

Sunday Reading.

The Nearer Salvation.

Now is your salvation nearer than when ye believed—Rom. xiii. 11.

O hear it, ye saints of the Lord, And, hearing it, loudly rejoice; What music re-sounds in the word, How charming the heavenly voice; Salvation! salvation is yours: 'Tis yours in sweet fortasse received; And the pledge of Jehovah assures 'Tis nearer than when you believed.

The day of redemption draws nigh, The triumph advances apace; The foes that assail you must die, Subdued by invincible grace, Even now the grim hosts at your feet Are tokens of conquest achieved; And prove that salvation complete Is nearer than when you believed.

Then let not dull slumber o'ertake Your spirits, or hinder the fight; 'Tis no time for dreaming: Awake! Awake, all ye children of light! The blackness of night is withdrawn, The bright streaks of morning perceived Are heaven and salvation, in dawn, Much nearer than when you believed.

Ye fathers in Israel, sing; Ye mothers, your sweet voices raise; Ye young men and maidens, too, bring Your music and join in the praise. Salvation! it brightens—it glows With splendours that never deceived; And each added ratiance shows 'Tis nearer than when you believed. J. HANSON. North Bradley, Trowbridge.

God in Christ.

REV. DR. DEEMS.

God never performs an unnecessary act. We know most of God in Jesus. More than in nature, more than in any verbal revelation. God is manifested in Jesus the Christ. His motives and emotions are learned, not by a long process of generalization from the facts of the world, but by a simple, opened eye, open-hearted, child-like observation of the movements of the intellect and heart of Jesus. If the life of Jesus be the index by which men may know the workings of an intimate nature, then we must believe that our heavenly Father never does a single thing to afflict his human children unnecessarily, never takes any delight in their sufferings, is always ready to save them from their sins, and does what an infinitely wise and benevolent nature can suggest to make them happy. So Jesus was. So God must be.

Now, it is a remarkable characteristic of Jesus that he never spoke an unnecessary word nor performed an unnecessary deed. He never did for another what that person could do for himself. There seemed to be omnipotence at His command. He claimed that there was. He performed acts which go as far as acts can go to prove such a proposition as the possession of limitless power. All disease was under His control. All nature seemed under His control. He could still storms, multiply bread, change water into wine. He was the master of the grave. He sent His summons through the gates into eternity and called back the spirits of the departed to reinhabit their former bodies. There is no perceptible limit to His power.

And yet he never performed a miracle to gratify His own passion or that of others. He never exerted His great power for display. If Jesus were a mere man, to whom Almighty God had delegated His almightiness, it is inconceivable that he should not at some time put forth His hand to gratify the curiosity of His beloved friends, or to indulge His own desires of display, or bind the hands of His foes, or destroy them with His word of power. But He never did. I never knew a man, never heard of a man, and no record in any history of a man so continent, so gloriously self controlling, that he would not, at least once in a life-time, break over the bounds and exert this delegated power selfishly. Jesus never did. Then God never does. It is the merest naturalism to desire and pray that God will give us a sign, do a wonder, and set the universe agape at His wondrous power. He never did. He never will. His power seems glorious to us, it is because that power is glorious. All that men see is what Habakkuk calls the "hiding of His power." God does only what God cannot leave undone.

Obedience and Blessing.

Do you know that all of God's blessings come through obedience? Take the life of Christ and those that were blessed while He was here. They were blessed in the very act of obedience. Every solitary one that He told to do anything did what he told him and was blessed. He told Bartemeus to come to him, and he came and was blessed. He said to that man: 'Go home and tell your friends what great things the Lord has done for you,' and he was blessed. He said to the ten lepers: 'Go show yourselves to the priest.' They might have said: 'We showed ourselves to the priests and they sent us out of the city into the desert to die.' But they went and did as He told them, and they were healed in the act of belief. I suppose there were never ten men more astonished in their lives than those ten men. One said to another: 'Why, John, I am whole.' He said: 'I feel as if I could leap over a stone wall ten feet high.' And another man says: 'I am whole.' And so they were all whole, and it was because they obeyed the Lord. And Christ said to the man that they brought to him on a bed: Thy sins are forgiven thee; take up thy bed and walk.' And he rolled up the old bed and swung it across his shoulders and went home healed. And so you run on through the life of Christ and you will find that every man that did what Christ told him to do was healed.

You remember that Elisha told Naaman to dip seven times in Jordan. It was a terrible thing to Naaman's pride, but he did it and was healed. Do what God tells you to do. He tells you to seek first in order to go to heaven. That is the first thing. That is the greatest question of life. There will never be a question come before us so important as this question of eternal life. Everything else fades away into the dim past, and men ought to wake up and do what God tells them to do. It is a command.—D. L. Moody.

Christless and Christlike.

Two lives have gone out from the same street of the little country village. Each had passed fourscore years; neither ever married. But the homes were opposite; so, too, were the lives.

B—was the only son of parents rich for that town. The large square-house, with its clean white paint, fresh green blinds, the very perfection of neatness and order, was his home. The village academy fitted him for the college from which he graduated with honor. Tall in person, fastidious in dress, with fine talent, liberal education, the idol of parents, of ample means, and life only bright before him. Such was he at twenty-one.

Just below and opposite was a low cottage, guileless of paint, with small windows shaded by never a blind. In it an aged man dragged on his weary years, and his daughter watched over him with untiring love. Very plain her face, very plain her dress, very plain her work-day life. To look toward was to see only the same drear monotony, to look backward was but to see the grave of him to whom her heart's full love had been given, and around whom all her hopes had circled.

From the large house religion was barred out, while it permeated the very air of the cottage. B—went to the city and studied law with a man of note, and was admitted to the bar. But work of any kind he had never done, and for the active duties of his profession he had neither energy, discipline nor training. He soon returned home. His father toiled, his mother toiled; he, ignoring all claims of God or man to effort or help from him, sat, from early to late, Sundays and all days in the open front door reading—reading. Thus his life of indolent selfishness droned on.

His parents died, his land was untilled, his house, never repaired except his room became damp and dilapidated, his bank stock was exhausted, and the town took his place, let him live—or rather stay—in it, and had frugal meals sent him from a near house. In the open doorway of that desolate, forlorn home, he, unwashed, unkempt, sat all the long, bright summer days reading—reading—reading.

To the last his memory was perfect,

and he was a very encyclopedia of knowledge, thought clearly, and conversed brilliantly; but so untidy was he that his very presence was a disgust, and his death gave almost pleasure to the village. He was buried, but his only kinswoman (who had long ignored him) would not allow him to sleep beside her dear ones, and he was removed.

Thus B—(whom the academy students called Beelzebub), who might have been an honor and a blessing, but whom no one respected, no one loved, and not one mourns, lies in an un-blessed grave. The aged father died in that little, low cottage, but Rhoda's great warm heart—loving God and all his children—kept her hands busy. The students, struggling through poverty to the pulpit, knew where to find a motherly encouragement, were to take their three-dbare coats and buttonless shirts, where to find a smile and welcome. She loved every one of them, loved to encourage them, loved to pray for them. Her ear of sympathy drank in their secret discouragements and trials, her lips bore them to heaven, her heart locked them up from every ear of earth. And her love ceased not with their going out, but to the last of her long life she prayed for each by name, and every blessing that came to one of them was a happiness to her.

Hands are oft-times very busy, and even hearts may be kind, and yet the tongue be unchained. But her tongue was ever governed by the law of kindness. Some fourteen years ago I wrote a description of her lowly cottage and her simple, grand life. I was visiting in the village, and felt bound to take her the paper. With her on the very spot, the description of the little low bare rooms seemed to me more accurate than kind, and I paused a moment before reading of her life-work, which I thought would salve any wound to her pride.

'Why, that is all just as it is,' she said. 'A lady told me you had made fun of my old house. I said you did not mean to do it, but it did make me a little uncomfortable. Don't you pity any one who could find pleasure in giving me pain?'

'Pity isn't the word I should use,' I said.

'Yes, pity is the word. We must pray for her,' she answered firmly.

'I am sure you will, but excuse me,' I said.

And I read on, read how these plain rooms had been so filled with the earnest prayers of the aged saint and the struggling youth, so filled with the presence of God that to many souls they had seemed the very portal of heaven; read how the unconscious influence of her pure, unselfish life had been a rebuke and a blessing. I looked up to see her smile at my words of the appreciation due her. I saw only tears of deep humility coursing down her furrowed cheeks, as with broken voice she said:

'It is sweet, sweet to hope I have helped even one soul upward.'

And then with clasped hands she thanked God aloud, in her weakness and age and poverty she 'had done anything, anything' for him.

When heaven opened, and angels sang her welcome, men on far mission field, men in the far West, men whose eloquence entrances cities, paused with a loving thought, and more than one, with a pang of pain, exclaimed: 'I have lost 'Aunt Rhoda's' prayers!'—N. Y. Observer.

Our answered Prayer.

There was sorrow in the nursery, for nurse had come in to tell us that baby, our little brother, whose birth only two months before, had given us so much delight, was dying fast. The doctor had just left, saying that there was no hope. Mamma had sent word that we were to go into his bedroom, very quietly, to have one more kiss, and take a last look at our little darling, and then we must stay in the nursery alone, while nurse helped her. Poor mamma looked so white and sad, it made us cry to see her, and baby Willie lay pale and still on her knee, with his big, blue eyes closed, and his breathing so faint, we almost thought he was even then dead.

We crept quietly out of the room again, and instead of returning to the

nursery, where we thought nurse might interrupt us, we went to an old lumber room, at the top of the house, where we used generally to retire when we wished to be alone. We did not run gaily up stairs as usual, but walked slowly and quietly, the tears running down our cheeks all the way. For some time we did not speak. Annie was the eldest, being eight years old; I was the next; and then came little Jack, who was only four. At last Annie said, 'Jesus raised Lazarus to life again, and I think He would raise baby if we all asked him.' To this I agreed, and Jack, of course, was too young to have much voice in the matter; but we decided that we would sing a hymn first. We chose one that we had heard in chapel a Sunday or two before, and that we thought would suit our case very well:

'Why do we mourn departing friends, Or shake at death's alarms? 'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends To call them to his arms.'

The graves of all His saints He blest, And softened every bed; Where should the dying members rest, But with their dying Head.'

It was rather a queer choice, when we were just going to pray that God would let baby live. But Jesus knew our meaning better than we could express it. We sang two verses, Jack, joining very loudly and beating time on a box with an old spoon, for he was too young to feel as much subdued as we elder ones did, and as he did not know a word of the hymn, he made rather a queer noise.

Nurse came running up, thinking we were heartless children, to be singing and making so much noise when our little brother was dying. She stopped at the door, for we were all on our knees, and Annie's sweet, serious voice was saying, 'You let Lazarus get better, and the ruler's little girl; please let baby, because mamma looks so sad, and we should all be so unhappy if he died. Then we jumped up, with our faces quite bright, and little Jack said, 'Now he's sure to get better,' and Annie and I thought so too. Nurse went with tears in her eyes to mamma and said, 'O ma'am, those dear children are having a prayer-meeting in the lumber room about baby, and they say he is sure to get well now.' Then a faint hope sprang up in mamma's heart that perhaps God, in answer to her children's prayer, and to give them faith in the power of prayer, would let baby live.

Mamma was worn out with nursing and watching, and so papa persuaded her to lie down for a short time, while he watched by Willie. About one o'clock he called her, for he saw a change, and thought the end had come. They watched together for two or three hours, but still his slender hold on life was not loosened.

Early in the morning Dr. Foster came, without much hope that baby would be still alive. But his face brightened when he saw him, and he stooped to listen to his breathing.

'Why,' he said, 'there is a wonderful change; the fever is gone and his breathing is quite regular! He will do nicely now. This is mainly owing to your good nursing though,' he added with a smile, 'perhaps a little credit is due to the skill of the doctor.' Mamma, however, thought it was neither her tender nursing, nor the doctor's skill that had wrought the change, but our earnest and believing prayer on the day before.

When we woke, we found mamma bending over us with such a bright, happy face, that we knew at once what she had to tell us. 'Baby is well! baby is well!' we shouted; and little Jack whispered softly, 'Cos we prayed.'

We were rather disappointed when we saw Willie, that he was not quite well and strong yet, but all danger was passed. He recovered quickly, and now he is such a great, strong, rosy boy, that I can hardly believe he was once the frail little baby, for whose life we prayed so earnestly in the old lumber room ten years ago.

Let this true story encourage other children to call upon the Lord in times of trouble.—Early Days.

When Christ gives peace He does not hinder, but guides, thought; does not destroy, but purifies, love; does not stop industry, but sweetens toil; does not check, but makes business just and good.

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

Petitions of Little Ones.

An American Missionary lady writes:—'A little girl in my Calcutta School was asked if she bowed down to the idol of the house. 'Yes,' she said, 'when mother tells me I have to, but I go away immediately by myself, and fold my hands, and look up and say, 'O God, I have sinned, but do Thou forgive me. Thou knowest I cannot help myself because my mother will beat me.' Hearing this made me think of Naaman the Syrian, when he entered the house of Rimmon with his master. Some of the girls in my School pray somewhat in the following way: 'O God, make me good, help me to obey my parents, keep me from saying naughty words, and teach me to love every one. One little girl saw two others going up for an examination; she knelt down and asked God to keep their minds clear, so that they might pass successfully. They did. When she was going up she told them what she had done and how God had heard her prayer, and asked them to do the same for her. You see from this they are getting to believe in prayer. A. SUNDER.

Baptist Mission Work in Italy.

The following letter has just been received from the Rev. W. K. Landels, and will, we are sure, be read with great interest:—

'MY DEAR MR. BAYNES.—As we are now fairly settled in Naples again, I am in a position to give you some idea of the present state of our work in Southern Italy.

AN ITALIAN BAPTIST UNION. Let me, in the first place, however, call your attention to the formation of the Baptist Union of Italy.

You will remember that when in England I told you how some of us had been attempting to get this Union formed, but that, owing to the great difficulties we had to encounter, the question for the time being had been allowed to drop.

On our journey south we stayed a few days in Turin, and Mr. Walker and I talked the matter fully over, and it was decided that he should come down to Rome with us, and that we should make another attempt to get the matter fairly started. We then drew up a draft constitution to submit to the brethren in Rome. Two days after our arrival in the capital we had our first meeting.

We have thus been able to lay the basis of a Union which will doubtless be of great service to the work of the Lord in Italy. It is, of course, too soon to say much about its practical working; that I must reserve for a future letter, when we shall have had time to commence operations.

THE WORK IN NAPLES.

The second thing I wish to write about is our work in Naples. I am happy to say that, during our absence, things have been going on in a highly satisfactory manner. The meetings are well attended, and since the month of June no less than twelve persons have been received into our membership.

The work in Caserta is also giving us considerable encouragement. Signor Libonati has lately been able to get hold of a considerable number of soldiers; some of whom had already been evangelized by Signor Cappellini in Rome. There are now some thirty who are desirous of joining our church in Caserta, and it is probable that a number of them will ere long be baptized.

On Saturday evening last I had the pleasure of meeting with twenty-three of them at a soiree, which was got up to welcome us home. Some of them were exceedingly interesting men. There was one of them who spoke English with considerable fluency, having been employed for some years in a bank in Lombard Street; a second presided at a harmonium; while a third played some selections on the flute. What pleased me most about them all was that they seemed thoroughly convinced of the truths of the Gospel, and to love each other as Christian brethren.

The Prayer Book Revision Society have decided to take steps to bring the matter of Liturgical revision before Parliament.

Our English Brethren are vigorously prosecuting the work in Central Africa. At a recent meeting of the Sub-Committee, the present position and pressing necessities of the Mission were anxiously deliberated upon, and the following recommendations unanimously agreed to:—

'That the staff of the Congo Mission be immediately reinforced to such an extent as shall permit of at least two brethren being associated together at each of the five stations of the Society, it being, in the judgment of the Sub-Committee, of the highest importance that no single missionary should be settled at a station without at least one colleague. That in order to secure this, the General Committee be urged to send out at least one more missionary to the Congo before the close of the current year, thus increasing the total strength of the European staff on the Congo to thirteen missionaries, and by so doing providing two brethren for each of the five stations existing, setting Mr. Grenfell free for the reconstruction of the S. S. Peace, and permitting two to be absent, seeking recruited health by a change to England or elsewhere. That in the opinion of the sub-committee the staff of the Congo Mission should be further augmented by at least two more additional missionaries, as soon as ever the funds of the Society will permit; thus increasing the staff of brethren on the Congo to a number only barely sufficient to cover all the risks of removals and changes on account of broken health, and to maintain two brethren at each of the regular stations of the Mission, after making due allowances for casualties that may arise.'

These recommendations were unanimously adopted by the General Committee.

Widow Marriage.

Mrs. Jewett writes:—From time to time in our paper, the Madras Times, appears a cheering note from Rajahmundry, a large Telugu town north of Nellore. The Western Society has done so well in sending a memorial to the Queen, I feel I want to send you, as its secretary, the following from the Times of August 15:—

ANOTHER WIDOW MARRIAGE AT RAJAHMUNDRI.

A Komasi virgin widow marriage was celebrated last night under the auspices of the Local Widow Marriage Association. This is the ninth widow marriage and second Visya marriage. The bridegroom is thirty years, and the bride sixteen.

I should say the Komati and Visya mentioned in the article are very high caste. God seems to be stirring up the minds of great numbers of his servants just now, in reference to his wonderful things he is preparing to do for the millions of India's women. Their 'great wrongs' are constantly being suffered before our eyes. When my school of eighty caste girls was closed for vacation it was well known that the brightest and best of them could not return, because she was twelve years old. During the last few weeks, she had attended both day and Sunday-school by stealth only, whenever her father was absent from home. Like many others in the school she has no doubt been married several years. They do not call it betrothal, as I used to think they did. Dear little Parah girls are taken out similarly, if their parents are not Christians, and married to heathen men against their will.

IT MUST NOT BE SUPPOSED that the women of India are generally unhappy; that they regard themselves as slaves; that they long for independence; that they protest against seclusion; that they hanker after knowledge. They are too feeble minded and apathetic to be conscious of degradation, too wedded to ancient customs to repine under absence of freedom or want of education. They esteem it an honor to wait on their husbands. The necessity for privacy, and the undesirability of a woman's learning letters, are ideas so intermingled with their earliest feelings—so interwoven with the whole texture of their moral being—that, they have become cherished customs with the women themselves. They are more than customs; they are sacred religious obligations. So far from submitting to these restrictions from compulsion, no respectable woman would, as a rule, show herself in public, or allow herself to be taught reading and writing, or any feminine accomplishment, even if permission were accorded her. She has no conception of any benefit to be derived from a knowledge of letters, except for the promotion of female intrigue; and she would prefer to be accused of murder than of learning to dance, sing or play on any musical instrument. She loves ornaments, but she regards ignor-