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Sunday Reading.

What is the Best?

We do not know! Thou knowest! As children in the dark We lift our hearts, our hands to thee, And find a rest, an ark; We trust thee in our ignorance, O Wise, O Good, O Strong; And though the shades encompass us We find thee with our song.

We think we know. Thou knowest. We dream and hope and plan, And make mistakes, and sigh to know How frail and weak is man: But thou, from the beginning, Canst see the end of all, We rest upon thy knowledge, Father, on whom we call.

We do not know the best for us, And so we strive in vain ; And for our sowing often reap A harvest dire of pain; We fail and fall, and then at last We cry to thee for aid, And only rest when thou dost say, "Tis I, be not afraid."

O God, we would be wiser yet, And only pray : "Choose Thou." Lead as one leads the little ones, We are thy children now; And day by day, and step by step, We need thy guiding hand; Oh, let us cling to thee, until We reach the safe home-land.

And then let days be fair or dark, The journey short or long, Our hearts will rest in comfort, And we will sing our song; Since thou dost know, our ignorance And weakness matter not, We trust in thy great love, O God And thou dost choose our lot. Marianne Farningham.

Mealtime in the Cornfields.

FROM "FARM SERMONS" BY C. SPURGEON.

of And Boaz said unto her, at mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers : and he reached her patched corn, and she did was sufficed, and left."-Ruth.

- We are going to the cornfields, not so much to glean, as to rest with the reapers and the gleaners, when under some wide-spreading oak they sit down to take refreshment. We hope some timid gleaner will accept our invitation to come and eat with us, and will have confidence enough to dip her morsel in lid. He, with his own skillful hand, the vinegar. May all of us have courage to least to the full on our own account, and kindness enough to carry home a portion to our needy friends at

-THAT GOD'S REAPERS HAVE THEIR

Those who work for God will find master. He cares for oxen, and he has commanded Israel. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." Much more doth he care for his servants who serve "He hath given meat unto them that fear him; he will ever be mindful his covenant." The reapers in Jesus' fields shall not only receive a to-day walk with him as the elect did of and gave to Naomi. So it shall be blessed reward at the last, but they shall old, and commune with him as his apos- even with you, poor tremblers, who have plenteous comforts by the way-He is pleased to pay his servants twice; first in the labor itself, and a second fashion. time in the labor's sweet results. He gives them such joy and consolation in the service of their Master that it is a sweet employ, and they cry, "We delight to do thy will, O Lord." Heaven is made up of serving God day and night, and a foretaste of heaven is enjoyed in serving God on earth with earnest perseverance.

God has ordained certain mealtimes for his reapers; and he has appointed that one of these shall be when they come together so listen to the Word preached. If God be with the ministers they act as the disciples did of old, for they received the loaves and the fishes from the Lord Jesus, and then they handed them to the people. We, of ourselves, cannot feed one soul, much less thousands; but when the Lord is with us we can keep as good a table as Solomon himself, with all his fine flour and fat oxen, and roebucks, and fallowdeer. When the Lord blesses the provisions of His house, no matter how many thousands there may be, all his poor, shall be filled with bread. I hope, beloved, you know what it is to sit under the shadow of the Word with great

unto your taste. Where the doctrines Christ revealing himself to us. of grace are boldly and plainly delivered to you in connection with the other truths of revelation; where Jesus Christ upon his cross is always lifted SUFFICED, AND LEFT." So it shall be up; where the work of the Spirit is with every Ruth. Sooner or later not forgotten; where the glorious purpose of the Father is never despised, every mourner a singer. There may there is sure to be rich provision for the be a space of deep conviction, and a

narrative-BOAZ REACHED HER THE cides for the Lord, and cries, " If I eat." Where did she sit? Note well Jesus. I will not play the fool any that she "sat beside the reapers." She longer with my buts and ifs, but since did not feel that she was one of them, he bids me believe that he died for me, but she "sat beside" them. Just like some of you who do not come to the Lord's Supper, but sit and look on. You are sitting "beside the reapers." You fear that you are not the people of God; still you love them, and therefore sit beside them. If there is a good thing to be had, and you cannot get it, you will sit as near as you can to those

earnestly, affectionately, sincerely; but the prospects of what he is yet to do. I know very well that at my poor bidding none will come till the Spirit of us have had deep draughts of love ; draws. No trembling heart will accept we have thought that we could take in the King himself comes near, and our best, we have had to leave a vast reaches the parched corn to each chosen remainder. We have sat down with a are afraid to think that it can be true that infinite has been granted us an expectancy, and that expectation and no doubt you have felt the same

Having done this, the Saviour does more; he sheds abroad the love of God in your heart. The love of Christ is like sweet perfume in a box. Now he who put the perfume in the box is the only joy yet; and these we are obliged to person that knows how to take off the opens the secret blessing, and sheds Lord say, "I have yet many things to abroad the love of God in the soul.

reaches the parched corn with his own hand, when he gives us close communion Our first point of remark is this with himself. Do not think that this is a dream; I tell you there is such a thing as speaking with Christ to-day. our feet have not climbed-virgin As certainly as I can talk with my snows of the mountain of God untroddearest friend, or find solace in the den by the foot of man. There is yet company of my beloved wife so surely a be yond, and there will be for ever. may I speak with Jesus, and find intense delight in the company of Immanuel. It is not a fiction. We It is very wrong, I believe, at feasts to do not worship a far-off Saviour; he is carry any thing home with you; but a God nigh at hand. His word is in she was not under any such regulation, our mouth and in our heart, and we do for that which was left she took home tles did on earth; not after the flesh, it is true, but after a real and spiritual

Yet once more let me add, the Lord Jesus is pleased to reach the parched corn, in the best sense, when the Spirit gives us the infallible witness within, that we are "born of God." A man may know that he is a Christian beyond question. Philip de Morny, who lived in the time of Prince Henry of Navarre, was wont to say that the Holy Spirit had made his own salvation to him as clear a point as a problem demonstrated in Euclid. You know with what mathematical precision the scholar of geometry solves a problem or proves a proposition, and with as absolute a precision, as certainly as twice two are four, we may "know that we have passed from death unto life." The sun in the heavens is not more clear to the eye than his present salvation to an assured believer; such a man could as soon doubt his own existence as suspect | charm of your life, and the joy of your his possession of eternal life.

Now let the prayer be breathed by Ruth, who is trembling yonder. Lord, reach me the parched corn! "Show me a token for good." "Deal bountifully with thy servant." me, we will run after thee." send thy love into my heart."

"Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, With all thy quickening powers, Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love, And that shall kindle ours."

delight, and find the fruit thereof sweet | There is no getting at Christ except by

And now the last point. After Boaz had reached the parched corn we are told that "SHE DID EAT, AND WAS every penitent shall become a believer period of much hesitation; but there Here is a very sweet point in the shall come a season when the soul de-PARCHED CORN. She did "come and perish, I perish. I will go as I am to I will believe it, and will trust his cross for my salvation." Whenever you shall be privileged to do this, you shall be "satisfied." "She did eat and was sufficed. Your head shall be satisfied with the precious truth which Christ reveals; your heart shall be confent with Jesus, as the altogether lovely object of affection; your hope shall be who do get it. "She sat beside the filled, for whom have you in heaven but Christ? Your desire shall be satiated And while she was sitting there, what for what can even your desire hunger happened? Did she stretch forth her for more, than " to know Christ, and to hand and take the food herself? No, be found in him." You shall find it is written, "HE reached her the Jesus charm your conscience, till it is at parched corn." Ah! that is it. None perfect peace; he shall content your but the Lord of the harvest can hand judgment, till you know the certainty out the choicest refreshments of spirit- of his teachings; he shall supply your ual minds. I give the invitation in my memory with recollections of what he Master's name, and I hope I give it did, and gratify your imagination with

" She was sufficed, and left." Some divine refreshing at my hand; unless all of Christ, but when we have done guest, none will receive it. How does ravenous appetite at the table of the he do this? By his gracious Spirit, he Lord's love, and said, " Nothing but first of all inspires your faith. You the infinite can ever satisfy me, and that such a sinner as you can ever be I have felt that I am such a great sin-"accepted in the Beloved"; he breathes ner that nothing short of an infinite upon you, and your faint hope becomes atonement could wash my sin away, buds and blossoms into an appropriating but we have had our sin removed, and faith, which says, "Yes, my beloved is found merit enough and to spare in mine, and his desire is turned toward Jesus; we have had our hunger relieved, and found a redundance remaining for others who are in a similar case There are certain sweet things in the word of God which you and I have not enjoyed yet, and which we cannot en leave for a while, till we are better prepared to receive them. Did not our say unto you, but ye cannot bear them But Jesus does more than this. He now?" There is a special knowledge to which we have not attained, a place of intimate fellowship with Christ which we have not yet occupied. There are heights of communion which as yet

> A verse or two further on we are told what Ruth did with her leavings. for yourselves; you shall be alowed to eat, and when you are quite sufficed you shall have courage to beir away a portion to others who are hingering at home. I am always please to find the young believer beginning a pocket something for others. When pu hear a sermon you think, " My poormother cannot get out to-day; how I wish she could have been here, for that entence would have comforted her. If forget everything else, I will tell he that." Cultivate an unselfish spirit. Sek to love as you have been loved. Immember that "the law and the prohets" are fulfilled in this, to love th Lord your God with all your heart, an your neighbor as yourself. How en you love your neighbour as yourselff you do not love his soul? You hav loved your own soul; through grac you have been led to lay hold on esus love your neighbour's soul, anchever be satisfied till you see him in 1e enjoyment of those things which se the spirit. Take home your gleaning for those you love who can not glen for

I do not know how to give yu an invitation to Christ more pleantly. "Come and welcome to Jesus." pray my Lord and Master to reach a hidful of parched corn of comfort to you you are a trembling sinner, and I als beg him to make you eat till you areully

For the Christian Messenger. Fundamental Truths of Christianity. LUTHARDT'S APOLOGETICAL DIS-COURSES.

Eighth Discourse, translated from the German by Prof. D. M. Welton. THE HISTORY OF REVELATION. HEATHENISM AND JUDAISM.

The stoical philosophy was pantheistic and represented the world as God; and the Epicurean philosophy, especially influential among the cultivated classes, recognized the existence of the gods at first, but as not concerning themselves with human affairs, and finally banished them from the faith and thoughts of men. The poet Lucretius undertook to set aside faith in the gods by a natural explanation of religion. But man must have some reli gion. And though he persuades himself to the contrary a hundred times, he is yet not able to satisfy himself. The necessary consequence of this unbelief was a widespread power of superstition, which Plutarch has painted in living colors for us. Magician-priests passed through the kingdom, and the more the ceremonies savored of superstition, the more approbation they received. This was the end of the history of the ancient spirit in the sphere of religion. And still it hereby served the future. For out of the general decay of the old that individual need asserted itself which, freed from the powers of the old world, sought for itself the satisfaction which religion and philosophy denied it, but which only revelation could

The morality of the old world took a similar course. For morality and religion are interdependently related to each other. Morality stands and falls with religion. Many a noble and earnest form, which extorts from us a high moral regard, comes before us in the history of the old world. What the moral spirit of antiquity could accomplish, we see realized in the heroes of Leonidas or in the noble men of Athens and Rome, whose names history has preserved to us. Especially is old Rome distinguished above many other peoples and states, by a great moral earnestness, which we may point to as the fruit of the religious spirit which reigned there. But it is everywhere the morality of the citizen, not the morality of the man, much less the morality of the renewed heart, which we perceive. The ancient morality had its limitation here. When this limitation gave way, the moral force which depended on it declined. In vain philosophy sought from its own resources to produce an ethics which should prove to be efficacious. yielded only beautiful theories, not a profound virtue, and it never became a universal power. And even its theories are to be regarded with the gravest

It is true, philosophy has produced particular characters which all times will behold with admiration Socrates and Plato tower head and shoulders above the mass of their contemporaries. One might say: God has wished to show in limitation of human nature should also at the same time be revealed. Socrates has often been compared with Christ. But there is a heaven-wide distinction between them. Socrates is intellectually and morally great, but his greatness is not that of humanity, but only of his nation and state. His fellowcitizens are his brethren, the others do not exist for him. Only Athens is a worthy world to him. It is with him as with antiquity generally, his virtue is a political governmental virtue. obey the laws of the state is to him the sum of all duty. In other respects he does not go beyond the limits of his time: the virtue of man is to overcome his friend with well-doing, his enemy with evil-doing. He gathered young men around him in order to lead them in the way of wisdom, and Alcibiades man in Socrates' company. But he lifted them not above the moral limitabut I would with my whole heat cry, tions of his nation. He kept himself indeed free from the sins of sensuality,

also to recommend it. And when he sopher must not entertain anger, must heard the beauty of the courtesan not be passionately excited, &c., not, Theodotia praised, he went with his however, because he is divinely conpupils to her, and entered into conver- strained to be still and full of friendly sation with her, in which he attempted | mildness and peace, but because he to show her in what she could best win thinks himself too high to have his the men. We see here nothing of that divine rest disturbed by anything. He ment for sinners and announces to them | able to allow himself to be placed in deed with crime, but he saw a remedy therefor in better knowledge and not in the renewal of the heart. His life was blameless according to the Grecian standard, and he earnestly sought the best thing for his nation; but the soul that his philosophical conversation with his pupils might not be hindered by their crying and lamentation-how can we place it by the side of the end of Jesus Christ! "What an illusion it is," exclaims Rousseau, "when one attempts to compare the son of Sophroniskus with the son of Mary !

In moral nobility Plato vies with Socrates. A breath as from eternity sweeps through his philosophy. He has been called "divine" and sayings of a high, supernatural origin have been attributed to him. But he stands restricted also by the intellectual limitations of his nation. According to him the moral problem is: to introduce into this world the eternal ideas of the true, the good and the beautiful. But he himself virtually declares the realization of these ideas in life an impossibility. Nature opposes an insuperable barrier to this. In the realm of spirit the divine principle rules, but matter offers an opposing element. The contradiction between the idea and the reality remains unsolved, an unrealizable ideal. And what kind of an ideal is it? Plato also goes beyond the state. Humanity united with God is not his thought-he knows nothing of this-but the state of the reason, the state of philosophers. This, however, is the most unnatural that can be imagined: a state which, with its community of goods and women and its abstract reign of law, destroys all personal freedom and property and rests upon the most pronounced arrogance : only the ruling classes represent the reason, the remaining ranks represent the lower faculties of the soul down to the instincts and passions. There is a lack throughout of the true worth of man, the conception of free human personality: on this account Plato demands for his ideal state the exposure of weak children, the community of women, approves of slavery-as also Aristotle: tor the slave is only a tool and not en_ dowed with reason,-tolerates pederasty, &c. There is here nowhere the idea of humanity. And yet Augustine confesses: " No one has come so near to us as the Platonic philosophy!" When this is done in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?

Socrates and Plato did not prevent the fall of their nation, and could not breathe into it a new moral spirit. these men how far the innate nobility Neither could the philosophy of a later that things have sadly changed in many of human nature could go through its time do so. For they all sought the a homestead, and the world has the own energy. But herewith the moral help of the moral power of man himself mastery where once there was a church and wished to make him his own saviour. But no moral theory could renew man, which knew no deeper sources of moral life than those which originate in

The two philosophical schools, which contended for the supremacy at the conclusion of the old world, are the Stoical and Epicurean. The severest ethics are the Stoical. But what is true of ancient ethics generally, that they are grounded in self-esteem and are supported at bottom by the spirit of pride, is true in the highest degree of the ethics of the Stoics. Nowhere is the spirit of haughty arrogance and cold resignation so much at home as here. If Christian morality is rooted in humility, Stoigal morality is rooted in pride. Humility is a Christian conception only. The lowliness, which anticould say that he scorned to be another quity also knew, has been ennobled only by Christianity and transformed into humility. The Stoical philosopher indeed avenges no insult, but only because he cannot be insulted; he thinks voted; but he could find it compatible offence. It is not the sense of placabi- Some fear it may lead to a genwith his vocation for the preservation lity, but it is the spirit of a haughty eral European war, but croakers are and safety of youth, not only to permit contempt of others, from which this always on duty. War is an evil any

their intercourse with prostitutes, but principle proceeds. The Stoical philoholy compassion which proclaims atone- thinks this life altogether too contemptthe way of salvation. He bittled in- disquietude by it. Neither shall the evil that is in the world call forth his zeal to war against it. Evil as well as good pertains to the entire course of the world, and the wicked also play their role as well as the others; the philosopher looks upon the play with calm inof true morality, love to God and his difference. And does it become too neighbor, he knew nothing of. And confused for him he takes his own life; also his end-when he heartlessly sent for this world is not worthy of him-so his wife and children away, in order he withdraws from it. Thus did the younger Cato on the fall of the Roman republic, thus did many in the time of the Emperors, in order to free themselves from despotism or get rid of the burden of a heavy crushing illness. It is only an external resemblance which this morality bears to that which is Christian. What is true in it has only become such in Christianity.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. From England.

BY REV. JOHN BROWN. The hay crops, as to quantity, have been the best for many years, but as to quality the worst. There are vast quantities rendered well nigh useless through the incessant bad weather, and the prospects for the corn harvest are at present very unfavorable, and unless a favorable change come soon, the farmers, and others as a consequence, will suffer. The last six or seven bad harvests have told disastrously against the agricultural interests of this country. I trust the Lord will yet be favorable to this land, and give us fruitful seasons. Christian farmers have need to be men of strong faith in God in order to see that all this is for their good. Happy is the farmer that can say like Habbakuk : " Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I shall rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." But a man needs more than common faith to

Speaking of farmers, &c., reminds me of a new volume of sermons by that unwearying husbandman C. H. Spurgeon, entitled "Farm Sermons." In the preface he says: "While the earth abideth, with her seed time and harvest, some men will be tillers of the soil. The day may come when there will be no more squires, but there will be sure to be farmers. Whether there be lords they shall cease; or titles they shall vanish away; but farmers shall remain.

. . , True religion in former generations found many of her sturdiest defenders among the farmers of England and Scotland. It is to be feared in the house. Oh that the good old times might be repeated in grange and farm and lodge, till every village shall have in it a sanctified people who shall glorify the Lord." The sermons number nineteen, each with an illustration. Here are a few of the titles : "The Sluggard's Farm, The Broken Fence, In the Hayfield, The Loaded Waggon, Mealtime in the Cornfields, Frost and Thaw, Threshing, The Ploughman &c." The price is three and sixpence. As to quality, the name of the author is a sufficient guarantee for that. It will be an excellent book for N. S. farmers to read when shut in by the "beautiful snow" from attending church, or any other time, as to that. My advice to such and all other readers of the Messenger is this : if you don't want a book full of good things, rich in plain, oldfashioned gospel truths; if you don't want a feast of fat things, of new wine from royal stores, don't get "Farm