

Threescore.

BY MRS. M. A. B. DICKINSON.

I know a form, once proudly strong;
In height a peer, most men among,
Tis bending now—long years have set
Their seal of care and weight, and yet
The form that seemed not 'brave to you,
For me, no nobler ever grew.

I knew a face, once full and fair;
Now seem and furrow deepen there.
Each feature still so kindly glows,
I never think how old it grows.
That face that seems not fair to you,
The fairest is I ever knew.

I know a step once fleet and free,
O'er God's green earth went tirelessly.
Tis slowing now, and fainter falls,
Yet comes as patient to my calls.
It is not much to you? Ah! well,
For me no sweeter ever fell.

I know a voice, how clear it rung,
In golden days, when I was young.
Tis failing now, and trembles oft,
Yet in my grief grown wondrous soft,
That voice, that might seem harsh to you,
The gentlest is I ever knew.

I know a heart, so rich and deep,
Its freshness Time untouched doth keep.
Nor toil, nor years, can take away
The peace God gives it every day.
The heart, that seems not rare to you,
The purest is I ever knew.

I know two hands, task-worn and brown,
Loved earthly things they're laying down;
Each strain I'd kiss with thankful tears,
They've toiled for me these many years!
These hands, that might seem hard to you,
To me, have tender been and true.

Some day, when step and form are still,
Whose heart has ceased to throb and thrill,
No tired hands, no voice to pray,
In deepest shade the earth will lay,
That soul, that seems not much to you,
My man will miss my whole life through.

How To Become A Christian.

BY ADELAIDE TAYLOR.

Said a young friend of mine: "I know I ought to become a Christian, and I would if I only knew just what to do. The minister and my Christian friends say, 'Won't you come to Jesus?' and 'You ought to come to Jesus,' but I don't know just what that means. I know I ought to obey God's commands, and that Christian people try to do so, but they say that obeying the commands does not make one a Christian, but that we must believe on Christ first, and then obey His commands, and I don't understand what they mean."

Now, perhaps, some young people feel this same difficulty, and I shall be very glad and very grateful if I can remove it. May the Holy Spirit make His own truth plain while I attempt to show "just how" one becomes a Christian!

Christ came to save us by first obeying the law which we have disobeyed, and then by suffering the penalty which our sins deserve, so that God could justly let us go free from suffering it ourselves.

We cannot get to heaven by living good lives, because, in the first place, we are naturally so bad that we cannot obey God perfectly if we try ever so hard, and in the second place we can make no satisfaction to God for the sins which we commit except by suffering their punishment. But God is willing to accept Christ's perfect obedience in the stead of the obedience which we should have given, and to accept Christ's sufferings in the place of the punishment which we deserve. So, then, if we are willing to be saved in this way, by just being indebted for everything to Christ we may be. All we have to do in order to be pardoned and made children of God is to accept this offer of God, to give us salvation freely on account of what Christ has done. If we want to be saved, and are willing to be saved in this way, God will save us. He will forgive us and take us for His children, and put a new nature in us, so that we will desire to do right and to please Him, and at last He will take us to heaven.

Christians try to obey God, not to gain pardon and heaven, for, as we have said before, that is impossible, but they try to obey Him because it is right to do so, and to show their gratitude to Him for His great love in giving them a Saviour when they were so unworthy.

So you see that it is only on account of what Christ has done for us that God can forgive us, and give us all needed strength to live as His children should, and we have only just to accept His offer in order to have the forgiveness and the strength. To accept it is to believe in Jesus, to come to Jesus.

If there was something which you wanted very much, and there was only one person in the world who could give it to you, and that person should send you a letter, saying: "I will give you this thing if you will accept it; do take it, I very much wish you to have it," would you not say in your heart, "O! indeed, indeed, I accept it," and would you not be very happy at the thought of having the thing that you had wished for? Well, this is

just the way one accepts God's offer of salvation and becomes a Christian.—*Ch. Advocate.*

Faith.

How shall I, in the simplest, briefest way, tell a soul just what it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ so as to be saved? To get at the very heart of this subject, let us suppose that you are at the bedside of a dying sinner, whose only hope of salvation lies in your being able to tell him at once, in the simplest words, how to perform the saving act of faith. Many a person is told to believe who is not conscious of not believing, and who has no appreciation of the difference between belief and faith. How may the matter be so put before an inquiring soul as to help to the immediate appropriation of saving grace? Time may not be left for the study of the word of God, or for any thing but the briefest prayer. How shall this last moment be improved to the saving of a soul?

Faith differs from belief, because it is an act of trusting. Belief is the assent of the mind to a fact or truth put before us in the form of a proposition or a statement; as though I should say, "Christ died for sinners." Faith is the consent of the whole mind, heart, conscience, and will to the fact or truth of the Christian religion, as represented in the Person of Christ. Hence we read, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That little word on carries the idea that such a way of believing brings me near the person of Jesus, and makes me not only accept what He says, but lean on Him; resting not only on His words, but on His work for me. Here is not only believing, but trusting.

Faith differs from belief, because it is an act of taking. God not only puts before me a truth to be believed, but a personal Saviour to be taken to myself. Faith is that by which I apprehend, and then appropriate—first perceive and then receive, Him. I see Christ to be my possible Saviour, and take Him to be my actual Saviour. How do I take Him? By giving myself, the only way in which one person can take another. So a lone orphan takes one who offers to be a father; so a wife takes a husband; so a soldier takes a general, or a subject a king; by giving ourselves away to another; we take another to ourselves. No act can be simpler; and, in fact, it is its simplicity at which we stumble.

Faith thus differs from belief, because, in this trusting and taking Jesus, it becomes a tie of union. It makes me one with Jesus, and Him one with me forever. I lose my life in Him, my will in His will. I look at this world and the world to come through His eyes, and become part of His body, a member obeying Him as my head.

To guide a soul to Christ we must first, then, get clearly in mind that the central thing about faith is this act of trusting, taking, trying, to Christ. A child in years or in mind can understand this. Let every dying sinner lay his hand in mine, as Christ's messenger to him, and say, "Lord Jesus, I trust thee, I take thee as my Saviour and Lord; I give myself wholly to thee, forever."—*The Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D.*

Patience.

One has said, "Patience is a beautiful grace to look at, but a desperately hard one to live." St. James says, "Patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect, entire, wanting nothing." So then, "desperately hard" though it may be, it's surely worth the effort, if to gain this grace is to be "perfect, entire, wanting nothing." We are told by the blessed Master, in whom this lovely grace, amid sorest provocation, was so luminous, that we are to "hear the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." How seldom do we see fruit or flower brought forth in perfection the very day the root or seed is planted! Have patience, then, with yourself, discouraged friend. If the true seed is in the heart, nourish it, and patiently expect the fruit. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

O that I might be patient! But how can I be, with all the worry and rush and nestling of these days! Ah! these are just the things that cause this charming grace to grow. They are intended for that purpose, though seemingly so adverse. "Knowing that tribulation is 'squeezing' or 'harrowing,'" and the little annoyances, the friction that "rubs the wrong way," are the elements in which patience may most thrive. Whoever became patient when every thing went well? The most blessedly patient soul I know is one whose daily "squeezing and harrowing" have been exceptional.

St. Paul tells us to be "gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient." We are more "apt to teach," as a rule,

than to be the other thing. "Why cannot those children remember what I tell them?" said a father in an irritated tone. It is well for parents to consider how many times they forget their Father's word to them, and how patient He has been through all the years.

How shall we gain this growing grace? Not of ourselves alone, but through Him who is able to strengthen us "with all might, according to his Glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness."

The Comfort Of Hope.

He who shows mercy to another remembers himself. To be pitiful is to be thoughtful. Those who are in the full tide of health cannot easily think what it really is to be worn with unrelieved pain and disease. Those in whose happy homes there seem to be the perpetual festival of comfort and the sweetest friendships can hardly imagine what it is to have the home broken up, and to be outcast and alone. The infinite comfort which there is in Christ's love and presence and friendship is due in part to the infinite thoughtfulness of His love.

"If it were not so," said Jesus to his disciples, "I would have told you." What is it that he would have so surely told them, "if it were not so?" This, that in God's home, in the home of the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there is abundant room; that there is His own prepared place for each one; and that this home, assured to every disciple, is no mere guest-house for a night or a day, but a home that has the element of permanence—that is, an abiding place.

The need of that "perpetual vision of a better world," whose light shines through the darkness of the present life, is not a need for a few here and there, but a necessity for every one and every-where. "If it were not so, I would have told you." The reasons, then, are obvious enough why we, too, should tell of it, that all may know it.—*Congregational Magazine.*

Harmony At Home.

1. We may be quite sure that our will is likely to be crossed during the day; so let us prepare for it.

2. Every person in the house has an evil nature as well as ourselves, and therefore we must not expect too much.

3. Look upon each member of the family as one for whom Christ died.

4. When inclined to give an angry answer, let us lift up the heart in prayer.

5. If from sickness, pain or infirmity, we feel irritable, let us keep a very strict watch over ourselves.

6. Observe when others are suffering, and drop a word of kindness.

7. Watch for little opportunities of pleasing, and put little annoyances out of the way.

8. Take a cheerful view of every thing, and encourage hope.

9. Speak kindly to dependents and servants, and praise them when you can.

10. In all little pleasures which may occur, put self last.

11. Try for the soft answer that turneth away wrath.—*Congregationalist.*

"Lend a Hand."

When? Where?
To-day, to-morrow, every day, just where you are.

You have heard of the girl who sat down and sighed the morning hours away, longing to be a missionary and help somebody, while her mother was toiling in the kitchen and looking after three little children at the same time. Perhaps your mother has servants in the kitchen, but you can lend her a hand all the same. You can find a place to help your patient, kind obliging spirit, "in honor preferring one another," self-forgetful and mindful of others.

It seems a very little thing to "lend a hand" in these quiet home ways, but if you could see the record the angels make of such a day you would see that it was a very great thing.

Boys, girls, watch eagerly your chance. Do not be cheated out of your happy privilege. It is a great, noble, blessed thing to be able to "help a little," no matter how little it may be.—*S. S. Advocate.*

The Bible is a large book or a small one, a dark or bright one, according to the spirit in which men read it. Wranglers and first-class men will not understand it unless their hearts are right as well as their heads. The highest critical and grammatical knowledge will find it a sealed book without the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Its contents are often "hid to the wise and prudent and revealed to babes." Reader, remember this, and say aloud, when you open your Bible, "O God, for Christ's sake, give me the teaching of the Spirit."—*Ryle.*

The first condition of doing good is being good. Character is better than usefulness. Every man ought to do four times as much good unconsciously as he does on purpose. There was a real truth symbolized by the nimbus around the heads of the saints in ecclesiastical art; who does not know some living saint whose head is surrounded with a nimbus? "Let our light so shine," says the Master. The first condition of letting a light shine is having a light. To be luminous is the first duty of the Christian. There are some people who impress you by their rectitude, while they equally repel you. They send out their virtues, not as the sun sends out rays of light, but as a hedgehog sends out quills. They are irritatingly good. The little girl who did not want to go to heaven if grandpa was going there, only spoke out what a great many people have felt. You have consecrated yourself to Christ, and want to begin at once Christian service. What can you do? Be a Christian. If you are a thorough Christian, you will be an attractive one.—*Christian Union.*

Wisely remarks the Standard: "Be careful of your pastor. If you want him to preach good sermons, if you want him to do his best work, indulge him a little. Give him time for his study-room work. Don't press him too hard with other ministries toward the closing hours of the week. And as to teaching the Bible-class just before preaching, it is possible he can do it, but assuredly it will be at an expense which you, yourself, as well as he, will presently feel when he comes to the sermon. Moreover, hold him in check a trifle, if need be, after the discourse. Naturally he feels in some cases somewhat more sociable than usual, and is ready to talk. But our best authorities tell us it is bad for the preacher. Let him be quiet, give him a few moments' rest; that is, if you wish him to preach well for the next time."

I have been enabled to commit my soul to him who says: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," and who is "able to save to the uttermost." These two texts have been as sheet anchors, by which my soul has outrode many a storm when otherwise hope would have failed. "In no wise" takes in all characters, and "to the uttermost" goes many a league beyond all difficulties. I recommend these anchors, they are sure and steadfast.—*John Newton.*

In the true Christian though "weeping may endure for a night joy cometh in the morning." A sweet smile of hope and love follows every tear, and tribulation itself is turned into the chief of blessings.

"It is well" is the only soul quickening and God glorifying frame. God, that has appointed the end, has settled, and he will order, the means. Rest there and all is well.

Let me remember that I am nothing, have nothing, can bear nothing; and that my depending on myself is madness, and my depending on the Lord is heavenly wisdom.

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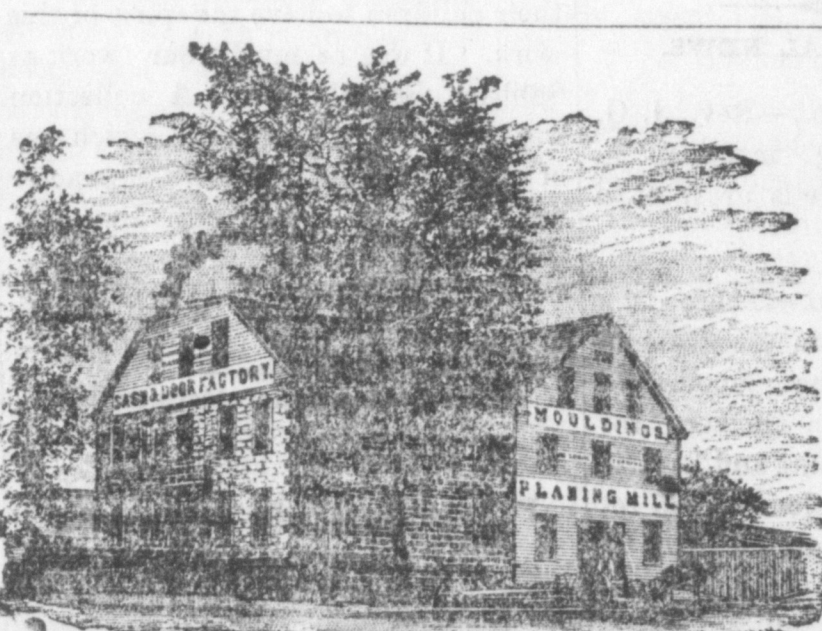
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1876	102,822.14	715,944.64	2,214,093.00
1878	127,505.87	773,895.71	3,374,683.43
1880	141,402.81	911,132.93	3,881,478.14
1882	254,841.73	1,073,577.94	5,849,889.19
1884	278,378.65	1,274,397.24	6,844,404.04
1885	319,987.06	1,411,004.38	7,030,878.77
1886	373,500.31	1,573,027.10	9,413,358.07

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