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Poetry.

His Own.

"They shall be as the stones of a crown."
Zech. ix. 16.

The Master came to our dwelling,
And left us a jewel one day.
To be cherished, and guarded, and polished,

Till it shone with luminous ray.
We knew it was all for his service,
But the gem in such beauty shone,
We almost forgot, as we watched it,
It was not indeed our own!

The burdens of life grew lighter,
The home was a holier place;
The clouds in our daily journey,
Left only a passing trace;
And we thought, what a blessed mission,
To keep, in our tenderest care,
The jewel the Master entrusted us,
So beautiful, bright, and fair!

We knew that the lengthening shadows
Would steal o'er our path some day,
But we trusted the light at the hearth-
stone to be our guide all the way.

Would shine with a quenchless ray!
Of this treasure from the skies,
Till our wearied hands were folded,
And the curtain veiled our eyes.

Then a darkness thick o'erwhelmed us,
We groped in its stifling breath,
For our hearts were torn, and bleeding,
By the mighty hand of Death.
The Master had taken His treasure,
The jewel that was His own,
And the added beauties of heaven
In its radiant lustre shone!

So now, with our upward yearnings,
Since the light of our home has fled,
We bear the burdens unshrinking,
And the daily pathway tread;
For heaven, with all its glory,
Is brighter and lovelier yet,
For amid "the stones of the crown"
Our beautiful jewel is set.

N. Y. Observer.

Religious.

Mr. Spurgeon at Benmore Castle,
Scotland.

AN OPEN-AIR SERMON ON THE BUILD-
ER AND THE SINGER.

On the evening of Sunday July 18th, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, who was a guest of Mr. James Duncan, of Benmore, Scotland, preached a second sermon to about 3,000 persons on the lawn in front of the castle, facing the River Clyde. Most of the worshippers had travelled from Dunoon, Kilmartin, Hunter's Quay, and other watering places. The roads towards Benmore were crowded for an hour before the services with all kinds of vehicles and persons on foot. Happily, though the sky was somewhat clouded, no rain fell, so that the vast congregation heard the great preacher under circumstances much more comfortable than if they had collected within a building. Though Mr. Spurgeon was sixty yards away from the most distant of his hearers, yet he was heard easily by them all. After praise and prayer, Mr. Spurgeon announced his text as Psalm lxxxix. 1, 2—"I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever, with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations."

If this psalm, said Mr. Spurgeon, were read at their leisure, they would find that the poet Ethan was in a very evil plight. He said that the cause of God was in a very sad condition, and he mourned over it; yet notwithstanding the burden that was within him, he said he would sing of the mercies of the Lord forever. It was quite true there was some comfort in complaining when we were very sad. It did ease us to shed a flood of tears, or to tell our sorrows to some one else. To dam the stream and let the waters gather became dangerous; but let them flow and the flood would disappear. Complaining was but a dubious remedy for grief. It were better far if we could sing our griefs away. If we could do so, we would glorify God in the highest, and we should give Him the ripest and sweetest fruit of our hearts, for there were no fruits of song so mellow to God as those which came from His servants when they were most under His afflictive hand. Let them try the same. Were their hearts sad all the days in which they lived. There was not

much cause for such sorrow, for the present days, with all their darkness, were better than any that went before. He heard a great deal about the good old times, and he questioned if things were ever better. When he looked at that great congregation he was reminded of the meetings of their Covenanting fathers upon the hills. Who was upon the mountain top in those times? It was the sentinel watching lest Claverhouse and his dragoons should come and break up the worship. He saw none present armed to defend the women and children against the cruel soldiery. Spiritually they were at peace, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ was known in every peasant cottage and fisherman's hut. They had, therefore, great reason to bless God that they lived in such good times.

There might be much to depress, and there would be always much to depress till Christ came; but they were so much nearer His coming, so that till the day broke and the shadow flew away the best occupation for His people was not to murmur but sing of the mercies of the Lord forever! What if they felt sick, and near to die? There was never a better time to sing and die, as the negro said, than when full of life. At the opening of his discourse he wished to urge every believer to try to be a singer of the praises of God. In the darkest hour their singing was the sweetest—the nightingale sang best at night time when all things were dark and dead—for it was in sorrow that faith rejoiced in the living God. It was often said that this world was a howling wilderness. So it was if they liked to howl, but if they took to singing they would find in another text that the wilderness and solitary place shall be made glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

The key-note of the discourse was, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever," and in speaking of that text he would turn it upside down, and make for his first head the second verse—namely the builder. This mercy shall be built up forever, and thy faithfulness shall be in the heavens. Then the second thing was the singer.

He first invited their attention to the Builder. The first of all builders was the Lord God Himself. He could see before Him ruins vast and crumbling, haunted by the owl and the night bird, and the beast of evil voice who made these ruins sin. He had cast down humanity from all its dignities, and laid it level with the ground. When our first parent sinned he fell, and what a fall was there. Thus they, all of them fell down, and sin triumphed over them, but the Builder came and surveyed the ruins and determined to build something better than what stood there before, even in its palmy days. The mighty Architect conceived a noble temple wherein He should dwell and men should dwell with Him.

Notice the materials with which He built, for every word of the text was full of meaning. The stone with which this great temple was being built was mercy. What a charming word it was? It was akin with the other word in sound—namely misery. It seemed to fit with misery, because mercy came and transformed misery and removed it. There was this mine of mercy, a quarry of mercy, such as might have been found on the mountain side from which Solomon cut out the stone to build the Temple of God. Huge and massive stones were there—in the very soul of God—and with these He would build up. If they could hear that word merely in hell it were hell no longer. It was because that word was sounded on earth that there was hope for us. Why, mercy was the last attribute of God that was displayed. He showed His power when He made the heavens and the earth; and His wisdom in creating every blade of grass; every tree, insect, bird, and beast; but mercy could not be shown till the Son had come. There must be offence deserving judgment before mercy had space to display herself. So he called mercy God's Benjamin,

the Son of His right hand, the attribute in which He most delighted. When we received mercy, we beheld the whole character of God revealed—God in the person of His Son, who was incarnate; mercy set forth not in miniature, but in full length portrait. Long ere these hills were made, and before the day-star knew its place, or the planets ran their rounds, God's mercy had struck hands with Christ, and made a covenant of love by which Christ pledged himself to redeem, and the eternal Father pledged Himself to give Him His redeemed. That covenant of mercy was, as it were, the corner-stone. It was God that redeemed us with His own blood. Think not that this was a misuse of the word when he spoke of the blood of God, for the words of the apostle were "Feed the flock of God which He has purchased with His own blood." On that day when He gave His Son He gave Himself. Whenever a broken heart cried for mercy and called to be bound up, whenever the penitent cried, "Father, forgive," then mercy held her court, and all her courtiers were dressed in silken garments to receive the soul that came to God. They had read of Matthew Henry's description of the prodigal son. It was very beautiful. He said that when the prodigal was yet a great way off his father saw him—there were the eyes of mercy; he ran—there were the legs of mercy; he fell upon his neck—there were the arms of mercy; he kissed him—there were the lips of mercy; he spoke to him—there were the words of mercy; he said, "Bring forth the best robe and put it upon him"—there were the deeds of mercy. In a word, when the soul came back to God, the Great Father was all mercy, and nothing else but mercy.

The text said that mercy should be built. The idea of mercy being like a building showed it was real. Bubbles and shadows could not be built. His mercy was as real as the stone that built yonder edifices. Nor did God build up with rubbish. His mercy was not built up to flit before our eyes like the fabric of a vision, but built up to last like some strong castle or mighty fort. There was also in the idea of mercy being a building a plan of the architecture. A load of stone was not a house. This mercy would be built as the result of the master-thoughts of God, the deep and Divine conceptions of the Heavenly Father. God would put His shoulder to it. The Eternal would exert His full strength to save His people, and Christ Himself would thus, while He performed the labour, faint and sweat great drops of blood, when He left it saying, "It is finished," He would die in the deed.

When built, the house was made for habitation. God would live within its walls. Emeralds, jaspers, and diamonds, and all manner of precious stones could not make up such a house as this would form. Its lowest foundation to its highest pinnacle would be of the fair crystal of the mercy of God. The idea charmed his soul, that whereas we would build a house, or, if generous, build a hospital, God would build a house of mercy for Himself unto which poor souls might come. God made a covenant. Boys and girls learned the doctrine of the covenant in the Shorter Catechism with great difficulty, but although it was a plague to them, they should look upon that document as a great treasury. The covenant with Adam had an "if" in it. "If they keep my commandments." Now there came another covenant—a covenant of grace—which had an "if" in it once—"if Christ would die." Christ had died, so that there was now no "if" in it. The Scriptures said, "I will give them a new heart, and they shall walk in My statutes."

It had been said that mercy would be not only built, but built up. What did this mean? It means that there would be more mercy, and always more mercy—course after course, from the foundation stone to the top. First He redeemed, then He justified, next He sanctified, then He glorified, and what

next could not be told; but the edifice would continue to rise and rise higher. He had met some people who were so good that they thought they did not want mercy, and who if they did sin it was only a speck or two. He had heard people coming up so high to the top of the ladder that they came down on the other side. For his own part he could never get above mercy. An old ploughman had said to him, "If you get an inch above the ground you will be too high." The best position for the sinner was to be low and plead for mercy. If we ever got so near the gates of heaven as to be just about to enter, if mercy did not help us in the last step, we should die outside of heaven. There was a fine picture of mercy in the Book of Revelation. It was of the city four square, with the height as large as the breadth. No old people should be discouraged in the matter of conversion. He had seen persons of seventy and eighty years converted, so that he had come to the conclusion that as many were brought to Christ at one age as at another, considering, however, that there were always fewer old people in the world than young.

The second thing in the text was the Singer. Ethan said he would sing for ever; nobody should stop him. He would sing in life and death, and sing when he rose from the tomb. The reason was because he saw the building rising for ever. The preacher wished that some of them would take up the heavenly trade of singing. This singing in the text was resolute, personal singing. Some people liked to praise God by machinery. If they thought it was acceptable let them go ahead, but he would praise God with his mouth and make known His faithfulness to all generations. There was no doubt great sweetness obtained by heaving bellows, chords, and strains, but it was the heart that made the music which God accepted. Then Ethan's singing was constant. Some people sang when all went well with them, and often not much of that either, but still better was to sing when things were ill. There was a man who sang with a cracked voice near the pulpit of Mr. Rowland Hill. He said to the man, "Hold your tongue;" when he received in reply, "It comes from my heart." "Then," said Rowland Hill, "sing away, brother; do not let me stop you." So to all the preacher said, sing all day and night long, and let their latest breath be expended in the praise of God. Praise was very pleasant, and was not hard work. It was recreation. He was on a railway the other day, when a young man said to him that the Sabbath should be spent in recreation. He replied, "Young man, you have got hold of the truth. I wish everybody would spend the Sabbath in recreation—that is in being recreated and made anew in Christ Jesus."

It was profitable to sing God's praise; it lifted the heart up. His father had a servant who was always singing, whether washing or cooking, and he asked her the reason. She replied—"It gets quit of bad thoughts." So it was a grand thing to sing; but not to break the drums of people's ears. Besides, singing was suitable, because we were always receiving God's mercy. God Himself sings. When God made the heavens and earth He did not sing; He looked at His work and said it was very good. The Angels sang, because there was something for them to sing about, but when God came to save His people He sang. "He shall rejoice over them with singing;" let them bring out their tuning forks and strike up a song that night. Let there be no more murmuring, but let them sing the mercy of the Lord shall be built up for ever.

Then as to the subject of the text—"I will sing of the mercy of the Lord for ever"—that was a capital subject. Any other subject was very soon exhausted, but this was new every morning and evening. If the heart was right they might sing now as a young man, and sing, when they were leaning upon the staff of age. There was a stimulus for singing a song of deliverance. When

his friend Dr. Fletcher one was passing the Old Bailey he saw two boys making themselves wheels upon the pavement as if in a delirium of delight. He asked why they were jumping about in that way. They replied that if he had been three months within the stone walls of the prison he would jump too. John Bunyan said that when he had found Christ he wanted, as it were, to tell the crowd about it. Yes, it did seem as if all nature were in sympathy when we were in that happy state.

Mr. Spurgeon closed by noticing the audience mentioned in text—namely, all generations. Ethan believed that his immortal spirit, after quitting its tabernacle of clay, would rise to heaven and there make known God's faithfulness. Mr. Spurgeon believed that he would preach in heaven, and that everyone would preach—all would desire to tell what God had done for them. But we could not praise God if we did not begin on earth. This was the place for the rehearsals. When we went into a piano warehouse we could do nothing with the instruments; we must wait till they were all tuned, then we would hear the music. On earth we were tuning our harps. We could not expect to see perfection in our fellow men. We would never be fit to be played upon in heaven till we were tuned. Would we bring our disorderly harps to the great Music Tuner and say, "Lord Jesus, tune us now?" He would place His blessed fingers upon our harp-strings, lay His dear pierced hand among the chords, and then make us perfect. Then in heaven we should be played upon for ever by the Divine hand, to the praise of His glory and His grace. All that remained was to live and sing, and "Wait till the angels come to bear me to my King."

A liberal collection was afterwards received for the Stockwell Orphanage.

The Wheel Horse.

There is a wheel horse in every family; some one who takes the load on all occasions. It may be the older daughter, possibly the father, but generally it is the mother. Extra company, sickness, give her a heavy increase of the burden she is always carrying. Even summer vacations bring less rest and recreation to her than to others of the family. The city house must be put in order to leave; the clothing for herself and the children which a country sojourn demands seems never to be finished; and the excursions and pic-nics which delight the heart of the young people are not wholly a delight to the "provider." I once heard a husband say, "My wife takes her sewing-machine into the country and has a good time doing up the fall sewing." At the time I did not fully appreciate the enormity of the thing; but it has rankled in my memory, and appears to me now an outrage. How would it be for the merchant to take his books into the country with him to go over his accounts for a little amusement? Suppose the minister writes up a few extra sermons, and the teacher carries a Hebrew grammar and perfects himself in language, ready for the opening of school in the fall?

Woman's work is never done. She would never have it done. Ministering to father and mother, cherishing her husband, nourishing and training her children—no true woman wants to see her work done. But because it is never done she needs resting times.

Every night the heavy truck is turned up, the wheel horse is put up into the stable, and labor and care are dismissed till the morrow. The hills of the household van cannot be turned up at night, and the tired house-mother cannot go into a quiet still repose. She goes to sleep to-night feeling the pressure of to-morrow. She must have had "an eye."

There is never any time that seems convenient for the mother of little children to leave home even for a day; but with a little kindly help from her husband, and a little resolution in herself, she may go, and be so much the better for it that the benefit will overflow from