

Sunday Reading.

Unbaptized.

There was a little child, With pretty merry lips and laughing eyes, And cheeks that dimpled sweetly as she smiled, Both innocent and wise. Heaven shone within her face, And every look was like a sunbeam bright From out that sky so blue, and there was grace In every footstep light. Methinks that angels gaze In wonder to behold their equals here: Those who can yield perfection in their praise, And serve without a fear. Beneath that homestead roof The monarch Love in infancy kept sway, And led them all in golden chains—a proof That love makes all obey. Alas! they wist not death Would pluck the bud, and take the opening flower: Or blast with desolating breath The blossom of an hour. But soon her voice grew still, And hands no longer played in childish glee, Or infant laugh come echoing at will, And rippling merrily. And Death bore her away, And took her to the presence of his King; Where she for ever, in an endless day Of boundless bliss, could sing. She had not been baptized, So they refused to lay her in the holier ground Where saintly monuments had been devised O'er saintlier forms around. Her little corse was laid Within the quiet churchyard, in the ground That was unconsecrated; and they raised A tiny little mound. No priestly book was read, No long memorial o'er that little grave; She sleeps serenely in her earthly bed, Where the tall grasses wave. Within God's keeping there Her dust shall lie, till He shall bid it rise To join the spirit in the radiant air, Midway 'twixt earth and skies. Only an infant's tomb! Yes; but the glory of that Day awaits it, And God, who in His heart for her made room, He consecrates it. J. C. TODD. 48, Buckingham-street, Landport, Hants, G. B.

The Old Bible Hotel.

BY REV. H. F. SMITH, D. D.

As the train stopped at Amsterdam, Holland, about noon of a hot day in July, a sonorous voice from a waiting omnibus said in good English: "This way, gentlemen, for the Old Bible Hotel." Having heard of its reputation but knowing nothing of its history, I was soon on my way over bridges, by the side of canals wherein were shallows moored, modelled after the fashion of five hundred years ago, along narrow streets with houses some of them leaning over the road, and others slanting back to the canal in the rear. The plain substantial building was soon reached, and proved to be a good quiet home during the sojourn in the city. But about the significance of the name. Three hundred years ago the building was a printing office. Here, it is claimed, the first Bible printed in the Dutch language by Jacob Van Liesveld came from the press in 1542. The landlord shows a copy well-preserved over which he keeps a careful guardianship. During the persecution which followed the publishing of that Bible, Jacob was forced to leave Holland. The back window is shown by which he escaped. He succeeded in reaching Antwerp, but was there arrested, and executed by the authorities. The building passed into the hands of a Scotchman, was converted into a tavern, named from its connection with the Bible, and he same old sign of a Bible carved in wood still does duty over the door. How much this venerable landmark suggests to us concerning the struggles and triumphs of Bible work! How interesting to think of the victories won by the Book in Holland, its voyage dressed in our own language to our ancestral Island, and its propagation there despite the opposition of Cardinal Bishop and Priest! We are saddened by the thought that to-day in that Amsterdam town whose pulpits the truth once was proclaimed, the doctrines of THE BIBLE are twisted

and undervalued, and its heart-truths are denied. But the "Word of the Lord shall stand forever." The old tavern with its quaint historic sign preaches the faithfulness of the revealer; its solid walls are strong, and its memories are full of interest; but who can measure the wide-spreading saving influence over the nations of the precious printed revelation—the old OLD BOOK? Mt. Holly N. J. Feb. 1884

Our Solemnities.

A SERMON PREACHED IN THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FITCHBURG MASS., MARCH 16TH, 1884, BY THE PASTOR, REV. I. N. WHEELLOCK.

"Look upon Zion, the city of our Solemnities."—ISAIAH xxxiii. 20. A citizen is not to be blamed for being fond of his own city. Indeed it is a virtue to be proud of it. Paul was proud to claim himself to be a "citizen of no mean city." A man ashamed of his nativity is lacking in a strong element of character, whether his nativity be thought of as race or as country. He will most likely be ashamed in other respects, when his shame can be adjudged only a pitiable weakness and defect. Commend me much rather to him who sees the virtues of his race and country, and in his kindly feeling is loyal to both, and proud of both, and ashamed of neither.

But for different reasons this pride may be cherished. The citizen of our national city refers with pride to the locality of Washington, to its broad streets skirted by untragedous trees, to its governmental buildings, and to its splendid fashions and showy wealth. The New Yorker will show his warehouses and great stores, his Central Park and Public Gardens, his monster bridge suspended high, his elevated railway, his galleries of art, and his churches; the Bostonian will show you his State House, his Colleges, his Faneuil Hall, his Old South Church of colonial fame. All these say, "Look upon Washington, New York or Boston, the city of our residence or nativity." But says Isaiah, "Look upon Zion, the city of our Solemnities." His reason is not the Washingtonians, of broad avenues and showy drapery; nor the New Yorkers, of wealth piled up in immense business blocks, of spacious business facilities, and lavish profusion of money; nor the Bostonians, of Public Library, and Athenaeum, and Museum, and Schools, and College; but his pride is in the religion of his city. The religious life of his race centered in the Solemnities of Mount Zion, as the bodily life centres at the heart. The ordinances of religion were there observed. Nothing was so popular as religion among the Jews. It absorbed the thought and energy of the people as nothing else did. The ritual of worship and religion was splendid, and the sacrifices numerous. Their Solemnities exceeded in attractiveness and grace, everything in the life of the people. Nothing else awakened such commendable pride. "Look upon Zion the city of our Solemnities."

But we must translate the meaning of the Hebrew poet into our own Christian speech. We must read the life of this ancient people into our own, to make our text what a text must be.

Zion was the symbol of the Lord's people for all time. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people for henceforth, even for ever." And now Zion is still the symbol of those people. Generally it pictures them in their heavenly state. But God's people, whether in heaven above or in the earth beneath, whether they are already the "spirits of just men made perfect," or are the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, are all of one. Their life is one, their spirit is one. Their Solemnities have a common basis. The pride of one is the pride of the other. They have one common Lord. Christ calls them all brethren, only those who have become perfect have attained unto that for which they were apprehended, while we a little longer wait in the refiner's fire. The Lord's people are His church, part of it is called the church triumphant, and part is yet here in the toils of conflict. The Hebrew poet thinking of the pious people of his race, of the sacred city which was the centre and home of their worship, and of their most impressive celebrations, says: "Look upon Zion the city of our Solemnities." We, putting his thought into Christian speech, and having as good reasons for innocent commendable pride, say—the Solemnities of our faith as exhibited in

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the services and influences of our public worship, look upon them.

It is true that in respect of the outward form of our worship being imposing or grand, we cannot be boastful. Our celebrations are plain, and have none of the showy grandeur of a circus procession. They are chaste, and often exhibit simple taste. Heathen worship far exceeds any display of true Christian worship. Christian worship has no pomp in its genius and spirit. It orders no processions as does heathenism. It draws no lumbering cart with a huge idol on board. It displays no banners highly colored by art and man's device. It is not accompanied by noisy shouts as "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." As to any showiness, our celebrations are simple indeed. Indeed a chief injunction of our leaders and guides is "Be clothed with humility," and "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," and "Study to be quiet," and "Walk circumspectly," and "Give no offence," and pass along gently, for you are not in your own land. You are strangers, merely journeying through a foreign land. All this induces a certain chasteness in our celebrations. It makes for plainness rather than grandeur. It softens our Solemnities into the grace of a Christian lady's fashions, described by Milton, "plain in thy neatness."

By many it has been thought that a mistake was made by our Lord and His apostles. They ought to have instituted a pompous worship. The grandeur of the old temple service ought to have been continued in the gospel age. Great names and great titles ought to have been invented. And instead of simple Paul and Peter, those distinguished leaders in the Christian faith, should have been signalized to the world by sonorous titles as especially learned in divinity. A gorgeous ritual of worship should have been invented, and processions organized, and banners should have been woven, and a great ensue. Hence the attempt has been made to rectify the mistake in certain quarters. In the Roman Catholic community, the fiction of the host has been invented, and its elevation before awe-struck peoples. The altar imposing with its many lights, has been erected. There is the burning of incense and the roll of chanting and antiphonal singing. The simplicity of the early Christian worship has been lost in these attempts at show. It has been thought necessary to exhibit these splendors to hold the multitude, for the masses find more in a showy procession than in a chapter of the New Testament; many find more in the graceful physical gyrations of a roller skater at the rink than in the truths of religion. Hence it is thought that we must improve on the simplicity of Christ and the disciples whom He taught. We must put pomp into our worship. Our simplicity must give way to a gorgeous style. We must have processions, and hence the Salvation Army parades the streets with banners and holy songs. It has its generals and lieutenants, and goes forth in army display to take the world for Christ. If this form of worship and service does any good, let it do it. Do not arrest those well-meaning people. Political parties parade the streets with banners and bands, and drive all travelers off of them for the time being. Why may not religion have the streets as freely as politics? It makes one ashamed of the judges and police who interfere, and claim that the Salvation Army is disturbing the peace. Do not politicians disturb it with their torch-light processions as certainly as does the Salvation Army, and in much greater measure? But with reference to all this pomp and show, and these artificial lights, let me say, the wonder is that the faith of Christ can stand them at all.

Now, how simple the forms of worship are as Christ has given them, or as we know them from the Apostles and the first disciples. The slight forms and slight appearances of ritual we have, are greater even than theirs. They met as we do, only not in such style. They worshiped God in song, only not with organ. Their simplicity was a surprise to Pliny. He reported to Trajan that "the Christians affirmed it to be their custom to meet on a stated day before sunrise, and sing a hymn to Christ as to a god; that they further bound themselves by an oath never to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, adultery, never to break their word, nor to deny a trust when summoned to deliver it, after which they would separate, and then reassamble for the purpose of eating in common a harmless meal." No more than this did the worship of the first disciples impress Pliny. Just in describes more exactly their Solemnities. "On Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles, or the books of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then when the reader has ended, the president in a discourse

instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these glorious examples. Then we all rise together and send upwards our prayers. And when we have ceased from prayer, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability. The congregation assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each one present of the consecrated things, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons." It must be held that Solemnities having this description, are indeed not imposing and pompous, but plain and pure and whole. Some to nurture a sturdy religious life.

Now suppose Pliny should come in to our worship this morning. Would he think it imposing? Would he report grand spectacles? Would our service seem at all dazzling? No, far otherwise. Most likely he would care to remain only a few moments, long enough only to take in what of outward appearance there is and then like many another person who finds nothing in the ordinary evangelical service, for his heart is not right, not illumined, not melted by grace, turn away and wonder what those Christians are thinking about.

No, friends we do not ask you and the world to look upon the Solemnities of our faith for any show they have, not for the external appearance which God cares not for at all, but for what is in them, for what fills them. Here lies the occasion of our pride. Here lies the main-spring of the invitation we so heartily extend to you to come and worship with us. Here lies that in which we glory. Come look upon the Solemnities of our faith for what is in them.

1. There is first this,—THE PRESENCE AND GRACE OF GOD THAT IS RECOGNIZED IN THEM.

Our Solemnities are full of this thought—the immanence of God, how near He is, how close, how intimate the fellowship established! This is the inspiring truth of these services. Says Christ, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is a special promise for the celebration of God's praise in concert. You do not have it in the woods and fields and shops. You have it only when you are met in such Solemnities as these. Met in God's name, if only two or three are present God is there,—there more than with you when you are in business offices and social gatherings. Hence the Church of Christ will always have her assemblies. The endeavor to come near the heart of God and to feel its beatings of grace and love, will always bring disciples together for worship. Because God reveals Himself to people met for concert of worship, is the reason for that charge not to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together." And contrariwise the disciple who habituates himself to absence from our Solemnities, soon loses faith and power and growth. He must meet with those who worship, or he will suffer the privation of a staple article of religious food. You might as well try to get along without bread on your tables, as without the Solemnities of our faith, for God meets us in these as no where else. David thought so when he said, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Filling our Solemnities then is the truth of God being so near. You sing together, congregation and choir—to whom?—to God close as your own breath—invisible yet so actually here. You listen now, and one of us speaks. And while I tell you these things the Spirit of God is your guest, chastening, informing; feeding, comforting you while I speak.

And now do you know what one of the chief struggles of religion is in this land to-day? It is to save the special presence of God as a living abiding truth for our Solemnities and the good of the world. The tendency of worldly thought—is to abolish the idea of the nearness and fellowship of God with us. The world in countless ways, is enforcing the suggestion that we are left alone of Him—that He will hear no sooner than Balaam, that no fire from heaven will come down to consume the moist wood and the sacrifice we have placed for our offering unto Him. But look upon our Solemnities, Christ is here. Our Solemnities are what shall save the truth and faith of God's fellowship to us. The nearness of Christ was one of the things I have lately noticed in the devout Puritans. Did they find corn? It was God who put it in their way. Did they suffer from storms? It was God who sent them. Was the rain withheld? It was God who sent up the heavens. Did it return again in grateful showers when they had observed a day of fasting and prayer? It was God who sent the clouds. Did the harvest yield a plenty and for export too? It was God who gave it from His storehouse. Opinions like these

must be fostered now, and in our noble pride we say, look upon our Solemnities as the chief agency.

2. Then secondly, THERE IS IN THESE SOLEMNITIES SUCH SIMPLIFICATION OF THE HIGHEST TRUTHS AND MOTIVES AS THAT THE HUMBLEST MINDS AND HEARTS MAY TAKE THEM IN, AND BE GOVERNED BY THEM.

How wonderful this is! Our children even fasten their thought upon them. I hear them singing about our homes, "I am so glad that our Father in Heaven, Tells of His love in the Book He has given," "Sing them over again to me, Wonderful words of life."

You say, "Oh the children do not understand them." I suppose not to any great extent, but there must be some apprehension of these greatest truths or the children's minds would not fasten to them so intelligently as they do. You are a mathematician, we will suppose, and you have before you and them the Binomial theorem or another of the higher formulae of Algebra, and you try to attach it to a child's mind. You might as well recite Greek to him or talk in Arabic. But in our Solemnities, we are able to speak of the greatest truths and thoughts and motives as of common things. The language of spiritual things which are higher than philosophy or metaphysics, we can use and be understood. Motives that influence God and the holy of the other life, are so simplified in our Solemnities as to influence and govern us in small concerns. Great motives are made to apply to the little things and the "little peoples" of life. Hence children have place in our Solemnities, and find some thing in the sermon. A few weeks since a beautiful little girl greeted me at the close of our service, and handed me for encouragement, "A Plea for the Little Ones." It ran in part as follows:

"Just think of the dear little children, How tiresome the hour must be, When they think Oh, it's all for the big folks, There's none of it spoken for me."

"Sometimes the words spoken to children, So simple yet loving and true, Have touched hearts long hardened and sinful, As others were powerless to do."

"How often words spoken to children, Have entered the innocent heart, Producing an early decision, To choose that most glorious part?"

"Then if but one word for the children, Is all you have time to bestow, Oh! give it, 'twill not be forgotten, Tho' the increase we never may know."

It has been the world's opinion that the great topics and themes of our Solemnities belong only to the wise and learned, only to the great, and to people of literary leisure. Really in a profound and learned analysis, they must be placed in the category with metaphysics and philosophy. They are so great and high and deep and broad. And who now of the common people know anything scarcely of the mysterious and abstruse mind of man as mapped out in metaphysical science, or of the speculations and findings of philosophic investigation? Really there is some reason for saying that theology should go with them to the literary pundits who have time and choice for such speculations. But by means of our Solemnities, religion is made the common speech of the common people. It has been taken from the literary pundits, and the "poor have the gospel preached unto them." You know, Christ gave this as the highest proof that he had come from God. The gospel embracing such high wide knowledge, is given to the poor. It is not held as a monopoly now by the great and wise. The common people talk of human sin, and the workings of the natural heart, of what God wishes and does, of what we should be, of temptations and hopes, of the deep teachings of Christ, of motives and penalties, of the life that now is and of that which is to come, as children talk of common things in their child life, as grown people talk of familiar newspaper and social topics. Our Solemnities have brought down the high things of the spiritual world, and made them the common stock of our common trading. Such simplicity is there now in Christian thought and life, though they are so high and so sacred, as cannot be matched for exactness and fullness except in the minor concerns of life. Look upon our Solemnities, friends, so wonderful are they as a medium of revelation and power that we have only to perceive the fact to rejoice in them.

This now is the place for a review of the 73rd Psalm. Asaph was bewildered by what he saw in society. Wickedness prospered; irreligious men were strong. They are not in trouble, nor are they plagued. Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish. Asaph's understanding reeled in delirium over it. What does it mean? Is faith vain? Does goodness go for naught? But the Solemnities of religion made it all plain to him. There was reflected from them a

light upon the bewildering mystery. From the sanctuary a reckoning day was visible; and what he could not see outside the sanctuary, he could see inside, that really irreligious people walk on "slippery places." "When I thought to know this" he says, "it was too painful for me. Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end."

3. But once more, LOOK UPON OUR SOLEMNITIES FOR THE LEVELING PROCESS THAT GOES ON IN THEM, AND MAKES ALL WHO SHARE IN THEM, KIN.

One of the miseries of mankind is the tendency to develop into caste; high and low, lord and slave, rich and poor. And with these distinctions which count for so much in men's opinion, raise antagonisms and bitterness of various sorts, until when sufficient time has elapsed you have Roman life under the Caesars, and that condition of society in France which immediately preceded the Revolution. That state of things, we know, culminates in bloodshed and terrible enactments of crime and horrors.

The safety of the people from such miseries, is something thrown into society that shall level its inequalities. The prophet had this in mind when he spoke of our gospel age, "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed." Leveling is the condition of the display of His glory. If you have a proud aristocracy on the one side, and a slave caste on the other, you have what Christianity labors to reform. In the Solemnities of our faith, there are no bond and no free as distinct, no Jew and no Gentile, no barbarian, no civilized, no high, no low, no rich, no poor. None of these have recognition in our church services. We "disciples, are all one in Christ Jesus, whatever may be our birthright of race or color, "All ye are brethren," and "members one of another." The poor have equal rights and privileges with the rich. The master may occupy the same slip with the servant, and sing out of the same hymn-book. Social distinctions melt away in the fellowship of the Christian fraternity. All are alike in the Solemnities of our faith, made of one blood, in one category of sinners by nature, saved by the washing of a like regeneration, sanctified by one Spirit, as all drink into Him, made to walk humbly in one path, and are bound to one eternal home.

You remember that Onesimus the slave ran away from Philemon, and providentially came under Paul's influence. There he was converted, and resolved to go back to Philemon, and illustrate the better life into which he had come. Paul sent a letter by him to his old master. And how does Paul speak of the runaway slave? "My son Onesimus." And what does he say to Philemon about him? "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus." "Thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved. If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself."

Perhaps the greatest good the Catholic has ever done has been in leveling inequalities. With so much that is grossly wrong and wicked in that religious system, have been elements of truth and power. Macaulay says that the two greatest social revolutions which ever took place in early English history, were wrought by her leveling power. And in that she displayed the Solemnities of our Christian faith. Those revolutions were the crushing out of the "tyranny of nation over nation, and of the property of man in man." Noiselessly the distinction between Norman and Saxon faded away, and also between master and slave. Just so it was in the first Christian churches, just so it is and must be now. The master and slave learned to call each other brother. They sat beside each other. They came to the same chancel, bowed at the same altar, ate of the same bread. And now we all drink of the same divine life in Christ, if we drink at all of the Christian spirit. Each disciple is exhorted to prefer others to himself, and to "let brotherly love continue." Each one is to "mind not high things," but to "condescend to men of low estate." The strong are to help the weak. Those who have, are to share with those who have not. We are always to exhibit the spirit of Christ toward one another, who "though He was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich."

A visitor from our city spent Sunday in New York a few months since, and went to Trinity Church for what might be seen and heard. That monumental pile stands as the symbol of a rich parish. Can it be any place for the poor? Surely it cannot be. The visitor saw the rich go in. Ladies of fashion and wealth