

This World of Thine.

Oh, Lord, I love this world of Thine
And these dear summer days;
I love these hallowed silences
So vocal with Thy praise.
I love the sounds of rushing streams,
And whispers everywhere,
And how shall love express itself
But in some happy prayer?

The mountains draw my heart to them,
The little loving flowers
Look up to me with smiling eyes
From glowing meadow-bowers.
The merry birds trill forth their lays,
And every stately pine
Is some fresh thing to love for Thee
In this dear world of Thine.

I love Thy world of happy men;
Great Father of us all,
How merrily they keep to-day
Thy summer festival!
And Thou art glad to see them glad,
They thank Thee with their joy,
And I am glad with them and Thee,
Till songs my heart employ.

Is anything more beautiful
Than this dear world of Thine?
My hopes look through these skies of blue,
Beyond these stars that shine.
Oh! world wherein my dear ones dwell,
Where Christ's own love makes bliss,
I think that Thou art fair, indeed,
If lovelier than this!

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

What is the Kingdom of God?

When we pray, as Jesus taught us, "thy kingdom come," we utter an aspiration that is native to the human heart. For vaguely as men conceive it, or poorly as they illustrate it, they still continue to cherish, in some form, the yearning for the coming of a greater good, a better order. Some see this coming good in civil or ecclesiastical changes, some in social revolution, some in educational progress. But all these forms of anticipation spring from the same root,—the unquenchable hope of better things to come which God has lodged within the human breast. "No one who has once cherished it," truly says Maurice, "entirely loses it; if he loses it, he loses himself with it."

"The kingdom of God" is one of the phrases which we most frequently hear on the lips of Jesus. From the beginning of his ministry he proclaimed that the kingdom of God was at hand, and invited men to enter into it. In discourse and in parable he dwelt upon its nature and requirements, and in prophetic vision spoke mysteriously of the time when he should renew his fellowship with his disciples in the kingdom of God.

The phrase, then, represents one of the characteristic and fundamental ideas of Jesus. Perhaps there is no other which is better entitled to be called the idea of Jesus. We shall impute no narrowness to our Master if we thus speak, since we may be sure that he will make no conception central in his teaching and work which is not broad enough to embrace the entire life of man. If Jesus will have one idea, he will have a great one.

The phrase "kingdom of God" is difficult to define, not because it means nothing in particular, but because it means so much. It stands for so great a movement of God in human history, so great a triumph of divine truth and love in human life, that no single phrase can contain its whole meaning.

Our Lord's idea of the kingdom was doubtless rooted in the Old Testament. The Jewish nation conceived itself to be what Josephus has so aptly called it, a "theocracy,"—a people of whom Jehovah was the rightful king. It was the greatest idea that was ever lodged in the heart of any nation. It is this living sense of God which gives special significance to the religious history of this people, and which fitted the nation to become the medium and vehicle of revelation. The consciousness that God was their King and Saviour was the fruitful soil in which sprang and flourished the Messianic hope. The firm belief that Israel was a kingdom of God filled the Israelite with expectation and confidence amid conditions which were adapted to dismay the stoutest heart. Invading hosts might devastate his fields, and lay his sacred temple in the dust; foreign armies might drive him from his home into exile; still his King was mightier than all others, and, although he might make his grave in a foreign land, his holy temple should rise Phoenix-like from its ashes, and the proud kings of the earth should bring their tribute into it. Where else shall we look for such a persistent optimism? Where else do we find so noble a philosophy of history?

The noblest minds in the nation, such as the great prophets, rose to the idea that the glorious destiny of Israel was to consist in a knowledge of God which this people was to bear to all mankind. To this height the nation as a whole did not rise, and they sank farther and farther away from it as the time drew near the birth of Christ. The great coming good was conceived of as a monopoly of divine favor to be

enjoyed by Israel, and thus the kingdom or reign of God, instead of embracing, in its idea and intent, the whole human family, became more and more narrowed, so as to include only the lineal descendants of Abraham. The very brilliancy of Israel's hopes made her perversion and narrowing of them the more disastrous. The shining goal of the nation's history was lost from view. She hid the light which God had given her, and it slowly died out, the light that was within her becoming darkness.

Now when Jesus appeared, he took up the best ideals of Jewish prophecy and lifted them to even greater heights. He set aside the limitations of view in which the idea of the kingdom of God has been apprehended in Old Testament times, and gave the idea its true universality and spirituality. The kingdom of God was for him something larger, because more spiritual, than the Jewish state had ever been,—something more spiritual than any state or church could ever be. It is impossible to mark off its limits precisely by the boundaries of any outward organization.

What, then, is the kingdom of God? It is the reign or rule of God; and all in whom God reigns—that is, all who obey, trust, and serve him—belong to this kingdom. It is the total company of those in whom heavenly laws and principles hold sway, and to it belong all who are living in the spirit of this petition: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Thus it is that the kingdom of God includes all God's faithful and obedient children in all times and places. Who these are, in actual fact, it is beyond the wisdom and province of man definitely to say. The conditions whose fulfilment makes men members of the kingdom are chiefly internal and spiritual, and only He who perfectly knows the human heart can pronounce that judgment. By the kingdom of God is understood what is commonly meant by the "invisible church;" that is, the whole spiritual commonwealth of God's children, the true company of all faithful people. The organized or visible church, in all its parts and branches,—the church catholic or universal,—represents more fully than any and all other institutions the kingdom of God on earth; but the two are not synonymous nor coterminous,—the kingdom of God is more and greater than the church.—S. S. Times.

Are You Weary in Well-Doing?

"Be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Are you a Christian worker? "Be not weary." It may be that you are just on the point of success; if you grow weary and give up now all your work will be lost.

Are you a Sunday-school teacher? "Be not weary." If your motive in teaching is a good one, and you can not teach for position or any worldly motive; if your whole aim and object are that your scholars shall be taught to know more of God, shall be brought to surrender themselves to Christ; and, above all, if you are teaching for Christ's sake, then be not discouraged, for "he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

You may be a member of some church committee; how full of enthusiasm you were when you first took up the work, but in a few weeks you grew weary; your work as a member of that committee commenced to suffer, to be neglected, and finally had to be transferred to some one else. What was the trouble? You lacked perseverance. Go to a Vanderbilt, a Wanamaker, a Gould, or others who could be mentioned. Ask them the secret of their financial success, in nearly every case you would be told it was perseverance. We lack perseverance to a very large extent, in every work undertaken for God.

Many Christian workers may be compared to a bundle of straw. Set a match to a bundle of straw, and what will be the result? A great deal of smoke, a great crackling noise for two or three moments, and all disappears; you can see only a little handful of ashes. Just so with some Christians. They plunge into their church work with great enthusiasm, but in a very little while they grow weary; they have not enough of the love of God in their hearts to accomplish any real work for him, and so they "grow weary" and give everything up.

Many people make a great mistake in regard to the service God requires of them, forgetting continually that it is in the faithful performance of the little duties which come to us in everyday life that we can serve God acceptably. The great majority of people will find their work of life near at hand. One reason why we find so many people lacking in spiritual strength and Christian principles is that they go on from day to day neglecting to perform the little duties of every day life, which go so far

towards building up a strong Christian character. Why is it, with many, such uphill work to serve God?

There are many, many ways whereby people "grow weary in well-doing." Have you grown weary in going to church? How about your weekly prayer meeting? Christians have no right to dare absent themselves from the weekly prayer meeting unless they can furnish an excuse that they can give at the day of judgment. Faithful attendance to the prayer meeting and other means of grace is one of the ways of serving God. If you are a little tired, go in spite of your weariness, your sickness, the heat, the cold, your old clothes, (can't you wear old clothes for Christ's sake? If not you are not worthy to bear his name.) Go in spite of other attractions, go in spite of the lecture down town, or your wheels.

It will pay, it does pay, to serve God, for "in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Hear the words of Christ: "Because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Another great neglect of duty among Christians of the present day is the "growing weary" of the study of the Bible. Are you able to say, as God's servant of old, "Thy word I have hid in my heart?"

I find no better remedy for the cure of idle thoughts than this one, the practise of committing to memory verses, from some portion of Scripture each day. Try it. Just think of the spiritual advantage it will be for you to "know the Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Lastly, my dear friends, have you "grown weary" in prayer? Perhaps you have prayed for weeks, months, it may be for years. Perhaps there have been times in certain religious awakenings when you were very much in earnest. That loved one for whom you prayed is not yet a Christian. Must you come to the conclusion that he has sinned away his day of grace, and drop him from our list? Ah, no! That is only a delusion of Satan's. Do not do it under any circumstances; otherwise you will make a fatal mistake and release God from his promise. His command is, "Pray without ceasing"; the condition is, "If ye faint not." Remember the little word "due" in this verse. God's seasons are not always our seasons, but be assured that in God's time and way "we shall reap if we faint not." The seed sown may not spring up and grow until after we have passed away, but in "due" time God will shine on the seed sown and there will be an abundant harvest.—J. M. G. in Morning Star.

Family Worship.

To read a chapter of Holy Scripture in the morning, and offer a short prayer in the presence of the whole family before they separate for the day, may seem a little thing which can be omitted without much loss. If the tremendous consequences of family worship could be arrayed before the mind of the father when he is tempted to neglect it, he would not find it difficult to resist the temptation.

Family worship has been the means of saving many a son from wandering from God. Going out from his home in the morning with the sound of his father's prayers ringing in his ears, and the sweet influences of the morning worship sweeping like a gentle zephyr over his soul, he is fortified against the temptations of the day more securely than all the books and lectures on moral science could fortify him.

Through family worship many a man has heard the call of God to a noble and useful life. One lad, kneeling at the family altar while his father commended his children to the keeping of the Almighty, heard distinctly the voice of the Spirit calling him into the Christian ministry. Responding to that call, he preached Jesus for nearly forty years. Not in dreams, but rather in family worship, does God call men in these days.

Nothing can bind the hearts of parents and children together more firmly than daily family worship. If through temptation the bonds of love begin to be loosed and slight alienations arise, the hour of prayer, when all meet around the common Father by his blessing, drives away the intruding tempter and augments the strength of the holy bonds. When one member of the household is about to depart on a long journey, the family prayer in the morning imparts to that separation a holy character, and through all his wanderings the absent one feels the halo of that last hour of home worship about his soul.

In this world where homes are founded in joy and love, invaded by sorrow, and broken up by time, the family altar is the holy of holies

which sanctifies the bitter and the sweet, and introduces the atmosphere of heaven into every scene.

Christ's Presence.

Jesus announced to His followers, "Lo, I am with you alway," and we dishonor His word by not accepting His precise meaning. He did not say, "Lo, I am with you alway, so long as you maintain a sensible evidence of it or so long as I see worthiness in you, character. Here is not a revelation to the believer of a mere possibility, but an actual experience. We ought not to hesitate; hesitation is unbelief."

"I am with thee," He hath said it, In His truth and tender grace; Sealed the promise grandly spoken, With how many a mighty token Of His love and faithfulness.

If we think upon our daily experiences we may easily see how this is illustrated in our human relations. We sit down at home near a chosen companion, and become absorbed in reading an attractive book. We forget for the time the nearness of one whose presence is just as real as though we were engaged in actual interchange of thought. The influence of that presence is immediate enters the realm of personality, silently affecting us. No one can explain how this is, yet the fact is admitted. Inadequate as this illustration may be, it serves our purpose. This life has its perplexities and responsibilities. Material things press close upon us daily, demanding our undivided attention. Is He with us during folly and inattention? His saving grace is accomplished in the heart only when it yields its full concurrence. Love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—these are the blessed fruits of His indwelling. Are they not worthy our watchfulness, our careful walk, our unswerving loyalty to the light He gives us on every question of Christian faith and practice? It is only when we walk in the light that we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and the full joy of knowing that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

Backbone.

At Chautauqua Rev. P. S. Henson, of Chicago, gave a lecture on "Backbone," in which he said:

"To stand alone! It is one thing to touch a bow; it is one thing to feel the inspiration of fellowship as you stand awaiting the charge—but to stand alone, as Noah stood in the midst of a surging sea, in the midst of a mocking multitude; to stand as Abraham stood beside the altar on which his only beloved son was stretched, and lifted the gleaming knife while his heart was in his throat, and yet obey God; to stand as Moses stood in the presence of the king, with the proud consciousness that he was God's ambassador; to stand as Elijah stood in the presence of the wicked Ahab; to stand as those young Hebrews stood in that vast multitude who debased their manhood before the image that the king set up—three that stood erect in their God-given manhood; to stand as Nehemiah stood when he proudly said, 'Shall such a man as I flee?' to kneel as Daniel did, though the lions were snarling yonder in their den; to stand as John the Baptist stood in the presence of guile Herod; to stand as Paul stood, reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment, till he made Felix tremble on his throne; to stand as Savonarola stood in the presence of the guilty Duke; to stand as Martin Luther stood in the Diet of Worms; to stand as Columbus stood in the midst of a mutinous crew with his eyes searching for the world that lay beyond; to stand as the Pilgrim Fathers stood—thank God for the Pilgrim Fathers! I thank God that they struck a rock when they landed. If they had struck an Illinois prairie instead, the whole history of America would have been different; they struck a rock, and they founded a government that is rock-bottom."

Dr. Hall's Maxims.

Love that has nothing but beauty to keep in good health is short-lived, and apt to haveague fits.

Very few of the great minds of our country have come from the cradle of the rich.

If you act with a view to praise only, you deserve none of it. A soldier, disabled in trying to shoot his brother man, is at once placed on the pension list, but a clergyman, whose youth and manhood have been spent in the effort to throw around this world a chain of love, and raise it to heaven, if he is disabled in his godlike work, is sometimes turned out to die like a dray-horse.

That man or woman who is not happy at home, has made a sad failure as to the largest portion of a life time.

A man who is in health is not morally

entitled to anything which he does not earn.

If the poor man thinks he works any harder than the rich man, he is much mistaken; if he thinks that the other enjoys more substantial comfort he is equally in error.

Begin early to live under the benign influences of Christian religion, for it has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Implant into the very nature of your children, from earliest infancy, an affectionate and implicit belief in all Bible teachings.

Mad dogs and turtles are not the only snapping animals in the world.

Chipmunks Play Tag.

Nothing is prettier and more frolicsome than a squirrel, or chipmunk, in his native woods. John Burroughs gives the following account of how the little fellows play "tag" in the trees: "It looked very much as if the chipmunks had learned to play tag. Round and round they would go, first one taking the lead, then another all good-natured and gleeful as school-boys. There is one thing about a chipmunk that is peculiar: he is never more than one jump from home. Make a dive at him anywhere, and in he goes! He knows where the hole is, even when it is covered up with leaves. There is no doubt, also, that he has his own sense of humor and fun, and what squirrel has not? I have watched two red squirrels for a half hour coursing through the large trees by the roadside where branches interlocked, and engaged in a game of tag as obviously as two boys. As soon as the pursuer had come up with the pursued, and virtually touched him, the palm was his, and away he would go, taxing his wits and his speed to their utmost to elude his fellow."

The Best Kind of Work.

Daniel Webster once said: "If we work on marble, it will perish; if we work upon brass, time will effect it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; if we work on immortal minds and imbue them with good principles—with the just fear of God, and the love of their fellow men—we engrave on those tablets something that will brighten for all eternity."

Remember that mirrors should never be hung where the sun shines directly upon them. They soon look misty, and grow rough and granulated, and do not give back a correct picture.

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