

Sunday Reading.

Hymnic Song.

Sometimes, in quiet reverie,
When day is growing dim,
The heart is singing silently
A sweet, unwritten hymn.

The strains are not to measure wrought
By cunning of the mind;
But seem like hymning angels brought
From Heaven, and left behind.

The misty hills of bygone grief,
Once dark to look upon,
Stand out like blessings in relief
Against the setting sun.

The rain may fall, the wind may blow,
The soul unhindered sings,
While, like the bird 'neath sheltering bough,
She sits with folded wings—

A brief and pleasant resting space,
A glance at Beulah land,
Before she girds herself apace
For work that waits the hand.

Then giving thanks to Him who poured
Refreshments in her cup,
She hears the calling of her Lord,
And takes her labour up.

T. MACKELLAR.

Comfort in the Dark Hour.

"There never was such an affliction as mine," said a poor sufferer, restlessly tossing in her bed in one of the wards of a city hospital. "I don't think there ever was such a racking pain."

"Once" was faintly uttered from the next bed.

The first speaker paused for a moment, and in a still more impatient tone resumed her complaint:

"Nobody knows what I pass through. Nobody ever suffered more pain."

"One," was again whispered from the same direction.

"I take it you mean yourself, poor soul! but—"

"O, not myself! not me!" exclaimed the other, and her pale face flushed up to the very temples, as if some wrong had been offered—not to herself, but to another.

She spoke with such earnestness that her restless companion lay still for several seconds and gazed intently on her face. The cheeks were now wan and sunken, and the parched lips were drawn back from the mouth as if in pain. Yet there dwelt an extraordinary sweetness in the clear gray eyes, and a refinement on the placid brow, such as can only be imparted by a heart-acquaintance with Him who is "full of grace and truth."

"O, not myself! not me!" she repeated.

There was a short pause, and the following words, uttered in the same low tone, slowly and solemnly broke the midnight silence of the place:

"And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. * * * And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots. * * * And they passed by reviled him, wagging their heads. * * * And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?'

The voice ceased, and for several minutes not a syllable was spoken. The night nurse rose from her chair by the fire and mechanically handed a cup of barley water, flavored with lemon-juice and sugar, to the lips of both sufferers.

"Thank you, nurse," said the last speaker.

"They gave him gall for his meat, and in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink."

"She is talking about Jesus Christ," said the other woman, already beginning to toss restlessly from side to side. "But," added she, "talking about His sufferings can't mend ours—at least not mine."

"But it lightens hers," said the nurse.

"I wonder how?"

"Hush!"

And the gentle voice again took up the strain:

"He hath borne our griefs, and carried out sorrows. * * * He was wounded for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with his stripes we are healed."

The following day, as some ladies visiting the hospital, passed by the cots, they handed to each a few fragrant flowers.

"The gentle voice was heard again: 'If God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith!'"

A few days passed away, when, on a bright Sabbath morning, as the sun was rising, the nurse noticed the lips of the sufferer moving, and leaning over her she heard these words: "Going home! I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Her eyes closed and the nurse knew that the hand of death was grasping the cords of life. A moment more and all was over. The soul had gone.—*Sword and Trowel.*

Anticipating the Last Judgment.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

There is a story told of two soldiers who, being in the valley of Jehoshaphat, the one said to the other, "Here in this place shall be the general judgment and therefore I will now take up my place where I will then sit;" and so, lifting up a stone, he sat down upon it, as taking his place beforehand; but as he sat there, such a quaking and trembling fell upon him, that falling to the earth, he remembered the day of judgment with horror and amazement forever after.

Might it not be of exceeding value to many of our friends, if they would try and seat themselves in the place which they will occupy at the last great day? Let them think that it has come, and that they are present, for it will soon be so. Let them look up and realize the scene. Behold, a great white cloud comes floating upward and forward and on the cloud there is a great white throne, from which everything is reflected of the past and present of mortal men. Gazing around for a moment the mighty multitude astounds and amazes the beholder. The dead are there, and all the millions of the living. The sea has yielded up every corpse, and every foot of earth teems with myriads upon myriads of long buried men. All eyes are turned towards the cloud, and the throne, and the Son of God, who sits thereon, surrounded by an innumerable company of angels. Who can adequately conceive,

The pomp of that tremendous day,
When Christ with clouds shall come?
See the books are opened, and the last assize begins, with sound of trumpet. It is even now at our doors; and the thought of it is enough to arouse the fears and startle the consciences of all but the most brutal and graceless of men.

The putting off or forgetting of the Lord's coming and the judgement is the cause of much hardness of heart. The evil servant would not have behaved himself so ill if he had looked upon his master's return as near at hand. Men who have death at their elbow, and see judgment before their eyes, are likely to break off their sins by righteousness, and seek to be reconciled to God. I have heard of the women of a certain island, that the first sheet they wove was the winding-sheet, and this they kept by them. I am afraid that this fashion has long since died out, and that both men and women live as if there would be no hereafter. This is the root of much of the impiety of our age.

Sit down dear reader, if you are as yet unsaved, and take an hour for this solemn exercise; it may prove the turning-point of your history. In a few years, you will be one of that vast assembly, and have to answer for every deed and word of your life. Think of it long; picture it vividly; let it work upon your mind. Though at the first it fill you with fear and trembling, it may conduct you to the Saviour's feet, and then, looking up to him with penitential faith, you may hear how to "have boldness in the day of judgment." If you fly to Jesus as your Saviour, you will not fear to face him as your King. It has been well said "Thou wilt meet the Great Day well if thou get the Great Judge to judge thee every day."

Suppose that this night you should start up, and find the day of grace over, and the day of judgement beginning! Suppose you should within an hour hear

the Lord Jesus say to you, 'Depart!' These are no vain imaginings. If you remain as you are, they will be true ere long. Do but put them before your mind's eye a little before the time, that you may judge of the wisdom of running so grave a risk. Those who wish to act well on great public occasions rehearse their parts beforehand. Unconverted friend, rehearse your part, and prepare yourself to receive the dread sentence which awaits all who are out of Christ. Are you afraid to think of it? Be much more afraid of enduring it! If even to dream of the Last Day is a terrible event, what must it be then to be there in reality? The prisoner who will not even think of his trial is in his conscience assured of a verdict of condemnation. Would he not be far wiser to seek for a Counsellor to plead his cause? Will you not seek one? Jesus the faithful Counsellor, asks no fee. Commit your cause into his hand and you need not fear the Last Assize.

Life a serious matter.

Most people say, "Death is a solemn matter." And so it is. Death separates us from those we love, sinks the body into the cold grave, and sends the soul into the unseen world. But is not life a much greater and more solemn affair? The Bible does not tell us much of the way in which men die, neither that their eternal condition depends upon it, nor what they have said and done during their illness and in the hour of death. The great question is: How have they lived? What use have they made of their time, their property, their privileges and their influence? What have they done for their neighbor? And for their God? We may conclude and be convinced, that as men have lived, so they will die!

"Oh, had I but known that I should die as I have lived!" cried an Eastern king, as he was dying. And if you, dear reader, wish to know what your end will be, you must consider what your life is. Is sin your friend, or your horror? Does true repentance urge you to forsake each sinful way? Is your whole trust resting on the grace of God, through the merits of Jesus Christ? Do you pray with a feeling of guilt and danger for mercy and acceptance through Him who died on the cross to save from sin? And do you prove, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the sincerity of your trust, by a holy life?

These questions must surely arise, once for all. Fix your attention on them now. Understand that life is a sacred thing, and as you make use of it, your eternal condition will be in the hereafter. Be persuaded that a life in Christ and in obedience to the will of God is the happiest life on this earth, and the only way to everlasting life.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."—(Heb. ix. 27).

The Burning of the Books.

The people of Ephesus could not have given their heathen neighbors better and stronger evidence of their conversion to Christ than by the burning of their books on magic and other curious arts. The value of these books, we are told, was very great. The simple sacrifice of so much money was in itself a proof of the profoundest convictions. Then, too, the fact that these people were thus willing to sever the tie that bound them to the old life, was the best manifestation of a thorough change of heart.

Herein we may learn a lesson for our own times. The best way for those who profess to come out on the Lord's side is, to separate themselves at once and forever from their old life. They that cling to their former sinful companions or manner of life, are sure eventually to find them a hindrance and a snare. The only safe plan is to bid them a final and irrevocable farewell. There are plenty of books, too, now-a-days, with reference to which the best thing we can do is to burn them. The young man or woman who has them in his or her possession, should not give them away, or loan them where they may still prove a temptation, but should consign them at once to the flames. Such bonfires as these would be as glorious as the burning of the Pope's Bull by Luther.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Joseph Cook's Lectures.

LECTURE 169 OF THE MONDAY LECTURE-SHIP.

LECTURE 7 OF THE PRESENT COURSE.

Prelude: The Rationalism in the New Congregational Creed.

Interlude: Questions answered.

Lecture: Spiritual Truths verifiable by experiment: A Cosmopolitan Faith.

THE PRELUDE: NEW CONGREGATIONAL CREED.

There is at the present time a reaction in England against the doctrine of probation after death. Canon Farrar approached but does not hold the doctrine. The last Bampton Lectures oppose it stoutly. Luthardt thunders against it in Germany.

The New Creed has been published to the four winds. It is to be left to produce its own impression, is not to be enforced upon the churches. But it has several important omissions:

(1) It does not make the issues of the judgment depend upon the deeds done in the body.

(2) It does not assert a belief in the resurrection of the unjust as well as the just.

(3) It does not make the Scriptures the only standard of religious truth.

(4) It does not assert that the sacrifice of Christ was expiatory.

(5) It does not assert that the Holy Spirit is of one substance with the Father.

(6) It does not sufficiently emphasize the doctrines of regeneration and sanctification.

(7) It violates the creeds of most of the individual churches of England and America in the countenance given to probation after death.

(8) It is emphatic on Infant Baptism, while it is loose on Inspiration. Among the remedies proposed in view of these defects were:

(1) A statement of the reasons of the minority of the Committee for not signing the Creed.

(2) A wide and impartial canvass of the churches.

(3) The appointment of a large, new Committee to prepare an improved Statement.

(4) Let it not be hastily adopted by the churches.

THE INTERLUDE: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(1) Are there large advantages in the system of weekly payments for labouring men.

(2) Sunday School instruction is too much taking the place of home nurture.

(3) The mode of Sabbath observance can best be determined by a rigidly honest application of the Christian consciousness.

(4) Personally I do not attend the theatre. There may be good in it, yet the evil is so great one does not care to touch even its fringes. Too many photographs of half-clad actresses abound.

(5) A belief in an endless future punishment is of course not essential to salvation, yet it is a grave sin if one wilfully and consciously rejects the teaching of the Christ on this subject.

(6) Knowledge is subordinated to belief in Christian Theology, because until we yield utterly to God we do not gain true spiritual knowledge.

LECTURE: SPIRITUAL TRUTHS VERIFIABLE BY EXPERIMENT.

I exalt Natural Theology but I recognize its limitations. Natural Theology is founded on truth. It belongs to the constitution of the universe. But it may not be fully ascertained by the unaided human capacities. I recognize the light which has come to us from Revelation to aid us in our interpretation of the truths inherent in the nature of things.

Standing now at the grave of Lotze, let me call hither Keshub Chunder Sen and Marcus Aurelius, and Plato and Socrates, and all devout theists from every age. In this sublime presence let me outline my creed in natural theology.

(1) Natural laws enswathe us, saturate us, fill everything above us, below us, within us. If we take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, if we ascend into heaven, if we descend into hell, they are there. But they are *He*.

(2) It is a Person who presses upon us in all natural laws in the world of facts, in the world of laws, in the world of worths. It is a person who touches us in all the facts, laws and standards of the True, the Beautiful and the Good.

(3) Our Intuitions result from the indwelling of that Infinite Personality in our souls.

(4) The spiritual instincts, too, are contacts with a Person in whom we live and move and have our being.

(5) The Intuitions and the Instincts are the source of our faith in God, freedom and immortality. This faith is verifiable by experience.

(6) The presence of God upon the soul and within the soul is never to be escaped by the soul in this life or the next.

(7) It is self-evident that two cannot walk together unless they are agreed.

(8) Similarity of feeling with God is a necessity to our harmonization with our unescapable environment. The soul must learn to love what God loves and hate what God hates.

(9) Harmony of the human faculties with each other, each at its best, is also necessary to the peace of the soul.

(10) This harmony is possible only by total, affectionate, irreversible self-surrender to conscience, to the Person who touches the soul in the holy of holies of conscience.

(11) The facts of unrest, imperfection, guilt, point to the necessity of spiritual regeneration.

(12) These organizing and redemptive truths are the unassailable basis of the religion of Theism. They were earnestly held by Keshub Chunder Sen.

(13) Communion with God in Nature means communion with the highest in Nature. *The highest in the individual soul is conscience, and the highest in history is the Christ.*

Conscience has appeared at its best but once, and then in the Sinless One. Whatever more he may have been, Christ was certainly man at his climax. The highest outcome of the forces around us is the sinless character of the Christ. In him the conscience was obeyed. Do you wish to have harmony with your environment? Then you must have harmony with the conscience in the Christ, harmony with the Christ-like.

(14) Our personal responsibility to God is a commanding reality: we are face to face with a Person, infinite in all perfections.

(15) When evil is wilfully done by one person against another the inexorable laws of the conscience require an atonement to be made.

(16) Conscience requires of the offender confession, restitution, the purpose of a better life, remorse.

(17) It also requires that mercy and forgiveness should, by some emphatic act, be exhibited to the one who has offended.

(18) When sin is committed against God, all the demands of conscience as to confession, restitution, punishment, remorse, a new life, and an emphatic act of mercy and forgiveness, are the demands of God.

(19) The laws of conscience are but the methods of God's action in the soul. You assert that God does not inflict punishment, but that it is the result of law? But natural law is God's action. He is a father and a judge. He is infinitely tender and He is infinitely just. That which occurs under natural law occurs under the personal touch of God, in life, in death, beyond death.

(20) Our past is irreversible. Our conscience and God must forever face our record of sin.

(21) It is demonstrably necessary to our peace that we have deliverance not only from the love of sin but also from the guilt of sin.

(22) Natural Theology therefore points out the necessity of the Atonement as well as the necessity of Regeneration.

(23) It is a fact of universal experience that yielding utterly and gladly to the conscience brings light and peace to the soul.

(24) Merely Natural Theology, I contend, includes not only the doctrines of Regeneration and an Atonement but also the doctrine of a Holy Spirit as a Personal Being or the Oversoul within the soul.

(25) The Oversoul within the soul develops an increasing consciousness of sin.

(26) If this sin is abandoned then is there a growing bliss, a regenerate consciousness.

(27) The Lord, the Giver of Life, to whom natural theology points as the supreme power over mind, as well as over matter, knocks at the door of conscience. The soul was made by this Person who enswathes us. Our power of shutting or opening the door was given us by him. It is his knocking which awakens us and woos us to such an attitude as makes it easy for us to open the door. We must do so gladly or we cannot do so at all.

The key of the soul is a choice, a confirmed preference, a total self-surrender. It is not an iron resolution. It is an affectionate opening of the soul to God.

This power of opening is stimulated by the Divine knocking and our faculties have been given us from on high.

Therefore it may be said that the entrance is wholly God's work. Never-

theless, there is a human power and duty in this matter. We have the natural power to open the door. When we open it and give to him who knocks the key, at that instant he enters and floods the palace of the soul with the effulgence of his own glory. This, I contend, with the consent of Lotze, of Plato, of Marcus Aurelius, of Keshub Chunder Sen, is a fact of ethical science. All spiritual truths which can be verified by experiment ought to become, in the name of Science, a Cosmopolitan Faith.

Undoubtedly, if you bring natural truth or revealed truth to that light in the soul, you will find a new illumination cast upon them. This is what I call the true doctrine of Christian consciousness. If you bring your personal sins to that light, they will be burned up in its intense flame.

Is that light enough to save us? Is that light enough to give us the sense of forgiveness? Is that light enough to make us sure that we have obtained remission of sins?

The Christian doctrine is that Christ is at the right hand of God. He sheds forth thence his spirit upon all believers. Where is the right hand of God? Everywhere. (Prof. R. D. Hitchcock, *Journal of Christian Philosophy*, June, 1883). Put aside your narrow notions of a local appearance of God. It may be that there is something corresponding to our poor human conception on this point; but when I am told that Christ is at God's right hand, I love to remember that whoever is at God's right hand is everywhere. The omnipresent, essential Christ, the Logos, is knocking everywhere, and when admitted to the soul gives the evidence of his approval. Nevertheless I believe it to be a fact of human history that no great company of believers, however it may have been with individuals here and there, has ever received anything like a deep, reasonable, fruitifying conviction of pardon, except under the Christian scheme. The Christian believes that he has the inner witness of his acceptance with God through Christ.

We cannot say that the Christian consciousness is enough to prove the deity of our Lord. That would be a false use of it. It is, however, enough to prove that the Holy Spirit is given us when we yield to God. But who knows of any company of men who have ever drawn from the testimony of the inner witness a full assurance of pardon of sin unless it be a company of Christians under the action of the Holy Spirit, and resting not merely on its testimony but on that of the great external facts of revealed truth? Before the day of Pentecost there were many large companies, even of theistic believers, who had such a hope of pardon, except through sanctification by a spirit to be poured out more fully in the latter days, and through an atonement, then to be made.

Plato, more wise than many theists, saw the insufficiency of theism even in its most lofty development. Make mere theism great, if you would make it seem small. Make natural theology efficient, if you would prove it to be insufficient. Is the regenerate consciousness vivified and exalted by the oversoul within the soul, a sufficient guide to religious truth, without an external revelation? Keshub Chunder Sen answered "Yes." So did Emerson. I must answer No. But its insufficiency does not undermine our faith in its efficiency. Let us maintain that it is efficient; let us maintain, with equal emphasis, that it is insufficient. [Applause.]

Respectfully,

E. M. CHESLEY.

For the Christian Messenger.

"The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit."

DEAR EDITOR,—

I was much interested in the perusal of an article on the above subject in the CHRISTIAN MESSENGER of Feb. 27, written by my friend, Mr. E. M. Chesley, of Boston.

Among the admirable things it contains may be discovered an inharmonious as to its teaching.

Doubtless there is "a very vague idea prevalent among many professed disciples of the Christ as to the nature and offices and reality of the Holy Spirit." Mr. C. says: "It is the glorious privilege of the Christian to have the inward assurance of the veritable presence of the Paraclete the Helper, the Spirit of truth," implying by the following sentence that this presence is one and the same with the "manifestation of the Spiritual Christ," and that the condition of this manifestation is "obedience to the known will of the Christ"—"a renunciation of the world and self." I agree with the writer that "to fulfil this condition of obedience is no trifling matter." Yet it seems to me that his words mislead when he explains the fulfilment. He says it means, "work,

prayer, understanding, &c., &c., a Christian condition," which is the "gospel" to be "worked" to be the fruit of which the Holy Spirit may be said to be present. Is this statement self-evident? The question by what comes into the self? By faith, abnegation, to be done, filled with Christ, assurance, Holy Spirit receive, whatsoever we pray, Spirit, to abide, be answer, your heart, 3, 14.) dition be and belie His word, "filled with the fullness seen in to do) obedience and "w shall k accepts this ple our way Him to This "a commit His will We the in the boldness shall n hope." says: in him Is the equivalent Let me with the the cre working Does work in the str monious opening ation of Further with w knowing to the form w Spirit? Holy S fullness if we are from k not pu can we Says I know know contin present appare cannot in stead tian "pure," all filit having to "a enteri fulnes know "puri 15, 9.) hearts Peter clean spirit, the v away inwar gives, own v Ye mand that mani man A show ment but is the h heart keep be co of ab prop