

Sunday Reading.

The Blessed Home.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Josh. xxiv. 15.

Oh, blest the house wh'er befall, Where Jesus Christ is All in All; Yea, if He were not dwelling there, How poor and dark and void it were!

Oh, blest that home were faith ye find, And all within have set their mind To trust their God and serve Him still, And do in all His holy will.

Blest such a house,—it prospers well; In peace and joy the parents dwell, And in their children's lot is shown How richly God can bless His own.

Then, there will I and mine to-day A solemn covenant make, and say, Though all the world forsake Thy Word, "I and my house will serve the Lord."

All Things are Yours.

BY REV. RICHARD CORDLEY, D. D.

Years ago I clipped from a paper a scrap which I have lost, but which read something as follows: 'I live in a small cottage, which cost me little expense or care. I have a small garden, which is easily cultivated. My wardrobe I carry mostly upon my back, and have no fear of thieves or moths or mildew. Yet my estate extends as far as the eye can see. It is true, I have no title deeds to this estate, but this relieves me of all anxiety about counter-claims and lawsuits. My neighbors are working for me, but never come to me for their wages. Close to my cottage a gentleman of taste has laid out a beautiful park, with trees and drives and grottoes and fountains, and flowers and birds of every kind and clime. He takes the entire care of it, and never troubles me even so much as to ask me a question about it. I am delighted with the way he keeps it, and am only sorry that he seems so burdened with care that he cannot enjoy it himself. As I meet him from time to time, he always goes with his head bowed, and his eyes on the ground, as if too much burdened to enjoy anything. But I am as happy as a king.'

So he went on enumerating his wealth, until he seemed richer than an Eastern prince. At first this all seemed a mere piece of pleasantries, but one soon felt that there was a great truth in it. The best things in the world are not bought and sold, nor conveyed by title deed. They do not always get the most out of the world who own the most of it. The world belongs most to those who enjoy it most. A title deed conveys very little of itself. The man without a title may get more out of a landscape or garden than he who owns them.

The best things in the world are free to all men. There can be no monopoly of them. Air and sky, the light of the sun, and the light of the stars, the beauty of the landscape, and the joy of living, are subject to no man's control. No man may wall them in, and charge an admission at the gate. A man may lock his gallery of paintings, but he cannot lock up the stars of a summer night. You and I have looked on landscapes which no painter could ever copy; on arrangements of shrubs and plants and flowers, such as no brush could ever represent; on minglings of earth and sky such as no art could ever attain. The brightest and sweetest birds are never found in cages. Men may own the soil, but there is a great deal which ownership does not give. The owner of the soil may be dead to the best things on it. Whittier, with his 'tent on the beach,' gathered more from field and wood, and rock and ocean, than all who owned the globe or sailed the sea. Though he owned not a foot of the soil, he could look around on farm and beech, on sea and ship, and say: 'These are all mine for the only purpose I care for them, for enjoyment and inspiration.' We may think the poor boy in the mountains had little chance for culture. He lives in a rude house, among rough companions. He has few books, inferior teachers, and no models. But he is not so destitute as we think. He can spare the galleries of art where he has the earth spread out before him by day, and the heavens above him by night. He can spare the flowers of the

garden, when the mountains are in bloom. He may have neither art nor poetry, but he has that which inspires them both. So it has happened often that the best artists have come from where there is least art, and the best writers from where there were fewest books, and the best scholars from where there were fewest schools. While these missed a great many things, such as books and pictures and teachers, the best things of nature were all open to them, as they are to all men.

Paul did not exaggerate at all when he said: 'All things are yours; 'the world,' with its treasures of beauty and wisdom and knowledge; 'life,' with its hopes and aspirations, its lessons and its discipline; 'things present,' with their influence and teachings; 'things to come,' with their possibilities and joys. All these things were at their service for the best of purposes, their own development and culture. He charges his readers not to be narrow when their privileges are so many and so broad; not to impoverish themselves when they may be so rich. 'Do not glory in men.' Do not confine yourselves to Paul or Apollon or Cephas. When all three are your servants for Jesus' sake, you have a right to the teachings of them all. Do not confine yourselves to Paul or Peter, when the whole 'noble company of the apostles' is yours. Exalt no man to exclusive leadership, when the goodly fellowship of the prophets is yours. And not they alone, but you, may draw wisdom and comfort and help from all things. They are all at your service if you are only willing to have them serve you.

And each one's share in this inheritance shall be just as large as he shall choose to make it. As he opens his heart to receive, so shall it come to him. It is not for lack of beauty that a man sees none; it is not for lack of light that a man's soul is in darkness. Light and beauty and grace are all waiting for the soul to open to them. God himself is waiting to be gracious. When you commit a seed to the ground, all the powers of earth and air are waiting to foster its growth, and multiply its fruit. When you commit yourself to the grace of God, all the powers of the divine Omnipotence are waiting to foster your purpose, and enlarge its results.

O child of God! O Glory's heir! How rich a lot is thine. A hand Almighty to defend. An ear for every call, An honored life a peaceful end, And heaven to crown it all.

—The Advance.

The Newspaper.

In an editorial on 'Subtle Influence,' the Richmond Advocate remarks: Our attention was called recently to this subject by a cultivated religious man, who said: 'I have been reading a certain newspaper for two years, and though I like the great ability of the paper, yet with all its power and general high tone of morality, it has an undertone of cynicism and sceptical tendency, which is beginning to affect me in a secret and indirect way. Only in the last month have I become aware how its manner of looking at things, and especially spiritual things, had stolen unconsciously into my methods of thinking, and I mean to quit' its cost me what self-denial it may.' Now, this man was in advanced life, a Christian of half a century, an educated and thoughtful person, but, nevertheless, he finds one of the ablest newspapers of the country leaving a slow deposit of evil in his mind. It is a common and uncommon case. As to the effect it is of frequent occurrence. Men are undermined in their holy beliefs; men are poisoned in the very fountain of their life-currents; men are demoralized, and, we had almost said, men are debauched in their best and noblest sentiments by such insidious means, without notice or hint from consciousness of what is going on within their souls. This is an everyday matter. The uncommon feature in the case under notice is the detection of the harm at work, and the resolution of a Christian man not to risk the influence of such a newspaper any longer.

Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much nor dare too much.

The Death of Children.

BY J. R. MILLER, D. D.

There are few unbroken families. There may be years through which the circle remains whole, but sooner or later there is a vacant place.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended, But one dead lamb is there! There is no fireside, however defended, But has one vacant chair."

We press our children to our bosom to-day, and love builds up in our hearts a thousand brilliant hopes for them; then, to-morrow, death comes, and they lie silent and still amid the flowers. Or we watch over them, and see them grow up into nobleness and beauty, when, just as our dreams and hopes seem about to be realized, the fatal touch is upon them, and they are taken away.

One comfort in the time of such bereavement is that it is God's will. Long ago this was the rock on which a godly father leaned when death had come suddenly and taken all: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." When we know that God truly is our father, and that his love is eternal and unchangeable, this confidence should give us great peace even in the sorest bereavement.

In the Pitti Palace, at Florence, there are two pictures which hang side by side. One represents a stormy sea with its wild waves, and black clouds and fierce lightnings flashing across the sky. In the waters a human face is seen, wearing an expression of the utmost agony and despair. The other picture also represents a sea, tossed by as fierce a storm, with as dark clouds; but out of the midst of the waves a rock rises, against which the waters dash in vain. In a cleft of the rock are some tufts of grass and green herbage, with sweet flowers, and amid these a dove is seen sitting on her nest, quiet and undisturbed by the wild fury of the storm. The first picture fitly represents the sorrow of the world when all is helpless and despairing; and the other, the sorrow of the Christian, no less severe, but in which he is kept in perfect peace, because he nestles in the bosom of God's unchanging love.

Another of the great comforts when a child is taken away is the truth of the immortal life. In the autumn days the birds leave our chill northern clime, and we hear their songs no more; but the birds are not dead. In the warmer clime of the far south they live, and amid lovely flowers, and fragrant foliage, and luscious fruits, they continue to sing as joyously as they sang with us in the happiest summer days. So our children leave us, and we miss their sweet faces and prattling voices; but they have only gone to the summer land of heaven. There, in the midst of the glory of the Lord, they dwell, shedding their tender grace on other hearts. We all believe this, but most of us believe it in such a way as to get but little comfort from it. The bringing into our hearts of the truth of immortality, in all its richness and fullness of meaning, would take away all bitterness from our sorrow when our little ones leave us.

"In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion, By guardian angels led, Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution, She lives whom we call dead."

"Day after day we think what she is doing In those bright realms of air; Year after year, her tender steps pursuing, Behold her grown more fair."

One of the chief elements of the sorrow when children die is the sore disappointment. Careers of great usefulness have been marked out for them in the fields of hope, and without even entering upon them they are gone. They seem to have lived in vain, to have died without accomplishing any work in this world. So it appears until we think more deeply of it, and then we see that they have not been in this world in vain, though their stay was so brief. They have not done what we planned for them to do, but they have accomplished the part, in God's great plan which he had marked out for them.

Here is a little babe; it lies now in the coffin with a face beautiful as an angel's smile. It lived but a few days or weeks. It merely opened its eyes upon the earth, and then, as if too pure

for this world of sin, closed them again, and went back to God. Did you say that it lived in vain, that it performed no work? Do you know how many blessings it brought down from heaven to that home, when it came like a messenger, from the fragrant garden of God, shook its robes, and then fled away again? It only crept into the mother's bosom for a brief season, and was gone; but her heart will be warmer ever afterward, her life richer and deeper, her spirit gentler and sweeter. No one can tell what holy work a babe performs that stays only an hour in this world. It does not live in vain. It leaves touches of beauty on other souls which shall never fade out. It may accomplish more in that one short hour, leave greater blessings behind than do others who live long, full years. It may change the eternal destiny of one or more souls. Many a child dying leads an unsaved parent to the sacred feet of Christ. Certain it is that no true parent is ever just the same in character after clasping his own child in his arms. To have felt the warmth and thrill of a new love, even for a few moments, though the object loved be withdrawn, leaves a permanent result in the life.

God takes away your children, and in faith you surrender them to him to see them no more in this world; but you cannot give back all that they have brought to you. In your heart new springs of love were opened by their coming, and you cannot give these back. Death cannot take out of your life the new experiences which you had, in pressing them to your heart, or in loving them and caring for them through the sunny weeks. You are better, stronger, richer, in your nature, more a man or a woman, because you have held in your arms and have nurtured your own child. These new out-reachings of your life can never be taken from you. Like new branches of a tree, they will remain ever after, part of yourself. Though the loved ones are removed, the results of their coming to you and staying with you, the influences, the impressions made, the new growths in your life, will never depart. They are your permanent possessions forever. Tennyson puts this truth in happy phrase:

"God gives us love; something to love He lends us; but when love is grown To ripeness, that on which it thrives Falls off; and love is left alone."

Then while the influences of a child's life remain, its death also brings new blessings to the home. It softens all hearts. Rudeness grows gentle under the influence of the sorrow. It brings the parents closer together. Many an incipient estrangement is healed at the coffin of a dead child. It is like a new marriage. Lowell writes:

"I felt instantly Deep in my soul another bond to thee Thrill with that life we saw depart from her; O mother of our angel child! twice dear! Death knits us well as parts."

Many a home owes its purest happiness, its richest blessedness, to its losses. The memories of its sorrows are golden chains that bind all hearts together in tenderest clasp. Then when Christian faith rules, the mementoes of bereavement become inspirers of new hopes, lenses through which we see deeper into heaven. Again Lowell writes:

"Heaven is not mounted to on wings of dreams, Nor doth the unthankful happiness of youth Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom to bloom, With earth's warm patch of sunshine well content: 'Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder up Whose golden rounds are our calamities, Wherewith our firm feet planting, nearer God The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed."

Through the clouded glass Of our own bitter tears we learn to look Undazzled on the kindness of God's face;

Earth is too dark, and heaven alone shines through."

Such are a few of the comforts and blessings that come when the crib is emptied or a chair left vacant.—Sunday School Times.

At the New York East Conference, Bishop Warren said:—"I know of one whole conference that abstains from the use of tobacco." Then, of course, rapturous applause. But last of all, when the uproar had ceased, he added, "It was a coloured conference."

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1883.

SECOND QUARTER.

Lesson XVII.—JUNE 17, 1883.

END OF FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Acts xiv. 19-28. COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vs. 21-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."—Matthew xxviii. 19.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Acts xiv. 19-29. T. Steadfastness, Phil. iv. 1-14. W. The Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50-58. T. Tribulations First, Heb. xii. 1-17, 23. F. Elders and Deacons, 1 Tim. ch. iii. S. Grace to the Gentiles, Col. i. 18-29. S. The New Song, Rev. ch. v.

COMPLETION OF THE FIRST FOREIGN MISSION.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Paul Stoned, Vs. 19, 20. II. Securing What Had Been Gained, Vs. 21-25. III. Return to Antioch, Vs. 26-28.

QUESTIONS.—Vs. 19, 20.—What change at Lystra? Who caused it? Who were the fiercest opposers of the gospel? What outrage did Paul suffer?

Vs. 21-25.—What success at Derbe? Any persecution there? Why did the missionaries revisit the different cities? What did they do? What instruction did they give? What is the Kingdom of God?

Vs. 26-28.—Why did the missionaries return to Antioch? How long did they stay at Antioch? What was the result of the first Foreign Mission?

Scripture Searchings.—Find, from his own account, what sufferings Paul endured for Christ? What does Jesus promise to those who bear his cross and follow him?

NOTES.—Vs. 19, 20.—With two exceptions (see chapters xvi. and xix.), the Jews originated every persecution against Paul. We see their furious zeal against the truths he preached, bringing them all the way from Antioch (in Pisidia) and Iconium, to counteract his efforts.

Persecuted. Doubtless, giving their own explanation to the miracle wrought upon the cripple, and attributing it to diabolical influences. Hence the apostles were dangerous men. The multitudes. The crowds, mostly heathen, rude, credulous, and fickle, and hence easily wrought upon by designing men. Stoned Paul. "Once was I stoned" (2 Cor. xi. 25). And once he had assisted in stoning a servant of Christ (vii. 58). A Jewish mode of punishment, showing that the Jews took the lead in it.

Nothing reveals more clearly Paul's prominence than this concentration of wrath against him, while Barnabas went unscathed. Drew (dragged) him out of the city. No scruple would prevent an execution in a heathen city. Compare vii. 58. Supposing he was dead. They were murderers in heart, though not in fact. The disciples. The Word had not been preached there in vain. Perhaps Lois, Eunice, and Timothy (2 Tim. i. 5) were of that sorrowing company. Rose up, etc. He had been stunned, not killed. There is no necessity of seeing anything miraculous in his speedy recovery. Perhaps it is to the scars from this stoning that he alludes in Gal. vi. 17. Came into the city. "Cast down, but not destroyed," and showing a noble intrepidity of spirit. To Derbe. See last Lesson.

Vs. 21, 22.—Had taught many. Rather, as in New Version, and according to Matt. xxviii. 19, had made many disciples. Undismayed by ill treatment, and with wounds unhealed, Paul preached and won disciples in Derbe also. From that point the apostles could readily, and by a shorter route, have gone down to Tarsus, the home of Paul, and from thence sailed to Antioch (of Syria). But no sense of danger or fatigue could turn them aside from duty. There was a needed work of confirming the churches in the cities they had visited, and therefore they returned again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (of Pisidia). Confirming the souls of the disciples. "Not by any outward rite, but by instruction and encouragement."—Hackett. Too often a church is satisfied in making converts, and neglects training them. To continue in the faith. Living the life of faith. See Gal. ii. 20. Tribulation. From tribulation, the threshing instrument by which the corn is separated from the husk. See Christ's promise in John xvi. 33. The Kingdom of God. They were already in that kingdom on earth, but they needed the discipline of trial to perfect them for the true spiritual kingdom and the heavenly world.

Vs. 23.—The apostles not only preached the gospel; they also organized churches, and saw that they had proper officers. Ordained. Appointed. Whether such as were first chosen by the church, as in vi. 3, as is probable, or whether the choosing was their own, is not clearly indicated. But it is evident that there were harmony and mutual confidence between the apostles and the church, in this matter. Elders. Greek, Presbyters. A Jewish title, derived from a class of officers in the synagogues, who had charge of their welfare and worship. Also called bishops, according to Hackett, "Those who are called elders in speaking of Jewish communities, are called bishops in speaking of Gentile communities." The same authority says: "The presbyters, or bishops, were not, by virtue of their office, teachers or preachers at the same time; nor, on the other hand, were the two spheres of labors incompatible with each other." Yet, he adds: "Teaching was considered, in the apostolic age, a normal function of the church-officers, called elders, bishops, pastors, etc." It is most likely that these elders taught the Word, as well as gave spiritual oversight. Every church. Each church had its college of elders. Commended them to the Lord. By a solemn religious service.

Vs. 24-26.—On their return to Perga they preached the word there, which they had not done at their former visit. Then they crossed the plain to the seaport town, Attalia, and set sail to Antioch (of Syria), from whence they had started out on their missionary tour.

Vs. 27, 28.—Returning to Antioch they gathered the church together, to make a report. It was a great missionary meeting, at which they rehearsed all that God had done with them, (not what great things they had done); and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. The door was not circumcision, nor natural birth, but faith. Hence the Gentiles could enter. Long time. That is, comparatively so—about two or three years. A long time to those who felt that they must preach the gospel to the regions beyond.

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

LESSON THOUGHT:—Strengthening and confirming faith.

TRUTHS TO BE TAUGHT:—1. All strength is from God. 2. God often uses human agencies to communicate strength. 3. Growth is as necessary as conversion. 4. Growth and strength come by use.

"Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium" were bad-busy people,—busy in mischief. They had murdered in their hearts. One day Paul was applauded as a god, and sacrifice and garlands were proposed to be offered. Only a little later, the same people were persuaded to stone Paul, and they left him for dead. At another time, on the island of Malta, Paul was thought to be a god, though just before they had thought him a guilty criminal. (Ch. xxviii. 4-6).

When they reached Antioch, a grand meeting was held; the church was gathered together; and Paul and Barnabas told "all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Then, for a long time, perhaps a year or two, they remained there with the disciples, preaching, teaching, and working.

To confirm is to make strong; to fix firmly. Show how much reason there is for interest in missionary effort. Also show that children may help in such work. —Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

Irreverence.

Unbelief comes oftener from irreverent association than intellectual doubt. The sneer of a Voltaire has killed more than all his arguments. A jesting tone of talk on religious truths, a habit of reckless criticism on religious things, is to take the name of God in vain; as truly as the vulgar oath; and when I hear him who calls himself a Christian, or a gentleman, indulging in burlesque of this sort, I at once recognize some moral defect in him. Intellect, without reverence, is the head of a man joined to a beast. There are many who think it a proof of wit; but it is the cheapest sort of wit, and shows as much lack of brains as of moral feeling. I would say it with emphasis to each Christian who hears me, never indulge that habit, never allow sacred things to be jested at without rebuke; but keep them as you would the miniature of your mother, for no vulgar hands to touch. There is an anecdote of Boyle that he never pronounced the name of God without an audible pause; and whatever you think, I recognize in it the dictate of a wise heart. We need this reverence in the air of our social life, and its neglect will pale our piety. —Dr. Washburn.

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