

HEART-LIFE.

BY

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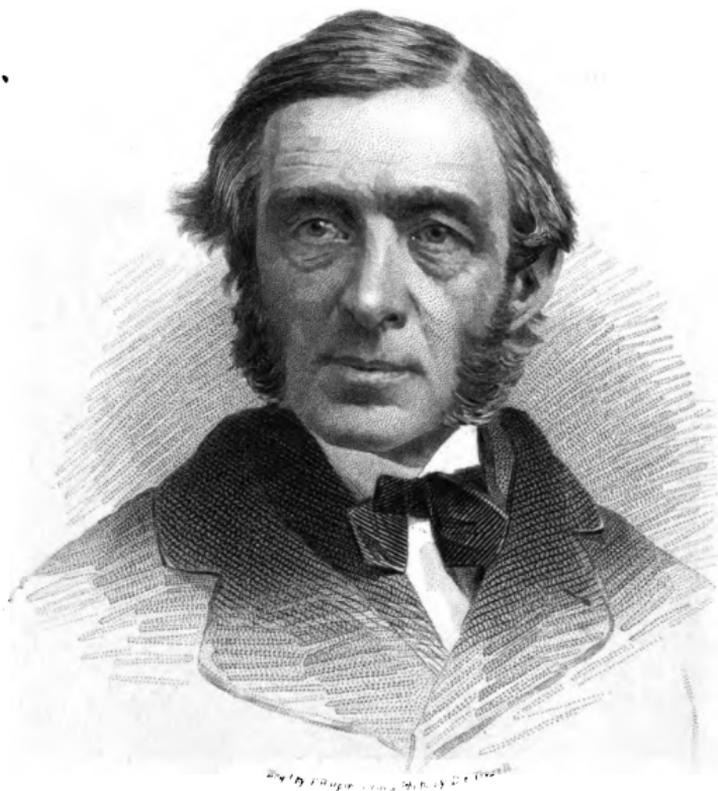


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With the following chapters on the Christian Life, there have been incorporated the five popular articles—from the N. Y. Evangelist—on “THE GREAT HYMNS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.”



HEART-LIFE.

HEART-KEEPING,

KEEP thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." As good "housekeeping" is essential to domestic comfort, so good heart-keeping is essential to healthful and happy piety.

The word of God represents the human heart as a *dwelling*. The unconverted heart is a habitation of the Evil one, with his brood of unholy thoughts and sinful tastes and passions. When Jesus Christ first enters this dwelling-place of the Evil one, he finds it fearfully filthy and out of order. The first work

of the Divine Spirit is to cleanse the house. Every room must be entered and purified. Into the stately and sumptuous drawing-room where Pride held court, the lowly Saviour enters and expels the occupant. From the walls of Sensuality's chamber many wanton pictures have to be taken down. The deserted and cobwebbed closet of Conscience is entered by the key of Truth, and is thrown open to the daylight.

Memory is another apartment of the mind which the Holy Spirit renews for a higher and holier use. Ranged on its shelves he finds the stores which were brought in through the five doorways of the senses. Much of this accumulation is but rubbish. Christ does not destroy this faculty; he simply makes it henceforth a granary of truth. A sanctified memory is the soul's store-room. We pity the man with whom this is but an empty garret or a confused lumber-room, heaped up with accumulated things, so hopelessly mingled that its owner can never lay hands on what he needs at the moment. With a devout believer the memory is a cabinet of curiosities of God's

love. In no apartment does Jesus abide oftener than in this; here the alabaster-box of gratitude is broken, and the room is filled with the sweet odor of the ointment.

There is also a chamber of Taste, from whose window the lover of beauty looks out on magnificent landscapes; and at midnight up into the star-studded vaults of Heaven. There is a lofty watch-tower where holy Vigilance keeps guard to espy the approaches of the enemy. Woe unto the Christian when the sentinel falls asleep on the tower! Over the doorway to this turret the Spirit has written, "Watch unto prayer!" "Blessed is he whom his Lord when he cometh shall find watching." From this tower Faith often looks out through the spyglass of the promises, and catches bright glimpses of the celestial city which lies at the end of the way.

"For glimpses such as these
My willing soul will bear
All that in darkest hours it sees
Of toil and pain and care."

We must not overlook one room in a converted heart, though it be ever so small or

ever so secluded. It is the secret "closet" where Faith holds sweet fellowship with God. It is fragrant with the presence of Jesus. Here stands the mercy-seat. To this inner sanctum Faith keeps a golden key inscribed, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; pray without ceasing." Over the door she readeth the inviting words: "Enter into this closet, 'and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.'" On the walls are inscriptions written in moments of devout intercourse with God, when the meditations of him were like the droppings of the honeycomb.

This is Faith's stronghold; here she weap-
ons herself for the daily conflict. Silence in
that closet of prayer bespeaks death through-
out all the house. When that door is suffered
to rust on its hinges and that chamber is de-
serted, then the heart-house is soon retaken
by Satan, and evil spirits come in and dwell
there.

To keep this house with all diligence is the
primal duty of every one who bears the name

of Christ. The object of this little volume is to offer a few counsels for the right keeping of the heart and the right conduct of the Christian life. Some of these brief chapters have been written out of our own personal experience; and some have been gathered during many years of observation of the experiences of others. How to keep J̄esus in the inner heart, and how to glorify Jesus in the outer life, is the twofold secret of spiritual success and of final salvation.





AM I ALIVE?

IT is not a sufficient answer to this question for any Christian to say, "I was once converted." Thousands were born ten years ago who are now in their coffins. There is a great difference between being "made alive," and *keeping* alive afterwards. Quite too many professors base their hope of being Christians, not on what they now are, but on some experience during a revival season in days gone by.

Genuine conversion brings a man into a new state towards God. Old things have passed away; he is a new creature. But he must constantly encounter a strong under-current, running like a mill-race, towards the old state of corruption. No renewed heart will "keep sweet" without a great deal of salting with

divine grace. No converted man will *stay* converted unless he takes care of himself, and the Master takes care of him. What is conversion? It is the turning of the heart to God; and unless that heart holds fast on God, and God holds fast to him, he will soon fall into vain confidence, apathy, pride, self-indulgence, or any sin that "doth so easily beset" him. How long do you think that Paul would have been *Paul* if the power of God had not kept him, through faith? "Not I," exclaims the modest old hero—"not I, but Christ that liveth in me." "I live by faith on the Son of God." Again he exclaims, "*So fight* I, not as one that *strike*th out into the air; but I keep my body under." He uses a phrase drawn from the boxer's contests, and the literal translation of it is, "I bruise my body—I give it a *black eye*—lest I myself should be a reprobate." Paul had such a terrible dread lest his evil propensities should get the better of him, that he constantly beats down with steady and sturdy blows the unruly appetites and passions. If such was the necessity laid upon the great apostle, who of us has a right to grow fool-

hardy and self-confident? The moment a Christian begins to feel, "What do I care? let others be afraid—not I;" the moment a Christian feels so, he is as near to a disgraceful fall as boastful Peter was in Pilate's hall.

But granting that you were once made alive, kind reader, *are you alive* to-day? If so, how shall you keep alive?

First of all comes *prayer*, the daily and hourly intercourse of the soul with God. Prayer is just as vital to my spiritual life as water is to the "monthly rose" whose leaves are now dripping from the refreshing of the pitcher. Prayer is the conduit-pipe between my soul and heaven. It is the *outlet* upwards for gratitude, and yearning desires for blessings; it is the *inlet* through which the supplies of grace pour downward into the heart. When the channel is allowed to freeze up, I am in the same condition with the housekeeper who inquires, "I wonder why the water does not *run* to-day? The plumber is sent for, and he soon explains the difficulty. "Your pipes are frozen up; the connection with the reservoir is

stopped." Alas for the Christian who has broken his connection with Christ !

Prayer may be also likened to a telegraph with Heaven. Our messages go up with the lightning speed of thought. The mercies asked for often flow down to us with the promptness and velocity of a divine love. Sometimes the blessing sought is ours at once. Sometimes the answer is delayed. Then we can only do our duty and *wait*. Sometimes the reply comes in the sudden shock of an unexpected trial; it comes like a death-message over the wires ! But it is all right. God knows what answer to send. I must take what my Father chooses to give. If I put myself into connection with God, I am only responsible for *this* end of the celestial telegraph ; not for the end that lies in the Infinite bosom of love. I must receive just what God sends. "Thy will be done." But trying messages are not so dreadful as to have the telegraph of prayer utterly out of order through long disuse, and the soul cut off from Jesus. Friend, is thy connection with the Divine Hearer and Giver broken off ? Then to your knees ! to your knees !

“Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give:
Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray they live.”

But with prayer the Master also coupled *watchfulness*. “I say unto you all, watch!” Never yet have I seen the Christian whose heart would not “bear watching.” The oversight must be close, constant, and wakeful. If you were set to keep a canary-bird on the open palm of your hand, you would understand what is meant by “keeping the heart with all diligence.” You must not take off the spiritual eye for one instant. Have the arm of resolution ever ready to seize it the very first moment that it attempts to fly off into sin.

“Wherefore I say unto you all, watch!” Watch the stealthy approaches of the tempter. Watch for old habits of sin that will steal back again though they have been driven off a hundred times “from the premises.” Watch over your soul’s nurseries in which the thoughts are cradled. Watch over an unruly tongue. Watch for opportunities to do good. Let the *Mary* side of your religion be ever at the feet of Jesus in humble devotion; let the *Martha*

side of your piety be ever abounding in the work of the Lord. In these days we hear much about the "higher life." But the best prescription that we know of for attaining it is to use our knees for prayer, our eyes for watchfulness, our purses for liberal giving, our tongues for confessing Jesus, and both our hands in hard work to do Christ's will, and to pull sinners out of the everlasting fires.





BUILDING ON THE ROCK.

DIG deep, and lay your foundation well, is our earnest advice to every awakened soul. Almost every revival brings into the church more or less of what may be called “shaky professors.” Their religious life is frail, ill-built, tottering, and liable to come down in the first stiff gale of temptation. The simple reason is, that there was no underlying godliness based on Jesus Christ. When you see a huge crack in the third story room of a tall mansion, you may at once suppose that there is something wrong in the *foundation*. So with a religious profession that is not bottomed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Sooner or later the crack appears in the daily life; or else the flimsy structure leans over from the perpendicular “like a bowing wall and a tottering

fence." Even if it manage to hold itself up until the dying hour, the tremendous surge of death tumbles the whole edifice of presumption and falsehood into utter, irretrievable ruin. When the last storm descends, and the floods beat upon it, it falls; and "great will be the fall of it," for eternity can bring no repair of the wreck.

Christ, in his searching Sermon on the Mount, spoke of two classes of builders. The one built on the sand, and the other built on the rock. When the hour of trial came upon both alike, the quicksand upset the one, and the rock-bed upheld the other. The one stood because it had a *foundation*; the other fell for want of one. Now, just here is the vital point with every anxious seeker after salvation; for it will be a terrible thing for you to find out at last that you have been building on the sand!

In building for eternity there is but one sure foundation. God is rich in resources, but he has provided only one plan of salvation. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST." What is

meant by this? We believe it means, that when sinful man had no righteousness of his own to stand upon, Christ "becomes to him righteousness." When he has no strength, Jesus offers to put his infinite arm beneath him. When the sinful soul has no inward principle to base a godly life upon, Jesus implants one through regeneration. When he has no pattern to live by, Jesus furnishes a perfect model. And when any penitent man sincerely embraces Christ Jesus as his Saviour, rests on his atonement for pardon, looks to Jesus for guidance, leans on Jesus for support, and is united to Jesus in heart and in daily life, then may he be said to have built on Jesus as his spiritual foundation. When a man thus embraces Christ, he has a *rock-bed* infinite and immovable beneath him. If you ask such a man why he expects to be saved, his simple answer is, "Christ died for me, and his blood cleanseth from all sin." If you ask him the ground of his assurance, he answers with Paul, "I *know* whom I have believed." If you inquire of him whence he derives strength for the strain of daily life, its wrenching trials, its

wrestling temptations, and its toils, he can humbly testify that down in the depths of his soul there is an underlying grace which Christ doth furnish. This work of Christ for him and within him is his foundation. It underlies his religion, just as the granite underlies the heaven-kissing hills. If you take away the divine Jesus from this man, you take away his faith, his hope, his peace, his strength, his character, his all.

Now, my friend, here is a Rock for your soul—the Rock of Ages. If you build on anything else—on your prayers or your professions, on your morality or your philanthropy, on your ceremonies or your church-membership—you are building on the sand. Morality is a very beautiful part of a Christian's superstructure, but it is not a *foundation*. Other foundation, remember, no man *can* lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus. We have seen some melancholy crashes in the moral career of men; we have heard some terrible *falls* in dying chambers. They were the down-tumbings of a false hope that was bottomed on the sand. When the floods came and the

winds smote on it, it fell, and great was the fall thereof!

But when a penitent soul has committed itself to Jesus, and the new heart, the new principle, and the new purpose have come to it through conversion, then on this sure foundation what a beautiful and effective life may be built! A well-built life is just the laying up of one grace and good deed upon another; of faith and patience and temperance and benevolence and courage and self-denial and brotherly love. It is growing in grace. It is the sacred architecture of the Holy Spirit. "Ye are God's building."

A well-built Christian is harmonious in all his parts. He is not a jumble of opposites and inconsistencies—to-day devout and to-morrow frivolous, to-day liberal and to-morrow stingy, to-day fluent in prayer and to-morrow fluent in falsehoods. He does not keep the fourth commandment on Sunday and break the eighth commandment by cunning frauds on Monday. His philanthropy does not outrun his conscientiousness, nor do his spiritual fervors outrun his inward faith and self-deni-

als. Some professed Christians are as unfinished as the cathedral at Cologne, where vast towers have risen no higher than mere stumps, and where ugly wooden cranes conceal an exquisite Gothic tracery. Do not expect to reach absolute Christian perfection; but that is no reason why you should settle down content with a wilful and wretched imperfection.

As we close, we point you to the Rock of Ages—Christ Jesus. You never can be saved but through him. Every hour is worse than lost that you spend away from Christ. There is a dying-bed spreading for you somewhere, my friend; there is a shroud somewhere weaving. There is a storm coming that will wrench and try your spiritual hope to the utmost. See to it that you are well founded. The way to avoid the sand is to strike for the rock. Dig deep, and lay your foundation well. He that heareth the voice of Christ, and *doeth his will*, he is the wise man who buildeth his house upon the rock. Steadily the structure rises, stone-on stone. Sometimes in tears and trials the builder buildeth; sometimes through storms of persecution and reproach. But he

builds for eternity. And it shall be of such as he that the celestial chant shall yet be heard: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that *kept* the commandments of God, and the FAITH OF JESUS."





THE ROCK OF AGES.

THE southern coast of England has been the birthplace of the grandest hymns in our language. Within that belt of land, sacred to devout poesy, Charles Wesley caught the inspiration of many of his hymns, and there, we believe, he composed that delicious love-lay of the heart,

“Jesus, lover of my soul.”

On the shores of Hampshire mused and sang good Isaac Watts; and in the same county, modest Anne Steele breathed forth her tender songs of consolation. In old Kent lived Edward Perronett, who struck that thrilling note,

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!”

In beautiful Devonshire, the Rev. Henry F. Lyte chanted his last sweet melody,

“Abide with me: fast falls the eventide.”

A few miles from him dwelt Charlotte Elliott, the sister of a clergyman: she went about doing good; but the grandest work God ever put into her hands was to write,

“Just as I am, without one plea.”

Devonshire is certainly honored above all the shires of Britain, for on that poetic soil Augustus Toplady gave birth to the most glorious hymn of modern times, the *Rock of Ages*. The “Dies Iræ” is the king of mediæval hymns; but of modern songs of Zion, the “Rock of Ages” wears the crown.

It is a curious fact that the spiritual birth-place of the heart which fashioned this hymn was a *barn*! Augustus Toplady was the son of a British officer. After Major Toplady's death his widow took the lad Augustus on a visit to Ireland. While at Codymain, the boy of sixteen found his way into a barn, where an earnest but uneducated layman was preaching on the text, “Ye who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” The homespun preacher “builded better than he knew,” for his sermon converted the soul which gave to the church of God the *Rock of Ages*.

Let no man feel that he is doing a small thing when he is proclaiming Jesus and the great salvation even to peasants in a cow-house, or to sailors on the docks. Probably that obscure Irish preacher has overheard ten thousand echoes of his sermon in the heavenly world.

Toplady was ordained to the ministry in 1762, and began to preach on the banks of the Otter. His career was a short one, for he died at the age of thirty-eight. He lived fast and worked fiercely. James Hamilton says of him, that "like a race-horse, all nerve and fire, his life was on tiptoe, and his delight was to get over the ground." He composed in hot haste. Certainly some of his sharp controversial papers were thrown off as from a furnace, for they scorched terribly.

Even when he wrote his magnificent masterpiece, the "Rock of Ages," he could not resist the temptation to give a sly thrust at those who he insisted were believers in "Perfectionism." So he entitled his hymn when he printed it, "A living and dying prayer of the *holiest believer* in the world." This was as

much as if he had said: "The most sanctified soul in the world must come down on his knees, and confess, 'nothing in my hands I bring,' and 'vile I to this fountain fly.'"

Glorious child of song! he has gone where the strife of tongues has ceased and controversies are for ever hushed. Perhaps he and Wesley have sung each other's hymns in glory, and been puzzled to find out which of the two was the "Calvinist." As we Presbyterians sing with tears of joy,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

so our Methodist brethren have cheered many a love-feast by pouring forth the inspiring strain,

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!"

Toplady's hymn is as universally popular as the sunshine or the vernal flowers. It has been translated into almost every tongue. Dr. Pomeroy went into a church in Constantinople, where a company of Armenians were singing a hymn which so moved them that the tears were trickling down their cheeks. He inquired what they were singing? A man

present translated the words, and lo! they were the dear old lines of Rock of Ages! When Prince Albert of England was dying, his lips feebly murmured the sweet words of Toplady's hymn. And so it came about that the dying *prince* laid hold of those precious thoughts which had their original root in the rude discourse of an obscure layman in an Irish barn! Truly the religion of Jesus abaseth the proud and exalteth the lowly. Kings and beggars must go down into the dust alike, where the blood of the atoning Lamb is streaming.

We do not dare to attempt the critical analysis of Toplady's wonderful hymn. Just as soon would we pull a tuberose to pieces to find out where the delicious odor was lurking. The hymn itself is absolute *perfection*. Of all its lines the two finest are those which are carved on a monument in Greenwood, beneath a figure of Faith kneeling before a cross:

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.”

No device in all Greenwood is more impressive; and no words can express more beauti-

fully the entire empty-handedness with which a poor, weak, sinful soul comes to grasp the Divine Redeemer as its last and only hope. The essence of the gospel is in this matchless couplet. It has wrought itself into ten thousand prayers for pardon; it has been the condensed "confession of faith" for ten thousand penitents.

Two slight changes have been made in Toplady's hymn. The word "tracts" has been superseded by "worlds" in the last verse. In the same verse the author also wrote,

"When my *eye-strings* break in death."

Perhaps he had learned the medical fact, that at the moment of dissolution, a delicate tendon near the eye sometimes breaks, and causes a flow of tears. But the allusion was more anatomical than poetic, and the word "heart-strings" is substituted in our common version.

This glorious hymn yet waits for a *tune* worthy of it. The one in ordinary use is by no means of the highest order. Some master of music ought to compose an "air" which shall describe the majestic onward and upward

movement of the thought to its sublime climax. The whole hymn is a fervent *outcry* of a broken heart to Jesus. It begins in plaintive confession,

“Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfil thy law’s commands.”

Then the suppliant owns that he is naked, empty-handed, and helpless and foul, and calls out imploringly—

“*Wash me, Saviour, or I die!*”

Then his bursting heart begins to yearn and stretch onward. It reaches on to the dread hour when the heart-strings are snapping at the touch of death. It sweeps out into eternity; it soars to the judgment-seat. It beholds the great white throne! And casting itself down before that throne, it pours forth its last piercing but triumphant cry,

“Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!”



JOINING THE LORD JESUS.

JOINING the church is one thing, but joining the Lord Jesus is quite another thing; and only those who have done the second have any clear right to do the first. The main cause of inconsistency and failure in the life of too many professors of religion, is that they make a formal union with the church without any heart-union to Christ. Almost their solitary act of loyalty was their standing up to respond to a church covenant before the pulpit. From that time onward their divine Master had no more of them than their idle name on the roll of his followers. They enlisted; they entered their names on the record, and straightway are heard of no more. They made no tie to anything but an organized body of professed Christians; they did not knit their souls to the Saviour.

“But am I not to join the church?” inquires some one who is indulging a hope of pardon and of the new birth. Yes, friend, join the church, provided that you have already joined Jesus. If you unite yourself to nothing stronger than to a company of frail, fallible fellow-creatures, and expect them to tow you along by the power of their fellowship and prayers, then you have but a poor chance of reaching the “desired haven.” But genuine conversion unites your heart in clinging faith to the Friend of sinners. When you take the step of confessing this faith before men, you literally and truly *join the Lord*. You join your weakness to his strength; you join your ignorance to his wisdom, your unworthiness to his merits, your frailty to his enduring might, and your poverty to his boundless wealth. The fair peasant-girl who married an emperor of Russia became a sharer of his palace and his crown. When you wed your heart and hand to Jesus, you become a sharer in his kingdom and crown, a joint heir with Christ! The joint heir has the promise of the Father’s love, of the indwelling of the Spirit, of the peace of

God, of pleasures for evermore, and of the society of all the just made perfect throughout eternity! "Where I am, there shall ye be also."

What a glorious thought this is! What a different conception it is from that of merely "joining a church" of fellow-creatures. You really join Christ. Your heart joins his heart. Your life is knit by hidden links to his; because he lives, ye shall live also. Your destiny is bound to his; and ye shall be *kept by the power of God*, through faith, unto salvation. If you have a real faith, however feeble, *confess it*. If you have renounced sin and self, and come to Jesus, then "join yourself to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten."

Many who have a secret faith in Christ hold back too long from a public confession. Waiting to become stronger, they only grow weaker. They are like the timid child who should try to learn to walk without ever getting on its feet. For fear of a tumble they lie still. On the whole, I rather like the venture of Simon Peter out of the fishing-boat to walk to Jesus on the waves; for, though he began to sink, he

also began to pray. He found that sinking times were praying times; and when we learn that, we know where to reinforce our own weakness by laying hold on the infinite strength. But for a true convert to confess Christ is really not a walking on the water. He has under him the solid rock of God's promises.

"How soon should I join the church?" The best answer we can give to this question is, Just as soon as your heart has joined the Saviour. Not one moment before that. When God gives conversion he demands confession. Make the most of your early love. If your heart goes out to Jesus in loving trust, then stand up for him and *with* him, and joining your hand to his, take the blessed vows of spiritual wedlock. The whole drift of the Bible is in favor of prompt approach to Christ, prompt trust in Christ, prompt confession of Christ, and prompt obedience to *his* every call to duty. The teaching of the word is, "Whatsoever HE saith to you, *do it.*" But the devil's version reads, "Whatsoever He saith to you, *delay it.*"

Our pastoral observation has convinced us

that people sometimes commit two great mistakes. The saddest mistake is committed by those who join a church without joining Christ. This solemn mockery of professing a faith that is not really possessed, has cost many a one the most indescribable misery and mischief. May God in his mercy keep you from such a false step; it may be a fatal one.

The other mistake is that of delaying the acknowledgment and open confession of that blessed Saviour, who, when he gave us himself, demands that *we give ourselves to him*. Have you given your heart to Jesus? Then give him your hand in a public and perpetual covenant, that shall never be forgotten.





WANTED—MORE CALEBS.

“**W**HO is Caleb? I never heard of him.” That is quite possible; for in the Bible gallery of characters there are some modest people whose presence we only discover as blind men find out rose-bushes—by their *fragrance*. Dorcas probably made no sensation in Joppa; but when Dorcas’ fingers grew quiet under the grave-clothes, Joppa found out what they had lost, and the poor women came in and preached her funeral sermon in warm tear-drops on her silent face. To this same class belong Ezra, the scribe; and Hannah, the praying mother; and Andrew, who believed in personal effort; and Onesiphorus, who was not ashamed of Paul’s chain. CALEB stands in this catalogue—a

type of thorough-going servants of God, who do a great deal with but little noise, who stand meekly and steadily at their posts of duty, who never shirk their share of toil or danger, who do not attract much attention until they are *gone!* Then how we miss them in the church, in society, in the Sunday-school! How the family or the neighborhood suffer for the want of them! How hard it is to get along without them!

Caleb's whole biography is condensed into a few bright sentences. He was the chieftain of a clan in Israel, was selected as one of the deputation to go down and spy out the land of Canaan; he came back, helping to carry the luscious load of Eshcol grapes, and made a strong report in favor of the immediate occupation of the land; and when the panic-stricken people clamored for retreat on account of "the giants there," Caleb came to the front and made a ringing speech, in the face of poltroons who stood with stones in their hands to batter him to the ground. God's verdict on the man's steadfast heroism was in these brief words: "My servant Caleb will I bring into

the land, who hath *followed me faithfully.*" In another passage it reads, "He hath followed me *wholly.*" In still another it is written, "He hath followed me *fully.*" God was as good as his word. While the cowards and the rebels all perished in the wilderness, stout, steady old Caleb lived to own the beautiful acres on the hills of Hebron, and in full view of the verdant vale of Eshcol. When the long march and the bloody war were over, he tasted of the grapes of victory—even as our Lincoln did for a few brief hours before his martyrdom.

Caleb is the man most needed in our churches in these latter days. He is the type-man for thorough-going fidelity. He followed the Lord fully. What we want to make churches vigorous and successful is, not bustle, but business; not parade and puffery, but patience, prayer, and persevering work. We want the full following of Christ with the whole heart, for the whole time, and for the whole life campaign. Christ started his church on the principle of entire consecration. Over the doorway he wrote, "Whosoever would follow me, *let him leave all!*" Again he said, "Ye cannot

serve God and mammon." And again he said, "He that is not for me is against me." It was thorough-going discipleship or nothing. "Sell all that thou hast and *follow me*" frightened the poor selfish young ruler back to his farm and to his fate. Christ would have no half-hearted disciples. He sifted his followers, and out of the whole number there remained eleven men and a few faithful women to lay the foundation of his church on the eve of Pentecost.

To follow Jesus fully requires a whole-hearted conversion at the start. Half-way converts make half-way Christians. Some men's boughs hang over on the church side of the wall, but their *roots* are on the world's side. Such bear nothing but leaves. "Many lay false and bastard foundations," said quaint old Rutherford; "and they get Christ for as good as half nothing, and never had a sick night of sorrow for sin. *This maketh loose work.*" True enough; and, unless the conversion is radical and thorough, unless the submission of the soul to Christ is without compromise and conditions, there will be half-heartedness and halting to

the last. Caleb, we are told, "had *another* spirit within him."

But there is prodigious power in singleness of love for Jesus—in the doing "just one thing," and that is to live solely for the Master. A man of very moderate talents and endowments becomes a leading mind as soon as Christ gets complete hold of him. I can point to more than one plain, modest, moderately-educated Christian who has attained to a great *propelling* power in the church simply from the momentum of his godliness. He follows Jesus so heartily, so projectively, that he carries others along with him by his sheer momentum. And that is not brain-power, or purse-power mainly, but *heart-power*.

So it comes about that thorough godliness outstrips genius in the pupil. Thorough-going piety is the *first* requisite for the church officer, for the Sunday-school teacher, for the leadership of a class, of a meeting, or of any movement. Thorough-going piety never commutes with the Master for half-fare, never whimpers, "I pray thee, *have me excused*;" never interprets the Bible in the lax and lati-

tudinarian sense; and when there is a doubt on any point, gives God and not himself the benefit of it. Such a Christian "loves duty, even in all the wholesome severities of it." If his religion has ever a necessary pain or a pinch in it, he bears it without flinching. He never imitates Peter Pindar's pilgrim, who, having been commanded to make a long journey with peas in his shoes, took the sly precaution to boil his peas before he started. Thousands are quite willing to go heavenward with us provided they have a choice seat in the cushioned car; but commend me to the Calebs who, discerning the land afar off by faith, are ready for a lifetime march to reach it, over rough roads and with stony pillows for a bivouac.

I have come to consider those the best members in my church who are quite as good in ordinary times as they are amid the fervors of a revival. When the church is all aglow, and its meetings are magnetic with enthusiasm, how easy it is to catch fire, to sing, to shout hosanna, and to go into raptures on the mount. It is a luxury to be a Christian then. But

when the fervor is gone, and the crowd is gone, and the flesh is weak or weary, and the very air of the room numbs the spirit, then to keep aglow, and to kindle others also, requires the living fire of Christ Jesus in the soul. It was easy for Caleb to exercise faith while he was picking Eshcol's grapes and feasting on the fresh figs; but to keep up his faith amid an army of poltroons, and to hold out for nigh forty years in the desert, demanded and developed the most resolute pluck and principle. A revival brings great glory to the Lord, but it also brings great disgrace upon the church, for it reveals so painfully the indolence and worldliness of those who never lift a finger for Christ at any other time. Revivals fill the church; seasons of dullness and declension winnow the church. We pastors never love our Calebs so well as we do in those dry, dreary spells of comparative drought; for they work right along, without any need of external excitements. They are the *salt* that never loses its savor.

If seasons of spiritual declension sift our churches, so do times of swimming worldly

prosperity. Then we find out how many Calebs there are who can keep lowly in heart while their income is running up from ten thousand to a hundred thousand. When silly *furores* and fashions rage, the chaff in our churches always goes with the gale; but steadfast, solid Caleb never has but one fashion, and that is to follow Christ. His first rule always is, to please God, which trieth the heart, rather than man.

We have said enough to indicate who the Calebs are. They are the sinew of the church. Blessed is the pastor "who hath his quiver full of them!" To those who inquire, "How shall my church be developed?" we answer: *Ask God for more Calebs, and use such Calebs as you have.* Remember, too, that a hundred half-Christians do not make a single whole one. Every addition made to the weight of our own personal Christianity adds to the weight and momentum of the church of Christ.



THE NIGHT-BELL OF PRAYER.

“**P**ULL the night-bell.” This is the inscription we often see written on the doorpost of the shop in which medicines are sold. Some of us have had our experiences with night-bells when sudden illness has overtaken some member of our households, or when the sick have rapidly grown worse. How have we hurried through the silent streets, when only here and there a light glimmered from some chamber window! How eagerly have we pulled the night-bell at our physician’s door; and then, with prescription in hand, have sounded the alarm at the place where the remedy was to be procured. Those of us who have had these lonely midnight walks, and have given the summons for quick relief, know

the meaning of that Bible-text, "Arise! cry out *in the night!*"

Seasons of trouble and distress are often spoken of in God's word under the simile of *night*. The word vividly pictures those times when the skies are darkened, and the lights that gladden the soul have gone out, and it is not easy to find one's way. Enemies may be stealing on us in the darkness. Apprehensions gather like fancied spectres, to make us uneasy or afraid. If prosperity be likened to the noonday, the seasons of perplexity or distress may be likened to the "night." Perhaps some of the readers of this paragraph may be in a gloomy night-season of poverty, or bereavement, or of spiritual doubt and depression. Each heart knoweth its own bitterness. Friend, arise, and pull the night-bell of prayer! God your Father says to you, "Call upon me in the time of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Centuries ago it was said of certain people, "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses."

There are different kinds of prayer. There

is the calm communion of the soul with God. There is the affectionate converse of the believer with him, in which faith feeds on the promises, and recounts its mercies, and finds its meditations to be sweet. Then, too, there is the sharp, piercing cry of anguish, or the earnest appeal of importunity, which will not let God go without an immediate response. Christ described the beseeching eagerness of this style of prayer, when he told his disciples about a certain housekeeper who went to a friend's house at midnight, and clamored for the loan of three loaves of bread to feed unexpected guests, until, "because of his *importunity*," he got all the bread that he needed. There are many varieties of night-calls for relief, from the sudden cry of our little ones in their cribs, to the shout for "help!" in the street, or the eager call under the physician's window. These are all types of the prayer which you are to pour out into the ear of God in seasons of difficulty or distress or danger.

"If pains afflict, or wrongs oppress,
 If cares distract, or fears dismay,
 If guilt deject, if sin distress,
 The remedy's before thee—*pray*."

“This is all a very pretty theory,” some of you may say, “and it has a very pious sound. But please to tell me what actual and positive *good* it can do me. Does it really move God? Does it really bring relief?” Such cavils are as common as breathing. The devil can suggest them in a hundred forms; and it is astonishing how much readier some people are to believe the father of lies, than to believe their Father in heaven.

Does the prayer of faith really move God? To this we can only reply, that God himself tells us that it does actually produce that state of things in which it is right and in accordance with his will to bestow the asked-for blessing. God tells us that he loves to be asked, and is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him. He tells us that the fervent effectual prayer of the righteous availeth much. He bids us ask, and we shall receive. His word abounds in narratives of the actual bestowal of things which his children have besought him to give them. When his needy or suffering ones have pulled the night-bell of prayer with strong faith, he has relieved them of their distress, or

removed the evils they suffered from, or else given to them supernatural grace to bear their burdens. On his bed of anguish Hezekiah rang this night-bell, and God heard it, and spared his life. In his dungeon at Jerusalem Peter cried unto the Lord, and a whole prayer-meeting cried at the same time for his deliverance, and God sent his angel and brought the apostle out of the prison. Answered prayers cover the field of providential history as flowers cover Western prairies. Answered prayers hover around the communion-tables of our churches, in seasons of revival, as we have seen great flocks of birds descend into a meadow. Answered prayers have made the pulpits of Payson and Burns and Spurgeon powerful. Answered prayers have visited sick-rooms like angels, to restore to life; or if infinite wisdom had appointed to the sick to die, the sting of death has been turned to the song of victory. "I cannot get on without three hours a day of prayer now," said Martin Luther in the thick of his great fight with the man of sin. Are you wiser than Luther?

Some people pull the bell of prayer, and

then run away without stopping for the answer. Sometimes they grow discouraged, and mistake a delay for a total denial. Sometimes the thing asked for is not actually bestowed, but in lieu of it our all-wise Father grants us something far better. He does not spare our sick darling's life, but he takes the little one home to heaven, and draws our poor hearts up with it unto himself. God answers prayers according to his own wisdom and love, and not according to our short-sightedness. But I no more believe that God leaves a right prayer, offered in the right spirit, to pass unnoticed, than I believe that he will let the whole summer pass over without a drop of rain or dew.

In securing answers to our requests, we must coöperate with the Lord. Some people ask him to do their work. "Father," said a little boy, after he had heard him pray fervently for *the poor* at family worship—"father, I wish I had your corn-crib." "Why, my son?" "Because then I would answer your prayer." I have heard professing Christians pray for the conversion of their children, while

they were taking them night after night into scenes of frolic and dissipation. We may make fools of ourselves, but the Almighty will never let us make a fool of him. God is not mocked; whatsoever we sow, we shall also reap. *Neither does God ever mock us.*

Then, my friend, if you will only "arise and cry in the night," you may be sure that your Father will hear the bell. He will send the right answer; and if it is not best that he lift off your load, he will give you grace to carry it. Pull the bell with a strong hand! You'll never doubt that God is a prayer-answerer when you get to heaven. There is no night there! He who has often arisen in the night of trouble and sorrow here to ring the bell of prayer, with a trembling hand, will then stand in the morning light of glory on the sea of glass, like unto pure gold.





TRUE PRAYERS NEVER LOST.

IT is hard to believe that the fervent prayer of the righteous man is ever lost. The answer may be long delayed. It may come in a manner wholly unlooked for. The return of the prayer may be such that it may not be recognized by the devout soul who uttered it. But it is not lost.

1. For example, there are some prayers which we cannot expect to see answered immediately. I was at a monthly concert last evening, where God's people were pleading with him for the conversion of the world. None of that praying company had any expectation of living to see the day when the last heathen nation should surrender to the victorious Jesus. Yet their petitions will never

be forgotten. Those pleading disciples will yet behold the glorious fulfilment of their desires from the battlements of heaven. In our own experience we have seen many a prayer manifestly answered long after the saint who breathed it into the ear of the Saviour has gone to lay his weary head on that Saviour's breast.

A dying-mother commits her beloved boy to a covenant-keeping God. She has often borne that child on the arms of faith to the mercy-seat. He has been the child of many prayers; and in the feeble utterances of her passing spirit another and a last petition is breathed forth that Christ would have mercy on his soul. Years roll away. The sod has grown green, and the rank grass has long waved over that mother's tomb. In some distant land—mayhap hundreds of miles from that spot—a full-grown man, who has long been ripening in sin, is seen bowed in prayer. He is crying out of an agonized heart, *God be merciful to me a sinner!* Behold, he prayeth, and *his* prayer is the answer of the fervent petitions which his dying mother uttered many

long years before. Her requests were recorded in God's book of remembrance; and but for them we know not that the prayer of that penitent son would have ever ascended there. Let praying fathers and mothers never grow faint of heart. Let desponding churches, long unvisited by revival blessings, only close up their ranks more compactly about the mercy-seat, and besiege heaven with new importunity. For above the dark cloud of their discouragement is written, as in the clear upper sky, "He that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

2. Other prayers are answered at the time of their utterance, but in a way so unlooked for that he who offered them is inclined to think that the very opposite of what he asked for has befallen him. One individual prays, for instance, that he may be enabled to glorify God. Ere he is aware, some tremendous calamity comes crashing down upon him, prostrating him to the dust. His fortune is swept away; or his schemes of promotion are blasted. A favorite child is missed from the cradle

or the hearthstone. His hopes are withered like grass. God has answered his prayer, but has answered it, as the Psalmist says, "by terrible things." From under the overwhelming pressure of affliction he flees to Jesus, his divine Comforter, and oh, how his love is kindled by the contact! How his latent faith is called forth! How he glorifies God in the furnace of trial which is purging away the dross of selfishness and worldliness, and making his pure gold shine with tenfold brightness!

We once saw an earnest inquirer who was praying most importunately for faith in Christ, and for peace to his troubled soul. But while he prayed, a cloud of darkness gathered across his horizon. And against that cloud, which swung like a funeral pall before his vision, played the sharp lightnings of the Almighty's wrath. The thunders of God's law roared against him. Instead of peace came only the sword. Instead of the calm he sought came the fearful tempest; and, under the stress of its terrors, the poor baffled soul betakes himself to the "covert" which Christ has raised on Calvary. There he finds the peace he so

earnestly prayed for. There the long-sought confidence in Jesus pours its fulness through the soul. His prayer was answered—first by terrible things, but at last by the very blessings which he desired. And without that storm the true calm would have never come. Had the sinner not been led to that frightful view of his own guilt and condemnation, he might never have gone to Christ, and thus could not have known true abiding peace. As he looks back over the dark valley of sorrow through which the divine hand has wondrously led him, and sees that no other way would so surely bring him to the cross, he feels a renewed assurance that no true prayer is ever lost; he now *knows* that he that asketh aright will always receive, and he that seeketh will surely find. His experience is worth all it cost him.

3. Once more, let us remark that the petitions of believers are often answered according to their *intention*, and not according to the strict letter of the request. The utterer of the prayer sought only the glory of God; but, in his ignorance, asked for wrong things. 'God

hears and answers him; but the blessing granted is something very *different* from what the believer expected. The case of Paul is a beautiful illustration of this. He is sorely afflicted by a "thorn in the flesh." What the precise nature of the affliction was, we know not. Perhaps it was a severe malady; perhaps a besetting sin; perhaps a mortifying deformity of body or of character. He beseeches God in three earnest petitions that this "thorn" might depart from him. His prayers are heard. They are answered. But, instead of the removal of the thorn comes the cheering assurance, "My grace is sufficient for thee." The Lord does not take away the trial, but gives him all that is needed to make it endurable; thus the Divine glory and Paul's spiritual well-being were more certainly advanced than if the prayer had been answered strictly according to its letter.

The prayer was not lost. That God hears every sincere prayer, who can doubt? The skeptic must seal his vision, lest, coming to the light, he shall be persuaded against himself. He must mutilate or destroy the shining

record of God's providential dealings with the children of faith. He must erase from the Bible the animating narrative of Jacob's midnight struggles, the thrilling scenes of Elijah's wrestlings at Carmel and at Zarephath, the "evening oblations" of Daniel, and the angelic deliverance of Peter from the prison cell. He must destroy many a leaf from the Christian's diary, on which devout gratitude has written, "This day I learned anew that my heavenly Father hears and answers prayer." He must give the lie to omniscient Love, which has uttered in the ear of all the needy, sorrowing, guilty household of humanity, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."





SPIRITUAL DYSPEPTICS.

HERE is a class of weak-handed and feeble-kneed professors in Christ's church who are self-made invalids. Their spiritual debility is the direct result of their own sins and short-comings. In their case, as in the physical hygiene, disease is the inevitable punishment of transgression against the laws of health.

Is not the inebriate's bloated and poisoned frame the immediate legacy of his bottle? Is not a shattered nervous system the tormenting bequest which a high-pressure career of sensuality leaves to the transgressor? The indolence which never earns its daily bread cannot earn the appetite to enjoy it; the glut-

tony which gorges the stomach is but fattening an early banquet for the worms. *Dyspepsia is only God's appointed health-officer, stationed at the gateway of excess, to warn off all who approach it, and to punish those who will persist in entering the forbidden ground.* In like manner spiritual disease is the inevitable result of committed sin, or of neglect of religious duty. It requires no profound skill to detect the cause of Mr. A——'s dyspepsia, or Deacon B——'s spiritual palsy, or of poor Mr. C——'s leprosy. How can a Christian be healthy who never works? How can a man's faith be strong who never enters his closet? How can a man's benevolence be warm who never gives? A want of appetite for giving always brings on a lean visage in the church; but I do like to hear my neighbor M—— pray at the monthly concert, for the fluency of devotion is quickened by his fluency of purse. He *dares* to ask God's help in the salvation of sinners, for he is doing his own utmost too. And I have known one resolute, sagacious, Christ-loving woman to do in a mission-school what Florence Nightingale

did in the hospitals of Scutari; that is, teach the nurses how to cure, as well as the sick how to recover.

If this brief paragraph falls under the eye of any spiritual dyspeptic, let us offer to him two or three familiar counsels. My friend, your disease and debility are your own fault, not your misfortune. It is not a "visitation of God," but a visitation of the devil that has laid you on your back, and made you well-nigh useless in the church, in the Sabbath-school, and in every enterprise of Christian charity. Having brought on your own malady, you must be your own restorer, by the help of the divine Physician. You are not only useless to your pastor, but uncomfortable to yourself. You must get well. Let us tell you how.

1. You need a wholesome diet. Instead of the surfeit of daily newspapers and political journals, or the spiced stimulants of fiction, give your hungry soul the *bread of life*. Your moral powers are weak for want of nourishment. There has been a starvation of *Bible-truth*, of sound experimental works, of in-

spiring religious biography, of "books that are books." Nothing will give sinew and bone to your piety like the thorough reading and thorough digestion of the Bible. All the giants in the history of the church have been large and hungry feeders on the Bible.

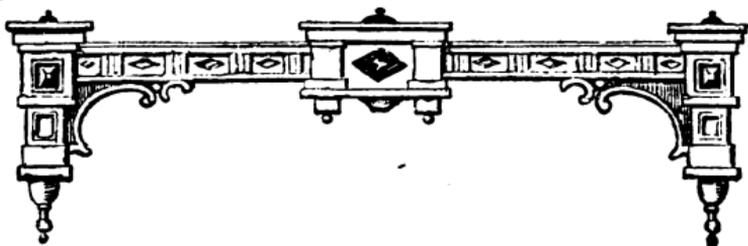
2. You want exercise. God has given you powers and faculties and affections to serve him with. But for want of use, those limbs of the soul are as powerless as the bodily limbs of a fever patient who has not left his couch for a fortnight. Never will you recover your appetite for the word and the ordinances, never will the flush of spiritual joy mantle your countenance, until you have laid hold of hard, self-denying WORK. Nothing will impart such earnestness to your prayers as to spend an hour before them by the bedside of the sick, or in close conversation with an inquirer for salvation; nothing will excite a better appetite for a Sabbath sermon than a morning spent in *business-like* devotion to your Sabbath-school class; and a little uphill work in behalf of some discouraging movement of reform, will harden your muscle amazingly. Oberlin, Wil-

berforce, Elizabeth Fry never knew the meaning of "dyspepsia." You are dying from confinement and indolence. There is but one cure for spiritual laziness, and that is—work; but one cure for selfishness, and that is—sacrifice; but one cure for timidity, and that is to plunge into a disagreeable duty before the shiver has time to come on. Some Christians are paralyzed for life by the monomania of fear. They remind us of an invalid who was afflicted by the delusion that he was made of pipe-clay, and if violently struck against any object, he should snap into fragments! He was only cured by a friend who drove him into a meadow and managed to upset the vehicle in the right place. The poor monomaniac shrieked frightfully as the carriage went over; but he rose from the ground sound in *mind* as well as in body. Would it not be well for those who have trembled for years at the bare thought of a prayer in public, to force themselves into an utterance? They will be amazed to find how one resolute trial, in the strength of God, will break the tyrannous spell for ever. Try! my friend! Lay hold of

any dreaded or disagreeable duty, and try. God never leaves his child to fail when in the path of obedience; for if the Christian does not succeed in pleasing himself by the method of his performance, he yet pleases God by the sincerity of his good endeavors. And the very attempt to discharge duty will give you strength. When the duty is fairly achieved, the sense of *having done it* will send an exquisite thrill of satisfaction through the soul, and will be a source of one of the purest joys that you can know this side of heaven. I question whether we ever realize a sweeter delight than when we stand beside some heaven-directed undertaking fairly accomplished, or some painful task nobly wrought out; some trying testimony manfully borne, or some bitter persecution fairly weathered out into the repose and sunshine of victory. Such joys the half-hearted, cowardly, dyspeptic Christian never experiences. The "weak hand" plucks no such chaplet. The "feeble knees" reach no such goal of triumph. They are awarded only to the vigorous of spiritual sinew, to the Bible-reader, and the Bible-worker too! Dys-

peptic brother! we commend to you the double remedy—*Bible-diet* and *Bible-duty*. If these do not restore you, we fear your case is past all medication.





LOVABLE CHRISTIANS.

PAUL paints the portrait of the true Christian in the eighth verse of the closing chapter of his letter to the Philippians. Here it is. The portrait is one that he might have written his own name under when it was done:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, *whatsoever things are lovely*, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

In the former part of the verse, Paul paints the strong features of the Christian—his truthfulness, his honesty, and his uncompromising sense of right. These are such deep

lines as Michael Angelo painted in his figure of Moses and of the stern heroes of the prophetic era.

But, just as a great artist, having delineated the piercing eye, the majestic brow, and the leonine mouth of his hero, throws in the soft touches that give a womanly sweetness to the visage, so Paul completes his portrait by presenting loveliness and *admirableness* as the crowning attractions of the Christian character. "Whatsoever things are *lovely*," he says, "and whatsoever things are of good report." This is the only place in the New Testament in which this word "lovely" is to be found. It literally signifies what is *dear* to any one. It is that quality in the Christian character that engages the affections of all who come into its presence. The phrase "things of good report" also occurs in this passage alone. It means that which excites admiration and wins approbation. The two expressions together signify, in plain English, "*be lovable*; let your life win the hearts of all around you."

It was well that the apostle put in this finishing stroke. It was well to remind the most

conscientious Christian that he should strive to render his religion attractive to others. For not every good man's piety is lovable. Some men's religion has too much acidity to taste well. Others sour their religion with an intense censoriousness. Their conversation is enough to set every one's teeth on edge. After an hour's talk with them, you think the worst of even the best men you know. They are crabbed Christians. Everybody respects them, but nobody loves them. We once had a venerable and most godly-minded officer in our church, who never did a wrong act, to my knowledge; and yet he never did a pleasant one either. There was a deal of good solid "meat" in him, but no one liked to prick his fingers in coming at it. So the rugged old man was left to go on his way to heaven, working and praying and scolding as he went; but even the children in the street were almost afraid to speak to him. A drop or two of the *Apostle John* in his composition would have made him a glorious specimen of a Christian. He has become *mellow*, by this time, in the sunny atmosphere of heaven.

There is, also, a sanctimonious set face, which some people wear, that is anything but attractive. We once dealt with such a man in business; and we always counted carefully the change he gave back after a purchase. We did it instinctively; for we had an uncomfortable suspicion that his manner of look and speech was a *mask* to hide from the world a designing nature. Perhaps we did him injustice; but the fault was his own in wearing so repulsive a sanctimoniousness.

A lovable Christian is one who hits the golden mean between easy, good-natured laxity of conscience on the one hand, and stern, ungenial moroseness on the other. He is sound, and yet ripe, sweet and mellow. He never incurs contempt by yielding to men's sinful prejudices, nor does he incur the antipathy of others by doing right in a hateful, surly, or bigoted way.

Did our blessed Saviour ever fall into either of these extremes for a moment? Was not his the sinless, incorruptible majesty that awed his followers, while his gentle benignity inspired their enthusiastic love? If Jesus

were now on earth, we can imagine that the poorest people would not be afraid to approach him. Were he to enter a modern mission-school, as he once entered a synagogue, how the ragged youngsters would draw to him! If he visited our houses, how welcome he would make himself at our firesides, and how our children would love to climb on his lap and kiss that sweet, pensive, benignant face! There is nothing derogatory to his divine dignity in this. Christ Jesus *drew* to him poor, suffering women, and outcast publicans, and sinners that had a sore heartache, and troops of little children who rejoiced to receive his benediction or to sing hosannas in his praise.

Now what Christ was every Christian should strive to be. He is our model, not only in spotless holiness, but in *winsomeness* of character also. Let us learn of him. Let us learn from him how to combine the most rigid sense of justice, purity and integrity with the lovable attractions of a sunny face, a kind word, an unselfish courtesy, and a genuine sympathy for even the most hardened sin-

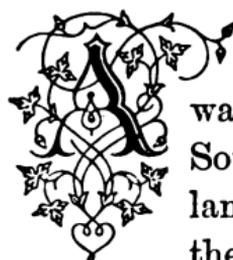
ners. The worst men may scoff at Bible-religion, but at heart honor the consistent Christian who wears the beauty of holiness in his character and conduct. A *living, lovable Christian* is the most powerful argument for the Gospel. No infidel ever yet refuted that.

Study Christ, then. Love Christ; get your heart saturated with him. Follow Christ. His example and his grace can turn deformity and sullenness and sin into the sweet comeliness of "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are of good report." He that winneth souls is wise. But if you would win sinners to the Saviour, you must make your religion *winsome*.





JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL,



ABOUT the time that Isaac Watts was writing his earliest hymns at Southampton, in Southern England, two brothers were born in the little town of Epworth, who were destined to be better known over the world than any other two men whom Britain produced in that half-century. While their godly mother (Susannah) was dying, she said to her weeping household, "My children, as soon as my spirit is released, sing a song of praise to God." Among the group who joined in this song of triumph with faltering voices, were JOHN, the founder of Methodism, and CHARLES, its sweet singer. John was *system*; but Charles was *song*. John was the Beza-

leel who laid the foundations, and hewed out the pillars of the new tabernacle; but Charles was the Asaph who filled it with melody. Methodism was builded rapidly; but the walls never would have gone up so fast had they not been *built to music*.

Charles Wesley was a born poet. Like Toplady, he was all nerve and fire and enthusiasm. God gave him a musical ear, intense emotions, ardent affections, and a glowing piety that never grew cold. He ate, drank, slept and dreamed nothing but *hymns!* He must have been the ready writer of at least four thousand. One day, while on his itineracy, his pony stumbled and threw him off. The only record he makes of the accident in his diary is this: "My companions thought I had broken my neck; but my leg only was bruised, my hand sprained, and my head stunned, which *spoiled my making hymns until—next day!*" Truly a man must have been possessed with a master-passion, who could have written a sentence like that.

Wesley found his inspirations "on every hedge." He threw off hymns as Spurgeon

throws off sermons. For example, when he was preaching to a crowd of rude stonecutters and quarrymen at Portland, he turned his appeal into metre, and improvised a hymn, in which occur the vigorous lines :

“Come, O Thou all-victorious Lord,
Thy power to us make known ;
Strike with the hammer of Thy word.
And *break* these *hearts* of stone !”

Standing, once, on the dizzy promontory of Land’s End, and looking down into the boiling waves on each side of the cliff, he broke out into these solemn and thrilling words :

“Lo ! on a narrow neck of land,
’Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,
Yet how insensible !”

For every scene and circumstance of life for prayer-meetings, for watch-nights, for love-feasts, and for dying hours and funerals, he had a holy, impassioned lay. But, like Watts, Cowper, and Toplady, he had his *masterpiece*. The Lord of glory bestowed on Charles Wesley the high honor of composing the finest heart-hymn in the English tongue. If the

greatest hymn of the cross is "Rock of Ages," and the greatest hymn of providence is Cowper's "God moves in a mysterious way," and the grandest battle-hymn is Martin Luther's "God is our refuge," then it may be said, also, that the queen of all the lays of holy love is that immortal song:

"Jesus, lover of my soul !
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,
 While the billows near me roll,
 While the tempest still is high !"

Whatever may be said of Wesley's doctrine of perfect holiness, there is not much doubt that he "attained unto perfection" when he wrote this hymn. It is happily married, also, to two exquisite tunes, "Refuge" and "Martyn," both of which are worthy of the alliance. The first of these tunes is a gem.

The one central, all-pervading idea of this matchless hymn is the soul's yearning for its Saviour. The figures of speech vary, but not the thought. In one line we see a storm-tossed voyager crying out for shelter until the tempest is over. In another line we see a

timid, tearful child nestling in its mother's arms, with the words faltering on its tongue :

“Let me to Thy bosom fly !”

“Hangs my helpless soul on Thee !”

Two lines of the hymn have been breathed fervently and often out of bleeding hearts. When we were once in the valley of the death-shade, with one beautiful child in its new-made grave, and the other threatened with fatal disease, there was no prayer which we uttered oftener than this :

“Leave, ah ! leave me not alone ;

Still support and comfort me.”

We do not doubt that tens of thousands of other bereaved and wounded hearts have cried this piercing cry, out of the depths :

“Still support and comfort me !”

The whole hymn is at once a confession and a prayer. It is a *prayer in metre*. And no man is prepared to sing these words aright unless his soul is filled with deepest and most earnest longings after the Lord Jesus. What an awful blasphemy it is for a set of mere

trifling amateurs in a choir to *perform* this holy prayer merely as a feat of musical skill. What college boy would *dare* to commit the Lord's prayer, or one of his pastor's public petitions to memory, and then speak it as a mere piece of declamation on the stage? Yet we do not see any difference between *declaiming* a prayer, and the heartless mockery of *performing*, for musical effect, such words as:

"Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past!"

Or that self-surrender for the dying hour:

"Oh! receive my soul at last!"

Words like these are too infinitely solemn for the mummeries of frivolous lips in the concert-room or the organ-loft. When a congregation sing such a hymn as "Jesus, lover of *my* soul," each one should feel as if he were uttering a fervent personal prayer to the Son of God.

The history of Charles Wesley's incomparable hymn would fill a volume. Millions have sung it, and will be singing it when the millennial morn breaks. A coasting vessel once

went on the rocks in a gale in the British Channel. The captain and crew took to the boats and were lost. They might have been saved if they had remained on board; for a huge wave carried the vessel up among the rocks, where the ebbing tide left her high and dry. In the captain's cabin a hymn-book was found lying on his table. It was opened to a particular page, and the pencil still lay in it which had marked the favorite lines of the stout sailor who was just about going into the jaws of death. While the hurricane was howling outside, the captain had drawn his pencil beside these glorious words of cheer:

“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide;
O! receive my soul at last!”

Blessed death-song! Thousands of God's redeemed ones have shouted it forth as the “haven” of rest opened its celestial glories to their view. If we could choose the manner

of our departure, we would wish to die singing:

“Other refuge have I none ;
Hangs my helpless soul on **THEE** !
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone ;
Still support and comfort me ;
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring ;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing !”





SITTING DOWN WITH JESUS.

THOSE who would feed their souls must often sit down with Jesus. In the upper chamber, at Jerusalem, the disciples sat with their Master at the board as he blessed the bread, and brake it, and gave it unto them. Not for bodily nourishment, but for the feeding of the soul, and the in-bringing of spiritual strength and comfort, did Jesus give this bread unto them. Herein lies one precious significance of the sacramental supper—it is the nourishment of a Christian's faith and love through a "partaking of Christ's broken body," which becomes to him the very bread of life.

But not only on one day of especial service must the believer feed his soul; he must be *constantly* coming out from the world's empty table of mockeries, and sit down in quiet heart-communion with the Redeemer. Don't

you remember the scene at the miraculous feeding of the five thousand on the cliff above Lake Gennesareth? There was the hungry multitude. The anxious disciples worry the Master with such questions as: "Whence have we bread for so many?" "Shall we go into the villages and buy?"

"No!" replies the omnipotent Jesus; "command the multitude to *sit down*." They do so, in long lines, upon the verdant grass. He takes the five loaves and two fishes out of the rustic lad's basket, and begins to distribute. The meagre provision grows, and grows, and grows, until not only are all the thousands abundantly fed, but there is a surplus of broken food to fill a dozen baskets!

There is something akin to this in our spiritual experiences.

1. We often worry, like the disciples, about the best means of feeding our own souls, or of bringing the Gospel-bread to needy souls around us. We invent new methods; we try all manner of devices; we get up "attractions" in the sanctuary and the Sabbath-school; we go into all sorts of "villages to

buy." Oh! if we would only sit down with Jesus, and accept what he bestows, with his rich blessing on it! Oh! if congregations would only sit and receive the Gospel of Life from their own Shepherd, and *pray* over it, and *practise* it! If teachers would only aim more to keep their classes sitting quietly at the feet of JESUS, to take in his truth, and to think about it! And if all of us would only make more of our seasons of devotion, more of digesting the truth, more of self study, more of meditation and communion with Christ, and more of listening to the still small voice of the Spirit, we should be far more healthy and vigorous Christians.

The most industrious farmer must go in occasionally from the plough or the hot harvest-field, to sit down at his table and nourish his weary frame. When an army corps comes in sight of the enemy, after hours of hard marching, they must sit down awhile by the camp-fire and replenish their wasted strength by food and drink before they are able to make the impetuous charge, and to drag the heavy guns into the thunder-storm of battle.

So every Christian toiler must needs recruit his spiritual strength by sitting down often with Jesus, to meditate, to pray, and to come into close communion with the Master. Christ himself had his *Olivet* of retirement. His disciples spent many an hour in quiet converse with him on the lake-side, or under the olive-trees, listening to his voice, and drinking in the inspirations of his presence and his grace. The healthiest Christian, and the one best fitted for hard service, is he who feeds most on Christ. Not only at the sacramental table, but every day does he partake of this "Bread of Life." To him the loving Saviour is continually saying: "If ye *abide in me*, and I in you, ye shall bear much fruit."

2. In the second place, let us remember that, in order to be *instructed*, we must sit down much with Jesus. The transcendent truth of the new birth was revealed to Nicodemus when he sat as an inquirer at the Saviour's feet. The woman of Sychar found the "well" of salvation only by waiting to be taught by the Great Teacher, when she went only to fill her "water-pot," and came back

with an enlightened and refreshed and converted heart.

In every church there are *Marthas* who are intensely busy in religious activities, and who achieve many happy results. But the *Martha*-side of the Christian character is only one side. The best disciple cannot be always pushing through the round of excitement and zealous activity. There must be a *Mary*-side of character also; and the most zealous worker needs to have instruction, prayer, reflection, and heart-converse with God, or else he will become noisy, superficial, and shallow. Like Mary, he must sit down with Jesus, and gain deep views of his Saviour and of himself. If he would fill his soul, he must come often to the fountain-head of wisdom and of grace.

Oh! busy *Marthas*, in your round of teaching, visiting, working, planning, and almsgiving, go often to recruit your strength and to learn your duty by taking Mary's lowly place at the feet of your loving Lord. Let us ever bear in mind that the most effective preachers and philanthropists have been those who waited humbly and hungrily for the guidance and

grace which the Lord Jesus gave them. As examples of this fact, let me point you to the apostles, and to Augustine, Luther, Pascal, Calvin, the Wesleys, Wilberforce, Payson, William Allen the Quaker philanthropist, Bunyan the wondrous allegorist, Martyn the self-denying missionary, and Edwards the majestic man of thought. All these master-spirits drew their inspiration from a daily communion with their divine Lord.

3. Finally, let us also remember that in our hours of *sorrow* the one place for consolation is at the feet of Jesus. On that bosom the beloved disciple leaned. There is also room for us. Where the afflicted sisters of Bethany sat we may sit down too, and hear the heavenly voice say: "I am the resurrection and the life." How sweetly fall the promises from his lips: "Lo! I am with you always. My peace I give unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you; that where I am ye may be also."

Then let our perpetual invitation be: Lord! *abide with us*; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent!



CHRIST WITHIN.

CHRIST does not offer to be simply an occasional shower of blessings to the faithful believer. He promises to be a *living well*. "The water that I give him shall be *in him* a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The deepest and the most urgent wants of the heart he promises to satisfy.

In true conversion Christ enters the soul. This is the very essence and touchstone of conversion. With him comes light; with him comes love; with him comes peace. The radical change of heart in conversion is just as truly a supernatural work as was the resurrection of Lazarus from the cave in Bethany. Christ, then, enters the soul, not as a transient visitor, but as an abiding guest. While

he abides there he gives perennial life and beauty and strength to the believer. "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Yet not I," said the happy, hale-hearted apostle, "but Christ *that liveth in me.*" And that was the reason why Paul remained a Christian (a Christ's-man) long after the first excitement of the scene at Damascus had passed away. A *well* was opened in Paul's heart that day, and its deep, cool, living waters never ran dry.

Men could always predict how Paul would act in any emergency, because the principle that ruled him was always the same. "The love of *Christ* constraineth me." "For me to live is *Christ.*" The only reason why any good man continues to be a good man is that the well-spring in his soul never runs dry. Reckless, slave-hunting John Newton ceases to swear and scoff, and begins to pray. Twenty years later John Newton is still praying, still preaching, still overflowing in beneficence among the haunts of busy London; and solely because the Lord Jesus dwelt in him, a source of holy affections, and an in-

spirer of noble and godly actions. On Sunday he preached to rich bankers and titled ladies. On a week-day evening he would sit on a three-legged stool, in his blue sailor jacket, and open up his rich experiences and wise counsels to the poorest who came to visit him. "I was a wild beast on the coast of Africa once," he used to say; "but the Lord Jesus caught me and tamed me, and now people come to see me as they would go to look at the lions in the tower." What people came to see and to hear and to love in the sturdy sailor-preacher was the *Christ who dwelt* within John Newton.

Here is the secret of Christian perseverance. Wesleyans and Calvinists alike agree in this, that a true Christian holds out for no other reason than that Christ holds out. The Fountain-head of all holy affections, and all generous deeds, and all heroic, self-denying endurances, is down deep in the man's heart; because Christ lives, he lives also. You can no more exhaust the graces of a John Wesley, or an Oberlin, or a Chalmers, than you can pump the Thames dry at Lon-

don Bridge. What a transcendent idea that is in Paul's prayer for his brethren: "That ye might be *filled with all the fulness of God!*" When, therefore, we meet with a man or woman who almost never disappoints us; who is always "abounding" in the work of the Lord; who serves God on every day as well as the Sunday; who is more anxious to be right than to be rich; and who can ask God's blessing on the bitterest cup; when we meet such a one, we know that down in the clefts of the soul is Christ, the well-spring!

In a thousand ways will the inward fountain of Christian-principle make itself visible. We see it in the merchant who gives Christ the key of his safe, and never soils it with a single dirty shilling. We see it in the statesman who cares more to win God's smile on his conscience than a reelection to office. We recognize it in the minister who is more greedy for souls than for salary. We see it in the young man who would rather endure a comrade's laugh than his Saviour's frown; in the maiden who obeys Christ sooner than fashion. I sometimes detect this well-spring

of cheerful piety in the patient mother, whose daily walk with God is a fount of holy influence amid her household. I know of poor men's dwellings in which grows a plant of contentment that is an exotic rarely found in marble mansions. Its leaves are green and glossy; it is *fed from the Well*.

In dying chambers we have often heard this spiritual fountain playing, and its murmur was as musical as the tinkle of a brook

“ In the leafy month of June.”

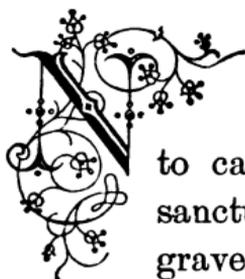
Perfect love had cast out fear. Peace reigned. Joys sparkled in the sunlight of God's countenance. There was a well there which death could not dry—the “well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Bonar, the sweet singer of Scotland, has rhymed this thought into beautiful metre :

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say :
 ‘ Behold, I freely give
The living water ; thirsty one !
 Stoop down and drink, and live.’
 I came to Jesus, and I drank
 Of that life-giving stream.
 My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
 And now I live in him.”



OVER THE FINE.



EVER was there a time when it would be more appropriate to carve on the very walls of the sanctuary, and for every Christian to grave "on the palms of his hands," this divine admonition: "Be not conformed to this world." "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God."

No snare is so subtle, constant and perilous to the follower of Christ as conformity to the world. Nothing sooner saps his spirituality; nothing hinders a revival in the church more effectually. Conformity implies resemblance. And when a professed Christian begins to look like a worldling, and live like a worldling, how dwelleth the love of Christ in him? For there is a complete and irreconcilable *antag-*

onism between what the Bible calls "the world" and the service of Christ.

The chief end of a Christian's life is to glorify God. Is this the chief end of life with the people of the world? Ask any one of them, and he will answer, "No! I live to enjoy myself in promoting my interests, in gratifying my tastes, and in taking my comfort. I want to get all I can, and to get the most out of it." He "looks only at those things which are seen and temporal." God is ignored entirely, the soul is ignored, eternity is forgotten. The pleasures most relished are the pleasures of sin, for God is not in any one of them. The worldling commonly delights most in what a consistent Christian finds to be forbidden fruit on forbidden ground. That forbidden fruit is *poison* to the Christian.

Bear in mind that every *pure* pleasure which an unconverted heart can enjoy, such as the joys of home and of friendship, the love of letters or art, the sight of beauty, or the delight of relieving sorrow—all these the Christian can have and enjoy likewise. They are not sinful, and the child of God can par-

take of them with a clear conscience. But just where a Bible-conscience tells him to *stop*, the license of the world begins. The Word of God draws a dividing line. *Over that line* lies the path of self-indulgence. Over that line lies self-pampering, frivolity, slavery to fashion. Over that line God is ignored and often defied! Christ is wounded there and crucified afresh. Over that line the follower of Jesus has no business to go. It was over such a "stile" that Bunyan's Pilgrim looked wistfully, for the path was soft and skirted with flowers; but when he stepped over, he soon found himself in the dungeons of Giant Despair.

Over the line which separates pure piety from the world the Christian, if he goes at all, must go as a participant in the pleasures of the world, or as a protestant against them. If he goes to partake, he offends Christ; if he goes to protest, he offends his ill-chosen associates. Christian! if you ever attend a convivial party, a ball-room assembly, a theatre, or a gaming company, do you go as a partaker in the sport, or to make your protest against

such amusements? If you go for the first object, you offend your Lord; if for the second, you offend your company. They do not want you there. We are quite sure that no bevy of merry-makers would be the happier over their cups, or their cards, or their cotillions, if all the elders and deacons of our Church were to come in suddenly among them. Brethren, "the world" don't want you in their giddy and godless pleasures, unless you are willing to go all lengths with them. And if you walk *one mile* with them over the line, they will "compel you to go with them *twain*." If your conscience yields the "coat," they will soon rob you of your "cloak also."

Vanity Fair would have welcomed Christian and Faithful to their jovial town if the pilgrims had only been willing to doff their Puritan dress and "take a hand" with them in all their revelries. But because the godly men refused to be conformed to the fashions and follies of Vanity Fair, one of them was soon sent to the prison and the other to the stake.

Where does the dividing line run between

true religion and the world? We answer that it runs just where God's Word puts it; and a conscience which is enlightened by the Word and by prayer does not commonly fail to discover it. Where God is honored is the right side; where God is dishonored, or even ignored, is the wrong side. Where Christ would be likely to go if he were on earth, is the right side; but where a Christian would be ashamed to have his Master find him, there he ought never to find himself. Wherever a Christian can go, and conscientiously ask God's blessing on what he is doing, there let that Christian go. He is not likely to wander over the line while walking by this rule. And when a church-member can enter a play-house, or into a dancing frolic, and honestly ask God's blessing on the amusements, and come away a better Christian for it, then let him go, *but not before*. When a Christian invokes the divine blessing on the bottle which he puts to his neighbor's lips, he had better look sharply whether there is not a "serpent" and a "stinging adder" in the sparkling liquor.

Without going into further illustrations, we come to this fundamental principle, that whatever of work or of recreation a Christian engages in to promote the health of his body or soul, and in which he can glorify Christ, lies on the safe side of the dividing line. The moment he crosses it to become the "friend of the world," he becomes the "enemy of God."

But should not every good man be a "friend of the world"? Was not the divine Jesus a friend of the world when he so loved it that he gave himself for its redemption? Did not Paul love the world when he endured hardship, humiliations and martyrdom to lead sinners to the cross? Ah! yes—very true; but what the Redeemer and his apostle were after was not sinners' *sins*, but sinners' *souls*. And they sought to save the world, not by conformity to it, but by transforming it to a higher and holier idea of life.

Nor is it by going over to the world that we can save the worldling. If we are to impress the world, we must live above the world; if we would save sinners, we must, in the same

sense that Jesus was, be "separate from sinners." The moment we go *over the line* to "curry favor" with the votaries of sin, we never reach them, and only run the risk of ruining ourselves. Would to God that, in trying to draw the world into conformity to Christ, we did not allow the world to drag us down into conformity with itself!





A SHOT AT THE DECANTER.

HERE is a current story that a Quaker once discovered a thief in his house; and taking down his grandfather's old fowling-piece, he quietly said: "Friend, thee had better get out of the way, for I intend to fire this gun *right where thee stands.*" With the same considerate spirit we warn certain good people that they had better take the decanter off their table, for we intend to aim a Bible-truth right where that decanter stands. It is in the wrong place. It has no more business to be there at all than the thief had to be in the honest Quaker's house. We are not surprised to find a decanter of alcoholic poison on the counter of a dram-shop, whose keeper is "licensed" to sell death by measure. But we are surprised to find it on the table or the

sideboard of one who professes to be guided by the spirit and teachings of God's Word. That bottle stands right in the range of the following inspired utterance of St. Paul: "It is good neither to eat flesh, *nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.*" This text must either go out of the Christian's Bible, or the bottle go off the Christian's table. The text will not move, and the bottle must.

The passage itself is so clear that it can hardly admit of a cavil or a doubt. It teaches the lofty and benevolent principle that abstinence from things that are necessarily hurtful to others, is a Christian expediency that has the *grip* of a moral duty.

This sounds, at first, like a very radical doctrine; but so conservative an expounder as Prof. Hodge, of Princeton, has defined the text as teaching that some things which are not always wrong *per se* are to be given up for the sake of others. He says that the legal liberty of a good man is never to be exercised where moral evil will inevitably flow from it. We are never to put stumbling-blocks in the

way of others. Good men are bound to sacrifice anything and everything that is counter to the glory of God, and destructive of the best interests of humanity.

It would be easy to prove unanswerably that alcoholic beverages are injurious to those who use them. The famous athlete, *Tom Sayers*, was once asked by a gentleman: "Well, Thomas, I suppose that when you are training, you use plenty of beefsteaks, and London porter, and pale ale?"

The boxer replied: "In my time I have drunk more than was good for me; but when I have *business* to do, there's nothing *like water* and the dumb-bells." After retiring from "business," he took to drink and died a sot. Cold water made him a Samson; alcohol laid him in his grave. As a matter of personal health and long life, "it is good not to drink wine;" as an example to others, *total abstinence is a Christian virtue*.

The inherent wrong of using intoxicating drinks is two-fold:

1. It exposes to danger the man who tampers with it; for no man was ever positively

assured by his Creator that he could play with the "adder" that lies coiled in a wine-cup without being stung by it.

2. It puts a stumbling-block in the way of him whom we are commanded to love as ourselves.

We lay down, then, the proposition, that no man has a *moral right* to do anything the influence of which is certainly and inevitably hurtful to his neighbor. I have a legal right to do many things which, as a Christian, I cannot do. It may not be a crime, by law, to take arsenic or strychnine; but I have no moral right to commit this self-destruction. I have a legal right to attend the theatre. No policeman stands at the door to exclude me, or dares to eject me while my conduct is orderly and becoming. But I have no moral right to go there; not merely because I may see and hear much that may soil my memory for days and months, but because that whole garnished and glittering establishment, with its sensuous attractions, is to many a young person the yawning maelstrom of perdition. The dollar which I gave at the box office is

my contribution toward sustaining an establishment whose dark foundations rest on the murdered souls of thousands of my fellow-men. Their blood stains its walls, and from that "pit" they have gone down to another pit where no sounds of mirth ever come. Now, I ask, what right have I to enter a place where the tragedies that are played off before me by painted women and dissolute men are as nothing to the tragedies of lost souls that are enacted in some parts of that house every night? What right have I to give my money and my presence to sustain that moral slaughter-house, and, by walking into the theatre myself, to aid in decoying others to follow me?

Now, on the same principle (not of self-preservation merely, but of avoiding what is dangerous to others) what right have I to sustain those fountain-heads of death from which the drink-poison is sold? What right have I to advocate their license, to patronize the traffic, or even in any way to abet the whole *system of drinking* alcoholic stimulants at home or abroad? If a glass of wine on

my table will entrap some young man, or some one who is inclined to stimulants into dissipation, then am I thoughtlessly setting a trap for his life. I am his tempter. I give the usage my sanction, and to him the direct inducement to partake of the bottled demon that sparkles so seductively before him. If the contents of that sparkling glass make my brother to stumble, he stumbles over me. If he goes away from my table and commits some outrage under the effects of that stimulant, I am, to a certain degree, guilty of that outrage. I have a partnership in every blow he strikes, or in every oath he may utter, or in every bitter wound he may inflict on the hearts of those he loves, while under the spell of my glass of "Cognac" or "Burgundy." I gave him the incentive to do what otherwise he might have left undone. The man who puts the bottle to his neighbor's lips is accountable for what comes from those lips under the influence of the dram, and is accountable, too, for every outrage that the maddened victim of the cup may perpetrate during his temporary insanity.

In this view of the question, is it too much to ask of every professed Christian, and every lover of his kind, that they will wholly abstain from everything that can intoxicate? For the sake of your children, do it; for the sake of a brother, a husband, a friend; for the sake of those who will plead your example; for the sake of frail tempted ones who cannot say, *No!* for your fellow-traveller's sake to God's bar and to the eternal world, *touch not* the bottled devil, under whose shining scales damnation hides its adder-sting!

It is old-fashioned total abstinence that we are pleading for. We ask it, as Paul did, for the sake of those who "stumble." O those stumblers! those stumblers! We dare not speak of them. It would touch many of us too tenderly. It would reveal too many wrecks—wrecks that angels have wept over. It would open tombs whose charitable green turf hides out of sight what many a survivor would love to have forgotten. It would recall to me many a college friend who went down at mid-day into blackness of darkness.

And to-day I see this social curse coming

back into our houses, into our streets, into our daily usages of life, with redoubled power. Would that every parent were a "prohibitory law" to his family! Would that every pulpit and every platform would thunder forth the old warning cry: "Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, for at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." At the *last!* at the **LAST!** But oh! who can tell when that "last" shall ever end? When will the victim's last groan be heard? When will the last horror seize upon his wretched soul?





A TEACHER IN GOD'S SCHOOL.

GOD keeps a school for his children here on earth; and one of his best teachers is named *Disappointment*. He is a rough teacher; severe in tone and harsh in his handling, sometimes, but his tuition is worth all it costs us. We do not pretend to be a very apt learner, but many of our best lessons through life have been taught us by that same stern old schoolmaster, *Disappointment*.

One lesson we learned was, not to be selfish, or imagine that this world was all made for us. If it had been, the sun would have shone just when *our* hay needed curing, and the rains would have fallen only when *our* garden thirsted for water. But we found that God ordered things to please himself, and not us. And when our schemes were broken up,

and our journey spoiled by the storm, the stern schoolmaster said: "The world was not made for you alone. Do not be selfish. Your loss is another's gain. The rain that spoils your hay makes your neighbor's corn grow the faster. The fall in wheat that cuts down your profits will help the poor widow in yonder cottage to buy bread for her hungry little mouths, next winter. The working Christian that removed from your church, and almost broke your heart, will make some other pastor's vineyard glad. Your loss is another man's gain. Don't be selfish."

On a grand scale, sometimes, this lesson is taught. When a certain ambitious self-seeker once clutched at the dominion of all Europe, stern Disappointment met him in his path of invasion, flung a Russian snow-storm in his face, and out of the tiny snow-flakes wove a white shroud to wrap the flower of French chivalry. The lesson that the proud usurper would not learn at Aspern and Eylau was taught him in the agonies of Borodino, and in ghastly blood-prints on the frozen banks of the Bérésina. His successor, the third Na-

oleon, has also been taught, lately, the same lesson: "All Europe does not belong to you." So, too, have we, in the defeat of our humbler plans of self-seeking, been made to hear the sharp teacher say: "Do not be selfish. God did not make this world just for you. Other people have rights as well as yourself." This lesson was worth all it cost us.

A *second* lesson which Disappointment has taught us is, that our losses are not only gains, sometimes, to others, but are very often the richest gains to ourselves. In our short-sighted ignorance, we had "devised a way," and set our hearts upon it. Had we been allowed to pursue it, we must have been led by it to ruin. The railway train we were disappointed in not reaching was dashed into fragments down an embankment; the steamer that we were too late for was burned to a wreck. At the moment, we scolded bitterly; but, by-and-by, we found out that God could not have sent a more fatal judgment upon us than simply to have let us *have our own way*. That seemed right unto us, but the end thereof was death.

A hundred illustrations of this truth occur to us. A "first honor" in college has turned more than one young man's head; the disappointment of losing it has goaded on another to higher distinctions than he had lost. More than one covetous merchant has been so thwarted in his enterprises for money-making that he has been enraged with mortification. But his Heavenly Father knew the dangers of success to him, and saved him from sorer sorrows. A young lawyer, heart-broken by the early death of the sweet girl he loved, turns away for solace to sacred studies and doing good. He becomes a successful winner of souls in Christ's ministry. The pecuniary crash of 1857 threw thousands into bankruptcy; but many a man was made richer in the priceless treasure of a Christian hope.

A dark door did Disappointment open that year, but it led thousands into the pathway to heaven. A dark doorway, too, did Death open to my friend B—— and his young wife, when their child went from them so suddenly; but their hearts went after the departed lamb up to the Divine Shepherd. The death of

their darling was the means of their souls' conversion. During our twenty-five years' ministry we have known more souls converted or especially sanctified through the loss of little children than from any other providential discipline.

The record-book of every Christian's life has some pages in it which were written at the bidding of that severe teacher, Disappointment. Tears may have blotted and blurred the page at the time. But as we turn over to that page now, and read it in the light of experience, we can write beneath it: "Thank God for those losses! they were my everlasting gain. Thank God for those bereavements! they have saved my soul from being bereaved of heaven. All things work together *for good* to them that love God; to them who are the called according to his purpose."

My friend, if you and I ever reach our Father's house, we shall look back and see that the sharp-voiced, rough-visaged teacher, Disappointment, was one of the best guides to train us for it. He gave us hard lessons.

He often used the rod. He often led us into thorny paths. He sometimes stripped off a load of luxuries; but that only made us travel the freer and the faster on our heavenward way. He sometimes led us down into the valley of the death-shadow; but never did the promises read so sweetly as when spelled out by the eye of faith in that very valley. Nowhere did he lead us so often, or teach us such sacred lessons, as at the cross of Christ. Dear, old, rough-handed teacher! We will build a monument to thee yet, and crown it with garlands, and inscribe on it: *Blessed be the memory of* DISAPPOINTMENT.





HYMNS OF THE CROSS.

IF all the hymns of the cross the “Rock of Ages” may well be styled the masterpiece. Perhaps the second place should be given to those grand lines of Isaac Watts which we once heard Mr. Spurgeon read in tones as sonorous as a trumpet—

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.”

Close beside Watts’ glorious hymn belong those tender strains which Cowper sung in one of his inspired hours of joy, when the cloud of melancholy lifted from his soul—

“There is a fountain filled with blood.”

This hymn is saturated with grateful love for the “dear dying Lamb.” Its author glories

only in the Cross of Christ, and lifts with trembling hand his crown of adoration and places it above the crown of thorns on Jesus' brow. Although Cowper was immeasurably the greatest living poet then in Britain, he confesses that his is but a "poor lisping, stammering tongue" to sing the song of redeeming love. He promises to himself "a nobler, sweeter song" when he gets his well-tuned harp in the grand oratorio of heaven.

To these three hymns of redemption which sprang from the devout souls of Toplady, Watts, and Cowper, America has contributed a *fourth* which is worthy to stand in this matchless quartette. It is, by far, the most precious contribution which American genius has yet made to the hymnology of the Christian church. The author of it was a native of "Little Compton" in little Rhode Island—and was graduated from old Yale in 1830. Immediately after leaving college he came to New York, and spent a few hours each day in teaching young ladies in a school which stood in the then fashionable quarter of Fulton-street, behind St. Paul's church. In Decem-

ber of that year (1830)—just forty years ago, he sat down one day in his room, and wrote in his pocket memorandum-book four simple verses, which he says “were born of my own soul” and were not written to be seen by another human eye. He wrote them rapidly, and with his eyes swimming in tears. The first verse reads thus:

“My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray:
Take all my guilt away;
Oh let me from this day
Be wholly thine!”

He put the memorandum-book into his pocket, and carried it there for two whole years—little dreaming that he was carrying about with him his own passport to immortality. One day Dr. Lowell Mason met him in the streets of Boston, and asked him to furnish some hymns for the volume of “Spiritual Songs” which he (Dr. Mason) and Dr. Thomas Hastings were about to publish. The young college graduate drew from his pocket the lines—

“My faith looks up to Thee.”

Dr. Mason went home, and catching a similar inspiration to that of the author of the lines, composed for them that beautiful tune of “Olivet,” to which the hymn is wedded unto this day. Dr. Mason met the author a few days afterwards and said to him prophetically, “Mr. Palmer, you may live many years, and do many good things, but I think that you will be best known to posterity as the author of this hymn.” The prediction is fulfilled. The man who sang this sweet song of Calvary is still living, and has composed many tender and beautiful poems and discourses; but his devout mind *flowered out in one matchless lily* whose rich odors have filled the courts of our God with fragrance.

How many a penitent, while reading or singing that hymn, has looked up to Calvary's cross and found peace in believing! In how many a prayer-meeting has it been sung through tears of holy gratitude! To how many a sick chamber and dying bed has it come like a strain from that heavenly land which was already in full view! The poetry

of the hymn is as perfect as its theology. In its structure it closely resembles the "Rock of Ages." It begins in penitence; it ends in praise. It begins in heart-broken sorrow, and concludes with the most glorious assurance of hope.

In the first verse the suppliant is represented as bowing before the crucified Saviour, and looking up to him, and to him only. He sees none but Jesus. His cry is—

"Take all my guilt away!"

His aspiration is—

"Oh, let me from this day,
Be wholly thine."

Before that cross the praying soul obtains strength, and a pure, warm, and changeless love for his Redeemer. He is filled with a "living fire." He is the new man in Christ Jesus.

But as he looks forward, he foresees a "dark maze" of trial before him, overhung with clouds of grief that lower black and terrible, and sometimes weep great showers of tears. Surrounded with these discouraging clouds of

confusion and temptation he shouts out like one lost in the dark—

“Be *Thou* my guide!
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow’s tear away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside!”

Before him lies still one more valley darker than any passed before. It is that vale in which “ends life’s transient dream.” Through it rolls death’s cold and sullen stream! He already imagines himself in the swellings of Jordan. And as the floods go over him, he lifts his last victorious voice of sublime trust—

“Blest Saviour! then in love
Fear and distrust remove;
Oh, bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul!”

Such is the grandest of American hymns. Is it not the grandest of this century? And if our readers wish to know, and to thank its modest author, they have but to go into the “Bible House” in New York, and take by the hand our genial and beloved friend DR. RAY PALMER.



MORNING-CLOUD RELIGION.

I HAVE stood in a Swiss valley at the time of sunrise, and seen the mountain-peak above me crowned with a beautiful white coronal. As the first sunlight strikes it, the cloud of morning incense is tipped with rosy fire. One moment it is fleecy white. Then it is glowing pink—then burnished gold like the robe of the seraphim. Then—*gone for ever!* Before we could call out our companions to behold the beautiful spectacle, the glory-cloud was dissolved into empty air, and the icy mountain-top stood out sharp and bare against the eastern sky.

Turning from the rocky peaks of jasper towards the valley about us, lo! the grass is a floor of diamonds. The dewdrops are all

as jewels. On the hedges hang the necklaces of pearl—over the fields are sown the living sapphires. We go in reluctantly to our morning meal; we come out again, and where is the jewelry? Gone for ever in the hot rays of the conquering sun. The mountain-top is bare; the earth is dry. The “morning cloud and the early dew” are both among the things that were. Opening our Bible and turning to the book of Hosea, we find these very words employed to describe a certain sort of showy but short-lived religion. Hosea 6:4.

As nearly every church may contain more or less members whose religion is no more real and abiding than the vapor on the mountain-top, it is worth while to inquire the causes, and the cure, of transient piety. May we not find in one or all of the three following reasons the answer to this inquiry?

1. The convicted soul, in its first awakening, was not brought to a genuine loathing and abandonment of known sin. In other words, there was no *Bible-repentance*. The impressions of many awakened persons are merely terror. They feel the danger of sin,

but not its abominable filthiness. They quake at the sight of God as a punisher, but do not quake at their own guiltiness. They see that there is a hell that follows *after* their sins, but do not see that there is a hell too *in* their sins. Of course such persons do not abandon sin thoroughly, or seek after a radical change of heart. And without "grief and *hatred* of sin" there can be no Bible-repentance. A religion that began in a mere fit of terror is likely to end as it began. For a man who has not abandoned his favorite sins, his petted and his profitable sins, cannot claim to be a genuine, enduring Christian.

2. The awakened soul when troubled by legal terrors did not betake itself to Christ. Consciously diseased, it compounded quack remedies for itself. Christ was not sought after, believed on, and heartily embraced. There was no love of Jesus awakened as a master-passion with the man. Had the soul reached Christ, it had been safe. Believers hold to the cross, *because the cross holds them*.

3. A third cause of the morning-cloud religion is the attempt to live on promises instead

of performances. The man trusts in resolutions, and never reaches actual downright doing of duty. He means to be—hopes to be—promises to be actively obedient to Christ—but never does one deed or makes one sacrifice for him. On the day when he joins the church, he is fluent in promises for his future life. He will serve God to-morrow. The morrow comes and goes, and sees not one stroke of thorough service done, not one sin crucified, not a single labor of charity undertaken. Before a week has rolled by, the man's religion has begun to *evaporate*, and in a year there is nothing left of him but a name on the church register.

How many a brilliant beginning have we seen that so soon ended in nothingness! For a brief time the "cloud" was beautiful. As it hung in prominence before our eyes, the rays of hope painted it with a ruddy glow. Christian friends hailed it as a cloud of promise. Praying souls—who had longed for just such appearances of piety in the man—grew thankful that their prayers were receiving a fulfilment.

But presently it grew thinner. It began to scatter into looseness; then into emptiness. It was not a shower-cloud of spiritual blessings, like the life of an Oberlin, a Raikes, a Haldane, a Whitefield, or a Harlan Page. But only vapor! Beautiful vapor for a little time, and then vanishing away!

In every church there may be just such professors. They are not backsliders, for they never had any genuine grace to lapse from. Are they hypocrites? Perhaps not; for that is a harsh word as generally understood, implying cold-blooded deception and falsehood. These unhappy persons never *intended* to deceive others; they were simply deceived in themselves. They entered the church from an entirely mistaken view of their own condition. Perhaps they were the subjects—or rather the victims—of a spurious religious excitement; or, under the foolish persuasion of injudicious friends, were hurried into church engagements. Their vows are no longer regarded. Their professions no longer deceive. A galling yoke of bondage is their church-membership now, when it ought to be the

symbol and the seal of a happy wedded union to Jesus Christ.

What is the duty of such persons? To leave the church at once? I do not think so. Shall they abandon the table of the Lord? I think not. Let them rather seek anew the Lord of the table. Let them go now to Christ with genuine contrition for their sins, and honest acknowledgment of their sad mistake. Wiser from the bitter experience of their own failures, let them begin afresh and *begin aright*. We never knew a false professor saved by leaving the church. But we have known of scores who were saved in it by timely repentance and faith in Christ. Candid reader! if you have a false hope, throw it away and seek a better. So shall your "goodness" be not merely a morning vapor, but a cloud of blessings through life's long useful day, and at sunset it shall burn with the golden glories reflected from the better world.



THE RE-CONVERTED MAN.



IN a certain evening in the olden times, a man of resolute look was sitting by the fire, amid a group of talkers, in a high priest's hall. During that day his Master had startled him by saying to him: "*When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*" Was he not already a converted man? Was he not already a disciple of Jesus? The remark was well calculated to surprise, and to give him pain.

Perhaps revolving the startling words in his mind, the man sits by the fire—waiting to be "sifted." Satan, the sifter, sees him there, and steals in to sift him. He comes through the lips of an impertinent serving-maid.

"Thou wast also with Jesus of Galilee," sneers the garrulous girl. What an opportunity for the boastful Peter to stand up for Jesus! With craven tone, the lie sticking in his throat, he stammers out: "I know not what thou sayest." He goes out into the porch, and again the sifter sifts him. How the wheat is running away, and leaving the empty chaff!

In the porch another maid is loitering, who no sooner sees him than she sets the rabble upon him by exclaiming: "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." The mob take up the jeer, and cry out: "Surely thou art also one of them; thy *brogue* bewrayeth thee." This is too much for the poor, irritated, hounded disciple—the man who chafed so under a taunt—and, with swaggering oath, he flings back the jeer: "I know not the man."

"Ah, Peter, methinks thou needest a conversion now! What shall keep thee from going clear over to the ranks of the persecutors of that Man of Sorrows in the judgment hall?" Stop. Judge him not too harshly. The difference between a bent tree

and a broken tree is, that one springs back to its place when the pressure is removed, but the other never rises from the dust. Peter's is a bent faith, not a broken; for no sooner does the cock-crow smite upon his ear than in a moment his cowed and brow-beaten loyalty to his Master leaps up and asserts its presence in an honest outgush of blinding tears. Out into the solitudes of the garden he goeth, not to hide his sin with the rope of the suicide, but to be RE-CONVERTED; to turn back again, with genuine contrition, to that Saviour whom he had wronged and denied; to do once more his first works, and give afresh his heart to Jesus. And from that garden, whose deep shadows made a fit "closet" for his secret outbreak of penitential grief, the weeping man comes out a humbler, wiser, better, and braver man than he had ever been before. That baptism of tears was a needed baptism for his high apostleship. Better fitted to sympathize with the tempted; better fitted to warn the presumptuous; better calculated to deal tenderly with the erring, and every way better able to "strengthen the brethren"

must the disciple have been for his melancholy lapse, and for his merciful re-conversion.

But what is re-conversion? It is certainly not regeneration. The Bible gives no hint of a second, or a third, or a fourth new birth of the soul. We recognize no such thing in our spiritual experience. Re-conversion is not the awakening of a sinner for the second time.

It is simply the return to God and to duty of a backsliding believer. Peter's religious character was not wholly swept from him in that sad, shameful hour of his denial of the Redeemer. Nor does any true Christian lose his faith entirely during his seasons of spiritual declension. He is not a happy man, nor a healthy man, nor a heaven-honored man; but he is alive. As the benumbed Alpine traveller, who has foundered among the swirling snow-drifts, soon "comes to" again, when laid before the fire of the St. Bernard Hospice, so a frozen backslider may thaw out and recover under the warmth of Christ's restoring grace. It is a terrible experiment to try; a

terrible risk to run. Let no man tempt God's love by trying the perilous step. Peter would probably have ended just where Judas ended, had not one been a true Christian and the other an impostor. Christ prayed for Peter that his "faith might not fail" utterly; and but for that timely intercession he could not have come forth from that garden a re-converted man.

The process through which Peter passed, during his recovery, was partially similar to the process of his first conversion. There must have been repentance deep and sincere. There must have been faith in Jesus exercised anew. The sorrows of his contrition, too, were aggravated by the recollection of his first state of grace, and of his late disgraceful fall. Now, as conversion is made up of repentance, faith, and new obedience to God, so Peter's recovery was, in every sense, a re-conversion. It was a turning unto God; and differed from a first conversion in only two things, namely: the point set out from was a different point, and the distance travelled over was vastly less.

Who the reader of this paragraph may be, we do not know; but he must be a remarkable Christian if he never needed a re-conversion. Every act of disloyalty to Christ, every disgraceful lapse into sin, should call forth Peter's tears and Peter's penitence. Even without looking back for some specific flagrant offence against Christian consistency, it will do you no harm, my professing friend, to "repent and do first works" afresh. If you have grown cold in heart and indolent in duty, if prayer is a penance, and the Lord's table an irksome formality, then you need a new conversion. If, after a searching scrutiny, you are not satisfied with your present hope, *give it up*. By all means give it up, and seek a better. Nothing would sooner bring a genuine revival into our churches than for lukewarm, inconsistent members to come forward by platoons and abandon the worthless hope of bygone days, and, with thorough repentance, to dig down deep and lay anew their foundation on the Lord Jesus Christ. Multitudes of church members, we fear, are barely living on the memory of the religious

experiences of ten or twenty years ago. John Wesley would call such a state a falling away from grace. John Owen would call it a spiritual declension. But both would agree in the remedy needed, and both would agree in the exhortation with which we close: "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, *and repent and do the first works!*"





THE SPICES IN GOD'S GARDEN.

THE true believer's heart is the "King's garden." It is described in the "Canticles" as a "garden enclosed." The Orientals were accustomed to fence in their gardens with hedges of prickly shrubs. Sometimes a stone wall was built, as in the case of the hallowed enclosure around Gethsemane. Outside the garden was often a barren waste. So is the believer's heart kept apart from a world lying in wickedness. "Come out, and be ye separate," saith the Lord Almighty.

What are the products of this heart-garden? The singer of Solomon's Song tells us that they are "pleasant fruits, with all trees of frankincense, and myrrh, and aloes, with

all the chief spices." These spices are the *graces* of a Christian's soul. As spices were not native to the Oriental garden, but were planted there, and required careful cultivation, so the fragrant graces of Christian character are not natural to the human heart. They do not spring spontaneously in any man before conversion. They are the blessed and beautiful results of regeneration. What a vast deal of watching and watering do they require! What constant need there is of that remarkable prayer: "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south! *Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out!*"

Look at the meaning of this prayer a moment. Its root is found in the fact that, as delicious odors may lie *latent* in a spice-tree, so *graces* may lie unexercised and undeveloped in a Christian's heart. There is many a plant of profession; but from the cumberer of the ground there breathes forth no fragrance of holy affections or of godly deeds.

As long as any member of Christ's church lives a hollow life of mere profession; as long as he aims to please himself and not his

Saviour; as long as he is grasping, and self-seeking, and self-indulgent, and covetous, and a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God; so long the professed cinnamon bush is not a whit better than the Canada thistle. A church full of such professors, whether they swear by the Westminster Confession or by the Thirty-nine Articles, is only a batch of weeds.

But even in genuine Christians there are latent graces which require to be drawn forth. And this prayer is for the coming of a "north wind" and of a "south wind," that the fragrance of the soul's spices may *flow out*. Anything rather than a scentless, formal, fruitless religion.

Let the *north* wind come, even though it be a cutting wind of conviction! Christians need to be convicted of sin as much as impenitent sinners. Peter was under conviction of sin when he went out into the garden to weep bitterly. Perhaps the Apostle Paul felt a terrible uprising of the "old Adam" when he wrote that tearful seventh chapter to the *Romans*. Dr. Beecher once told me that one of the

most tremendous seasons of awakening he ever knew was in a theological seminary. The "north wind" of the Spirit's power was so keenly felt that students for the ministry gave up their "hopes," cried for mercy, and dug down deeper for better foundations to rest on! The most powerful revivals in churches are those which bring professing Christians to repentance and tears, and to the cutting off of "right hand" sins. Awake! O north wind of conviction, and blow upon our dull, odorless hearts, that the spices of penitence may flow out.

Sometimes God sends severe blasts of *trial* upon his children to develop their graces. Just as torches burn most brightly when swung violently to and fro; just as the juniper plant smells sweetest when flung into the flames; so the richest qualities of a Christian often come out under the north wind of suffering and adversity. Bruised hearts often emit the fragrance that God loveth to smell. Almost every true believer's experience contains the record of trials which were sent for the purpose of *shaking* the *spice-tree*.

“Who bears a cross prays oft and well ;
 Bruised herbs send forth the sweetest smell ;
 Were plants ne'er tossed by stormy wind,
 The fragrant spices who would find ?”

Trials are of no profit unless improved. We need the Spirit's work at no time more than in our hours of trial. A graceless heart is none the better after affliction. The same wind blows on the thistle-bush and on the spice-tree ; but it is only *one* of them which gives out rich odors. Awake, O north wind, and come thou *south!* Blow upon my heart, that the perfumes of sweet graces may flow out!

There are *two* winds mentioned in this beautiful prayer. God may send either or both, as seemeth him good. He may send the north wind of conviction, to bring us to repentance, or he may send the south wind of love, to melt us into gratitude and holy joy. If we often require the sharp blasts of trial to develop our graces, do we not also need the warm south breezes of his mercy? Do we not need the new sense of Christ's presence in our hearts and the joys of the Holy

Ghost? Do we not need to be melted, yea, to be *overpowered* by the love of Jesus? When I look into my own scanty little heart-garden, when I go into the prayer-meetings of my flock, and when I think how feeble are the spiritual influences we are shedding out upon the world, I am ready to cry out: "Awake, O north wind of the convicting Spirit! Come, O south wind of melting, subduing love, and blow upon these odorless plants!"

Every genuine revival of religion has a divine side and a human side. Every such revival is the gift of God; yet it is also the work of free agents—the quickened activity of good men and women. When the winds blow upon the cinnamon-bushes, it is *from the bushes themselves* that the odors flow out. The softest of zephyrs cannot draw fragrance from a pigweed. Faith is the gift of God; but it is also your act and mine. Love is kindled by contact with Christ; but we must come up close to him. The Holy Spirit may waft odors from a true Christian life; but the *Christian must do the living*. Dead trees yield no spices. What was the secret of the suc-

cess and tremendous power of the apostolic church? *Every tree was a bearing tree.* Paul in his pulpit, Lydia in her cloth-store, Dorcas with her needle, John amid his flock at Ephesus—each and all were “always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Brethren! how shall our spiritual gardens attain to such beauty and fragrance? There are three pithy answers.

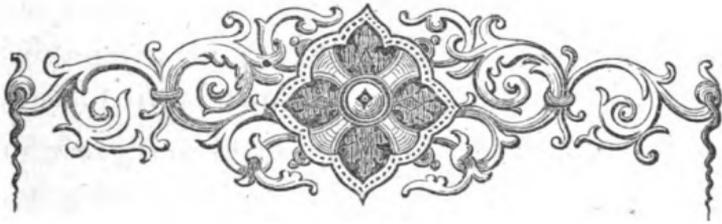
Let each one look well to the tillage of his own or her own heart. The measure of a Christian's power is the measure of that Christian's *piety*. Grace must be *in* the soul before it can come out of the soul.

Be the Christian *everywhere* and *always*. When Jacob came into his father's presence, the odor of the barley-ground and the vineyard was in his garments. It was the “smell of the field which God had blessed.” So, wherever we go, let us carry the Spirit of Christ within us. Then the spices will flow out.

Let us cry fervently and frequently and importunately for the breath of the Holy Spirit. With one voice let us cry: “Awake, O north

wind, and come, thou south! Blow upon our garden!" Then shall there be a shaking down of fruit from the branches, and the outflow of the sweet spices shall fill and perfume the atmosphere in which we dwell.





MAKING THE IRON SWIM.

“**S** LAS, master, for it was borrowed!” exclaimed one of the sons of the prophets beside the river Jordan, when his axe-head flew off, and sunk in the turbid stream. And Elisha said to him, “Where fell it?” The young student showed him the spot. Whereupon the man of God broke off a stick and cast it into the stream, and lo! “*the iron did swim!*” The student put forth his hand and took it up, and went on with his work to hew down timber for a “Log College,” to be occupied by the sons of the prophets.

Here was a direct interposition of the divine power. The honor of a company of good men was at stake; a loss had been met with; God

repaired the loss in a miraculous manner. God, who is the author of all law in nature, *acted directly* on that bit of iron, and made it rise up from the bottom of the stream. It was just such a special display of the divine power as that which sent the ravens to feed the famished prophet Elijah, and at another time made a poor widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil hold out.

These were very unlikely things to happen; but God constantly does unlikely things to reward the faith of his children. Elisha's heavenly Father is our Father. He is the Father of every faithful minister of the word, of every toiling missionary, of every true philanthropist who is struggling to turn the darkness into day, of every working Christian, and of every poor widow or orphan in his huge earthly household. He still fills poverty's empty cruse. He still makes the iron swim!

Yonder, at Ashley Down, lives George Müller, the noble, godly-minded superintendent of the famous "Orphan House," which shelters and educates hundreds of poor children every

year. George Müller began that vast work of love in simple faith. He goes on with his labor of love, and *prays*. God puts it into the hearts of liberal men to send him money, and Müller has already received and expended over two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Faith does its duty, and God *makes the iron swim*.

Sometimes the Lord transmutes the hardest outbreaks of human wrath into instruments of mercy. That royal scoffer, Charles II., locked up John Bunyan in Bedford jail for twelve years. That padlock kept Bunyan there, shut up with his Bible, until he wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress"—and that iron is swimming yet!

There is a prodigious leverage for our faith in the glorious doctrine of God's providential love. It enables us to remove mountains out of our way. It stimulates us to persevering effort in the face of every obstacle. A godly mother, for example, dedicates her only son to the gospel ministry. But how to educate him with a widow's scanty purse is a puzzling question. It seems a hard dilemma. But at the

critical time the will of a deceased relative is opened, and a *legacy* for the widow's son is found in the will. The lad is sent to college, and he lives to-day to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to a vast audience. So the widow's God made the iron swim!

How well I remember the difficulties which beset my path, when I came over to Brooklyn ten years ago, to undertake the building of a new church edifice on the sound principle of a large house and low pew-rents. We had but a feeble band of helpers, and many predicted failure. When the building began, Sumter's flag fell, and with it fell apparently all hope of prosecuting our undertaking to success. But we went forward. Poor and godly women did their own housework to save a few dollars for the church. From unexpected quarters came aid—for "the people had a mind to work"—and *the iron did swim*.

These are not miracles exactly; but the God who floated the prophet's axe at the Jordan yet lives, and he still loves to reward faith and to answer prayer. There is a rich encouragement in this truth for all who are earnestly

laboring for the conversion of souls. An unconverted heart is often like to the young prophet's axe-head—it is heavy and hard and tending downward. But the Spirit of God can make the iron move. Know this, ye disheartened parents, who almost despair of ever seeing your ungodly children come to Jesus. Be not weary in your efforts to bring them to the Saviour. Make your religion attractive to them. Pray for them without ceasing.

Ye praying wives, whom every communion Sabbath separates from your impenitent husbands, do not give up. God can make the iron swim. A loving wife, who spent a whole Sabbath lately in most pleading petitions for her husband's soul, was joyfully surprised on Monday morning to see the man upon his knees.

A long-suffering wife of a sad inebriate has just been into my study to tell me that her husband came home lately *sober and penitent*. For dark, weary months she has been praying for his reform, hoping against hope. It actually looks now as if the poor slave of the bottle would be saved; but I confess that I never

expected to see that stubborn piece of metal float. With God all things are possible.

During a period of revival in a certain town, a woman of devoted piety persuaded her skeptical husband to go with her once to church. He came home enraged. "I will never go again," said he; "that sermon against infidelity was aimed at me." She saw that the shots were striking him in a sore spot. So she prayed the more fervently.

One evening the wife said kindly to him, "I want you, my dear, to grant me one little request. Will you go with me to-night to the meeting? He answered gruffly, "I will go with you *to the door*." "Very well," she replied cheerfully; "that will do." He accompanies her to the door; he stays outside while she goes in to pour out her soul to God in impetunate, believing prayer for that iron heart. Presently the door opens. A man walks in, and going to her seat sits down beside her. He listens quietly. The wife walks home with him, all the time talking secretly to God.

The next evening, after tea, the husband rises, and says, "Wife, is n't it about time for

us to go to church?" It is too early; but she snatches her bonnet and shawl, and hastens off with him to the house of God. A happy evening is it to her long-tried spirit, for the stubborn skeptic bows at the feet of Jesus. He comes home to set up a family altar. Faith wins its precious victory, and the love of Jesus *makes the iron swim!*





THE JOY OF SAVING THE LOST.

IN Mr. George Kennan's fascinating "Tent-Life in Siberia" is a very thrilling account of a search made by the author for a party of his lost countrymen on the Anadyr river. After a journey by dog-sledge for two hundred miles over drifted snow, they reach the spot where they conjecture the missing Americans to be buried away under the snow. Mr. Kennan and his companion are well nigh perishing themselves from a cold which has sunk the mercury to *fifty* degrees below zero! The feet of their poor dogs spot the white snow with blood at every step. One of the two brave explorers has already sunk exhausted on his sledge, and is fast falling into the sleep of

death. Suddenly, at midnight, Mr. Kennan hears a faint, long-drawn halloo across the wintry waste. It came from one of his "Chookchee," who has gone on in advance. He hurries to the spot, all the blood in his veins throbbing at his heart. As he comes up he discovers the Chookchee standing by a small black pipe projecting from a snowbank. The lost wanderers must be under it. "Thank God! thank God!" I repeated to myself *softly*," says the heroic writer; "and as I climbed upon the snowdrift, and shouted down the pipe, 'Halloo the house!' I heard a startled voice under my feet reply, 'Who's there?' As I entered the snow-cellar, and seized hold of my long-lost friends, my overstrained nerves gave way, and in ten minutes I could hardly raise my hand to my lips."

Reading the above thrilling scene in my friend Kennan's book, I found the tears stealing down my own cheeks in sympathy with the brave fellows who had perilled their lives in order to rescue their lost friends from death by cold and starvation. After concluding the narrative, which had almost the sweet "linea-

ment of a gospel-book," I opened my Bible, and read this parable which Jesus spake:

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep; if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and *go after that which is lost* until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing."

With this vivid scene of the Siberian search fresh in my mind, I read this exquisite parable with a new delight. I seemed to see our Divine Shepherd starting off after the lost sheep. He knows the thickets or the quagmires into which the silly truant must have strayed. He may hear its bleatings afar off. He goes until he finds it. He does not *beat* it for straggling; but pulling it out of the mire, or drawing it from the tangled thicket, he *layeth it on his shoulders*—the clean carrying the unclean, the holy carrying the unholy. Beautiful picture of Jesus, the sin-bearer! Every saved soul has been upon Christ's shoulders. When he "bore our sins" and "carried our sorrows," then was the befouled yet precious load upon Jesus' shoulder. Yes, and he bids

us "cast our *cares*" upon him too. The whole load he takes up joyfully.

Say what we may about free agency, or about the activity of the soul in regeneration, it is equally true that not a solitary sheep would ever have entered the fold of God if the Divine Shepherd had not come to seek and to save the lost. He came after each one. For Jesus "tasted death for every man"—for the *individual*, and not for the vague mass of undistinguishable humanity. That "*one* sheep" was lost was enough to start the loving Shepherd on his search. What an argument is this to labor for the conversion of *one soul*!

It has often been said as a cavil by students of astronomy, If this globe of ours is only a mere speck in the starry universe, amid millions of suns and planets, why should the Son of God single out *this* diminutive globe as the theatre of his incarnation and sufferings? why did he stoop to such a little world as ours? In reply to this cavil, Dr. Chalmers prepared and preached his magnificent "Astronomical Discourses." But we think that this exquisite parable throws a hint of sugges-

tive light on this problem. For, though we do not know that our Saviour *never* went on an errand of redemption to any other planet, we *do* know that he came to this one of ours. We do not know that he went to stupendous Jupiter, or to belted Saturn, or to far-away Neptune.

He did not go perhaps to the planet that was biggest in size, but to the one that was *basest in sin*. He came not "to the largest world, but to *the lost world*." Ah! he may have left the "ninety and nine" glorious and gigantic orbs which never wandered, and sought out the single one in which lay a race of sinners lost in misery and guilt!

There is one stroke in the parable which we must not lose sight of. It is that which depicts the exquisite *joy of the Rescuer*. When the shepherd "findeth the sheep, he layeth it on his shoulders, *rejoicing*." He is glad for the sake of the restored sheep, but still more for his own. It was "for the joy set before him that he endured the cross and despised the shame." Into that sublime joy how many elements may enter! There must have been

in my Saviour's heart a holy ecstasy of love which pleased itself in doing good—in saving me when lost—in enduring suffering and sacrifice for my salvation. This sublime love of the Sin-bearer makes even the crown of thorns flash as a diadem of splendors on the Redeemer's bleeding brow. Here was the divine luxury of doing good.

It is a sweet thought too that Jesus would have *missed* me if I had never been sought and brought back. As the shepherd in the story *left* the ninety and nine to hunt for the single straggler, so I may gladly hope that Jesus *wanted* me in heaven, or else he would not have come so far or endured so much to save me. If I were left without him, there would have been one more soul in hell. But if he were left without me, there would be one soul the less to sing his praise in heaven. He would have had one the less to present before his Father "with exceeding *joy*."

For observe that the sweet parable says nothing about the delight of the sheep in being found; it only depicts the exceeding joy of the *shepherd in finding* the wanderer. He

calls his neighbors together to share his gladness. "Likewise there is joy in the *presence* of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The common and inaccurate rendering of this text confines the joy to the angels only, as if it read "*among* the angels." Just as well say that the "neighbors" felt the thrill of gladness over the recovered sheep, and not the shepherd himself.

The transcendent joy in heaven over a saved soul is not confined to the angel bands. It is only witnessed by them, and partially shared by them. It is "in their *presence*" that the celestial rapture breaks forth. But the *supreme joy is in the bosom of the enthroned Redeemer!* His was the sorrow, when he was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." His is the joy, when he presents even one repentant sinner "before the presence of his glory." He sees the travail of his soul and is satisfied.

O beloved Saviour! when we behold thee on thy throne, the shepherd amid his ransomed flock, thy victories complete, the last wandering sheep brought home, the last recovered jewel glittering in thy crown; then we will

confess that the triumph was worthy of the toil, and the ransom of thy glorified church was worthy of all the bitter agonies of Him who came to *seek and to save the lost!* “Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever!”





HYMNS OF HEAVEN.



FINE hymn is the consummate flower of doctrine: I had rather be the author of "Rock of Ages"—that crown-jewel of sacred minstrelsy—than of either of President Edwards' masterly treatises. Charles Wesley did more for Christ when he sang

"Jesus! lover of my soul!"

than if he had written fifty volumes of sound theology. A mere talk *about* that exquisite hymn a few evenings ago, was blessed to the soul of one believer, who had been under a cloud of despondency for months. The hymn itself would be enough to make Wesley's and Calvin's spirits embrace each other before the throne of their Redeemer, and weep that they had ever had a controversy while in the flesh.

It is natural that the theme of many of the richest hymns of the church should be the *Joys of Heaven*. When Bunyan's pilgrim was asked in the House Beautiful how he secured for himself "golden hours" in which he forgot his troubles, he answered: "When I think of what I saw at the cross, that will do it; when I look into the roll which I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when my thoughts *wax warm about whither I am going*, that will do it." The sweet thoughts of his expected home in glory drove away the devils of doubt and despondency—as they have driven them from many a tried Christian spirit ever since.

The earliest of the hymns of heaven is the old Latin composition, "Urbs beata Jerusalem," which had its roots in the meditations of that giant of the fifth century, Augustine of Hippo. This is the ground-work of all the numerous *Jerusalem*-hymns of latter ages. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, a prisoner was shut up in the dreary old tower of London, and to him as to the captive in Bedford jail, was vouchsafed a bright vision of the "better country." He composed a hymn in twenty-

six stanzas, a manuscript copy of which is still preserved in the British Museum. It is entitled "A Song by F. B. P. to the tune of Diana." The first verse is:

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end—
Thy joys when shall I see?"

The closing verses are in that most rapturous strain of longing for that celestial paradise, where "the trees for evermore bear fruit," and where "evermore the angels sit, and evermore do sing." The name of this prisoner of Jesus Christ is lost in oblivion. A few years afterward, old David Dickson of Scotland, altered the first line of the "Song of F. B. P." to the quaint and tender words, "Oh! mother dear, Jerusalem," and he also added to it six and thirty verses of his own. About the beginning of this century there appeared (from an unknown source) a beautiful variation of the hymn in six verses. This is the one which is found in all our collections of church music under the well-known name of "Jerusalem, my happy home."

A Presbyterian clergyman in New Orleans once called to visit a young Scotchman who was lying very low, and talked to him about his soul. The young stranger gave him but little attention. During one of his visits the minister began to hum over to himself the lines "Jerusalem, my happy home, name ever dear to me!" The youth burst into tears, and exclaimed, "I used to hear my dear mother sing those words when I was a child." His heart melted under a strain that seemed to come back to him as from his cradle; and the heart thus softened, *received* the "faithful saying" with penitence and joy. I am persuaded that we ministers make too little use of the *Gospel in metre* as a means of awakening and conversion. A hymn often goes many fathoms deeper than a sermon.

Among the ancient hymns of heaven we must not overlook that noble lyric composed by old Bernard of Cluny. Its opening verse is,

"Jerusalem the golden !
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed !"

The whole hymn reads like one of holy Rutherford's "Letters" turned into rhyme. It is rich in Scriptural imagery, without degenerating into the coarser sensuous language which disfigures some of the pious doggerel in our Sabbath-school music books. In fact some of these descriptions of heaven would answer about as well for Mohammed's Paradise. They give children the idea that the glorified spirits on high are enjoying a sort of celestial *picnic* with no end of good things to eat, and of angels to sing to them under the green bowers.

In my own childhood I got a very different conception of the holy habitation of the redeemed, when I heard that glorious hymn of Isaac Watts:

" There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

As the inspired singer of this lay looked across Southampton water to the verdant banks of the Isle of Wight, he caught a beautiful image of death as a "narrow sea" divi-

ding the heavenly land from ours. He imagines the lovely island across the water to be a type of that land, and writes—

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green ;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood
While Jordan rolled between.”

Of many another hymn of heaven I wish I had time and space to write this morning. In our days several fine additions have been made to this celestial hymnology. Among them are “Rest for the Weary,” and Dr. Muhlenberg’s “I would not live alway,” and those lines of Miss Cary, commencing,

“One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o’er and o’er.”

That popular hymn “Shining Shore,” is wedded to a noble tune, but the poetry itself is rather a clumsy piece of joiner-work.

For one of the grandest songs of the better land we are indebted to a member of that many-sided household of genius, the Beechers. When the Rev. Charles Beecher was in Switzerland he caught a sudden inspiration while gazing at the glittering peak of Mont Blanc

with its coronal of ice. He dashed off a few verses, which were set to music by Mr. Zundel, and the tune took its name from the mountain which inspired the hymn. No piece is a greater favorite with my own people than this; its first lines are,

“We are on our journey home—
Where Christ our Lord is gone.”

Let me quote, in closing, two of the ringing stanzas of this heaven-song :

“Oh ! glory shining far,
From the never-setting Sun !
Oh, trembling morning star !
Our journey’s almost done
To the New Jerusalem.

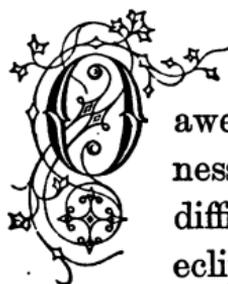
“Our hearts are breaking now,
Those mansions fair to see ;
O Lord ! thy heavens bow
And raise us up with thee
To the New Jerusalem.”





A TOTAL ECLIPSE—AND ITS SPIRITUAL LESSONS.

AUGUSTA, ILLINOIS, August 9, 1869.



ONE of the most sublime and awe-inspiring sights I ever witnessed—and yet one of the most difficult to describe—was the total eclipse of the sun, as we beheld it here on Saturday afternoon. Others will tell the story scientifically, let me jot down a few impressions of a scene that affected me as it did the children that stood beside me. Augusta—a thrifty village of this abounding region—was almost under the centre of the total obscuration. “You could not have a better place to see it,” said the astronomer of Princeton College to me a week ago. And not to see the eclipse in its *totality* is about equal to being half-married or half-converted.

At four o'clock we stood in the door-yard

of my friend, with smoked glass in hand; and, as one of us was watching the blazing sun, he exclaimed, "There she comes!" When a boy, I had read of this very eclipse, and of the moment it should begin. It *did* begin at the precise second predicted forty years ago! Such is the punctuality of the truth-keeping God. And will he not be equally faithful in keeping his spiritual promises? "Wherefore dost thou doubt?" The shadow came over the sun *gradually*—even as I have seen the shadow of a growing sin creep over a bright Christian character. The landscape around us began to look yellowish and ghastly. The grass seemed to be getting sick. Over the trees played a weird, lurid light, and every leaf hung perfectly motionless. "Oh! see how queer those flowers look! And those currant-bushes! It looks as if nature was *getting the jaundice!*" An odd thought; and yet I do not know of any other idea that would more truly describe Nature's ghastly hue.

"See who'll catch the first star," said one of our group. The shadow deepened. The devouring moon pushed on, until the helpless

sun was nearly smothered. "There—look! look! See—see—it is *almost* gone!" Only a minute more, and it is total! "Yonder is a star!" exclaimed one of our company. It was *Regulus*, blazing away close by the bed of the dying sun. (But *Venus* had been shining for full five minutes, without our discovering her golden locks.) "Only a few seconds more!" But, ah! what a transformation do those few seconds work! Even as in a human history, the deed of a moment suffices to darken a destiny for life; and, still worse, it flings its total eclipse over eternity!

"TOTAL!" we all exclaimed together. In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, came down an awful shadow, as of a black wing, filling the whole heavens. It was ineffably frightful. Coleridge's lines flashed into my mind in a moment:

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out!

With one stride comes the dark!"

To the north the horizon was dyed with a rich orange hue. But above us and around us the air seemed to be filled with fine black particles. It was so dark that I could not

recognize a countenance a hundred yards off; and yet it was not the darkness of an ordinary evening. It was the darkness of death! Above a group of trees before us a flock of birds flew wildly to and fro, as if panic-stricken. A couple of cows went lowing past the gate—the only sound in the awful stillness. Just over the fence, a half-dozen chickens had composed themselves to roost in a cherry-tree. A dozen stars were twinkling in various parts of the heavens. The air was chill as midnight.

The best description I can give of the sun when in total obscuration is that it looked as if a circular shield of sheet-iron had been riveted over it; and just at the lower edge glittered a bright, rosy clasp or nut, as if it was the *head of the screw* which attached the black shield to the sun. All around that shield flashed out the white rays of the *corona*. This corona had a shimmering, shivering brightness, and was fearfully and wonderfully beautiful. Its edges were not smooth, but scalloped; and from every point small beads of light seemed to float off into the sky.

The mighty pall of darkness hung over us for *almost three minutes!* During that time every one in our group had a death-like hue. So might have looked the face of the universe to the apostle John in some of his apocalyptic visions. At two minutes after five, as we stood gazing at the black orb, with its magnificent corona, a sudden flash of golden light burst forth from the northern limb. It was the most thrilling instant I ever knew, and the most splendid spectacle I ever witnessed. As if God said, "*Let there be light!*" a sheaf of dazzling rays burst forth in a twinkling! The whole sky lightened instantaneously. Methought that the "sons of God" must have seen something like this when on Creation's morn the first flood of radiance broke on black chaos at the Almighty voice. He spake, and it was done! "THOU makest darkness, and *it is night!*" "THOU coverest thyself *with light* as with a garment!"

And so, as we watched the blessed light burst forth, and, swift as an archangel, wing its bright way through the whole heavens and over all the earth, it was to us the most per-

fect of all images of the ineffable Lord Jesus. The Christ of Calvary breaking in on the midnight of a world lying in wickedness! Christ's sweet gracious word chasing away the darkness of doubt and unbelief from a depraved heart! Christ's overpowering love turning the night of impenitence into a rosy morn of faith and joy! Christ the comforter scattering the gloom which shrouds the chamber of sorrow! All these visions of our divine Lord were borne to us on wings of that *first excelling sunlight*. We saw the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams. We saw, as if pictured on the sky, that glorious miracle of grace when "old things become new" and spiritual death is turned into spiritual life; and in that wondrous transformation "the Lamb is the Light thereof." Henceforth I shall never point a poor sinner to the Saviour without recalling the delicious thrill of last Saturday's sunburst. And so on my own failing vision in the dying hour—when this world goes under eclipse—may the first glimpse of heaven break in ecstasy, and the *Lamb be the light thereof for ever!*



CHRIST THE LIGHT TO A HIGHER LIFE.

THE many writers who have sought to set "the gates ajar" have not been able to add to our positive knowledge of the heavenly state. Some have conjectured it to be only a glorified condition of happy souls; others have pictured it as a *place*—a stupendous city of splendors, filled with everything that delighteth. Some of these latter writers have made it but little in advance of the Mussulman's Paradise.

But there is one thing we *know* about heaven. God has revealed it to us. We know what is the supreme attraction and the crowning glory of the celestial world: *Christ is the Light thereof*. "I saw," said the inspired disciple John, "that the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to lighten it; for

the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof." This is the essential blessedness of the Christian's everlasting home. Christ is enthroned there. Christ reveals himself there. Christ instructs his ransomed ones until they "know even as they are known;" and oh, how many mysteries he will make plain! Christ will lead his followers to living fountains of waters. This will be the consummate glory of that city whose maker and builder is God. Christ's presence will be heaven's effulgence; his love our bright ecstasy; and "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

If this be so, then the chief characteristic of a Christian's life in heaven *ought to be* the characteristic of his life on earth. Heaven is "begun below" to a real follower of Jesus. The celestial world casts its sweet smell afar off to the pilgrim who is approaching its pearly gates. And the one grand feature that makes a Christian's life on earth resemble his life in heaven is "the Lamb is the light thereof."

Christ is the light thereof in every system of spiritual truth, in every triumph of con-

verting grace, in every comfort under trial, in every wise reform and work of philanthropy, in every closet of devotion, in every consistent and godly like. Christ is the Alpha and Omega of all true religion. It begins with him just as surely as the day begins with the rising of the sun. Your new birth, my brother, took place at the cross of Jesus. In that hour of conversion Christ was the light thereof. The new song that was put into your mouth was,

“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly!”

What is true of the beginning of your Christian life is true ever afterwards. There is not an actual grace that is not copied after him, not a holy emotion which is not inspired by him, not a victory over sin but is won in his strength, and you do not take a single step toward a higher life unless Christ be “the light thereof.”

When you get overburdened with a load of anxiety or discouragement, you probably betake yourself to prayer. But the devil mocks you and makes sport of you. “How absurd,”

jeers Satan, "that your prayer should have any effect on God!" Your closet seems to be as black as midnight. You are overhung with a pall of discouragement. All at once the idea strikes you, "I have an advocate in heaven; Jesus Christ ever liveth to intercede for me. He has said, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." You grasp hold of the love of the Intercessor as a drowning man clutches the rope. You seize on his love for you, and on his love for those who lie upon your hearts. Faith sees with new eyes. Your dark closet of prayer brightens in a moment. The *Lamb is the light thereof*. You rise from your knees strengthened, and go on your way rejoicing.

One day there arises a perplexing question of duty. You know not what to do. Self-interest counsels one course. Perhaps friends advise the same thing. They tell you "it will pay," or it will promote you. You are half inclined to decide for it. But conscience whispers, What will Christ say? What would he have you do? What will please him? Then your *better* self, your converted judgment and

affections, spring up and demand of you that you take the path which shall most honor your Christianity, even though it be up the steepest cliffs and through briers that tear the garments of your pride. But as you tread the rugged furlongs, up the hills and through the thickets, you find the blessed Jesus your companion on the road, and his smile is "the light thereof."

I do not believe that there is a doubtful question in morals or in practice on which the life and the teachings of the divine Saviour do not shed sufficient light. If Christ is wholly *in your heart*, and rules that heart, you will decide rightly. You will engage in the right callings. You will find the right fields of labor. You will seek out and enjoy the right kinds of recreation. If Christ has full possession of a man's soul, he will have no lustings after the indecencies of the licentious stage, or the revelries of the ball-room, or the reckless gambling operations of stock-boards or "the street," or for any pleasure or pursuit into which he cannot take Christ with him.

This glorious presence of Jesus with his own can brighten the darkest hours of trial. I used to visit an aged blind woman, whose sightless eyeballs rolled in vain to find the day. She could not see the sweet grandchildren who read to her God's Word. But hers was one of the sunniest rooms in Brooklyn. "The Lamb was the light thereof."

I have gone into a nursery where a mother was wringing her hands over the crib in which her treasure lay—smitten with the touch that turned its cheek to snow. "For this child *I prayed*," exclaims the agonized mother. "Thy prayer is heard," replies Jesus the Comforter; "this child *I will keep for thee*. Forbid it not to come to me. It was mine before it was thine. *Follow me*, and thou shalt find thy treasures in heaven." And so the shaft of heaven's glory seems to fall on the silent crib, and the child is no longer dead, but sleeping!

Ah, my fellow-Christian! you will find, when you reach the dark valley yourself, that "in the even time, it shall be light." Christ's countenance will gild the waters of death with glory. It is a "*shining shore*," because the

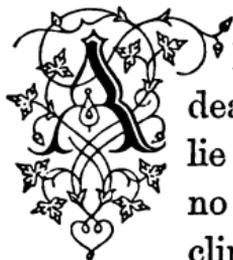
Son of God is "the light thereof." And there shall be no night there! Neither shall there be any more pain, or sorrow, or crying; for the former things have passed away.

Then "faint not; for the miles to heaven are few and short. There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom; but there is room for yours among the rest."





THE COST OF SERVING CHRIST.



ALL the most valuable things are dearly won. Scientific discoveries lie at the summit of a hill which no man reaches without hard climbing. A nation's liberty costs treasure, toil, and blood. It is paid in widows' tears and consecrated graves. What so precious as a soul's redemption? Yet by one price only could it be secured—the "blood of the LAMB, without blemish or spot."

When Christ offered the rewards, and enforced the duty of discipleship, he put in the careful injunction to "count the *cost*." The man who would not bear a cross for me, and follow me, "is not worthy to be my disciple." Let me remind you, my friend, what you must reckon upon if you attain that pearl above price, a Christian character. Count the *cost*. What is it?

1. Count on a fearful stubbornness in your own heart. It is by nature at enmity with God. Paul had to give battle without quarter to the "old man" of sin unto the last. So must you. Every sin-insurrection must be met with vigilance and prayer.

2. There are many unwelcome truths in the Word of God for you to swallow. The Bible is sent to save you, not to please you. It has no mercy on a sinner's sins, but it has unbounded mercy for a sinner's soul. When an ungodly man takes the vivid lamp of Bible-truths down into the dark vaults of a depraved heart, it makes terrible exposures. But the sooner they come the better. Sooner find out your sin by that light than by the lightning-flash of God's wrath at the judgment-seat. God will not compromise with you. Count the cost of submission. He demands the whole heart; but he offers in return a whole heaven.

3. If you expect to follow Christ, you must deny your selfishness, and take up every cross that Christ appoints. Count the cost! The simple, inexorable rule is: Give up nothing

that is innocent and right; but *give up everything that is wrong*. You now love to have your own way. You must consent gladly to let God have his way. You have favorite pleasures that are sinful. Find a higher pleasure in abandoning them. Count the cost of loving God more than you love money. Count the cost of offending some of your friends. Christ is a better Friend than they. Count the cost of quitting "profitable" sins. Count the cost of some sneers, of a great many hard knocks, and still more hard work. Count the cost of a noble, prayerful, unselfish, godly life. It will cost dearly, but, thank God, *it pays!*

When you get to be a Christian you will find that the clearer and stronger you are, the happier will be your conscience. But the better you are, the more dearly you will pay for it. Study in your Bible what it cost Paul to become all he was. Does he begrudge now one single self-mortification, one crushing of his selfish lusts, one stripe of persecution's lash? Not he! He gloried in every tribulation that burnished his piety, and brought

honor to his Redeemer's name. The best part of a Christian's character is that which costs the heaviest price. Patience, for example, is a beautiful trait; but it is not oftenest worn by those who walk life's sunny side in silver slippers. It is the product of dark nights of adversity and of many a cross-bearing up the mount of suffering. The "*trial of your faith worketh patience.*" The bruised flower emits most fragrance; and a bruised Christian puts forth the sweetest odors of humility and heavenly-mindedness.

4. Let me offer you four brief encouragements. I drop them as diamonds in your pathway to the Cross. • Here they are:

Firstly. The service of Christ pays a magnificent percentage of *usefulness*. A working Christian never can be wretched. He gathers his sheaves as he goes.

Secondly. A man is always happy *when he is right*. He is happy in doing right, happy in feeling that he has done right, and happy in the approval of his Master's heavenly smile. Impenitent friend! you have never felt *this!*

Thirdly. God will sustain you, if you try to serve him. His grace is sufficient for you.

Finally. There is a heaven at the end of every faithful Christian's journey.

“Our knowledge of that life is small ;
The eye of faith is dim ;
But 't is enough that Christ is there,
And we shall be like him.”

My friend, are you ready to follow Jesus? Count the cost. But I warn you tenderly that, if it costs much to be a Christian, it will cost infinitely *more* to live and die a sinner! Religion costs self-denial; sin costs self-destruction!

To be a temperate man costs self-restraint. To be a tippler costs a ruined purse, a ruined character, a ruined soul. The sensualist pays for going to perdition by living in a sty. The swearer must *pay* for his oaths, and the Sabbath-breaker for his guilty contempt of God's law.

To lead a life of impenitence costs a dying bed of remorse. Count the cost. To go up to the judgment-seat without Christ will cost you an eternity of despair. Count the cost.

Sit down and make the honest reckoning.
Put into one scale, life; into the other, death.
Put into one scale, heaven; into the other,
hell! Weigh them well! Weigh for eternity!
And, while you sit weighing anxiously, Christ
whispers into your ear the thrilling question:
“What shall it profit a man if he shall gain
the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or
what shall a man give in exchange for his
SOUL?”





FULL ASSURANCE.

“**F**AITH is the milk, and assurance is the cream that rises on it. If you have milk, you are pretty certain to have cream, unless the milk be the watery London mixture.” So said Mr. Spurgeon in one of his racy discourses; and it is not often that a sanctified wit teaches as much sound theology.

There are two kinds or shades of assurance—one of faith, and one which the apostle calls the “full assurance of hope.” Faith is the soul’s trusting itself to Jesus Christ. Not an intellectual act merely, but a spiritual exercise of confiding trust. But assurance is the full confidence of a believer in his own safety; that, being united to Christ, he is delivered from the “law of sin and death,” and is for

ever safe. John Wesley obtained this state of peaceful confidence when, after reading Luther's exposition of a part of the book of "Romans," and while he was walking in Aldergate street, he felt his heart strangely warmed within him. He says that assurance was given him that Jesus had taken away his sins and saved him from the law of sin and death. The Holy Spirit *bore witness* with his spirit that he was a child of God.

Many shallow and absurd views are often held in regard to the "witness of the Spirit." Some imaginative people declare that this "witness" has come to them in a vision, or by a voice from heaven, or in some extraordinary and sudden manner. But this is not the usual or normal experience of most sensible Christians. They obtain the witness of the Spirit by comparing the Holy Spirit's description of the true Christian in God's Word with their own character and experience. God's Word tells them what it is to be a follower of Christ, and sets forth the necessary traits and characteristics of the new life in Jesus. They compare themselves with the Divine Word;

and, if they find that the Holy Spirit's description of the true Christian *corresponds* with the Holy Spirit's work on their own hearts and lives, they know at once that they have their "witness" within themselves.

Each work of the Spirit testifies to the other. If we take a gold eagle to the mint, and compare it with the die, we see that they exactly correspond. The same stars and head of Liberty and inscriptions are on the die and on the coin. So a child of God opens his inspired Bible and reads: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus shall be saved." He says to himself: "I know that I do give up all other reliance, and trust Jesus only." He reads in his Bible: "My peace I give unto you." Looking into his own heart, he finds that peace. Again, he reads that if any man will be Christ's disciple, he must take up his cross and follow him. Such crosses he knows that he has taken up more than once. "To them that believe Christ is precious." The believer by actual experience so finds Jesus, and is as certainly *conscious* that he loves his Saviour as he is that he loves his own mother or the

child that plays by his side. Thus the Christian goes on, and compares his own state with the required condition of discipleship in God's Word; and, if he finds a good degree of resemblance, then he has an assurance that he is Christ's. There is an *agreement* between what the Holy Spirit has written on the Bible page and what that same Holy Spirit has written on his heart. And thus the Spirit beareth witness to his spirit that he is a child of God. This is one meaning, and a most vitally important meaning of that oft-quoted phrase: "The witness of the Spirit."

If the gold coin does not correspond with the die in the United States mint, we at once pronounce it a counterfeit. So the man who finds no clear resemblance in his own heart and conduct to the standard of Christianity in God's Word must confess that he is none of Christ's. His public profession is a counterfeit. Cream does not rise on water. Without the life of faith there can be no genuine "assurance of hope." Men never gather grapes from thistles.

A healthy Christian ought to have a com-

fortable assurance. He has a right to look for it. Good milk ought to raise cream. The reason why some truly good people do not enjoy more clear and comforting assurance is that they perpetually nurse their doubts and starve their faith. They never make a strong grasp of the divine promises. They are chronic doubters. "Other people may be saved, *but not I.*" If the life-boat rocks in the storm, they constantly "cry out for fear," and declare that they are going to the bottom. If such desponding doubters will not exercise faith, they must blame no one but themselves. God will not build another boat, or order perpetual calm weather just to suit their timorous unbelief.

Other people are the prey of their bodily feelings. To-day they feel well, their business prospers, and they are jubilant on the mountain-top. To-morrow their digestion is bad, their nerves are shaky, bad news comes, and at once their spiritual barometer falls again. They are all "in the dumps." Call upon them to pray, and their prayer is like a captive's groan in his dungeon. Nervous Chris-

tians and dyspeptic Christians need a three-fold supply of grace. It is as much their duty to pray against and fight against these periodic ague-fits of despondency as it is the duty of a man with strong sensual passions to battle against his lusts for liquor or libidinousness. An increase of faith, a victory over "fleshly" influences and external distractions, will bring abiding peace. These come from prayer and godly living. These come from a closer union to Christ. As farmers bury their winter apples so deep in the ground that they are beneath the frosts of January, so a Christian ought to put his faith and his love of Jesus so deep in his heart that they shall not be frozen by every external influence of bodily distemper or adversities of condition. Perfect love keeps out fear.

Finally, let us remind our brethren in Christ that full assurance is both a *right* and a *duty*. It is a perpetual joy; for, if our Lord has given us a title to heaven, why should not we enjoy it? Why should a Christian go limping and whining along the upward road to his Father's home in glory? Paul had a

mighty assurance, founded on a mighty faith. He *knew* whom he had believed. He exhorts his brethren to use “*diligence to the full assurance of hope.*” The Greek word *πληροφορία* means a full lading. If applied to a tree, it signifies an abundant crop of fruit, that weighs down the branches. If applied to a vessel, it signifies a ship crammed with her cargo. But the tree must be in good soil, and be well cultivated. So a follower of Christ must be *rooted* in Christ, and abide in Christ, and be watered by the Spirit, and grow in grace, if he would attain to the *πληροφορία*, the full assurance of hope unto the end. We must *receive Christ*; for “to as many as received Him to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” As we have seen a ship lie along-side of a grain elevator until the golden grain filled the hold, so must a believer keep his soul close beside the infinite Jesus, that he may be *filled* from the Divine fullness until he attains the “FULL ASSURANCE of hope unto the end!”



HYMNS OF THE HEART.

SO the richest and sweetest of all modern hymns of the heart we have paid our tribute of affection. The name of its author—Charles Wesley—should be exceeding dear to every lover of Jesus. To him belongs the glory of having written not only *more* hymns than any other man, but also of composing one sacred song which takes rank next to the “Dies Iræ” and the “Rock of Ages.”

Since his day several new and beautiful contributions have been made to that class of hymns, which may be called *Songs of the Soul*. Like many of David's most precious psalms, they are the musical outflow of a deep inward experience. Let us now bind a fresh chaplet around the modest brow of the authoress of one of these heart-songs.

Her name appears in most of the lately-published collections, yet few know anything about her. She was born at Cambridge, England, in February, 1805. Her father, Mr. Benjamin Flower, was the editor of a weekly paper. Her mother was a woman of fine gifts and culture. Their youngest daughter, Sarah F. Flower, was worthy of her name. For "Sarah" signifies a *princess*, and sweeter fragrance has rarely exhaled from any *flower* in the garden of the Lord.

This gifted girl married Mr. William B. Adams, an English civil engineer of superior abilities. She was of frail constitution, and, amid many bodily sufferings, she kept her pen at work upon various poetical productions. One of these was a religious drama. Another was a volume for children, entitled, "The Flock at the Fountain." At what time she caught the inspiration to compose that one immortal hymn which is now sung around the globe, we have never learned. Probably it was some season of peculiar trial, when the bruised spirit emitted the odors of a child-like submission to a chastening Father. It must

have oozed from a bleeding heart. As in the case of Toplady and Charlotte Elliott and Ray Palmer, the singer little dreamed that her song would be *heard through the ages*.

Her hymn first appeared in a volume of sacred lyrics, published by a Mr. Fox, in England, about the year 1841. The authoress did not live to catch the echoes of the fame it was to bring, for she died in 1849, at the age of forty-four. She was buried near Harlow, in Essex, and for several years her name was known to but few beyond the circle of loving friends who read it on her monument.

Presently the hymn began to work its way into various collections of songs for worship. It crossed to America. It was heard with delight in our prayer-meetings. It was married to the noble tune of "Bethany," and everybody caught the glorious strain. In noon-day gatherings for prayer it soon became so familiar that if any one "struck up" the hymn the whole audience joined in and sang it from memory. Last year, Professors Smith, Hitchcock, and Park, as they wound their way down the foot-hills of Mount Lebanon, came

in sight of a group of fifty Syrian students, standing in a line, singing in full chorus. They were the students of the new "College of Beirut," at Abieh, and they were singing *in Arabic* to the air of "Bethany." As the Professors drew nearer, they caught the sublime words:

"Nearer, my God, to Thee !
Nearer to Thee ;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."

"I am not much given to the weeping mood," said Prof. Hitchcock, when describing the thrilling scene, "but when we rode through the ranks of those Syrian youths, I confess that my eyes were a little *damp*." If it be permitted to the departed people of God to witness the transactions of earth, we may imagine with what rapture the glorified spirit of Sarah Flower Adams overheard her heart-song thus chanted in the land of sacred story.

As a literary production, the hymn is not faultless. Nor is it quite faultless in its adap-

tation to Christian worship, for the name of Jesus is not in any of its rich stanzas. But as a poetical version of Jacob's dream at Bethel, and as the devout aspiration of a soul chanting to God its triumphant *song in the night*, these lines have no peer in our modern hymnology. The authoress did not need to write another syllable than this one hymn of the wounded heart. This alone will carry the name of Sarah Adams into the minstrelsy of the millennium.

Has her hymn any equal of its kind in our time? Perhaps not; but two others stand very close to it. One of them is the Rev. Hugh Stowell's "Mercy-seat," beginning with the words:

"From every stormy wind that blows."

The other is the production of Rev. Henry F. Lyte, a native of Kelso, Scotland, afterwards the home of that grand singer of holy songs, Horatius Bonar. Mr. Lyte entered the English Episcopal Church, and became the rector of Brixham, in Southern England, that *poetic belt* sacred to the lyres of Watts, Steele, Toplady, and Wesley. There he wrote that

hymn (so often attributed to a "Miss Grant") commencing :

"Jesus, I my cross have taken."

His health failed, and, in 1847 he was obliged to sail for Nice, where he soon fell asleep in Jesus. The last Sabbath that he spent with his flock was the day of communion. Towards evening he handed to a friend a manuscript containing eight exquisite verses. They proved to be his own death-song of holy faith. Life's brief day was ebbing swiftly to its close. The lay he sang is the most pathetic in our modern hymnology. Let any reader open to it, and his eyes will fill with tears as he reads :

"Abide with me ! Fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide ;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me !

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day ;
Earth's joys grow dim—its glories pass away ;
Change and decay in all around I see ;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me !

"Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord—
Familiar, condescending, patient, free ;
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me !

“Come, not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind, and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea ;
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus 'bide with me.

“I need Thy presence every passing hour ;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power !
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be ?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me !

“I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless ;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness ;
Where is death's sting ? Where, grave, thy victory ?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me !

“Hold Thou thy cross before my closing eyes ;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies ;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows
flee ;
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me !”

But we must draw these reveries with the hymn-writers, and these counsels for the heart-life, to a close. As a labor of love have we written. We trust that the labor has not been in vain in the Lord. We close with those glorious lines of good old Bishop Ken, which have been sung oftener than any other four lines in the English language :

“Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow ;
Praise Him, all creatures here below ;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host ;
PRAISE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST !”

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