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Poetry.

HE KNOWETH OUR FRAME.

WRITTEN FOR AN INVALID

He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we are dust Ps. 103: 14.

Lord, is it wrong—this state of things?

I hardly know:

Each little bird its anthem sings;

I feel so low!

So restless, so disheartened, and so weary!

Life seems to me so de-olate and dreary!

This body seems to drag me down:

I cannot see

The beautiful, unfading crown,

Prepared for me.

Some of thy children seem so full of light!

But as for me, my day is almost night!

I do believe it was for me

That Jesus died:

And Heaven's door, I think I see,

Is opened wide:

I do believe that he will let me in,

And that his blood has cleansed me from my sin.

Oh why then shall I feel afraid?

Is it not true

My sins were all on Jesus laid,

And sorrows too?

Hath he not grace enough for all to-morrows?

For surely he hath borne our griefs and sor-

rows!

My Father! oh how sweet the name!

Art thou not near?

Say, dost thou pity me?—or blame?

I long to hear!

FATHER! My Father! This is all my trust

That thou rememberest I am but dust;

Thou knowest well my frame, for thou

Hast fashioned me:

The darkness all around me now

Is light to thee!

Then take me by the hand, and lead me on,

The poor blind child!—until the night be

gone!

Until the shadows flee away

Before the sun;

And glorious, everlasting day

Shall have begun!

Meanwhile, in love and pity, lead thou me,

For all my expectation is from thee!

HEART TO HEART.

Religious.

THE BLOOD MARK.

BY REV. J. G. HALL.

The paschal lamb of Egypt was a type of Christ. Paul expressly calls Christ "our passover." God had said to every Israelitish family, "Slay a lamb and sprinkle your door with its blood, which shall be to you for a token; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt." And how impressively similar the language of the Saviour, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." There must be the sign of the lamb, or there is no safety.

And, in general, there seems to be no prominent feature of the paschal lamb, which does not significantly point to Christ; who was also said to be "a lamb without blemish, holy, harmless, and undefiled;" not a bone of whom, moreover, was broken. The Israelites were not only to slay the lamb, and sprinkle with its blood, but also to eat it; just as believers, at the table of the communion, eat, discovering by faith, beneath the elements, the body of the Lord. The lamb of Egypt was both slain and eaten. So the Lamb of Calvary is a lamb slain and a lamb eaten. The two lambs were type and antitype to each other.

Of that great plan of God for the protection of the Israelites, the lamb and its blood were only its visible part. Everything else about it was invisible; to be taken hold of by faith, if at all, as of Moses it is said, "he kept the pass-over by faith." And as there was manifestly no physical protection to them in the dead lamb, nor in its sprinkled blood, so it is clear that their real protection lay in that part of the plan that was out of sight. The power was of God, but the conditions were of

man: that is to say, it was not a plan to act arbitrarily, irrespectively of conditions. If any one was careless, or indifferent, or unbelieving, all he had to do was to neglect the sign of the slain lamb and the sprinkled blood, and the death-angel would not pass him by. Of such a want of faith, an unsprinkled door was the token. While, on the other hand, the sprinkled door was the token, or sign, of faith. Of all such as had faith enough in God's message to slay the lamb, he required the sign. "Show my angel the sign," said he. It would not do for any to say, "God, in his adorable omniscience, knows that we have killed the lamb, and his angel must also know it, and hence of what need is the sign?" No, No! They must hang out the sign.

And, moreover, it must be just the sign specified, and no other. No Israelite might say, "I will put some other mark upon my door, that I apprehend will answer the same purpose." Or, "I will hang a silken cord in the window," as did Rahab afterward. No; but he must put upon his door just the mark specified; God's mark; nothing more, nothing less.

Now, this is highly representative of gospel faith, which passes by and avoids everything else but Christ, as its appropriate object, and hope fastening itself upon him alone; and then shows, in the appointed way, that it has done so. "Wont it do," says a soul, "if I repent, or reform, or begin a new life in works of righteousness, and put myself hereafter upon good behavior with God?" No, says the Spirit; for these things alone do not necessarily show the blood. They are like the supposed unscripted mark on the door, as of chalk, or a silken cord in the window.

No repentance is accepted of God that is not blood-bought; that has not the Christ-mark upon it; that has not gone with him, as it were, to the cross, to be pierced with its nails and its spear; that has not gone with him to Gethsemane and the tomb. "For him," saith Peter, "hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Thus, repentance itself must be gotten from Christ, or be brought to him from the blood-mark.

The house, in the case of the Israelites in Egypt, represents the soul of every man. And this soul, if it would find acceptance with God, must put upon itself the mark of Christ, of that "blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." Without that mark visible, the angel of destruction has no commission to pass over and spare it. And if the soul can, but will not, put upon it this all-protecting mark, then what other truthful epitaph can belong to it at last, than this, "O soul, thou hast destroyed thyself!" For it has, in a most solemn sense, trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, an unholy thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace.

This holy blood mark has saved millions in ages past, and is to save millions in ages to come. The apostle John says, that he saw in heaven "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands;" and every one of them had on the blood-mark. For he proceeds to say, that they "had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple."

STATE OF MEN AFTER DEATH.

BY REV. ALVAH HOVEY, D. D.

It is shown in my last paper that the souls of good men pass directly through death into Paradise, where, freed from sin and in company with their glorified Lord, as well as with the saints of other days, they await in holy fellowship the morning of the resurrection. The Biblical statements alleged in proof of this were seen to be very clear and

conclusive. It seems therefore a waste of words to bring forward other testimony in support of the doctrine that the souls of the saved will be at home with Christ until the last day. Yet I cannot withhold a reference to Stephen's inspired petition: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and the Saviour's precious words in the evening before His betrayal: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am there ye may be also;" for these passages, according to their obvious and true sense, are in perfect agreement with the more explicit ones considered in the preceding article.

But having shown from the "sure word of prophecy" that believers in Christ will be with Him in Paradise during the intermediate state, a question which has been in many hearts may now be answered, namely: Do the Scriptures afford evidence that the souls of the departed are ministering spirits to their friends on earth? There is reason for attempting a reply to this question; for not many years since a distinguished lawyer, writing to me of the death of his Christian mother, said that he "believed her unseen presence would be with him through life and her secret suggestions be more useful to him in the future than her pious counsels had been in the past;" and the chief teacher in "Gates Ajar" is made to say, "What more natural than that we shall spend our best energies as we spent them here,—in comforting, teaching, helping, saving people whose very souls we love better than our own?"

In fact it would be very unnatural if we did not. "God works by the use of means," as the preachers say. Why not use Roy as well as Gabriel? What archangel could understand and reach the peculiarities of your nature, as he could? . . . I suppose that Roy knows what you are doing and feeling as well as, perhaps better than, he knew it three months ago—when he was still alive. Now is there any foundation laid in the Word of God for this view? any evidence that the souls of good men are, after death, ministering spirits to their friends on earth?

In answering this question I refer again to the words of Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians: "But I am held in a strait by the two; having a desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account." From this language, which is a pretty exact version of the Greek original, it must be inferred that the spirits of good men in the middle state can do far less for the benefit of Christians here than may be done by those still in the flesh; and the same thing is taught by the previous clause, which assumes that "living in the flesh" is, for such a man as Paul, equivalent to "fruit of labor," or, in other words, to bearing fruit to the honor of Christ. But the passage does not go far enough to prove that departed spirits can render no service to their friends here; it only proves that their service, if they perform any, is less valuable than what they were able to render in the flesh.

But the account of the rich man and Lazarus seems to go a little further and imply that the "spirits of the just made perfect" do not, while in the middle state, have any intercourse with the friends they have left behind; do not, at any rate, employ themselves habitually in leading their earthly friends, by secret suggestions or otherwise, in the way they should go. For, in the first place, Abraham declined to send Lazarus to comfort, teach, help or save the rich man's surviving brothers; in the second place, Abraham denied that Lazarus could do any more for their good than Moses and the prophets; and in the third place, he took it for granted that Lazarus must rise from the dead in order to testify to the living. For while the rich man speaks of one "going to his brothers from the dead," a somewhat ambiguous expression, Abraham refers to the same event

as 'rising from the dead,' and the structure of the Greek original forbids us to make any distinction between 'going' and 'rising' from the dead. It is evident, therefore, that the only way that occurred to the mind of Abraham by which one could reach the living from Paradise, was that of a resurrection. And, so understood, this passage appears to agree with several expressions of the Old Testament which represent death as putting an end to our relations with the present world.

But there is a sentence in the last chapter of the Bible which seems at first sight to favor the opinion that the spirits of the dead perform angelic service to mankind. In the common version it reads thus: "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of thy brethren keep the sayings of this book: worship God;" and it is an angel who says this, seeming to affirm that he was once a prophet on earth. But the original text does not warrant this interpretation. The angel simply asserts that he is a fellow-servant of John and of his brethren the prophets, literally, "a fellow-servant of thee and of thy brethren the prophets," that is, a servant of God as well as they, and therefore not entitled to worship. This, clearly, is all which the language asserts, and therefore it sheds no light on the question in debate.

Finally, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is sometimes appealed to in support of the doctrine that departed saints minister unseen to the living: Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." But this passage does not speak of any service rendered to the living by departed worthies; at most it proves them to be interested spectators of our spiritual course; and I can hardly withhold the expression of a doubt whether it proves so much as this.

To give the result of my examination in a word; the doctrine of frequent intercourse between the spirits of the departed and their friends on earth has no foundation in the Word of God. Good men may doubtless learn a great deal as to the kingdom of Christ and its progress here from their Lord and his holy angels; for, as angels measure distance, Paradise is not far from earth and there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Paradise is a world of light, for He who is both Life and Light is there, the centre of attraction to all souls. The just made perfect are with the Lord, a blessed company and fellowship, knowing and enjoying far more than can be known or enjoyed here.

"And then He drew me closer, and Himself With His own hand, His pierced hand of love, Wiped the still falling tear drops from my face, And told me I was His and he was mine, And how my Father loved me, and He loved."

INABILITY FROM INACTIVITY.

BY REV. J. C. POSTER.

Many are unable to engage in the performance of religious duties because they have so long neglected the service of God. Their power to act has been lost through continued inaction. Here is a professed Christian, living in the neglect of family prayer, and it may be, even in the neglect of regular closet prayer, while he seldom attends the social meetings, and perhaps is never heard to speak or pray in the assembly of the saints. But it was not always thus with him. The time was when he was foremost in these duties. Once he sustained the family altar, from which the morning and evening incense ascended with the voice of prayer and praise. Once he entered into his closet at frequent stated times, and then his soul was wont to linger, as where the most delight was found. Once he was not of those who forsake the assembling of themselves together, but ordinarily he could be found among those who fearing, loving and serving God, speak

often one to another, nor was he a silent one among them. Remind him of his obligations and he will probably refer to his inability, which perhaps he sincerely bewails, while he speaks of his many fruitless attempts to return to the ways in which he once delighted, but which he has gradually abandoned under the influence of a slothful spirit.

AN OLD MAN'S ADVICE.

The venerable President Finney gives in the *Independent* sixty-three separate pieces of advice to preachers, all of them valuable, but the most noteworthy and important are herewith presented:

See that you personally know and daily live upon Christ.

Be full of prayer, whenever you attempt to preach, and go from your closet to your pulpit with the inward groanings of the Spirit pressing for utterance at your lips.

See that "the fear of man that bringeth a snare" is not upon you. Let your people understand that you fear God too much to be afraid of them.

Preach from experience, and not from hearsay, or mere reading and study.

Give your most intense thought to the study of ways and means by which you may save souls. Make this the great and intense study of your life.

Beware of leaning on commentaries.

Consult them when convenient, but judge for yourself, in the light of the Holy Ghost.

Never let the question of your popularity with your people influence your preaching.

Never let the question of salary deter you from "declaring the whole counsel of God whether men will hear or forbear."

Do not temporize, lest you lose the confidence of your people, and thus fail to save them. They cannot thoroughly respect you as an ambassador of Christ if they see that you dare not do your duty.

Be especially attentive to the wants and instruction of the poor.

Suffer not yourself to be bribed into a compromise with sin by donation parties.

See that your own habits are in all respects correct; that you are temperate in all things—free from the stain or smell of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or anything of which you have reason to be ashamed, and which may stumble others.

Avoid affectation and sham in all things. Be what you profess to be, and you will have no temptation to "make believe."

Suffer not yourself to be publicly treated as a mendicant, or you will come to be despised by a large class of your hearers.

PASCAL'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"I love poverty because Jesus Christ loved it. I love wealth because it gives me the means of assisting the wretched. I keep faith with all men. I do not render evil to those who do it to me; but I desire a state for them like unto my own, in which I receive neither good nor evil from the hand of man. I endeavor to be just, truthful, sincere to all men; and I have a tenderness of heart for those to whom God has united me more closely; and whether I am alone or in the sight of men, in all my actions I have in sight God, who must judge them, and to whom I have consecrated them all."

"These are my sentiments, and all the days of my life I bless my redeemer, who has put them into me; and who, from a man full of misery, concupiscence, pride, and ambition, has, by the strength of his grace, made a man exempt from all evils. And to this grace all the glory is due, since I have in myself nothing but misery and error."