

MY ROCK AND REFUGE.

God! Thou art my rock of strength,
And my home is in Thine arms;
Thou wilt send me help at length,
And I feel no wild alarms.
Sin nor death can pierce the shield
Thy defence has o'er me thrown;
Up to Thee myself I yield,
And my sorrows are Thine own.

Thou my shelter from the blast,
Thou, my strong defence art ever;
Though my sorrows thicken fast,
Yet I know thou leav'st me — NEVER.
When my foe puts forth his might,
And would tread me in the dust,
To this rock I take my flight,
And I conquer him through TRUST.

Christians, cast on Him your load,
To your tower of refuge fly;
Know He is the living God,
Ever to His creatures nigh.
Seek his ever-open door
In your hours of utmost need;
All your hearts before Him pour,
He will send you help with speed.

A. H. Francke.

SUCCESS IN LIFE.

This is what we all dream of and toil for. But what is it? One thinks that wealth is success, another that position and reputation are the goal of a true ambition. A few seek learning for its own sake, and fewer yet live to do good. A great deal depends upon the ideal that we adopt in early life. And hence the importance of calling the attention of the young to this matter, and helping them to understand what is real success. I recall to-day an incident and a conversation from the first year of my residence on this coast. It may help somebody who is looking forward to seek a true prize instead of one that will prove "like Dead Sea fruits, that tempt the eye, but turn to ashes on the lips."

I was travelling with a friend. We passed a large house in the suburbs of a California city. My friend said: "There lives John Smith, whose career is remarkable. He is one of the most successful men that I ever knew."

"In what has he been successful?" I asked.

"Why, in making money, of course. That's what we call success in California."

"How did he make it?"

"In almost every way. He is one of those peculiar men who seem to be lineally descended from old Midas that we used to read about at school. Everything that he touches turns to gold. He came out here in '49. He did not go into the mines and dig like the rest of us. He knew it was not necessary in his case, because he could make money anywhere out of anything. So he bought a few cattle very low, drove them to a mining camp, slaughtered them and sold the beef at an enormous profit. He brought in goods on pack-horses, and cleared two or three hundred per cent. If a miner was sick or discouraged, and wanted to sell out, John was always ready to buy the claim, and was sure to sell it in a day or two for from two to ten times as much as he gave for it. If anything was going to be scarce and high, John seemed to know of it beforehand, and he had a full stock ready for the increased demand. He seemed to take all sorts of risks, but he was always lucky. After he had accumulated a few thousands, he put his pile into a Mexican grant of 100,000 acres, which was considered doubtful, and everybody thought John was caught that time. But no; in a few months he secured a full confirmation of the grant, and was worth hundreds of thousands. So it has been for more than thirty years, until it has come to be a by-word that if John Smith touches a bag of grain it will become a bag of gold. He has never done a stroke of hard work. He has depended on his wit; and while his neighbors have toiled like slaves, and are poor, he is a millionaire. He doesn't seem to be smarter than other people. In some respects he is the most ignorant and thick-headed man in the country. But he knows how to make money, and he is making it yet, 'hand over hand.'"

"You call John Smith successful, but you have told me only about his success in accumulating property. How is it in other things? Has he a family?"

"Yes, he has two boys; and both of them are miserable drunkards. He was too busy making money to look after them. Their mother died when they were young. He married again, so as to have a house-keeper. He married a woman who he thought would be saving; and she was. She half starved the boys. She was such a shrew that she made their home uncomfortable, and they wandered off to the saloon. The saloon-keeper knew that they would have money some day, and might be profitable customers, so he treated them. They learned to love liquor, and in order to get it as they grew older, they would steal from their father. He dare not expose them, and so they have grown colder and colder. He is ashamed of them and yet he is afraid of them. And the step-mother's temper has not sweetened with advancing years. Smith blames her for the bad conduct of the boys, and the boys blame both of them. It is said that

they have awful quarrels, and some times come to blows. If there is such a place as hell on earth, I suppose it is in that big white house over yonder."

"Does John Smith have the sympathy of his neighbors in his domestic trials? and is he popular in the community?"

"Not a bit of it. Everybody says that he is a skinflint, and that he has made a good deal of his money by taking advantage of other people's necessities. His big farm, there, is made up of a dozen small farms. A dozen families lived on those farms twenty years ago, and thought that they had a good title. But he floated over them an old Mexican grant, ejected them from their homes, and took possession of all their improvements. Many of those families are in the neighborhood, and do you think that they can have much love for John Smith? Of course, as long as a man has money there are people who will toady to him, but he hasn't a real friend in the country, and he knows it. He couldn't get ten votes for any office in the gift of the people."

"Has he good health?"

"Far from it. Business cares and home troubles have made him old before his time. He is so dyspeptic that he can not eat any but the plainest food, and not enough of that to satisfy his hunger. And he is so rheumatic that he crawls and hobbles about in constant pain. It is only the excitement of money-making that keeps him up. The doctors say that he is failing fast, and can't last much longer."

"One question more, though, after what you have said, I need hardly ask it: Is John Smith a Christian? Has he any treasure laid up in heaven; any hope beyond the grave?"

"Not that I ever heard of. He never goes to church. No minister is ever invited to his house. I doubt if even there is a Bible in it. He gives nothing to the poor, or to any benevolent object. He says that he pays his debts and his taxes, and that is enough."

"And you call John Smith a successful man, do you? I call such a life as his a sad failure. And I presume that there is little prospect of his doing any good with his money when he dies. He is too selfish to think of endowing any charitable institution. He will leave his wealth to that miserly wife and those dissipated boys. It will prove to them a curse, rather than a blessing. They will probably quarrel over it, and between the lawyers and the rum-sellers, it will go fast. But it may last until the poor fellows have fallen into drunkards' graves. Give me abject poverty, the darkest and dearest adversity, rather than success like that of John Smith, who lives without happiness, and will die without hope."

And yet it is just such John Smiths our young men are tempted to envy and to imitate. They believe that money "answereth all things." If they can only get rich, they will be respected and happy. But if they could look into the homes and the hearts of many of our millionaires, they would say with Solomon: "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." The increase of riches brings increase of care, increase of temptation, increase of avarice, increased love of the world, increased probability of a Christless death and a rayless immortality. There are rich men who make a noble use of the wealth God gives them; but they are the exceptions. The rule still is, as in apostolic times, that the poor in this world's goods are "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." The way to avoid heaping up riches to our hurt is to use them faithfully as stewards of the Lord—to regard the gold and the silver as his, intrusted to us for doing good.—C. E. B., in *Journal and Messenger*.

REOPENING THE OLDSWELLS.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

There are some very important lessons suggested by the incident recorded in the twenty-sixth chapter of Genesis. The patriarch Isaac, who was the pastoral "sheik" of a nomadic household, pitched his tents on the southern borders of Palestine; but he found that the Philistines had filled up the wells digged by his father Abraham. So he reopened the old wells, and hewed out several new ones.

Wells occupy an important place in the Bible narratives. They are links that bind sacred history, and landmarks that determine sacred geography. In that torrid climate they are a vital necessity; instead of being scooped out of the soft earth or sand, they are excavated out of the limestone rock, or else walled in with such solid boulders that they endure for ages. The well beside which our Lord held that memorable conversation with one sinful woman (a most instructive hint as to the value of individual effort) remains to this day, and so does the

one at "Rehoboth," which Isaac either constructed or reopened.

At this season of the year, when our congregations have returned after their summer wanderings to their homes and churches, a few timely hints may be offered in regard to the reopening of certain wells. While whiskies and wines are human fabrications, pure water is the direct gift of God; we cannot create it, we can only collect and quaff it. Last Sabbath, when I opened my pulpit Bible, and gave my first discourse to my reassembled flock, I was simply drawing out of God's own well, which "is very deep." The insane attempts which have been made by all manner of Philistines, from Porphyry to Ingelsoll, to destroy this divine well-head of precious truth have been as unavailing as an attempt to undermine Gibraltar. Every fresh attempt proves former failures. God's Word has been well likened to that rock which a ship-of-war fired at all night—mistaking it for an enemy—but could not provoke it to answer, nor succeed in sinking it. To obstruct free access to this divine fountain of truth, or to adulterate its pure waters with theological errors, are high crimes against human souls. The most that we ministers can do, or that Sunday-school teachers can do, is simply to lead the thirsty to the fountain; we ministers may run dry, but the Bible never. The chief danger to be apprehended in regard to the Book of Life is from neglect of it. Heaven help us to attract our flocks, our schools and our households to the perennial well!

Let us emphasize that word *household*. This is a fountain-head of life and hope for both commonwealth and Christian Church. The future of both depends upon the *Home*. Where the Philistines of domestic feuds, or of fashionable folly and extravagance have either clogged up or poisoned the well of family piety, the life of every child is imperiled. No rosewood or Wiltons or marbles can atone for the want of a family altar. No gospel-preaching in the pulpit can counteract chronic irreligion at the table and the hearthstone. When reopening your homes, be sure to reopen the crystal well-spring of family worship.

Most vital of all to our spiritual life is that heart-well of which Christ Jesus is the secret and supplying spring. "The water that I give shall be in you, a well of water springing up into everlasting life," Jesus offers himself as the wonderful thirst-satisfier; drink Me, take Me, into your inmost souls; for there are desires and demands and necessities there that no uncertain and short-lived rivulets can ever satisfy. When he opens up the fountain-head within me, peace flows like a river; pure motives well forth, longings after holiness, streams of generous charity and love in its abounding fullness. Conscience also is kept clean and sweet by the continual presence of Christ's spirit.

The real reason for the low state of religion in any church, or in any individual Christian, is that such enemies as worldliness or indulgent personal sin, or the devil of unbelief, have filled up the secret well-head with obstructions. Backsliding brother, nothing short of thorough repentance can clear you out! Another cause for the feeble flow of grace from some hearts is that a greedy underdrain is drawing off the current of thoughts, purposes and affections from Jesus Christ. That sagacious Christian teacher, Miss Sauley, showed me, beside her Saratoga cottage, a sparkling spring. She told me that when she first came there, and found that the soil was moist, she directed her gardener to excavate a certain space, in hopes that a full supply of water could be got. But all the digging failed. At length the workman exclaimed: "Ah! I've got it now." He had discovered an old underdrain of a dead tree, with its brush and branches, along which all the water trickled away. As soon as the tree was removed, the sweet water concentrated in the bright little unfailing spring. Even so is it with the hearts of God's people. There can be no spiritual joy, or peace, or power, or overflowing fullness until the greedy outlets of selfishness or worldliness are stopped off and Christ becomes the perpetual, all-abiding and all-abounding well-spring in the soul. To feed a single ravenous sin costs more than to keep alive many graces.

One of the wells which Isaac dug out bore a very suggestive name. He called it "Rehoboth," which signifies roominess, or enlargement. The tendency of true Christliness is to break forth and to overflow. You can no more imprison the religion of some Christians than you could imprison sweet song in a canary bird or fragrance in a tube-rose. When Jesus was in the borders of Sidon "he could not be hid," neither can the temper and spirit and likeness of Jesus, which dwell in a sunny-souled believer. The man who keeps his religion to himself has very little religion to keep. Let "Rehoboth" be

the motto of all our churches during this working year; let us enlarge our prayers from the cramped routine into great, wide, all-embracing requests with large expectations of blessings; let us broaden out our sympathies and double all our contributions of money and of personal labor. The new "Hathorn Spring" at Saratoga burst forth when the diamond-drill pierced the rock which contained it. God has driven the diamond-drill of his sharp discipline into some hearts lately; may they rush forth in new streams of faith and love and active benevolence.

The last idea we gather up from that encampment at Gerar is that the patriarch did not construct an artificial pump, but reopened the everlasting, overflowing wells. A pump is a useful article when well worked; but as soon as our hands let go of the lever, the stream stops. There is quite too much pump-piety in our churches. It depends on the pastor's pull upon the handles, or upon some special external effort and it only runs periodically. An eloquent pulpit appeal brings a stream; sometimes only a dribble of water. When some evangelist comes, or the "week of prayer" is reached, the pump is set in motion, with a flow that too often proves intermittent and brief. Rather than dry up entirely, let us have pumps; but oh! how infinitely better is the deep, pure, perennial well-spring, fed by inward communion with the living Jesus. Dear fellow Christian, instead of mending pumps let us dig again, and clear of all obstructions, the everlasting wells. Then, with enlarged hearts and heaven-sent aspiration, we can beseech our Almighty Saviour to fill us unto all the fullness of God.

SUBMISSION.

"For me, I feel that nothing can be easier than to fulfil the duty which lies before me in life," said P—, a young Christian, in a college prayer-meeting. "I have given up my plans for entering into business. I shall devote my life to preaching the gospel. I have divided the day into periods. So many hours for prayer, so many for biblical study, so many for work and necessary recreation. I shall make it an absolute rule to speak with kind entreaties to evil-doers, never to allow my temper to be disturbed, and to occupy myself wholly in works of kindness and charity. I have begun this carefully-ordered life, and find it easy and full of sweetness."

The next day P— received a telegram that his father was dying. He hastened home, to find him dead and insolvent. He left the care of his helpless brothers and sisters on P—. He was forced to go to work as a book-keeper, and to postpone his preparation for the ministry. His life for two years was a hard one; seventeen hours of labor, and an unhappy, quarrelsome family at home. At the end of that time, an accident disabled him for months. He was confined to bed, suffering great pain at intervals, and surrounded by the direst poverty, which he could do nothing to relieve. He grew bitter and skeptical.

"Can there be a just God?" he said to a friend. "My purposes were good. He has thwarted them all. I might have been a pillar in God's house. He has left me a useless lump of clay by the wayside." "He gave you the opportunity to preach submission and patience as you could have done in no pulpit," was the answer. "You are a lump of clay and he the potter. It does not matter whether you are made into a rare porcelain vessel or an earthen one, provided you hold his purity and love and give it to the world."

The rebuke had its effect. Years afterwards P— gained his wish and became a Christian minister. He declared that at no time of his life was he brought so near to God in humility and love as during the years when he was debarred from openly proclaiming his name.

There are few of us who do not at some time in our lives complain that God has restrained and thrust us into the background when we would have rendered him service. The roots of the tree, could they reason, would doubtless rebel when they are buried in the dark, damp earth, but out of it they gather the life and sweetness for the flower and fruit. Obedience is true religious service, and experience is often the best scholarship of life.—*Youth's Companion*.

CROSS-BEARING.

The average Christian so much misunderstands cross-bearing it may be useful to give an illustration. Here is a case in point: One of the native converts to Christianity at Uganda, Africa, has been burned to death because he ventured, as a favorite page, to remonstrate with the king for killing Bishop Hannington.

Cross-bearing does not consist in the performance of such duties as

praying in one's family or leading the public prayer. That is a privilege. To call such cross-bearing is as if the eagle should complain of the wing that bears him above the storm. Cross-bearing implies such devotion to Jesus as that we collide with the world at the expense of pain or peril. The law of the kingdom on this subject is not obsolete, and cannot be until the carnal mind ceases to be enmity against God, and the friends of the world cease to be the enemies of God. It is not yet. The world has its fire and faggots for the faithful still, and this is true in America as well as Africa. If any one doubts this, let him try being a genuine Christian one day. But "if we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together."—*Southern Christian Advocate*.

DOING OUR UTMOST FOR GOD.

Few Christians do their utmost for God. This is true of them in their individual capacity. It is true of the aggregate of Christians. It is true in regard to giving and doing. Few give to the extent of their ability; many do not give up to the measure of self-indulgence in needless luxuries. Few toil in the Master's service with the diligence and faithfulness they employ in worldly matters. These are the confessions that the facts in the case compel and justify. The people of God on earth are responsible for results, and for the reason that, within their easy reach are facilities sufficient to enable them to do all that is required at their hands. There is no excuse for weakness or inefficiency, much less for indifference or neglect. Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. These are the three characteristics that ought to mark the lives of all professing Christians. Idleness, when one has health and strength, is beyond the range of apology. Laziness is a sin; there is nothing of the Christ spirit in it or about it. Zeal for God and his cause, fervency of spirit in all enterprises that have relation to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ on earth must be possessed by all who profess to be followers of the Lord Jesus, if they would make men see that spirit and profession and heart are in perfect accord. All this and more is true in regard to serving God. Those that worship him must do it in spirit and in truth.—*Bishop W. F. Mallalieu*.

"KNEW NOT THAT IT WAS JESUS."

Was it the dimness of the early morning ("when it was yet dark")? or was it the tears which filled her eyes? or was it that she did not fairly look at him, "supposing him to be the gardener?" or was it that there was something about the resurrection body which defied recognition, until He was pleased to make himself known? We do not know; but it is worthy of note that in several instances of his appearing before the eyes of the disciples, their eyes were holden, that they did not know him, on the way to Emmaus, by the lake-side, upon the mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed them ("some doubted").

It was a wonderful fact; but is not the same thing repeating itself constantly? Is not constantly our Lord coming to us, and we know him not?

Sometimes our Lord comes in the form of a trial. Our favorite plans are frustrated; our earnest prayers are seemingly denied; the darling child, the strong son, grown to manhood, filled with promise, the daughter who was as the apple of the eye, is taken; and the heaven is dark. We do not recognize the face, the voice; we know not that it is Jesus. Perhaps in later years we learn it; perhaps not until we have passed within the veil. But it was he.

Perhaps he comes in the form of some truth, which breaks up our system, which humbles our pride of opinion, which, perhaps, will cost us friends, which will compel us, like Abraham, to go out into the untravelled land, not knowing whither we go. It is hard; we do not recognize the divine one; we know not that it is Jesus.

He comes in the form of a duty. We are summoned to a sacrifice, to a labor, to a severing of ties. It must have been hard for Luther to understand that it was Jesus who called him to abandon all his store of merit, his maintenance, his ambitions, his affections, to disappoint the pride and the expectations of his parents, to break with the hierarchy and to declare war, he, a poor Augustine monk, to declare war to the unconquerable end against the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the world. One could hardly wonder if he had not known that it was Jesus.

But it was Jesus; and when he is recognized and followed, there is peace, happiness, heaven.—*National Baptist*.

The way to speak and write what shall not go out of fashion is to speak and write sincerely.—*Emerson*.

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