

Sunday Reading.

A Worker's Prayer.

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of thy tone;
As thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children, lost and lone.

Oh, lead me, Lord, that I may lead
The wandering and the wavering feet;
Oh, feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

Oh, strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the rock and strong in thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

Oh, teach me, Lord, that I may teach
The precious things thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

Oh, give thine own sweet rest to me
That I may speak with soothing power
A word in season, as from thee
To weary ones in needful hour.

Oh, fill me with thy fullness, Lord,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, thy praise to show.

Oh, use me, Lord; use even me,
Just as thou wilt, and when and where;
Until thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, thy joy, thy glory share.
—Francis Ridley Havergal.

The Upward Look.

BY JOSEPH PARKER, D. D., OF LONDON, ENGLAND.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went, beheld two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? etc. Acts 1: 10-14.

The action of the disciples was undoubtedly natural. There are some attitudes for which we cannot account, and for which we think we need not account, because they express the uppermost emotion of the soul. Who knows how long the disciples would have looked upward steadfastly into heaven? Many of us now look up in that direction simply because we have seen our loved one ascend toward the fount of day. We think we are the better for looking; and so we are. No man can surely be the worse for looking upward. This is God's old medication for wounded hearts and bruised lives. Said He to ancient Israel, "Lift up thine eyes and behold"; and then He called attention to all the hosts of heaven, and asked in effect, if that shining host had no meaning in it—whether it did not symbolize and attest in the most emphatic and gracious way, the power and wisdom of one unseparated.

We cannot allow the best part of our life to be taken up without looking in the direction which it took in its flight. No man, clothed in what apparel he may be, can chidingly refer to our attitude. The heart will tell its own tale; under some circumstances the heart will have its own way; it is useless to tell the heart that no good can come of this or that—the heart finds good in unexpected places, and draws honey from flowers that have not been suspected of bearing honey by any naturalist or herbalist. There is a time when sorrow becomes sweetness; such is the mystery and such the graciousness of life, that loss turns itself into a sort of gain.

We think, when we look after the captive, that perhaps we may see the captor. Surely that explains all: by what threadlets is he lifted up? By what secret mechanism, by what subtle attraction, by what spiritual affinity—what is this magnetism which draws him up to a larger place? So we are kept on the alert, expecting that one day we will see the hand that steals the objects of our love and homage. How wonderfully that hand conceals itself! It is beside us, spreads our table, makes our bed in our affliction, but leaves no finger-marks that our rude eyes of flesh can see.

Who were the two men in white apparel? There are so many anonymous influences in life—there has always been a man in this Holy Book that would not give up his name—he would be called prophet, angel, messenger, even voice, but the secret of his name he would not disclose.

That man is still in our life; he is the great presence in our life if we did but know it well. "Clothed in white apparel." Why this whiteness? Why this scorn of color? Why this infinite

and ineffable simplicity? What are these arrayed in white? The angel in the tomb was clothed in white; the men that spake to Jesus on the mountain were clothed in white. It is not scorn of color, for white is all colors in one—emblem of light, purity—symbol of divinity.

What said the two men? "Ye men of Galilee"—that term, once a term of reproach, now becomes, through their utterance of it, the beginning of one of the highest social honors. Names that have been spat upon by the world's contempt and scorn shall be lifted up into symbols of glory and honor.

"Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" It was not a rebuke, it was a call from enfeebling reverie; but it was not a rebuke of the attitude which was then most natural. But our attitudes do puzzle the angels and the white-clad ones that come from heaven to look into our ways of doing things. When the poor, sorrow-stricken women went to the grave, the young men clothed in white said: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" This "why" has stirred us from the very beginning of human history. Collect from the Bible all the questions that begin with the word "why," and you will be surprised at their number and variety. How we do perplex the better world! Why? Gentle word! sympathetic speech for angels to make to broken-hearted ones!

Why look at the empty chair? Why look at the little dresses that can never more be worn by the one for whom they were made?

We are to take the middle line. Men must live on averages. You cannot be living at the extreme point of melancholy, or the extreme point of ecstasy. Life is not a dazzling romance; life is not one continual funeral or wedding-feast. It is made up of ordinary duties.

Is contemplation then forbidden in the Church? No, reverie is; monastic seclusion is. The soul must have its time of looking into graves and looking into skies and looking widely about itself for, in such looking, is the beginning of strength.

"This same Jesus, etc." Pause long at the words, "This same Jesus." Not some other Christ. In some way God will preserve the identity of Christ, and we shall see that same Jesus that came to save the world. We must see Him so as to be able to say at once, without indication from any other quarter, "That is Christ and none other—"

"In His feet and hands are wound prints, And His side."

The Reasonableness of the Gospel.

BY BISHOP FELLOWS, REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CHICAGO.

Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, etc.—1 Cor. i: 22-24.

Evil exists, is the result of sin, which is a want of affection for God, and its cure is by Christ crucified. God is limited in His mode of cure by the capacities and endowments of human nature.

I. The Gospel cannot be a system of force. It must be one of motive. The Gospel appeals to every motive that actuates the human heart.

II. Love cannot be transferred at will from one object to another. Whatever God does for the salvation of man, He must do it Himself—an archangel cannot do it. God must become man to secure man's affection.

III. Hate in the human heart can only be conquered and overcome by manifested self-denying love. God's first work is to teach men their sinfulness and need of salvation. If man admits his guilt, and acknowledges that Christ out of love died to save him, and yet fails to give Him his confidence and love, he must be lost by the necessities of his own being. Without faith it is impossible to please God. There is no other avenue to the human heart than that which God has tried.

IV. The duties and prohibitions of the Gospel are demanded by our natures. Social scientists admit this. Prayer, praise, worship, are as necessary to soul-growth as food, exercise and rest for bodily powers.

V. The rewards and penalties of the Gospel are in accordance with nature—with reason, with these principles upon which we act in daily life. This wisdom of God is perfectly adapted to man's wants, and meets man's necessities.

Misquoted Scriptures.

BY TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D.

I. In Job xiii. 15, we read, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." A modern writer on hermeneutics speaks of this as a proposition logically absurd, yet sublime when considered as a cry of the heart. That it is not absurd, the experience of many a martyr shows. The real objection is that the words do not fairly represent the original. The received version rests upon the marginal correction of the Hebrew text (*Keri*), adopted by Jerome after several ancient versions, and followed by the French, Italian, and other modern translations (not by the German or the Dutch). But even in this case the sense fairly rendered is:

Behold He will slay me; I will wait for Him: Yet I will maintain my ways before Him.

That is: I have reason to fear the worst; my sufferings will doubtless end in death; nevertheless, I will patiently await the issue, conscious that, even in that event, I can abundantly vindicate my integrity. But, in the judgment of most modern critics, there is no good reason for departing from the ordinary Hebrew text (*Chathib*) of the original. In that case the rendering is substantially:

Behold, He will slay me; I have no hope: Yet will I maintain, etc.

That is: I despair of life; there is no more hope in the future; still I have an inward conviction of my innocence, and expect fully to establish it. And this agrees exactly with the tenor of the context: It is a pity to lose such a triumphant challenge of faith as the words in the authorized version express—one that has comforted many a saint in prospect of the grave, and been the theme of innumerable hymns exulting over the grave; but fidelity to truth compels us to follow the exact sense of the Scripture, even though we have to sacrifice household words endeared by the most sacred and touching associations.

II. The statement in Ps. xvi. 10, "For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," has given rise to many erroneous views. Literally rendered, it is: "For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol." Sheol is simply the Hebrew word put in English letters; and it is so put because no one word in our language expresses its meaning, which is, the place of the dead, the abode of departed spirits—into which good men, like Joseph, and bad men, like Shimei, together go. The word never means hell, i. e., the place of final and endless punishment. The devout Psalmist, celebrating the goodness of God to His chosen, and the excellence of their heritage, insists upon its perpetuity. Even death shall not interrupt its enjoyment.

Hence, in the next verse, he says, "Thou wilt show me the path of life"—a life that will be fullness of joy in the Divine presence. Of course, David did not expect to be exempt from the death of the body. But all the bitterness of death should be removed. There would be no long and gloomy imprisonment in Sheol. His present life of communion with God would continue, uninterrupted by the stroke of dissolution. This was David's conviction; and that he was led to express it in language which remarkably foretold the actual experience of the Saviour, while it was only a poetic exhibition of his own, is due to the one informing Spirit who guided the writers of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek.

III. "God is not in all his thoughts," is the rendering of the second member of Psalm x. 4, in the common version. But there is scarce any dissent among interpreters from the opinion that the margin gives a more correct as well as a more spirited expression of the original, viz.:

All his thoughts are, There is no God.

The word translated thoughts means not only opinions, but purposes and plans. The meaning, therefore, is that the language of the wicked man's life is, There is no God. Practical atheism is the outcome of his whole course. And, alas! it is too true that where one man is willing to deny in words the Divine existence, there is a multitude whose daily habits make that denial in the loudest tones.

He who speaks much of his sorrows to men, easily comes to speak of them too little to God.—Tholuck.

In the Wrong Place.

Wherever a Christian cannot carry a clear conscience and his Master's smile he is in the wrong place. I do not care how strong the inducement to go there, or attractive the bribe which the tempter offers, if conscience rebels—if conscience whispers a doubt as to the rightfulness of going—then stay away. If we err at all, let it be on the safe side. But a Christian never does 'err' when he obeys his conscience and honestly aims to please his Master. The real error and backsliding commonly begin when we begin to hush the memories of conscience by saying—"Oh, I will go just for this once; or, 'Everybody else goes; why may not I?' or, 'If I do go it won't be noticed.' These are the smooth excuses which the devil always has ready for a Christian professor when he is strongly tempted toward the ball room, or the sensual entertainment, or the convivial frolic of some kind. The place where he would not be expected to be is the very place where he ought not to be. Let the 'lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God' gather to the carouse, or to the play, or the wine feast, if they will; but Christ's smiles never beam upon one of his followers in such places. The eye that looked upon Peter until Peter shrunk away to hide his bitter tears, often falls upon the inconsistent Christian who is spending an evening in bad company.

The Traveller's Psalm.

There is one of the Psalms which is called 'The Traveller's Psalm.' When you are going to take a long journey—when you go by the railway, or by the sea, I should advise you to think of 'The Traveller's Psalm.' What Psalm do you think it is? Can you tell me which Psalm would do for 'The Traveller's Psalm'? It is the 121st. Let us look at it. It is a beautiful psalm, all about taking a journey. When anybody is leaving home, and going to take a journey, I should advise, at family prayers, before they went away in the morning, the reading of the 121st Psalm; or, if any friends of yours are going to take a journey, give them, or read to them yourself, this Psalm, "The Lord is thy Keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." Always read 'The Traveller's Psalm' before you take a journey.—Rev. J. Vaughn, in "Day of Days."

One Step at a Time.

George Manning had almost decided to become a Christian. One doubt held him back. "How can I know," he said to himself, "that even if I do begin a religious life, I shall continue faithful and finally reach heaven?" He wanted to see the whole way there before taking the first step. While in this state of indecision and unhappiness, he one evening sought the house of his favorite professor—for he was a college student at the time—and they talked for several hours upon the all-absorbing topic. But the conversation ended without dispelling his fears or bringing him any nearer the point of decision.

When he was about to go home, the professor accompanied him to the door, and observing how dark the night was prepared a lantern, and handing it to his friend, said, "George, this little light will not show you the whole way to your room, but only one step at a time; but take that step, and you will reach your home in safety." It proved the word in season. As George walked securely along the path, brightened by the little lantern, the truth flashed through his mind, dispelling the last shadow of doubt. "Why can I not trust my heavenly Father," he said to himself, "even if I can't see my way clear to the end, if he gives me light to take one step? I will trust him; I do trust him." He could hardly wait till he reached his room to fall on his knees and thank God for the peace and joy that filled his soul. Early the next morning, the professor was summoned to the door. There he found George

Manning. With beaming face he looked up to his teacher, and, as he handed him the lantern, said significantly: "Doctor, your little lamp lighted me all the way home last night."

Dr. Ryland and his Hymn.

Dr. Ryland was the author of that beautiful hymn, which he wrote under singular circumstances:—

"O Lord, I would delight in thee,
And one thy care depend;
To thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only friend."

He was at Bristol Academy engaged to be married to a young lady, whom he fondly loved. She was taken with a dangerous sickness, from which it was feared she would not recover. Filled with anguish, he called to inquire about her, and was told by the servant if he could call in half an hour he would hear the opinion of the doctors, who were then holding consultation in the case. He retired to an empty house, then, under despair sat down on a large stone, and taking a piece of slate wrote thereon that beautiful hymn which has been the comfort of thousands of the tired children of God:—

"When all created streams are dried,
Thy fullness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in the name."

"No good in creatures can be found
But may be found in thee;
I must have all things, and abound,
While God is God to me."

He called, and received a favorable report. The lady recovered, they were married, and lived most happily together for seven years, when she was removed by death. Thus out of trial came a song, even as out of the lion came honey.—Sword and Trowel.

Carry your Cross.

There is a large class of invalids who, perhaps, having no acute suffering to endure, are, from one cause or another, shrinking from any active work in the Lord's vineyard. To them wearisome days and night are appointed. Yet "your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things"; but when you have learned your lesson the trial will be removed. What is the lesson? Is it not a deeper feeling of entire weakness, and of the vanity of all things here below? You have also opportunities of learning trust, and patience, and weakness, and of experiencing for yourself the tender compassion of "the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Then, too, God's instruments require much chiselling. You are to be made meet for the Master's use. We never hear of any one much used for God who did not have some special waiting time first. "Blessed are they that wait for Him."

SABBATH REST.—I wish all tired people did but know the infinite rest there is in fencing off the six days from the seventh. In anchoring the business ships of your daily life as the Saturday draws to its close, leaving them to ride peacefully upon the flow or the ebb until Monday morning comes again. O, the delight, the lull of feeling: "No need to settle this question, no need to think of this piece of work, for a whole long, sweet thirty-six hours." Why do you take Sunday papers, to keep your nerves astir with business on the Lord's own day of rest? Why do you add up and consult and consider in the pauses of the sermon, or make opportunity for a business-whisper in the porch, and on the way home? Why do you let the perplexities of servants, of means, of plans, ruffle your spirits on the one great day of freedom? Do you not know that even a debtor may walk abroad on Sunday with no fear of a prison, and house-doors may stand open and no sheriff can enter? Shall it be worse with your mind than with your body?

"Sleep, sleep to-day, tormenting cares,
Of earth and folly born."
It is the high court of the Prince of Peace.—Tired Church Members.

Life is made up, not of great sacrifices and duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness and small obligations, given habitually, are what win and preserve the heart and secure comfort.—Sir Humphrey Davy.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The 'undenominational' (!) British American Book and Tract Society.

Dear Editor,—

In your issue of 3rd inst. the Secretary of the British American Book and Tract Society, in an appropriate business manner, reports munificent donations from the Counties of Kings and Annapolis. We may well conclude that a large proportion of the total of \$372.80 is contributed by Baptists. No doubt they each think they have done wisely in contributing for the support of that Society, but I would respectfully ask them to pause and consider some facts which may help them and all Baptists to decide wisely as to their duty in the future. The British American Book and Tract Society professes to be undenominational and unsectarian in its work. I am disposed to take it for granted that it is not the particular intention of those who conduct that Society to violate this rule, but we will just look at things as they are. I have just bought at their Depository a copy of a doctrinal work entitled "The Way of Life," by Dr. Hoige, which, during the last fourteen years, has been sold, no doubt, by hundreds. This book is published by the Religious Tract Society of London, which is a Union Society, on the same basis as is the British American Book and Tract Society. Twenty pages of this book is occupied by a chapter on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is much in this that every Baptist must repudiate as contrary to the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures.

1. On page 245 of this book the British American Book and Tract Society proclaim to all, "The Bible teaches us that the sacraments are the signs of spiritual blessings." Page 247 says: "We should greatly err, however, if we supposed they were merely signs. We are taught that they are seals; that they were appointed by Christ to certify to believers their interest in the blessings of the covenant of grace. Among men a seal is used for the purpose of authenticity and confirmation." Again, on page 248: "That these ordinances were really intended to confirm the promises of God is plain from the fact that Paul says that circumcision was the seal of the righteousness of faith; that is, it was designed to assure Abraham and his descendants that God would regard and treat as righteous all who believed His words. And that something similar is intended by the ordinance of baptism may be inferred from the manner in which the Apostle speaks of the spiritual import of circumcision, and then of baptism, in Col. ii. 10, 12." Again, on page 249 they say: "The gospel is represented under the form of a covenant. It is so called by Christ Himself." "The sacraments are the seals of this covenant." And on page 263: "Again, as the sacraments are the seals of the covenant of grace, to reject these seals is to reject the covenant itself."

2. On page 251 the British American Book and Tract Society asks, concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper: "What good do they do? What benefits are we authorized to expect from them? The answer commonly given by the great body of evangelical Christians is, that the sacraments are efficacious means of grace, not merely exhibiting to, but actually conferring upon those who worthily receive them, the benefits which they represent." "The sacraments have not only the influence due to the lively exhibition of truth, but as means of God's appointment, and attended by His Spirit, they become efficacious signs of grace, communicating what they signify."

We do not expect Dr. Hodge to write anything but his own convictions; but that these Pedobaptist convictions should be published and sold by these Union Societies, and they all the while so loudly proclaiming that their Societies are non-denominational, and free from sectarian controversy, every fair-minded man will emphatically object to. Obviously no man living knows better than Dr. Hodge, better than the officers of these Union Societies, that the very essence of the Pedobaptist controversy is wrapped up in these im-