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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

"There Shall be no Night"

BY ALCYONA JOHNSON.

How fair, O far-off country,
Must be thy hills of green;
How fertile all thy vallies,
That sheltered lie between.
Forever filled with brightness,
With never-fading light,
Thy beauties who can picture,
O land where comes no night?

What hand can paint the splendor
That all around thee gleams?
The richness of thy meadows,
The clearness of thy streams?
What pen portray the glory
That fills thy cities bright,
Forever and forever,
O land that knows no night?

No moon-light falls upon thee,
No stars their vigils keep;
Thou hast no need of night-time,
Her rest or silence deep.
No shadows dim thy splendor,
Thy God is rest and light,
And He has said, O country,
That "there shall be no night."
—Watchman.

Perseverance.

One step and then another,
And the longest walk is ended;
One stitch and then another,
And the largest rent is mended;
One brick upon another,
And the highest wall is made;
One flake upon another,
And the deepest snow is laid.

So the little coral-workers,
By their slow and constant motion,
Have built those pretty islands
In the distant dark-blue ocean;
And the noblest undertakings
Man's wisest hath conceived,
By oft-repeated effort
Have been patiently achieved.

Then, do not look disheartened
On the work you have to do,
And say that such a mighty task
You never can get through;
But just endeavor day by day
Another point to gain,
And soon the mountain which you feared
Will prove to be a plain.

"Rome was not builded in a day,"
The ancient proverb teaches,
And Nature by her trees and flowers
The same sweet sermon preaches.
Think not of far-off duties,
But of duties which are near;
And, having once begun to work,
Resolve to persevere.

Religious.

A Custom of Christ's.

REV. T. VINCENT TYMMS.

In an incidental way Luke throws a gleam of light on the obscurest period of our Lord's life. From the age of thirteen, when He disputed with doctors in the Temple to the time of His showing unto Israel, He lived in retirement at Nazareth: hidden from the world in that narrow valley through which no highway passed. He spent some seventeen years of self-controlled subjection to His parents and to the ancient laws of Israel. We infer that as a carpenter's son He learned and laboured at the trade of His reputed father. God had said, "Six days shall thou work," and until the Heavenly Father's business demanded all His "heart soul and strength," He would be diligent in lowlier toil. But the seventh day was set apart for rest, and ever since the Captivity it had been a custom in Israel to assemble on the Sabbath for instruction out of the law and prayer. To this custom Luke intimates Jesus conformed. "And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up; and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day." Hitherto He had been a silent listener, but on this day He "stood up to read," and Luke's reference to His former habit is no doubt due to the profound impression produced by His return as a famous teacher to the synagogue where for so many Sabbaths He had sat, almost unnoticed among the worshippers.

Many thoughts arise as to the feelings with which his old companions and teachers would view Jesus in His newly-displayed power, and especially His claim to be the Messiah of whom the prophets had written. The chief thing however, which deserves attention is the patience and humility revealed in the long-continued custom of our Lord. We know something of the crude teachings and cold formal usages of the ancient synagogue, and we know something of the wisdom and spiritual fervour which dwelt in Christ. From His thirteenth year He had been able to astonish the most learned rabbis in Jerusalem, and yet He sat week after week in that benighted village synagogue, following its rigid order of service, worshipping His Father in spirit and in truth. We marvel that He could endure those vain repetitions, those pedantic discussions of the letter of Scripture which so distorted its meaning and quenched its spirit, and above all those carnal and selfish interpretations of Messianic predictions which he knew to be so false. It must have been no small burden to His heart—a trial of patient submission to His Father's will worthy to be numbered among His chief temptations. Had He consulted His own pleasure and His personal facility for communion, He would have wandered along those wild hills which surrounded His home. An ordinary reformer would have scornfully broken away from such a dull and irritating routine. Feeling only a little of Christ's ardour for spirit and truth, most men would have poured ridicule on the scribes and elders. Even darkly guessing at what Christ knew perfectly, they would have hastened to expose the ignorance of their instructors, and formed a spirit of disaffection among the youths of Nazareth. Having in their souls the vague sense of a Divine call to break away from a death-like monotony of literalism, they would have fumed and fretted with impatience to shake off every ancient custom and conventional usage for which they felt no reverence and confessed no personal need.

We cannot rightly measure the strength and frequency with which the temptation thus to act must have assailed Christ, but we can appreciate in part the wisdom and glory of the self-restraint which conquered it. Our Lord knew that to awaken contempt for the old worship would in no way prepare men's hearts for a devout adoption of the new. To induce a spirit of scorn even for those dull-souled, letter-bound teachers would not conduce to future veneration when, with full authority from heaven, His own teaching might begin. Until a new faith was ready, and the worship of God had been opened to every willing heart, it was better for those Nazarenes to own their need of guidance and to be reminded, however feebly of the great commandments and promises of God. In the least inspiring routine of the synagogue there was some reminder of those grand old masters in Israel who set examples of faithfulness to duty. There was a confession of loyalty to the "I AM," who had brought their fathers out of Egypt, and to Moses, by whom the law was delivered. Poor and unassuming as were too many of the prayers, there was at least a bowing down and kneeling before the Lord their Maker. The Messiah they were taught to look for was little better than a temporal monarch, but still they were taught to look for a messenger and deliverer from God, and there was some partial deliverance from bondage to what was mean and servile in their condition in the hopes of emancipation so enkindled. To have broken with customs which served such ends before better could be substituted would have been wise only in the eyes of a raw enthusiast. The truly wise course was to abstain from finding fault with the old until the new had been introduced. Every Sabbath-day, therefore, Christ went into the synagogue that, as son of Man, He might unite with men in publicly honouring God, and that as the Son of God He might foster reverence and

faith towards His Father, awaiting the season when He could disclose new knowledge, and inbreathe a new spirit of life which without an interval of religious anarchy, might work out new forms and customs in harmony with new convictions, new duties, and new possibilities of communion with God.

This column may, perhaps, meet the eyes of some who are tempted to forsake the assemblies of the Lord's day. The dry and wearisome discourse of the scribes of Nazareth can scarcely find a counterpart in any Christian congregation, nor can any modern listener be compared with Him who endured them of old. But there are many who reasonably or unreasonably complain that the Sunday services within their reach are far from quickening and enlightening to their spirits. They learn nothing new and are inspired to no fresh fervour by what they hear. By the seashore, or on the hills, resting under the shadows of trees, or walking the wide moor, they seem to find a nearer access to the Crator, and a more refreshing sense of His love, than while following prayers and addresses from men who fail to win their sympathies or command their respect. Those of us who have so constantly to lead the thoughts of congregations are well aware how little reason there is for our fellowmen to hear so many of our words. We could most of us, I suppose, name authors whose books read at home in quiet we should be prepared to commend as a more worthy entertainment for the mind than our discourses. Let all this be conceded, but the question still remains, whether Christ's custom has not in it the force of an example all who desire to honour God will do well to follow.

I prefer to leave this question to the impartial consideration of those to whom alone it is addressed, but one out of many thoughts suggested by Christ's custom must find a brief expression. It is a custom our Lord has maintained ever since His Ascension and the assembling of men in His name. "Where-soever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," said Christ, and He demonstrated His presence by the signs and wonders of Pentecost. Not only in those congregations which have replaced the ancient synagogue, is He to be found, but He visits these in a very special sense to fulfil all those predictions of Isaiah which He read out of the Book at Nazareth. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

STRANGE NOISES IN NEW HOUSES.

—In entering a new house of the modern order it takes time to get acquainted with all its pipes for water and gas and sewage, and all its arrangements for working bells and bolts and ventilators. One is apt to be alarmed at the flow of water in a direction which is perfectly correct, and to be in trepidation because gas will not turn off where it was never meant to do so. Many of the fears and tremblings of new beginners in the divine life spring from a similar cause. Everything is new to them; emotions and desires which are perfectly natural to their young life are quite surprising to them, and though calculated to give confidence to the instructed, they arouse suspicions in new beginners. They don't know the working of spiritual apparatus yet, and are confused and confounded by the simple, inward movements. They had better not be in too great a hurry to condemn themselves, but wait till they are more at home in the heavenly life, which is all plain to him that understandeth and safe to him that trusteth in the Lord.—*Spurgeon.*

The value of everything in life depends on its power to lead us to God by the shortest road.—*F. W. Faber.*

For the Christian Messenger. Luthardt's Apologetical Discourses.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE
"CHRISTIAN MESSENGER," BY PROF. D. M.
WELTON.

Fifth Discourse.

MAN.—IV.

4. According to the Bible view, man is a unit composed of body and soul. The body pertains essentially to his complete state: he is a spiritual-corporeal being. That we are a corporeal being, is a fact of immediate experience; that we have a soul in us, the spiritual power of our life, is a fact of immediate consciousness. The Scriptures regard the body as the first, as the basis. And it is still ever so with every man's beginning. As such a corporeal being man belongs to the material world, as its conclusion. His body is the recapitulation of material nature. Its various departments repeat themselves here on a higher plane, and unite in a perfect living organism. It is characteristic of the Biblical view, not indeed to place the being of man in his body, but still to regard the body as an essential constituent of man,—a constituent necessary to his complete make up. Thus the Biblical view stands midway between that view which makes the body everything, so that life loses itself after death in a gloomy shade-existence, as with Homer (*Odys. xi. 488*), hence the moralizing that is heard in Ecclesiastes: let us eat and drink to-day for to-morrow we die, and that other spiritualistic view of Plato, which is that the body is a prison and a fetter, from which released to be removed—and sooner the better—to a purely spiritual existence, man finds felicity, the immediate consequence of which is the stoical wisdom of suicide. According to the Biblical view, the body is essential to man's complete condition and happiness here and hereafter. As the disturbance of the bodily functions or the loosening of the tie that unites body and soul is, in certain circumstances, somewhat diseaseful and a disturbance of man's true well-being, so we might perhaps say, that the complete sundering of both and the reduction to a purely spiritual existence in death is, in a certain sense, the highest disease of man, and that he will only become truly sound again, when the true harmony of body and soul is restored.

But the body is not merely essential to man, but of fundamental importance. The entire intellectual life roots itself in this ground and acts through this organ of the bodily organism. All the activity of the mind exists not in itself but only in and through the body. Its utterances are conditioned by this. The body is the necessary instrument of the mind. From this it follows that every disturbance of the body exercises a disturbing influence upon the mind's manner of expression. What we designate mental debility, because the mind's manner of expression seems disturbed, is at bottom a bodily debility. It is the derangement of the bodily instrument which makes the intellectual life seem deranged. When the strings of the instrument are out of tune a discordant execution of the music is the result. The piece of music remains the same, and the musician can play right well, but the instrument is out of tune. So also are we to understand the mental obtuseness of old age. The bodily organism fails to perform its office. The mind, consequently, has a very broken manifestation. It retires within, in its own hidden world, and only little is observed of it through the body. It has not itself become less, it has not shrivelled. All failure is on the side of operating through and exhibiting itself in the bodily organism.

Such is the importance of the body according to the Biblical view of the case. That view is not spiritualistic. It acknowledges the truth of the materialistic method of considering the subject.

5. But not less indeed does the Bible speak of a soul in man, which is an independent spiritual principle in him,

not merely the function of the bodily organs, and in which man's kinship to God and his connexion with God stand. The simplest observation is confirmatory of this. For man presents for our consideration two different sides: the one is the outer and sensuous which may be seen; the other is the inner world of the feelings and thoughts which transcends the realm of sense and recognizes the connexion of man with a supersensuous world of mind, whose centre is God. The ground that the soul exists is a necessary pre-supposition of all religion, of all morality also, yea, of all the higher spiritual contemplation of human life. If man has no soul, then there is wanting to the life of humanity a soul—the soul of poetry, the soul of all high feeling, the soul of communion of heart, of high moral consciousness and endeavor, and finally of life for God and in God. The world becomes a field strewn with human corpses. But we have an immediate certain consciousness of the fact that we have a soul, that is, an independent principle of spiritual life, which indeed is inwardly interwoven with the body, but not on this account one with it or a mere manifestation of it.

We are told, however, that it is a deception, that all is only life of matter. The lively discussion is perhaps still remembered, which was carried on for a number of years over this question by Rudolph Wagner, who attacked the materialistic view, and by Karl Vogt who replied, and which has stirred a good many minds and busied a good many pens till the present time.

Let us tarry a moment to consider this psychological materialism!

The idea of the soul is a universal one. We find it among all nations, and at every stage of civilization. Whence does it spring, if it is not the expression of a corresponding reality, and thus a corresponding truth. There is nothing of which we could have a greater certainty than of the soul. As certain as we are that there is a God, so certain are we of the existence of the soul. In vain do we attempt to deny it. My doubt and my denial directly prove the might of thought within me, and thus the spiritual principle which thinks. As man has always attempted to deny the existence of God, whom yet he could not help knowing, so also of the soul. Its denial has been made the starting-point of a complete materialistic view of the world.

The old world was acquainted with this species of thought, and it was renewed at the end of the last century. Its roots lie in sensualism, that is, in that philosophical contemplation which grounds all truth on the perception of the senses. It proceeds on the supposition that only the sensuous is reality and truth, and thus that only sensuous perception is the source of knowledge of the truth. Ludwig Feuerbach has given this thought a consistent philosophical form. The representatives of materialism in the sphere of Natural Science have only repeated Feuerbach's statements; in the writings of these scholars we find scarcely a single thought which Feuerbach had not expressed before. The general principle of this system of thought is the denial of all that is supersensuous, as Virchow, for example, describes it (*Archives of Pathological Study 2, page 9*): "The physicist knows only matter and the properties of matter; what is beyond he names the transcendental, and the transcendental (that is, the supersensuous) he considers an aberration of the human mind." From this it is further inferred: All accordingly that we name spirit is only an activity of matter, the so-called soul is only a collective name for a sum of nerve-processes, "a dust-heap," as one physiologist has called it, "which scatters asunder even as it has been swept together," at bottom material and mortal, like the organ whose function it is. Thought is a product of the brain, for the condition of the brain is determinative of the condition of thought. The negro has a less refined brain, and consequently less intelligence; in the child the brain is still less developed, hence