

Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

SKETCH OF A SERMON.

Text "Home."—1 Tim. v. 4.

No English word is sweeter to our families and house holds than the word "home." In some of the neighbouring countries it has scarcely a meaning, and nowhere is it so fully realised in all its lovely importance and nature as within the sea-girt isle of Great Britain. But there are several homes, which may be taken into our consideration. Look at the word

I. IN ITS RELATION TO OUR HOUSEHOLD RESIDENCE. The abode of our beloved parents; the place probably of our birth and early infantile associations. Where we dwell. The scene of domestic duties; joys, and endearments. Where, without selfish isolations, we are separated from others, and joined in one family compact. A Christian home will be distinguished by social order, harmony and love. Under Christian discipline it will be identified with an altar for spiritual service and a depository of sacred truth. Prayer, praise, and reading of the Divine oracles will characterise it. God will ever be acknowledged in our home engagements, and events.

Then there is
II. OUR SPIRITUAL HOME. Our moral as well as our physical nature needs a home. The Church is the Christian's home in this world. Here he dwells. Here he has holy fellowship. Here his Father and his Saviour and the Comforter abide. Here God manifests Himself, and prepares the home table, and supplies it with home blessings. This home is the choice of the Christian. He says this people, is my people and I will dwell where they dwell. So that his spiritual endearments and happiest associations are concentrated here. He prefers his Zion residence to his chief good, and seeks to dwell in it all the days of his life.

Then,
III. THERE IS THE MORTAL HOME FOR THE RESTING-PLACE OF HIS SLEEPING DUST. Wherever else we dwell, the day will come when the grave will be our house and abode. This is the house to which all living are destined. But like everything else of this earth it is only to be a transition residence, between death and the resurrection. It is the bodily resting-place of the pilgrim after the toils of his travels and journeys on the earth. This home has two very opposite aspects. In itself it is cold, dark, dreary, and silent. It is also connected with the penalty of human transgression. But in connection with our redemption, it has been hallowed by the personal visit of Jesus. It has been perfumed and made fragrant with His precious influence. And the door on the other side has been opened by the Saviour's resurrection so that there is a certain way out of the tomb as well as into it. And resurrection, promises surround it on every side. Its slumbering ones shall awake and come forth to life everlasting at the second appearing of the Lord Jesus.

And then
IV. THERE IS THE FINAL HOME OF HEAVEN. Our Father's house of many mansions to which Jesus has gone, and from which He will come. That where He is, His people may be also (John xiv. 1 Thes. iv. 18; 2 Cor. v. 6).

Now this is
1. The Great Home of all the saved family. Where the number will be beyond human calculation, of all ages, and peoples, and tongues (Rev. vii. 9).

2. It will be a celestial home in the heaven of heavens.

3. It will be a glorious home. It is represented as God's eternal kingdom and glory. All will be glorified, who dwell here, and wear the crowns of glory which the Lord of Glory hath given them.

4. It will be a perfect home, the home of perfected saints and of perfected services. No sin there.

5. It will be a joyous home. Absolutely and infinitely, and no pain, nor grief, nor tears.

It will be
6. The eternal home. No removal, no death, or change. But the everlasting residence of the redeemed family of Jesus.

Now the uses of this word "home." Let the Christian

1. Make his family home the abode of his God and Saviour. Seek God's abiding presence and grace, and the continued tokens of His goodness.

2. Let the Church as our spiritual home have our dearest love. May we seek its prosperity, and pray and strive for its comfort and joy.

3. May we piously seek to lie down in our sepulchral home in the faith and hope of the Gospel.

4. May our daily aspirations rise to the Holy Jerusalem home above:

"Jerusalem my happy home!
My soul still pants for thee.
Then shall my labors have an end,
When I thy joys shall see."

5. We invite all homeless wanderers to Jesus who has promised to save them and give them rest.

SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

When the Roman soldiers, at the sacking of Jerusalem, rushed into the temple to despoil it, they found no images of gold and silver like those they were familiar with in their heathen temples. They cried out jeeringly that "Jews were worshippers of the clouds."

So the devotion of Christ's people often seems to the men of this world. People whose judgment they respect in other matters, they consider slightly but harmlessly insane in matters of religion. The deep things of God they cannot comprehend, because "they are spiritually discerned."—It is as if a blind man should speak of the folly of those who believe in such a thing as sunshine.

St. Augustine mentions a heathen once saying to him, as he pointed to the sun, to his idol gods, and various objects about them, "Here are my gods, where are thine?" upbraiding him with worshipping a God he could not see.

St. Augustine answered, "I show you not my God, not because I have not one to show, but because you have not eyes to see him."

The joys of the Christian are incomprehensible to those who have not tasted them and yet they are the only real ones in the universe. To live by faith is a better portion, even for this life, than to dine with Dives every day.

"All this and Christ too!" said an aged saint, as she supped on a crust and a cup of cold water. Her face was aglow with love and gratitude, as she acknowledged all as coming from her Father's hand. Is not such a spirit better than a princely revenue?

It sweetens every mercy to know that God sends it. It takes the sting from every ill to feel that it is but for a moment; that soon all "sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

NET-MENDING.

The fishermen had a good take of mackerel the other evening at Brighton, but while getting in the net it became very badly entangled among the rocks, and was sadly rent. Before that net can be used again, busy fingers must see to its mending. Records of net-mending are as old as the days of "him who trod the sea," for he found the boats at the sea of Galilee empty, because the fishermen were gone out of them, and were mending their nets. The Lord's nets, the preachers of the word need mending too. Our mind grows jaded, and our spirit depressed, our heart beats with diminished vigour, and our eyes lose their brightness, if we continue, month after month, and year after year, without a rest. Mental work will as surely wear out the brain as friction will destroy the iron wheel. It is a bad policy to forego the regular vacation. There is no more saving

in it than there would be in the fisherman's continuing to fish with a rent net, because he could not afford time to sit down and mend it. The mind, like a field, ought to lie fallow every now and then; the crops will be the better for it. Congregations are most unwise who would grudge their pastor the time and the means to enjoy a thorough change, and season of relaxation. Oh, how reviving to wander in the woods, or lie down amid the pillared shade of the pine forests! The hum of bees is Elysium. Every bell of the heather silently rings out peace and goodwill. One drinks in new life as the lungs receive the sea breezes, or the pure currents which sweep the the glacier and the eternal snow. To watch the flying clouds, to mark the gathering tempest, to shelter beneath the rock, or in the cottor's hut, or even to brave out the rain—all this is balm to the soul. Headache, melancholy, nervousness, suspicion, and all other children of indigestion, fly before the staff or the alpenstock. Exercise is almost a means of grace; a walk with God is altogether so. Hope, courage, vivacity, zeal, resolve, all return on the wings of the wind when the right-hearted but weary labourer has had space to relieve the overwrought brain. Many a regret for unearnest sermons and unweeping prayers might never have been needed if our minds were more themselves, and less threadbare with ever-passing anxieties. How can we help losing the fish if our net is full of holes? We may be blamed for bad fishing, but who can help it if the net be largely rent, and yawns with gasches? Mental weariness is too often the cause of spiritual powerlessness. Deacons and wealthy stewards of the Lord's goods should generously aid their pastors, where such aid is needed, that they may for the sake of their churches and their work mend their nets; or, to use the Master's words, may "go into the desert and rest awhile." Brethren, everywhere, see ye to it.—*Sword & Trowel.*

Smoking is a useless, expensive, selfish, and filthy practice; it leads to drunkenness in many cases, and it is rare to find a drunkard who does not smoke. The man that smokes every day is never safe from the gutter; and he who deliberately runs this risk has not the courage to avoid any other sink of moral degradation were it not for the fear of being found out. As to the chicken-hearted plea, "I can't quit it," even when convinced that it is wrong and unhealthful, hear the testimony of James Parton, who was a slave to the practice for thirty years, and who heroically broke from his chains on the instant of his resolution to do so: "I have less headache, I enjoy exercise more, and step out much more vigorously. My room is cleaner, I think I am better tempered, as well as more cheerful and satisfied. I endure the inevitable ills of life with more fortitude, and look forward more hopefully to the coming years. It did not pay to smoke, but it decidedly pays to stop smoking."—*Dr. Hall.*

Rev. Donald McLeod, of Linlithgow, a brother of Dr. Norman McLeod, was lately inducted into Park Church, Glasgow, the wealthiest and most liberal congregation in the Established Church of Scotland. In replying to the toast for his health, Mr. McLeod humorously mentioned the following anecdote:—I confess that I had hoped to have been permitted to live and to die at Linlithgow. Indeed, my old beadle (who was at the park to-day, by the way) was very much of the same mind. I remember that when I first went to Linlithgow he took me into the graveyard, and showing me the graves of my predecessors, said, "There's where Dr. Bell lies, and there's where Dr. Roble lies, and there's where you will lie, if you are spared." (Laughter and applause.) He was indignant with me when I accepted the call. "Well," he said, "ye are the first minister that was ever lifted out o' Linlithgow except to the grave;" and I don't think he yet pardons me for having deprived him of that satisfaction. (Renewed laughter.)

We find the annexed in the *Independent*. It is rich:—The dispute on the psalm-singing has broken out in an unexpected quarter. Some of the "Scotch-Irish" convicts in an Irish prison have petitioned the chaplain not to use hymns in worship, but the *Psalms of David*, as the former are not inspired. The *Pall Mall Gazette* says that if the convicts had shown the same reverence for inspired writing before their incarceration as they now show, they would have saved themselves much trouble and the country much expense.

THE ROLL-CALL IN HEAVEN.

An incident is related by a chaplain who was in the army during one of our hardfought battles. The hospital tents had been filling up fast as the wounded men had been brought to the rear. Among the number was a young man mortally wounded, and not able to speak. It was near midnight and many a loved one from our homes lay sleeping on the battle-field—that sleeping that knows no waking until Jesus shall call for them.

The surgeons had been their rounds of duty, and for a moment all was quiet.—suddenly this young man, before speechless, calls, in a clear, distinct voice, "Here!" The surgeon hastened to his side, and asked what he wished. "Nothing," said he, "they are calling the roll in heaven, and I was answering to my name." He turned his head and was gone—gone to join the great army, whose uniform is washed white in the blood of the Lamb. Reader, in that great roll-call of eternity, your name will be heard: can you answer, "Here?" Are you one of the soldiers of Christ, the great Captain of Salvation?—*Christian at work.*

"CLOSED ON ACCOUNT OF DEATH."

Passing the streets of a city, you may often see upon a shop-door the words, "Closed on account of death!" So may it soon be written of you, on the house where you live, "Closed on account of death!" On your place of business, "Closed on account of death!" On your career of sinful pleasures, "Closed on account of death!" On your day of probation, "Closed on account of death!" On the door of mercy, as far as you are concerned,—oh, shall I say it?—"Closed on account of death!"—*Rev. Henry C. Fish.*

GOD COUNTS.

A brother and sister were playing in the dining-room, when their mother placed a basketful of cakes on the tea-table and went out. "How nice they look!" said the boy reaching to take one. His sister earnestly objected, and even drew back his hand, repeating that it was against their mother's direction. "She did not count," said he. "But perhaps God did," answered the sister. So he withdrew from the temptation, and sitting down, seemed to meditate. "You are right," replied he, looking at her with a cheerful, yet serious air; "God does count, for the Bible says the hairs of our head are all numbered."

MARKS OF LOVING CHRIST.

1. If we love a person, we like to think about him.
2. We like to hear about him.
3. We like to read about him.
4. We like to please him.
5. We like his friends.
6. We are jealous about his name and honor.
7. We like to talk to him.
8. We like to be always with him.

Daniel Webster penned the following beautiful sentiment:—"If we work upon marble, it will perish; if we work on brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work on immortal minds—if we imbue them with principles, with the fear of God and love of our fellow men—we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten for all eternity."