

My Lord and I.

HOSSEA 3: 3.

"Thou shalt abide for Me, So will I be for thee."

This message unto one of old comes like a glad refrain; I know that I may claim it, too, so say it o'er again; It is so good that thou shouldst ask for such a one as I, Thy love to me is wonderful, since for me Thou didst die.

"Thou shalt abide for Me, So will I be for thee."

Yes, Lord, I gladly answer thee, I'm ever Thine alone, And would not make a friend of those who'll not thy Lordship own; The world, with all its glittering charms, can no attractions give, Because for Thee, who's lovelier and better far, I live.

"Thou shalt abide for Me, So will I be for thee."

I bring my little self to thee, no costly gift I bring, And straightway a thy wealth and grace Thou givest, heavenly King; I offer Thee my tiny cup, Thy fulness then is mine, The finest of the wheat and oil, the choicest of the wine.

"Thou shalt abide for Me, So will I be for thee."

I am a vessel for Thy use, but all the power, Lord, And glory, too, is ever Thine, for which be Thou adored; I am the humble instrument, Thine is the master hand, Which all the melodies of love can waken at command.

"Thou shalt abide for Me, So will I be for thee."

O blessed fellowship most sweet, like that of heaven above; A bliss which no one else can know but those who taste Thy love; A friendship which shall e'er endure, for shall not I abide For Thee throughout eternity, my Saviour, Friend and Guide? —A. K. R., in "Kingdom Tidings."

Much Rubbish.

The Book of Nehemiah is very far from being a back number. As a revival manual embodying the essential conditions and practical suggestions of the work of repairing the breaches of Zion and developing the City of God to its true normal standard, it is as pertinent and timely as though it bore the new century date on its title page. The lines which that zealous reconstructor pursued in the work assigned him are models for every age and stage.

Prominent among the analogies and representative instances of Nehemiah's course our attention is especially directed to his night ride around Jerusalem. It was an excursion under reverse conditions from that to which the Psalmist invites when he calls for a walk about Zion to inspect her symmetry and strength. But it is just as practical and profitable. Zion in disrepair is as proper an object of consideration as Zion in ideal perfection. Nehemiah had no mind to evade difficulties. His optimism did not elude existing facts. He did not hide his head like a pursued ostrich, but took an eagle-eyed survey of the situation, and his example in this instance is very commendable. In doing the Lord's work it is one of the primary steps to find out first what there is to do. It is unwise to make conditions out better than they are.

As a result of his careful and detailed exploration he found the base of the walls encumbered with heaps of fallen stone and mortar, a confused mass of rubbish which needed to be removed before the work of repair and reconstruction could begin. Now what Nehemiah found when he set about the duties of his self-constituted committee was just what under prevailing conditions he was likely to find. It did not surprise or dismay him. It only clearly outlined the work to which he was commissioned. And here, too, is a lesson for all time. Various causes tend to the disintegration of the walls of Jerusalem. Un-tempered mortar may be used. Unskilled labor may have been employed. Certain points may have been subjected to excessive strain, and perhaps in spots the foundation work was not well done. The principles of church carpentry and masonry are not entirely dissimilar from what they were. Walls are not all plumb. Corners are not all square, and more or less rubbish still collects around the base. What is committed to human agency partakes of human infirmity. There is nothing surprising or discouraging in the fact that obstructions cluster around the walls of what is nevertheless the Holy City.

Rubbish was not all that Nehemiah found. Under all these accumulations were the rock foundations God had built. Around Jerusalem were the mountains God had put there. It was still as of old, beautiful for situation and susceptible of strong defence. It was the place fitted by nature and chosen of God as the spiritual metropolis, and this was warrant for faith and

courage, and the same glorious things are spoken to-day of the City of God, of which the old Jerusalem is the type and symbol.

Yet it is as necessary now to remove the rubbish. There is, for instance, the critical spirit of the age as directed upon or against the Word of God. It is much like those dismantled heaps Nehemiah saw. There may be some good stones in it, only of their base. There is some sincerity and love of truth, perhaps, and then there is a quantity of pedantry and pride, and a positive element of bad faith and dishonest, disloyal workmanship. And the task of distinguishing between them is somewhat like separating the wheat and tares in the field. In tugging at the live stones there is danger of bringing down more wall. Considerable crumbling has been due to this cause.

While the essential principles of the Kingdom of God are unchangeable, conditions of construction are considerably modified. The multiplied forms of activity characteristic of the age have been incorporated into the church. There are a good many gangs of workmen engaged on the varied lines of Christian energy, and it is somewhat more difficult to maintain perfect uniformity of counsel and action than it was when the administration was simpler. The old idea of church organization as the gospel ship under our captain and crew has given place to the division of the single church into the small fleet of distinct though not intentionally separate vessels which may keep together, or may not. And then, too, there are more or less sailing crafts which are not in commission. Now we would be very far from attributing to this multiplex organization of the present day a scattering rather than a gathering result. It is the intensity of spiritual energy which has brought these agencies into existence. The growth and advance of the Kingdom of Christ has called for work on new lines, and all are inspired by the one great impulse and object.

Yet while the angels of incidence and refraction are invariably equal, all do not see alike. There are a good many kinds and classes of visual defect. There are many things that deflect the single eye to the glory of God in the work and plan which is under his banner when the organization absorbs the object as it may do, and sometimes does so, there is given opportunity for the accumulation of rubbish. It is not the executive, but the constituency which ensures the successful working of theory. Christian sentiment and scrutiny must see that the walls are clean of such obstacles.

The same caution is necessary in our modern systems of evangelism, which is such a great and important factor in extending the Gospel call to every creature and pushing its way into highway and hedge. While these noble efforts are attended by incalculable influences for good there are certain tangential lines which should be carefully watched. Excursion trains do not supersede the regular. Special services must not be allowed right of way over the stated, or through their different methods and conditions impair the interest and draw off the attendance from those which are the support, as well as source of all the public spiritual life.

But it is the crop gathered from such husbandry that calls for greatest care. It sprouts quickly, often from poor soil, without much root or deepness of earth. The meetings close, the evangelists go away and the converts are left to the care of oftentimes unskilled tenders. We have been especially impressed with the danger of accumulating rubbish in what are called testimony meetings. It is without question of great advantage for all who believe they are the redeemed of the Lord to say so. Yet it should be done in few words as possible and with no undue prominence given to the confessor whose experience is limited and his course yet untried.

How much rubbish collects around the votive offerings of many professing Christians! The vows of God are upon them, but what loose ideas prevail respecting their discharge. Some almost make a burlesque of church attendance and seem impelled by nothing higher than convenience. The stated support is supplemented with the additional litter of entertainment of a certain class, which derogate not only from duty, but from the dignity of the service of God. What is not to edification is to disintegration and decay, to encumbrance and obstacle.

There is a close analogy between physical and moral conditions. Perfunctoriness, irrelevancy, inconsideration impair spiritual efficiency. Waiting one day for a train at a prominent station on the New York Central line we became interested in watching the operations of a gang of track repairers. They raked up the ballast and fastened

the spikes and did whatever seemed necessary, and then when a definite length of track was thus disposed of, the "boss" took a level and applied it to every inch of surface the workmen had gone over. And this was done over every foot of that road from New York to Buffalo. These little heaps of rubbish are unseemly, obstructive, sometimes pestilential. Take them hence. Let the whole line of work be under vigilant scrutiny, and up to the high standard of rectitude and symmetry which Divine righteousness and holiness require.—Chris. Intelligencer.

Church Thermometer.

The thermometer is defined to be an instrument for measuring temperature. A good thermometer is a very sensitive instrument, easily affected by the least change in atmospheric conditions. We consult it when the changes in temperature occur, to ascertain how great the changes are. Our own bodies seem to be susceptible to the degrees of heat or cold indicated by this instrument. The point from which we reckon is 0. The mercury stands either below or above this point. As it rises above this point greater heat is indicated, as freezing temperature, summer and blood heat, and as the mercury ascends still higher a boiling temperature is ultimately attained.

A good thermometer never lies. Rest assured the conditions are just as indicated. The thermometer of which the writer wishes to speak is the church thermometer; not the one hanging on the wall near the church door, that ought occasionally to be consulted to give relief to a long-suffering congregation. There is in every church called of God to better the existing conditions a spiritual thermometer. It is the midweek prayer-meeting.

It is in this service the spiritual temperature of the church is measured. The religious life of a church rises no higher than that found in the prayer services. The services on the Lord's Day are no true criterion by which to judge the moral and spiritual atmosphere of any church.

The Sabbath services may have a large attendance, and yet the Christ and Spirit life of the membership be side-tracked.

Christians living in a temperate religious atmosphere, and many even below, are not prepared for aggressive work in soul-saving and church-building. A well attended, spiritual midweek service will assure a power to the church that will be telling in its effects upon society.

As long as many say, 'It's only prayer-meeting,' it is not to be hoped that such a church will soon reach a 'summer heat' in religious enthusiasm, and cause much interest to be awakened among the unawed.

We live in extraordinary days. The successful church, in winning souls will be the one where the religious life is manifested in the prayer-meetings, and carried from this place into every department of church life and work. Sad, and indeed is the contemplation of the fact, yes, fact, that so few of the membership of the church can content themselves to live without the means of grace offered by the prayer-meeting, and yet hope to be approved of the Master. What low estimate of religious obligation!

Reader, when were you in the prayer-meeting? Have you been in this year? You ask, 'Why is not the church successful in winning and saving souls?' The answer is not difficult. Come to talk with the Lord. Come in to help us raise up the spiritual atmosphere of the church to blood heat and above, and see the results. God will not disappoint.

The prayer-meeting is the key to heaven's treasure house, and the hope of all true church success. What might not the Lord's people do if fifty per cent. would be regularly found in this service? Where are the Christians who live at a boiling temperature? How much religious fever have we as a church? It has been many days since some of us were shouting happy. Oh, for spiritual life and power! We will never have it until more interest is manifested in the prayer-meeting, which is the church thermometer—Rel. Telescope.

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A Safe Dwelling Place.

The apostle says, 'He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.' This doctrine was not original with the apostle. Long before John was born, and before Jesus came into the world, the psalmist sang, 'Lor', Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.' And again he sang, 'He that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the

Almighty.' In one of our hymns we sing, 'Nearer, my God to Thee.' It is well to dwell near to God, but according to the psalmist and the apostle we may dwell in Him. It is a good thing to dwell in the house of the Lord. The psalmist earnestly desired this place of refuge and meditation when he sang, 'One thing have I desired, \* \* \* that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.' And again he sang, 'I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' But one may dwell in the house of the Lord, and yet be far away from the Lord of the sanctuary. The Lord is in His holy temple, but many that enter into the temple do not draw nigh to God.

Moreover it is impossible to dwell in the house of the Lord all the time. One may visit the sanctuary every week, and perhaps every day, but he cannot remain there every hour. But one who dwells in God can have his dwelling place with him wherever he goes. Whether on land or sea, at home or abroad, among friends or enemies, he is dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. Great as is the blessing of being in the house of the Lord, it is far better to be in the heart of the heavenly Father.

Some men live in palaces, and some in hovels. Some good men have no permanent abiding place on the earth. Jesus had not where to lay His head, but He had what is better. He had an everlasting dwelling place in the heart of His Father. We may have the same secure abode. This is better far than the grandest palace ever built with human hands. We call men poor when they have no house to live in, but if they dwell in love they are rich. How can one be poor who dwells in God, who made the universe?

This is a safe dwelling place. The world is full of dangers. Temptations, afflictions, and persecutions abound. Satan goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But if the Lord is our refuge let wars arise; they shall not harm us. Let the arrows of the enemy fill the air; they cannot touch us. The psalmist speaks of the strife of tongues as one of the evils to which men are exposed. We know something about this peril. The tongue is sharper than the sword. The wounds inflicted by the deceitful tongue, the lying tongue, the tongue of slander will not be healed so readily as wounds inflicted by cold steel or dynamite guns. The one wounds the flesh, the other wounds the spirit. The strife of tongues rages in every community. Who is safe? Who can protect his own? One may throw his shield of love about his children, and do his best to protect them from the strife of tongues; but these arrows find their mark. There is a sure and safe refuge. It is found in God. One who dwells in God is safe. The poisoned arrows may pierce his reputation and tarnish his good name, but they shall not touch his spirit. His character is safe. He abides within, as did the Israelite in Egypt while the destroying angel passed over. He comes out safe and sound in the morning.

"Jesus, lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly." —Chris. Advocate.

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An Endless Life.

I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest that has been more than once cut down. The new shoots are stronger and livelier than ever. I am rising, I know, toward the sky. The sunshine is on my head. The earth gives me its generous sap, but heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. You say the soul is nothing but the resultant of bodily powers. Why, then, is my soul the more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head and eternal spring is in my heart. Then I breathe at this hour the fragrance of the lilies, the violets and the roses as at twenty years. The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. It is marvelous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale and it is history. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song—I have tried all. But I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I can say like so many others, "I have finished my day's work," but I can not say, "I have finished my life." My day's work will begin the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes in the twilight to open with the dawn. I improve every hour because I love this world as my Fatherland. My work is only a beginning. My monument is hardly above its foundation. I would be glad to see it mounting forever. The thirst for the infinite proves infinity.—By Victor Hugo.

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