable to us, or which sometimes are more than we can reconcile with the divine wisdom and goodness. And when we discover such inscrutable occurrences, baffling all our efforts to understand or explain them, we must either dismiss entirely the providence in them, or else we must provide for ourselves some adequate refuge from so gross an impiety; we must have some place to put them in.

Now, in searching for such a place, let us be thankful that we have an inspired example for our guidance. The psalmist David, in handling the great inexplicable points of God's omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, confessedly beyond the reach of his powers, has emphatically told us what he did with them. He had provided a place for himself, as he says, where he could quietly and safely deposit them—a place for all things that were "too wonderful for him," for all things that were "so high that he could

not attain unto them." If any one had asked him if he understood any of these great glories of Jehovah, he would undoubtedly have replied, "No; but I do not therefore throw them away; I have a place for them, where I put them." His simple motto, "Too wonderful for me," expressed his profound wisdom; for it did not, in his view, vitiate the claims of a truth, or the brightness of a providence, that it was only partially revealed, or so hid in the radiance of God's throne, or otherwise "high," that he could not attain unto it.

And for all of us to have such a place in which to put the many hard or obscure things of revelation or of providence that cross our path is absolutely necessary, if we would keep ourselves in any comfortable attitude of confidence toward God, or if we would not altogether lose Him as our trust, refuge, and stay. In attempting explanations we must either lose God or keep Him; and if we keep Him, it can only be by this frank acknowledgment that such things are "too wonderful for us."

Every sore event, like the death in Nain of the only son of his mother, is either a chance or a providence. If a providence (as it is), then we need the sheltering motto of the psalmist, "Too wonderful for me!" "Too wonderful for us!"

Of many another it has been said, "It had been better for the world, and better for himself, if his parents had buried him when a babe; better for his parents too." Why, then, was he not buried when a babe? Such providential problems often try us. And they must inevitably overthrow our peace, unless we are able in some way to find support. To do this effectually there is no other way than that of David, when he laid up God's omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence in a place in his thoughts which he had specially reserved for all such things as were "too wonderful" for him.—*American Messenger*.

FOR JESUS' SAKE.

A few Sabbaths since, I acted as substitute for a friend, and took a class of little ones. They had learned only the Golden Text, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." I tried to show why that prayer was so needful for us, and finally asked them why God could forgive us.

"Because God is so good," said a bright-eyed child.

"Because we tell God we are sorry," said another.

"Will telling God we are sorry, take away our sins?" I asked.

"I don't know what else," she replied, "only to ask him to forgive us because he is so good."

"Yes," said I, "we must ask him to forgive us, that is true, and God is good—never forget that. But think, if God is good, he ought to keep his word, ought he not?"

"Yes, ma'am," said all the children.

"If I promised to do something, and then didn't keep my word, you wouldn't think I was good, would you?"

"No, ma'am," said several voices.

"Listen," I continued: "God has promised to punish sin wherever he finds it, and he must keep his word, because he is good. Now how can he forgive sin, if he has promised to punish us?"

"I don't know," said the first two speakers. "Please tell us."

"Well," said I, "how many of you close your evening prayer with, 'All this I ask for Jesus' sake?' Every hand went up. 'Why do you say 'for Jesus' sake?'" No one knew, or if they knew, could tell why.

So I began right there, and told them in the simplest words I could frame, how "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," so that now "he might be just (keep his word), and yet justify (forgive) the sinner that trusts in Jesus." I told them of the Passover lamb, and how the oldest son in every house knew he was saved from death for the sake of the little lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the door. I was more than repaid when the bright-eyed girl who said God was so good, moved nearer to me and whispered, "I'm glad you told me. I shall think of it every time I say 'for Jesus' sake.'" I never knew what it meant before, I only said it because mother taught it to me."

I have thought much of her words since, and it has led me to question whether we begin early enough to teach the little ones committed to us the preciousness of the blood that cleanseth from all sin. I am sure I shall never forget the impression made upon me by some words of my father on this subject, when I was not more than three and a half years old. I had been guilty of some childish wrong, but I was very sorry, and sitting on his knee at bed-time, had told him so. He freely forgave me, but gently reminded me that I had sinned against my Father in heaven. "Well, he knows I'm sorry," I said; "don't that make it all right?" "No, little daughter," he said; "being sorry for our sins don't take them away. Only the precious blood of Jesus can do that." Then he told me the "old, old story," and I can recall now the thrill of awe that came over me, as I comprehended, for the first time, that God could not forgive sin if Jesus had not died. I am not sure, looking back upon it now, but I began to love Jesus from that very night.

"THEY CAME to the iron gate which opened to them of his own accord." Beautiful fiction as though a celestial hand were not moving it. And yet, things being described in the Bible as they appear, it is strictly true. So do inflexible circumstances change, and insuperable hindrances move out of the way, when God is at work for us.—*Adams*.