

in our infirmities," being tempted (or tried), in every respect just as we are tempted. But Jesus Christ came into the world to save men from their sin, and not chiefly from sickness, or poverty, or social discomfort. These minor things he did notice, and he showed that he was not indifferent to anything that pertained to man's welfare; but he knew also that if sin were destroyed, all lesser evils would soon take their flight, while it would really profit nothing if all adversity and suffering were temporarily removed, and sin the prolific source of all evil and all infirmity were allowed to remain. Evidently a fundamental truth which we must reiterate and dwell upon at this time.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he it is who will save the people from their sins." That prophecy and assurance stands inscribed across the very forefront of the Gospel, and everything within the blessed evangel is in harmony with this beginning. "Jesus" as a name, is the Greek spelling of the old Hebrew "Yeho-shua," and means "Jehovah the Saviour," the Saviour from sin. Christ did indeed heal all manners of sicknesses; he cured the deaf and blind; he cleansed the lepers; he raised the dead; but all this was incidental and secondary, to demonstrate his power over the mighty evil of sin. In what an impressive way he brings this out when healing the paralytic at Capernaum! Some of the on-lookers accused him of blasphemy because he said to the helpless man, "Thy sins are pardoned." The comment of the scribes was: "Who but God can pardon sin?" Christ at one time accepted their challenge, healed the sufferer, and made for himself the divine claim: "That you may know that the Son of Man has authority (power) on earth to pardon sins"—and thereupon he healed the paralytic and sent him home, carrying his own cot. Christ then, who had on earth the power of God over sin, and whatever healing he does, even the most startling, is simply to demonstrate the higher and deeper fact that he can forgive iniquity, transgressions and sin.

So it is everywhere in the New Testament. The testimony is uniform. After his resurrection Christ directed the disciples to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit clothed them with power, and commanded that "proclamation should be made in his name of repentance and forgiveness of sin to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem." There is nothing here about sickness and the healing of diseases. In the solemn farewell discourse before the crucifixion, Christ promised the coming of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, and said: "When he comes he will convict the world in respect to sin, of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me." And on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit has come and men are crying out, "Brethren, what are we to do?" Peter replies: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view to the remission of your sins." Here is the one uniform Gospel of salvation from sin by repentance and faith in Christ.

When Peter presented the Gospel to the Gentiles through Cornelius it was the same gracious declaration: "To Christ all the prophets bear witness, that all who believe in him receive the forgiveness of their sins." When Paul and Silas were offering the Gospel to Europe in the person of the Philippian jailer, this official in great anxiety cried out: "O sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and these apostolic messengers replied: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and both you and your household will be saved."

Sickness is very strikingly distinguished from sin in the New Testament. Sickness may be a means of grace; we may be called upon to bear it for years patiently, for the glory of God. This can never be said respecting sin. As Paul puts it: "Most gladly will I boast of my infirmities, rather than complain of them in order that Christ's power may overshadow me: I take pleasure in infirmities, in the bearing of insults, in distress, in persecutions in grievous difficulties, for Christ's sake." Every Christian can say this, in some measure; but it cannot be said concerning sin. Christ saves us from sin, by bearing all its guilt in our behalf; he helps us to bear our sickness, and by his compassion schools us in humility and unselfishness, as in multitudes of suffering saints like John Calvin, Charlotte Elliott, Florence Nightingale. Never confound sickness with sin. Sickness is often God's messenger; sin is God's enemy, and we must be rid of it, wholly and forever. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.—Examiner.

Heredity and the New Birth.

We are told that there is a law of nature whereby parents transmit to their children certain qualities and tendencies. Every new soul that comes into the world inherits not only physical characteristics, but also intellectual characteristics and moral impulses from ancestors. Students of human nature are not agreed as to the value of this law. Some insist that there is nothing in it, while others maintain there is everything in it. We are assured that if one is born of bad ancestors there is no hope for him. Perhaps the truth is found between these two opinions. Heredity does not absolutely determine the course of life or the destiny of a soul, but it makes a large contribution to that end.

It is a grand thing to be well-born. There is a theory of birth which is not worthy of much consideration. Some

men would think their everlasting fortune made if they could be assured that a few drops of aristocratic or noble blood ran in their veins. But one may have descended from a long line of nobles, barons, millionaires, or kings, and for all that have a very bad character. But it does afford a great advantage to be a descendant of a long line of virtuous and pure men and women, among whom not one criminal, not one drunkard, not one whose blood was tarnished with vice could be found. Such an heritage would not absolutely secure the soul against the sins and follies of the world, but it would furnish a mighty fortification of defense in the battle of life.

On the other hand, base parents transmit base qualities to their children. Sometimes the seeds of physical disease contracted in a life of dissipation are transmitted. Tendencies to evil are also transmitted. That soul comes into the world under a great disadvantage who is descended from a long line of corrupt and wicked ancestors, whose nerves have been shattered, whose brains have suffered deterioration, and whose wills have been paralyzed by sin and crime from generation to generation.

Many men have dismissed all hope on the ground of heredity. Professor Phelps, of Andover, tells of a child of vice who said to those who tried to lead him into a better life: "My father was a drunkard, and my grandfather was a drunkard before him; I shall be a drunkard, too; we belong to a race of drunkards. I may as well accept my lot first as last; it is my fate." The same author tells of another who, when admonished concerning his quarrelsome ways, said: "My father was just so; his boys are all so. We can't live in peace together; we never did. We are all possessed of the devil; I can't help it." The neighbors of these unfortunate people who, on account of their vile heritage, do not have a fair chance in the world, usually unite with them in the discouraging song. They have no hope for these poor creatures and offer them little help.

But there is help. There is an all-sufficient remedy. The new birth is more than a match for the old Adam. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus is able to overcome the law of heredity. There is no one so low that grace cannot lift him up. Some of the best men and women in the world have come up from the lowest depths. However low-born one has been, he may be born again. When he is born of God he is high-born.

Not only the base-born but the best-born, need to be born again. At best there is something in our inheritance to fight against. Every man that comes into the world has some fault which he has inherited. The theologians call it depravity. Some who do not like this term unite with Tennyson in calling it "the ape and the tiger in man." Call it what we will, it is more than a match for our best efforts to purify ourselves. We cannot measure up to the standard of the stature of Christ. Nicodemus was well-born, but to him Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Saul of Tarsus was well-born. He was proud of his genealogy. He was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. But he must needs be born again. The new birth made a great change in Saul the Pharisee, as it did in Peter the swearing fisherman.

Our fathers laid the foundation by working among the poor, the wicked, the debased. They could readily see the necessity of a new birth. They were not high-born in a worldly sense. They had not the honors of the world. They saw that they must have honor from God, or go forever without honor; that they must have comfort from God or go forever comfortless. But now we preach to people who are not poor, not illiterate, nor destitute of worldly honor. When we tell them that they must be born again they do not so readily assent to the doctrine. Are they not happy? Have they not something to boast? They are separated from the low and base. They do not care for the doctrine of depravity. They belong to good families. They are content. Their heredity trends upward. Their life is sweet and broad and grand. But there is as much need of the new birth now as there ever was. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." We are all born blind. We need the great Physician from our infancy. If we have ignored Him until we are advanced in life our case is bad indeed, and growing worse every year. Let this doctrine of the new birth be proclaimed with new emphasis. Let us not be content with a Church of unregenerated members. Let us not boast of our natural birth. It is not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God that fitness for the kingdom of God must come.—New York Advocate.

Close to Our Heavenly Father.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

The peace, the purity and the power of every child of God depend very much upon his or her living very nigh to our heavenly Father. It is well for us not only to sing, "Nearer, my God to thee," but also to pray, "Nearer, O God to me." We are too apt to think of him as dwelling at an indefinite distance from us—as a Father up in heaven, and not as a Father close by us. His actual nearness should be both a solemn caution and a sweet comfort. Not a thought in our inmost heart is concealed from him; not a secret sin we commit that is not as visible to his all-searching eye as the noon-day sun. This ought to have a prodigious restraining power upon us.

What a comfort it is that God is so close to us that he is

always within speaking distance! A Christian's prayer is not a message dispatched to a far-away throne; it is his intimate converse with One near at hand. Childlike faith reverently and lovingly talks with God, breathes confession of sin into his open ear, tells him its secrets, and unbosoms the whole soul to him. In perplexity and trouble we want a helper near at hand. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day. What our heroic President often felt amid his distressing perplexities we have often felt in life's dark hours. The child-feeling is waked up in us, and we want an Almighty Father close by us that we can talk to and lean upon. The persecuted apostle in Caesar's judgment hall, with guards in iron mail on every side, realized this cheering truth when he said, "No man stood by me, but all men forsook me; notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me." The sincere prayer of the true Christian is a breathing of the heart's desire into an ear that is close at hand. I don't believe that ear is ever deaf to the humble honest prayer of faith. Every proper desire from the heart of God's child obtains recognition and a proper answer in the heart of God Himself. The pull of our prayer may not seem to move the everlasting throne, but—like the pull on a line from the bow of a boat—it may draw us into closer fellowship with God, and into fuller harmony with His wise and holy will. When our desires chime with the will of God we are sure to receive some blessing.

If we live near to our heavenly Father we should strive to realize His constant companionship. Wherever a devout soul meets God is a sacred spot, whether it be like Jacob's solitary pillar of stone or a Sabbath sanctuary. We ought to make the workshop, the counting room, the study, the kitchen, the farmer's field sacred with God's presence. The nursery in which the pious mother trains her child is one of God's dwelling places and I have seen many a sick chamber that was the vestibule of heaven. Happy the pastor who returning to his study, finds both his Bible open and the mercy seat close beside him, with precious promises strewn thick about it! The nearer he gets to his Lord and Master in that study, the nearer he will get to the hearts of his people. The man of business who gets a little time both in parlor work and in his pulpit. The man of business who gets a little time with God in the morning, over his Bible or on his knees, will go to the tumult of the day all the stronger. To him the day with prayer will keep it from ravelling out into many a folly or sin. Stout old Luther used to say that he "could not get on without two hours a day in prayer and close fellowship with God."

The much-talked-about "higher life" is simply living close to God, on the Sabbath in his sanctuary, and through the week in our own dwellings and places of business. It is keeping our citizenship in heaven, and our eyes above the blinding mists of worldliness, and our hearts in close touch with our divine Master. They that thus wait on God shall renew their strength; they shall mount up as eagles. Their outlook is wide; their spiritual atmosphere bracing; their fellowship with their Father and their Saviour is sweet; they rehearse a great deal of heaven before they get there. Close to God here they will find the gates of pearl opening to them all in good time, and they will go in to be "forever with their Lord."—Christian Advocate.

Our Lord's Exaltations.

I think I hear the song, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The bars of massy light are all unloosed; the pearly gates are all wide open flung; and as he passes through, mark you, the highest joy which swell his soul is that he has opened those gates, not for himself—for they were never shut on him—but he has opened them for sinners. It was for this indeed, he died; and it is for this that he ascends on high, that he may "open the kingdom of heaven for all believers." See him as he rides through heaven's street! "Thou hast ascended up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts from men." Ah! but hear the refrain—for this is the sweetest note of all the hymn—"Yea, for the rebellious, also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." The scattered gifts of His coronation, the lavish bounties of his ascension, are still for sinners. He is exalted on high—for what? To give repentance and remission of sins. He still wears upon his breastplate the name of sinners; upon his hands and upon his heart does he still bear the resemblance of those sinners; and every day for the sinner's sake he doth not hold his peace, and for the sinners sake he doth not rest, but cries unto God until every sinner shall be brought safely home.—C. H. Spurgeon.

You should thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle never knew.—Sol.