

Sowing.

Sow thou thy seed of corn and wait awhile.
See the snow falling and the ice-spray gleam
Above its hiding place. Hear the wind scream
And the wild tempest sweep o'er mile and mile
Of sullen landscape. Watch the rain clouds vial
Empty above it, and the fitful team
Of sunlight thwart the field, until a seam
Of tender green shoot up to greet thy smile.
And lo! God's miracle is wrought once more
Of life from death—from loss, most wondrous gain:
The cornfield glitters with its golden store
On the same land where late the storm and rain
Beat on the bare, brown earth. Thy sowing o'er,
Thine but to wait and pray lest faith should wane!
Sow thou thy seed of love, O heart, and wait.
Though it be hidden—though thy doubts and fears
Whisper to thee 'tis lost, and thy sad tears
Fall on the ice-bound soil of bitter fate—
Surely the seed will live: spring sets the gate
Of life wide open. See! though hid for years,
Love seeks the light of love—its tender spears
Shall gladden thy sad eyes at last, though late:
E'en, but the blade perchance, and not the bloom.
 Oftentimes God seeth that love's flower rare
Hath no perfection this side of the tomb,
But needeth for its growth the purer air
Of His sweet paradise: after earth's gloom
Love hath its blossoming—not here, but there!

—Chambers' Journal.

The New Heart.

The prophet Ezekiel lighted on troublous times. His name signifies 'God strengthens,' and he had need of a large measure of divine assistance under the peculiar circumstances of exile and depression amid which he found himself. Born in Judea, Ezekiel was early deported to Babylon, and established with numbers of his countrymen in a community on the 'river Chebar,' which was, perhaps, a royal canal connecting the Tigris with the Euphrates, some thirty miles above Babylon. But no Jew, especially no well-educated, patriotic Jew, such as was Ezekiel, could forget Jerusalem. For over twenty two years he prophesied in the interest of the true spiritual Zion, highly esteemed and often consulted by the most prominent among his countrymen. Whether or not Jeremiah and Ezekiel exchanged prophecies, their predictions seem to be antipodal each to each, as both caught corresponding visions of a new and better spiritual order which would finally succeed to the material desolations of the Jewish state.

The Book of Ezekiel is an ardent allegory, or a prophecy on fire, prophecy alight with the flashings of celestial auroras and stirring with the sweep of angelic wings. The obscurity lies not so much in his style as in his subject. Yet some of the weird figures he employs do not appear quite so inexplicable now that examinations of the Assyrian monuments have familiarized us with such forms as eagle-winged lions and bulls with human heads. Ezekiel's great purpose was to inspire his countrymen with new faith in Jehovah. And born and trained priest that he was, and an ardent expounder of the Law, Ezekiel sought to draw the picture of a future and more excellent ritual, where the spirit would be more than the symbol, though the symbol might still have use in interpreting God's truth. It is important to note how God works all true-hearted men into the composite society and service of His Kingdom. While Jeremiah was laboring away amid severe trials and discouragements in Jerusalem, and Daniel was standing up bravely for God and true religion at the brilliant Babylonian court, down there by the canal Chebar, Ezekiel was dreaming of a restored Judaism, and recounting his inspiring visions.

The line future for Judaism which Ezekiel foretold, however, was conditioned on the giving and reception of a new Law, which would address itself to the conscience of Israel, and take hold of its moral nature. 'Clean water' would be sprinkled upon Israel and it would be purified, a spiritual interpretation of symbolism which any devout Jew would understand. The cleansing would be from the filthiness of idolatry. For idolatry was not only untrue to the reality of things, but was also vile and corrupting. No genuine religious faith could thrive in such an atmosphere.

It must have been refreshing, at that sad juncture in the history of Israel, when all its hopes, together with Jerusalem itself, seemed in ruin, to hear the optimistic Ezekiel speak

a newness of life for God's wandering people. 'A new heart will I give you,' said the prophet. There was a word of hope where all else seemed decadent and retrograding. Men must not in any age rest content with the ruins of Jerusalem, with the blackened relics of sin. If anywhere a new life is to be found it must be had. There is a place then in history for the Ezekiels, dreaming their dreams and recording their splendid visions, who find a hope for humanity amid its degradations and limn before its eyes the grander proportions of a new state in the midst of which dwelleth God.

The 'new heart' of which Ezekiel here speaks may be considered individually and socially. Religion begins with the individual. It is personal first of all. New hearts are created one by one. The heart is the centre of the man, is his personality. In the narrower sense, the heart denotes the affections. Back of the mind, back even of the will, which is but the executive officer of the heart, lie these imperious affections, which create, when they have had long enough play, the disposition of the man. The disposition is the position toward a thing, the leaning, bent or trend of the man's nature.

Heart then is habit, and only God can give the new heart or nature, which must come by a process of spiritual recreation. Mere cleansing from past sin is not enough. The positive quickening and energizing by God's Spirit is also needed that men may be caused to walk in the divine statutes and keep God's judgments (vs. 27). A new life and a new love are thus put into the soul of the repenting sinner, who thereupon becomes a positive force for righteousness and truth.

And when the individual is regenerated there is hope for the nation. A social heart is indeed but the sum total of the hearts or dispositions of the human units who compose society, or, possibly we may say, the predominant disposition of the majority of those units. There are marine organisms so low in the scale of being that they have but one heart in common. The social heart is not such a communal heart, and yet it is distinctly influenced by the moral quality of each of the individual hearts that go to make it up. And so Ezekiel here emphasizes what has been well termed 'the great scope of a human life.' The Jew was accustomed to associate his personal fortunes with those of the Hebrew nation. The prophet here represents the individual restoration of his countrymen as resulting in a national restoration. The desolate land would be tilled, and become like a second Eden, the wastes would be boided, and the once derisive heathen taught that the Lord can create a new society and a perfect paradise by creating new men.

That is the true reformation which is a regeneration by the Spirit of God. Nothing else will do. The only hope for humanity is the new heart, which God alone can give, but which God is willing to give to all who ask for it.—New York Observer.

"The Lord Thinketh Upon Me."

God is not indifferent to the creatures of His hand. He has shown an interest in all inferior creatures. He cares for oxen and sheep and sparrows. But we are taught in the Bible that He feels a still deeper interest in men. We do not suppose that the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and human beings all occupy the same level in the mind of the Creator. Jesus taught that the heavenly Father cares more for man than for any other living beings in this world. This is the comparison He makes: 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father. Fear ye not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows.' He does care for sparrows; much more does He care for us.

Since His eye is on the sparrow, I shall not be forgotten.

Jesus has more to say on this topic: 'Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?' That word 'much more' is emphatic and exceedingly important. God does care for lilies. The tints they bear are evidences of His care. But what are lilies? They are grass which is cut down and withereth. But what is man? He was made in the image of God. He can think and feel and love as God thinks and feels and loves. Much more, then, does the Creator care for man.

He has not left us without many evidences of His thoughts. When a father is absent from home he not only

thinks of his children, but he causes them to know that he does so. He sends letters and presents to remind them that he is thinking of them. If he did not think of them the birthday present would not come. Has not our heavenly Father sent us many remembrances? What is the meaning of our daily bread and all the blessings which contribute to the comfort of life? What is the meaning of the protection on which unseen hand exercises over us by day and by night? What is the meaning of the Bible? If God did not think of us we should not have His word. We should not have His Son. We should not have His Holy Spirit. He would not have taken our feet out of the miry clay and set them on a rock. All these things assure us that God thinks of us.

He thinks of us constantly. His thoughts to usward are more than can be numbered. His thoughts are very deep. He thinks of each individual. As the shepherd knows each sheep of the flock the great Shepherd knoweth His sheep and calleth them by name.

His thoughts are precious. 'How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!' Men who are exalted to honor and power do not, as a rule, care for common people. After their promotion they often forget those who were their companions before. If their former friends and companions happen to be obscure and lowly, they are quite sure to forget them. It is refreshing to read what the psalmist says: 'I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.' Such thoughts are precious. It is easy to believe that God thought of Adam and Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham, but it is not so easy to grasp the thought that the Creator of the world thinks of the poorest and most obscure saint. He does not forget those who wander away. A mother does not soon forget her son or cease to love him. He may wander far. He may disgrace his parents and himself by his conduct. He may lose the respect of his neighbors. His father may turn him away from his door, refuse to acknowledge him or speak to him; but his mother clings to him still. She will not give up hope nor cast off the son of her love. But the prophet says that even a mother may forget her son, but the Lord will never forget.

'Every human tie may perish,
Friend to friend unfaithful prove,
Mothers cease their own to cherish,
Heaven and earth at last remove;
But no changes
Can attend Jehovah's love.'
Surely His thoughts are precious.—Chris. Advocate.

Missions.

By MRS. CHARLOTTE O. VAN CLEVE

In studying the condition of the various countries of the world in which we have missions established, we come upon facts and incidents in the work which show very plainly that our Heavenly Father sometimes uses what may seem very trivial means to wake up his children to a sense of their obligations to him. We give as one instance of this the following fact: One day when Martin Luther was going up the 'Santa Scala,' the stairway which is said to be the one which Christ ascended to the judgment seat of Pilate, the text flashed across his mind: 'The just shall live by faith,' and that text was used by our dear Lord to the opening up of the Reformation.

Again, Xavier, the devoted Catholic missionary, was aroused by the forcible text, 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' and this sentence was used by the Almighty to open up the work of missions in Ceylon, in India, China and Japan.

And we cannot think of the wonderful life in Africa of the sainted Livingston, without a feeling of gratitude to God for the gift to the Church and the world, of such an earnest, self-sacrificing life as he lived among a savage people, deprived of every comfort, removed from friends, in the midst of danger and in a hateful climate, and for what? Simply that he might tell to those degraded savages the story of Jesus and His love. There is not, in the history of the world, a more soul-stirring episode than the story of that saintly man's death on his knees in that lonely cabin in Africa. As we read it, can we not realize in some slight degree the coming of the unseen messengers commissioned to bear his spirit to the blessed place prepared for him where there is no more sin, no more sighing, and where God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of his saints who have suffered and died in carrying out his last great world embracing command.

Wonderful political changes are going on in Africa, and the rising generation of Christ's children are called upon to prepare for their part in the work. In order to do it efficiently

we should read carefully all that is published concerning it and should keep in mind the far reaching orders of Him by whose name we are called: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' And do we realize as we should, the fact that this blessed work entrusted to us has been used by our Heavenly Father to throw wide open the doors of many dark places of the earth, and that we are especially called upon to carry forward the work?

We cannot but be thankful that a cordon of mission stations of the different families of Christians has almost encircled Africa and we can see in some measure how these will work towards the centre, where will be found a strange people but little removed above the brutes who are to be enlightened, by God's blessing on the labors of his servants, and to be lifted up out of their abject condition and taught the sweet story of Jesus and his love.

What a glorious privilege is granted to all Christ's followers to have a part in this blessed work. Sometimes, as we sit in a missionary concert meeting, we can realize, in a degree the promise, 'where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.' Oh! if at such an hour we can but touch the hem of his garment we may feel new life in our hearts and we may cry out in spirit, 'Lord, what wilt thou have us to do?' And quickly comes the reply, 'Feed my lambs; feed my sheep.' Beloved friends, are we doing our part faithfully in the great work entrusted to us? We do well to realize fully that we are debtors to the heathen world and that in giving for their enlightenment we are simply paying our debts; and experience teaches that a church which gives liberally for the cause of missions, receives warmth of love to Christ and is amply repaid for its investment.

'When this fleeting world is done,
When has set yon glorious sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall we fully know,
Not till then, how much we owe.'

The Selfishness Of Sensitiveness.

Every pastor must constantly meet the sensitive people of his parish, and there is no field in which he needs to be so tactful, kind and firm as when he is dealing with those who have a tendency to be sensitive. They do suffer keenly, and the fact must not be lost sight of. They are not to blame for the quality of soul which makes them susceptible to every word and mood on the part of others. And yet there is a side of this matter which must be kept in mind by those who have a tendency to sensitiveness. The trait may run swiftly into a most subtle sort of selfishness. There are churches in which the whole work of the church is really conditioned by the morbid nature of some one member, and very often the danger of 'hurting the feelings' of one sensitive person becomes the chief point in the discussion of the work of the church. It can be said with truth that there are churches in which the entire work of the body is not only conditioned but impaired most seriously by this fact.

Now, no one person has the right to let his natural sensitive temper become thus important in the life and work of his friends or fellow-Christians. It is the very height of selfishness to do this. And it is a difficult thing to check or reprove. Many a pastor suffers in silence rather than brave the danger of making a bad matter worse by trying to present the true situation to the sensitive member. There are always grave dangers in the way, but it is generally best to talk firmly and plainly with such sensitive people, and to try to show them the real selfishness of their mood.

What a joy and source of strength it is to the busy preacher when he can always be sure that he can ask this or that of his people, and put this worker here or there, with the assurance that there will be no hard feelings and no sense of slight or undue honor on the part of any one! This is the sort of workers needed everywhere. You must be this sort of a helper to your pastor. Look over that sensitive tendency that you have. See if it is kept within bounds. And if it has grown selfish, go resolutely at the task of reformation. For the selfishness of sensitive people brings weakness and confusion into the working of church.—Zion's Herald.

What It Cost.

'What is the value of this estate?' said one gentleman to another with whom he was riding, as they passed a fine mansion surrounded by fair and fertile fields.

'I don't know at what it is valued; I know what it cost its late possessor.'

'How much?'

'His soul.'

A solemn pause followed this brief answer; for the inquirer had not sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The person referred to was the son of a pious labouring man. Early in life he professed faith in Christ, and he soon obtained a subordinate position in a mercantile establishment. He continued to maintain a reputable religious profession till he became a partner in the firm. Labour then increased. He gave less and less attention to religion, and more and more to his business, and the cares of the world choked the Word. Ere he became old he was exceedingly rich in money, but so poor and miserly in soul that none who knew him would have suspected that he had ever borne the sacred name of Him who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' At length he purchased the landed estate referred to, built him a costly mansion, sickened and died. Just before he died he remarked, 'My prosperity has been my ruin.' What a price for which to barter away immortal joy and everlasting life! Yet how many do it!

Christian Service.

The service which Christ requires must be whole-hearted. To become a Christian one must give himself—body, soul, mind and strength, for life and death—to Christ. Christian service does not consist in any single act, but in a continued surrender, day by day, a living dedication of all that we are and all that we possess to Him who has called us into His kingdom. When the heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit, the soul is not only born into the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God is set up in the soul. To serve Christ is to have Christ enthroned in the mind and heart. It is to have the desires and habits and passions to which all the best energies were sacrificed brought into subjection to the new Master and Lord. That means on His part ruling, and on our part willing and loving obedience.—The Examiner.

A Governing God.

When things get beyond your control, when you face an unknown future, and when trying conditions confront you, remember that there is a governing God in Israel, and that it is His to bring light out of darkness, joy out of sorrow, and hope out of despair. Be patient and acquiescent. Let the Ruler of the universe and the Lord of the individual manage affairs in His own way and at His own time. Neither grow weary nor become too impatient. Roll upon a covenant-keeping God your cares, taking His dispensations as they come, and multiplying sorrow neither by distrust nor by foreboding. God unravels the future day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment, accompanying the distribution with His supporting and sanctifying grace.—The Presbyterian.

To many the resurrection from the dead of sin is a slow process; but others pass with one thrill of conviction, with one spasm of energy, from death to life, from the power of Satan unto God. Such moments crowd eternity into an hour, and stretch an hour into eternity.—F. W. Farrar.

Gained 50 Pounds.

'I have used Burdock Blood Bitters for Dyspepsia and sick headache. Before I started taking it I was thin and run down in health. Two bottles have completely cured me and since then I have gained about fifty pounds in weight.' Mrs. Ellen Vaughan, Moulton Station, Ont.

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