

God Loveth Us.

JEAN BLEWETT.

God loveth us—in woe or bliss,
O hearts, be true and strong!
God loveth us—and knowing this
We know life's sweetest song.

God loveth us—O hands that grasp
At human tenderness,
And then in emptiness unclasp!
He waits to fill and bless!

God loveth us—O weary feet
That find the pathway long!
His love provides a rest so sweet
The hopes of it make strong.

God loveth us—O eyes that find
Life's lessons hard to read!
By tears of loss made dim and blind,
Learn his great love in need.

God loveth us—O trembling one!
Dost think he does not see?
No need to farther walk alone—
One waits to walk with thee.

God loveth us—O fallen one!
Creep upward toward the light—
God's radiant stars shine on and on
Until the dawn grows bright.

God loveth us—the world grows old,
Yet falls the light and dew:
God loveth us—the world grows old,
But Love is over new.

Diligent Service for full Assurance.

BY THE REV. NEWMAN HALL.

Faith in Christ is often erroneously regarded as identical with assurance of salvation. Faith is trust and obedience toward the Savior; assurance is our own conviction that we are saved. Acting on the advice of our physician may result in cure, whether we feel certain or not of such a result.

But such a persuasion will encourage perseverance in using the means. Joy in work helps work. Life is happier in the sunshine of hope than under the dark cloud of doubt. Efforts for the salvation of others will be more effective when they see that what we recommend to them makes us happy ourselves.

On one of my pedestrian Alpine rambles I rose very early, and, having dressed by help of a dim rushlight, began my day's journey in dense darkness up a rough steep, in a gloomy valley, carrying a knapsack heavy enough to make me ask myself: And is this pleasure? Presently I saw a glorious vision. High above me, amid the dark, was what seemed a luminous cloud—pink, glowing into crimson, more and more radiant with beauty. It was the summit of Ortler Spitz catching the first beams of the sun, still hidden below the lower mountain range. My feelings were all changed. The valley, just now the Shadow of Death, glowed with life and beauty. The path was plain and the climb was a delight. I forgot my burden, sigh was turned to song, as with glad haste I pushed onward and upward. So the assurance of hope animates and gladdens the Christian pilgrim, and he sings with Wesley:

Away with our sorrow and fear,
Believers shall soon be at home!

But how to obtain such assurance? Some desire a dream, or the visit of an angel with a direct message from Christ. Some open the Bible at random, hoping that the first text that catches the eye may dispel all doubt. They, perhaps, despair because they read about Paul's cloak, or some Jewish genealogy. Then they doubt their own salvation or regard assurance as presumption, and try to content themselves with a vague hope. This may be thought humility of spirit; but it may be spiritual indolence. Assurance may in some cases be perilous presumption; but it may be humble, yet full reliance on the promise of God. Did not Jesus say "My sheep shall never perish," and did he not promise "to come again to take them to himself"? Yes; this is the promise; but may I appropriate it to myself? The Apostles did. Peter wrote of being born in Christ's resurrection into living hope of an inheritance incorruptible. John wrote: Now are we the sons of God, and we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him. Paul was assured that when the earthly tent was taken down he had a building of God, eternal in the heavens; and this hope was for all believers—even a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge would give, not to me only but to all who love his appearing.

Is not the fact of present salvation a reasonable ground of hope? Christ came to "save his people from their sins." Am I actually thus saved? Is sin my sorrow, my hatred, my avoidance, my foe? Do I habitually pray not only to be saved from the guilt of it, but from the indulgence of it; and is it my supreme desire and effort to obey and follow the Lord Jesus as my Savior? Then this is evidence that I am already saved.

I am alive in my soul if I thus actually trust in and serve Christ. Some indigestion is stubborn but K. D. C. overcomes it.

may doubt whether they are really alive spiritually. The best evidence of life in the body is activity. Are its functions operating? A drowning man has been taken out of the water seemingly dead. It may be only suspended animation. Efforts are diligently made for restoration. Tests are anxiously applied. Stethoscope and thermometer are applied. The pulse is felt. Doubt is suddenly removed—he opens his eyes, he breathes, he speaks, the body is in action, he lives. So if the eyes of the soul are looking unto Jesus, if the lungs breathe forth prayer which the lips utter, if the hands are moving in obedient service, this soul manifestly lives; and will he who has given this life fail to nourish and preserve it?

The writer to the Hebrews teaches that diligence in the service of Christ is the best ground, not for our salvation, which is Christ alone, but for our own assurance of sharing that salvation. He exhorts those who would enjoy assurance to be "not slothful, but followers of those who, through faith and patience inherit the promises." The saints in Heaven actually possess what they hoped for, by persevering in faith and obedience. Is not similar perseverance the best reason for hoping for similar success? A man contracts to do certain work for certain wages. How can he be assured he will be paid? Not by idly dreaming, but by diligent working; actually rendering the service is essential to receiving the reward.

In the same passage some of those Hebrews are commended for their work and labor of love in the name of Christ, in ministering to the saints, and the writer desires that "every one of them would show similar diligence unto the end, to the full assurance of hope," as much as to say, "Persevere in loving service for Christ, so that you may enjoy full assurance of hope."

Actual fruit is sure evidence that the tree is alive. Instead of curiously questioning: "Was mine a true conversion? Do I remember the moment and am I sure of the method? Does it resemble conversions I have read about? Is my repentance deep enough; are my prayers fervent enough? Can my faith be real when I have so many doubts?" ask, rather, "What can I do for Christ, and in his name, to his friends, and to the foes he wishes to become friends?" A hypochondriac has long shut himself up in his bedroom, and while consulting books on "family medicine," fancies one day he has heart disease, and another that his lungs, etc., are affected. He almost parodies the doubter's hymn:

"Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Shall I leave this room or no,
Am I ill or am I not?"

Fire! fire! The escape is at your window! Hark! He jumps from his couch, reaches the ground, seizes a bucket; helps to extinguish the flames. The anxious question is solved—he works! therefore certainly is well.

Anxious doubter! close your medicine book, cease counting your pulse, ask no longer whether your own miserable soul can be saved. Say rather, Can I do some work for Christ? Can I help any other mourner to bear his burden? Can I lead any other sinner to Christ? Go take that lame, burdened man by the arm; go help rescue that drunkard, that prostitute, teach that poor child, relieve that poor widow—do something for that Savior who died to save both them and you, and you will forget your own self-absorbing anxieties.

When Wilberforce was asked whether in constant work for the slaves he had leisure for saving his own soul, he replied: "I'm so busy that I forget whether I have a soul to be saved." Was not such devotion in itself a sufficient evidence not only of the existence but of the salvation of his soul?

It is in loving diligence in the work of Christ we shall best dispel doubts as to our personal salvation. The fruit shows the tree. Activity evidences life. Fellow-workers with Christ in his own cause need not inquire whether they who thus love him and work with him are alive in him. In such service we are ready for his coming, either at his advent or to summon us by death, and need not ask when it will be. A Negro who claimed to be the original "Uncle Tom," having escaped from slavery, devoted himself every winter to rescuing others. One night on his perilous way there was such a display of shooting stars that he halted, thinking the Day of Judgment had come. But presently he resumed his march, saying, "If it is the Lord Jesus he cannot find me better employed."

The preceding argument must be understood as referring to the persuasion of our own mind and not to the attainment of salvation itself—subjective only, not objective. We are saved only by the grace of God in the redemption by Christ, when we accept and obey him as Lord and King. But

K. D. C. Pills cures chronic constipation.

when thus trusting in him alone as Savior we have the best assurance of this new life by the fact that the life is manifested in its appropriate activities. The practice of godliness. For those who trust in Christ for Salvation diligence in labors of love for Christ promotes the "full assurance of hope."

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Fair-Weather Christians.

BY THE REV. D. W. C. DUGGIN, D. D.

You think that that designation is meant for you who don't go to church when there is a light storm or when it is a "leete threatenin'" with the possible prospect of a storm within the next twenty-four hours. But it isn't; you belong to a crowd too large for one man to speak to. But it may be said privately in passing that your stay-at-home practice on dull days don't tally very well with what you say on bright days about "rather being a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord," and about "dwelling in the house of the Lord forever." It is not only an inconsistency which reflects upon yourself, but it is a painful source of discouragement to your pastor, especially when he sees such "patterns of piety" on the alert on Monday though the storm has increased threefold. Such an absurd gulf between reasonable expectation and actual practice makes the heart sick. The pastor is apt to feel that his people have a low estimate of his sermons, and that they are worth coming to hear only under the most favorable circumstances; or else that they do not love the sanctuary half so well as they pretend to. Either conclusion brings depression, and depression is sure to subtract from efficiency. Did it ever occur to you that your practice had anything to do with the inefficiency of your pastor, of which you complain? Has your practice or your tongue done nothing to undermine the usefulness of the man called to be your pastor? Mr. Spurgeon used to urge the churches to do everything in their power to encourage and build up their pastors and keep them in good heart. Attendance upon his ministry on dull days is one of the ways, and not the least efficient, of strengthening the heart of the pastor. So much privately.

But what I wish to say about fair-weather Christians is illustrated by what Captain Speke tells us concerning the peculiarities of some of the tribes of Western Africa. While pursuing his interesting explorations in that region, pitying the nakedness of his Negro attendants, the captain furnished each of them with an ample goat-skin garment, thereby to contribute to their comfort and afford them protection from the storms so common in that latitude. These dark and untutored natives were into ecstasies of delight over their mantles and were extravagant in their expressions of gratitude to their captain, while he was happy in the thought that these poor fellows now had ample protection against the chilling rains of autumn. While the sun shone with tropical power these happy natives kept to their clothing—they danced and they sang. At length the looked for storm came, when Captain Speke's pleasant anticipations were turned to chagrin "to see everyone of his men, as soon as it began to rain take off their garments, fold them under their arms, and go about shivering in the cold."

What a faithful portrait is that of the absurd conduct of many Christians who have been "covered with a robe of righteousness" and been given "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness!" When the sun shines and omens are all favorable, when they are without trials and everything goes well, they "enjoy their religion" and wear it gracefully and sing cheerfully. But when "comes like a wild deluge come, and storms of sorrow fall;" when death gathers the fairest flowers from the domestic garden; when trials and discouragements; and hard times come to the church; when pecuniary loss has been sustained; when opposition has been encountered; when unjust and mean things have been said; when fancied personal slights have been shown, and the four-hundred-dollar pastor does not come up to the four-thousand-dollar standard—under these varied circumstances we see hosts of Christians folding up their religion "wrong side out," and themselves taking the storm on their unsheltered

heads. Aside from the proprieties of life, what is a garment for if not for protection and comfort? We should regard a man as bereft of reason who should lay off his garments because the cold and bitter days had come; but by what terms could we characterize a Christian who should cast aside his Christianity simply because dark days, losses, misunderstandings, and trials have come? Christianity proposes to give rest to the sorrowing, protection to the tempted, and to be a very present help in trouble; and we use it wisely only when we use it for the end which it proposes to subserve. It is no mere assertion, but a proven fact, that it is equal to all the drafts that any man or all men can make upon it. The severest tests of our Christianity are found in the dark, wild, tempestuous days of human experience, as the vessel's strength is tested by the hurricane and the tumultuous sea. Christianity is fireproof—it will never fail if we keep it on.

When the worthies went into the furnace they were wrapped in their religious robes, and when they came out there was not even the smell of fire upon their garments—the "form of fourth" was there. When Daniel was cast into the den of lions he took his religion along with him, and God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths that they shouldn't hurt him. Paul and Silas also, when thrust into prison at Philippi carried their religion with them; and God whom they trusted and honored made his comforts come gliding like angels through the prison bars till the whole fortress resounded with songs and praises such as dungeon walls had never heard before. Brave old John Bunyan went into Bedford Jail clad in the whole panoply of God, and he never wrapped it up and laid it aside. Who can estimate the loss to the world had he done so! He honored God by his fidelity, and God honored him by making him a preacher to all succeeding generations.

In the dark night of trial and needed discipline God has filled the history of his church as full of songs between as of stars of promise above. "Songs in the night" is a favorite expression of the Old Testament, and is equivalent to "glory in tribulation" of the New, and may be interpreted to mean that in privation, in bereavement, in desertion, in ill-usage, and in trials of any sort there are compensations, consolations, and comforts in Christianity that come out thick as stars when the sun goes down, and that express themselves in cheerful song.

Christians who are Christians always and everywhere, in all weathers fair and foul alike, are the men and women whom God delights to crown with glory and honor, and to whom he will say "Well done!" Are you simply a fair-weather Christian? Greenville R. I.

Believe also in Me.

There is no journey of life but has its clouded days; and there are some days in which our eyes are so blinded with tears that we find it hard to see our way, or even read God's promises. Those days that have a bright sunrise, followed by sudden thunder claps and bursts of unlooked for sorrows, are the ones that test certain of our graces the most severely. Yet the law of spiritual eyesight very closely resembles the law of physical optics.

When we suddenly come out of the daylight into a room even moderately darkened, we can discern nothing; but the pupil of our eye gradually enlarges, until unseen objects become visible. Even so the pupil of the eye of faith has the blessed faculty of enlarging in dark hours of bereavement, so that we discover that our loving Father's hand is holding the cup of trial, and by and by the cup becomes luminous with glory. The fourteenth chapter of John never falls with such music upon our ears as when we catch its sweet strains amid the pauses of some terrific storm. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." I will not leave you comfortless.—The Rev. T. L. Cuyler.

Saved a Dollar.

Watch stopped has it? asked one traveler of another. Now, I suppose you'll pay a dollar to clean it. But let me give you a tip. Open both of the back cases so, hold it with the open side down, and tap it with your finger nail a dozen times. Don't be afraid. Snap it again. Now move the second hand. Is it all right? I thought so. A drummer put me on to the track. Probably there were only a few specks of dust in the works, and you've rapped them out. Very likely it will run now for a year, and you've saved your dollar. If it doesn't run after the little jar that you gave it, then it is time to take it to the jeweler.—New York World.

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Preparation for the Sabbath.

The Sabbath comes to us week after week with so fair a gift in its hand, so gracious a smile on its face, so divine an elevation in its heart, that it behooves us to make some preparation for so welcome a guest.

We do not fail to set our tables fittingly when friends whom we delight to honor are expected within our doors. There are days which we all keep with an extraordinary splendor, anniversaries, gala days, *fele days*. This seventh-day festival comes to us from God himself the ever renewed expression of his gentle thought of us his children. Can we do otherwise than greet it with joy and receive it with gratitude?

To prepare aright for the Sabbath we should lay our worldly cares aside. Even if the week has been full of disappointments, embarrassments, and perplexities, we shall the better gain strength to enter on another wrestle with such cares and solicitudes, by bringing serenity and patience to the Sabbath. This blessed interlude is meant as a truce to the weekday strife and struggle. Let us take the full benefit of it, with thankfulness in our souls.

A good preparation for the Sabbath, and a practical one, is found in the study of the Sabbath-school lesson with the children. They will get more profit from the Scriptures if they study them intelligently than if they merely skim them over, or go to the class without having mastered the golden thoughts embodied in the sacred text. A part of Saturday evening might advantageously be devoted to family Bible study in houses where the children are beyond the early bedtime period.—Christian Intelligencer.

Far away there in the sunshine are my highest aspirations. I cannot reach them; but I can look up and see their beauty, believe in them, and try to follow where they lead.

Good words do more than hard speeches, as the sunbeams without any noise will make the traveller cast off his cloak, which all the blustering winds could not do, but only make him bind it closer to him.

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