

THE CROSS AND THE CROWN.

The cross for only a day,
The crown forever and aye;
The one for a night that will soon be gone,
And one for eternity's glorious morn.

The cross, then, I'll cheerfully bear,
Nor sorrow for loss or care;
For a moment only the path and the strife,
But through endless ages the crown of life.

The cross till the conflict's done,
The crown when the victory's won;
My cross never more remembered above,
While wearing the crown of His matchless love.

His cross I'll never forget,
For marks on his brow are set;
On His precious hands, on His feet and side,
To tell what He bore for the Church, His bride.

My cross I'll think of no more,
But strive for the crown set before;
That ever through ages my song may be
Of His cross that purchased my crown for me.

The work of redemption done,
His cross and His crown are one;
The crimson and gold will forever blend
In the crown of Jesus, the sinner's friend.

—Church Press.

The Pulpit.

A SERMON.

BY W. C.

Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. Genesis xiii. 36.

There are times in the life of every man, when anxiety and trouble of mind will come. Human life as such, has never been a complete success. It has ever been a blending of good and evil, of light and darkness, bright and pleasant prospects, and disappointed hopes. The fairest blossoms that give promise of fruit are often nipped in the bud, by unimagineable frosts.

The desire for happiness is inborn in our nature. To secure the greatest amount in the least outlay, is a reasonable and honest ambition. The past with its storehouse of actual experience, the present with its living realities, the future with its yet unrevealed treasures, and its manifold undeveloped resources, the mysterious things yet to come in practical every day life, are all beautiful fields filled with flowers, from which we gather the honey of enjoyment. Well for us, were it all sweetness, but such is not so. The sweetest wine may turn to vinegar. Much of the pathway of life is by rugged and rough ways. There are Maras with their bitter waters producing loathing and disgust as well as the Elims, where there is a well of sweet water for every "thirsting tribe," and for shelter threescore and ten palm trees.

It is often hard for man in his oneness to see beyond the actual present, and to realize that there are rights belonging to any one except himself, we are very apt to appropriate to ourselves a greater degree, or privilege, than by right belongs to us. We unfortunately inherit the propensity to fault-finding. It made its first appearance in Eden, in reference to the proprietary right to the first sin, and it crops out in all the history of our own race. We strive not to understand the circumstances which lead to certain results, or neglect to study the motives that prompt to action.

And so we find Jacob, when calamities came upon him, when his once affluent circumstances were narrowing down to the border land of poverty, when want and famine, like hungry wolves, were howling around the door of his encampment, when Joseph, his beloved son, had now been long removed from his embrace, when Simeon lay as a hostage in an Egyptian prison, when, as the only condition of a fresh supply of bread, he should give up his last remaining son of his beloved and wanted Rachel, the son of his old age, and the delight of his heart. He breaks out in a cry of despondency: "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me."

Such is the language of despair. To Jacob, the dark clouds of adversity, were gathered thick and fast around him. He who had prevailed with the angel of God, and had been dubbed, "Prince with God," was now low down in the "Slough of despond." He had allowed himself to be too much engrossed in the affairs of time.

He who had been the successful planter had, in his turn, been deceived by his own sons, and was reaping a harvest of a partial faith and confidence in the God of Bethel. The glorious light of the sun had been hidden by the mists of unbelief, and in his lack of simple trust, he could rise no higher in the scales, than the disconsolate cry: "All these are against me."

Remark (1): that the wail of the Patriarch is emphatically a human cry. They that are farthest from God's grace, are the most removed from happiness. Jacob was now an old man. His experience ran over six score years. He had been remarkably favored by God. He was the son of the son of promise, and the grandson of the Father of the Faithful, and friend of God,

whose society and blessing he personally enjoyed. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are the most remarkable trio of consecutive generations in the history of the world. Jacob seems to have inherited much of the vim of his grandfather. He was a man of action, of great executive ability, one that had experienced many favors from God, and has been blessed with a fuller revelation than any previous to his day.

He was the chosen one to inherit the blessings of the covenant of Abraham. He had received that which God had promised him; but through lack of trust in God, he had received it through guile, and had thereby unnecessarily caused family troubles; and family troubles followed him all his days. But as God can bring good out of evil, and order out of confusion, overruled the misdoings of his family, for the purpose of the family's good, and the bringing about the fulfillment of the prophecy to Abraham, that his seed should be a stranger in the land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that the nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge and afterward shall they come out with great substance.

(2) This cry was a personal one. "These things are against me," Jacob was the recognized and acknowledged head of his tribe. The two men whose names are linked inseparably with him in regard to the promises, had gone the way of the earth, and had been gathered to their fathers. He was the only representative head of the church on earth. He was in trouble. Earthly troubles lay thick around him. Sorrow in the loss of his sons, and want in the family, had done much to reduce him to the condition in which we find him.

It is difficult to tread the pathway of life alone. Jacob seems to have forgotten whence came his help in the days of his earlier experience. He had not asked God to accompany him, and he had in the meantime been left to himself. How different was the cry from the experience of David in the twenty-third psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Or thy humble trustful prayer of Habakkuk: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labor of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd on the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

The tone of the complaint is narrowed down to himself. He had not, in the sweet communion of family life, taken his sons into sympathy with himself. In the midst of a large family, he seems to dwell in solitude alone. Sorrow, the common lot of men, came and knocked at his door. His wives, the sharers of his joys and sorrows, of the cares and anxieties of life, had, at this time, gone beyond the dividing line of time, and had left a cold blank in his heart. His sons had grown up around him, and each had turned to his own way; and the ways chosen were not those known as the good old paths. They did not add much to the personal comfort of their father, but by their crooked ways had much to give sorrow to his heart, and help to bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Jacob's family was far from being a model family. There was in it a sad lack of brotherly love, as well as a filial affection. Whatever the Patriarch might have been to the outer world, we infer from the relation which existed in the home circle, that he was not the king, priest, and teacher of his family that he ought to have been. Under ordinary circumstances, the family is just as it is made by the parents. The family is an institution of God's own ordaining, and it is constituted by God for the very wisest and best purposes.

The family is the miniature church, and ought to be a miniature heaven. It can be, and God designs it to be so. Home is one of the sweetest words in any language, and the spirit of Christianity has sanctified and blessed it with a sacredness allied to the hallowedness of heaven. Around its hearthstone cluster all the virtues that combine to beautify and bless the human character, and constitute the family circle in large measure a regained Eden of enjoyment.

Jacob had, by some means, come short of the standard. His sons had not been trained around his table like olive plants. They had grown up rather like the wild ass's colt, and so in his old age, when he most needed the kindly sympathy of his family, he had to stand alone. His love was not returned, because, for the very good reason, he had failed to call out the respect due him, as the head of the house, when the boys were young and easily influ-

enced. How different was the family training of Abraham's household, and of Joshua's. How different were young Samuel and Timothy trained, and how obvious are the results.

We do not wish to be misunderstood. We do not intimate that Jacob's sons are wholly depraved. Far from it. There are some grains of golden sand in the lifeless quartz of their outward lives. There are some traits of character in some of them that we admire. Reuben's sympathetic cry at the loss of Joseph: "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" Judah's speech when Benjamin was impeached for theft, would do credit to Cicero or Demosthenes. Their apparent warmth of feeling in reference to the safety of Benjamin in Egypt, shows that they were not devoid of all filial respect.

It is well for that family, when trials come, and shadows are settling down upon the hearthstone, when it may be that some dear one of the household is taken away by sudden death, and gloom as the darkness of night gathers around the family circle; that there is a sincere genuine Christian sympathy existing among all members of the family, when they realize that the family is a unit, the interest one; that love to the dear departed is a common love, shared by all, and that that love is only an index of the love to each other, and that the united love goes up with a reverent submissive faith in God, who has in his own unerring counsel called the family to go through this painful experience. It is in such circumstances that we are enabled to say: "It is good to draw near to God,"—and though he slay me, yet shall I trust in him."

Few Christian families but have been called to pass through such experiences. It is the common lot of the family.

Jacob says, all these things are against me, and this lamentation is taken up all too readily by many men. That life is a struggle with difficulties and trials, is a fact which we cannot disguise. It is the experience of every individual, that cares and anxieties are the common lot of man. The ground has been cursed for man's sake, and we are doomed to eat with sorrow all the days of our lives. Thorns and thistles have sprung up, not only in the sin-cursed earth, but there is an abundant harvest of briars in the human mind. There is nothing so dissatisfied in all God's earth as the natural mind of man. The lower animals live up to the full capacity of their natures, and are satisfied with them; there are no hopes beyond the present. Even those creatures which make provision for the future, live only in the present enjoyment of doing that which will conserve for future use. But in the mind of man there is a void that nothing on earth can fill, from the fact that man is not all of earth. Man does not find his true home here, and when he makes the attempt, as myriads do, to satisfy the heavenly that is in man, with the material things of earth, disappointed hopes are the result. When we look at things in their carnal and earthly association, as apparent to the eye of sense only, instead of apprehending all things spiritually in the working out of God's good purposes concerning us, we are sure to be deceived by the imperfection of our own moral perceptions, and impugn the wisdom and justice of our common lot, and fly despondingly in the face of a kind Providence with the words of the Patriarch: "All these are against me."

We learn from the context that God was leading Jacob by a kindly hand. The dark clouds that had gathered around the pathway of the Patriarch were not threatening clouds; they, in the meantime, only hid from his view the light of the sun, that the light might be all the brighter when the proper time came for its shining. Clouds and darkness are necessary in the economy of nature, and have always had their good and legitimate effects on human life. Shadow is as necessary in the development of human character as sunshine. It is the intermingling of adverse things which constitute the riches in the treasury of life.

Jacob's life, without his trials, his disappointments, his sorrows, his bereavements, would not have the interest which we find it to have. God was preparing him for greater things, than he could have anticipated. God is always better than our fears, better than our hopes, better than our fondest expectations, yet pressing on, it may be faint, yet pursuing, anticipating hardship and difficulties in the way, hoping against hope; very often has God met us with pleasant surprises. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing, and we could say: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than the time, that their corn and their wine increased."

Joseph is not. Oh, the sad wail of the father's heart. The child of his affection had been rudely torn from his embrace, and the foul and be-dabbled coat, with a story even more

foul, was brought, saying: "This we have found." But by the wicked devices of his brethren to frustrate the purposes of God, in the fulfillment of the youthful dreams that were so distasteful to his envious brethren, their cruel and heartless acts were the very means that God used to bring about his purposes in the elevation of Joseph to high authority, and usefulness in the court of Pharaoh.

That which Jacob regarded as the severest affliction in the loss of his favorite son, was designed in the good providence of God for his best earthly good. He had sent him out to seek and inquire into the safety of his brethren; when he has found, God had raised him up to be the prime minister in the most powerful and cultured court among the nations, and in this position, to be the savior of his people. God had been better to him than all his dreaded thoughts, better than his hopes. Sadness and sorrow were turned into joy and gladness. Joseph had left his native land bereft of his coat, bereft of liberty. He appeared to his father in the royal robes of Egypt, clothed in all the authority of a Pharaoh, and Israel (not Jacob) said: "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Simeon is not. Simeon lay in an Egyptian prison. Why Simeon and not another, we know not, but there were doubtless good reasons. A term of prison life is just the experience that many an erring man requires. Simeon had in this discipline ample time to weigh in his mind the incidents of his past history. His thought would naturally revert to the scenes of home life, when he with his brothers in their nomadic life roamed widely free over the rich pastures of the goodly land, now far away. The scene in the plains of Dothan, when the entreaties of an innocent and helpless brother were treated with scorn, would be recalled. It may have been with remorse of conscience, and no doubt he would upbraid himself with such words, silent, but powerful, "I am verily guilty concerning my brother, in that I saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress upon me." We have no way of knowing, but we may infer, that Simeon came out of that prison a wiser and a better man.

And ye will take Benjamin away." Idols in the family are dangerous things. Jacob was the idol of his mother's heart, and it led her to be a deceiver, and to teach the supplanter to be more apt in his cunning than he otherwise would have been. Benjamin now in turn, in the absence of Jacob, became the idol of his father; and in both cases these objects of petty worship have to be removed before God's better gifts would come. Benjamin must be given up before Joseph can be restored. Oh, how loth we are to give up the darling of the household. It is only natural, and in most cases, right and excusable. But there are times when they come in and obscure the light of more glorious objects, and we, like Jacob, rebel against the plain leadings of God's providence, and say: "My son shall not go down with you, his brother is dead and he is left alone." When the fact is, that the brother that went out is not dead. He has only gone before, to the land where there is no famine, no death, but a land of corn in abundance, a land of great plenty.

And so it is with us, we mourn and lament, we shed bitter tears and repine at the revealings of a providence which we take little effort to understand, and we take the dark clouds, that have been sent by a kind provision to shield us from the too scorching rays of a burning sun, as the scourging of his uplifted hand, mistaking the blessing of a seeming adversity for chastisements or punishments. David says: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." But even in a subordinate sense, such discipline has its bright side;

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head;
And thus our life exempt from public haunts,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brook,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Job was called upon to pass through an ordeal of adverse circumstances, yet he never for a moment lost his trust in God and the wreck of his former greatness, he could meekly say: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." No one ever lost by trusting in God. So the Lord blessed the later end of Job more than his beginning, and the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends, also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. He had also seven sons and three daughters.

And Jacob lived to see his mistake, and to interpret the revelations of providence more correctly. Joseph was more than restored, for he filled the place of two sons, in Ephraim and Manasseh. Simeon came up, we trust, from his prison discipline a better son and a more affectionate brother. And little Benjamin was a tribe, and loyal to the throne of David, and faithful in the temple service; when the strong and ambitious Ephraim was carried away and lost in the mists of the East. And yet, for all these blessings, present and prospective, we hear him saying, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage."

Jacob's life was a life in miniature. It was made up of opposites, rowing against the current, and drifting with it. His early life was a course of Eastern duplicity, moving his cards with a skilful hand, his later life was to a certain extent passive, being acted upon by the instrument of his own creating, and was "led where he would not."

From a lack of faith, or simple trust in the God of Bethel, who met him in the way, he was made to experience sorrow upon sorrow. Jacob, like many men, did not shine in small things. It was only in great affairs that his true character shines forth. Far be it from me to rob the dear, sorrowing patriarch of the least of the laurels that cluster around his brow. We love good old Jacob with all his eccentricities of character; and, while we would shun his faults, we would strive most zealously to imitate his many sterling virtues.

Let us learn to have implicit trust in God, believing that all things work together for good to them that love God. Without this child-like trust in our heavenly Father, the web of life must ever be a tangled confusion; with a firm faith in Him, all and every obstacle will be removed, every seeming mystery and dark problem of life, will be duly and satisfactorily solved.

It is a Christian duty to cultivate a spirit of cheerfulness. We should always look on the sunny side of every cloud. Joy and peace are among the first-fruits of the Spirit. Love only has the pre-eminence, being the Alpha and Omega of the Christian graces.

We have the privilege, in the journey of life, to take the train that passes through the "land of Beulah," where all the enjoyments in the catalogue of pleasures are meted out with a full hand; there the flowers are ever in bloom, and birds of fairest plumage sing their sweetest songs; there the sun is ever shining in a cloudless sky. In that land there are no complaints, no cause for fault-finding. In Bunyan's immortal dream, this happy land is located near the end of the Christian journey, "because the most of Christian pilgrims never reach it until the journey is almost over." Nevertheless, it is in easy distance from each one of us. There are no strong walls, with high gates around its sacred precincts; it is open to all, day and night. Will we enter in now and experience the riches of that land, as the foretastes of heaven? It is God's good pleasure that we should do so, that we should leave our sorrows behind us. Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee because he trusted in Thee.

May our prayer ever be: O satisfy us in the morning with Thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory upon their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish the work of our hands upon us; year the work of our hands, establish Thou it.

JOHN BRIGHT ON SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

Mr. John Bright, of England, speaking at a mission fair recently, said that the Sunday-schools contribute much towards the development of the moral feelings, and that the work performed by them was of more importance at the present moment than it had been at any previous period in English history. The powers of monarchs were lessening, and the influence of the aristocracy was fading away. The only power that was governing—a power that would henceforth be unlimited—was the power of the people. He claimed, therefore, that the most pressing need at the present time was political education, by which there could be cultivated in the minds of the people a sense of their moral responsibility. They should be taught that labor would have its just reward, and that the wealthy should be permitted to enjoy their riches in security. This is a sentiment worthy of Mr. Bright, and as suitable for this country as for Great Britain.

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