

## WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT.

This was hard to put on, because it was provided absolutely of the King's bounty. It was altogether of grace and the man's pride stood in the way. He thought he had a pretty nice suit of his own, and to have it utterly disused as if it were of no value at all nor of any fitness for even the very greatest and best occasion went hard with him. Or, if he would be allowed to pay for this wedding garment it would be different; if something he had done or would do could be accepted as an equivalent for it, or at least partial payment. But to have not only all his own righteousness counted as filthy rags, but to have all that he had given and all he had done for the church, all all the responsible positions he had filled in it esteemed of no worth as a consideration for his acceptance at that day, was altogether too much humiliation and depreciation.

It is probably true that he had become more absorbed in occupation than in anticipation. The social features and the business affairs of that numerous company that had been gathered from everywhere in response to the "whosoever" call of the King's servants, furnished a large round of secondary occupation. There were quar- quarters to be found, entertainments to be provided, regulations to be established, and officers to enforce them. The thing is become a world in itself, and committees and sub-societies must be made and means gathered to look after the great and growing interests of this unique community, and it is quite possible the man has become so absorbed in all this as to lose sight of the chief and ultimate purpose of the gathering. Is it at all likely that any of us may be so busy caring for the interests of the Church, as to have lost interest in that which the Church stands for itself? Hope is as necessary for final salvation as Faith.

While busy thus about many things, it is quite possible he fell in with the common talk against "those who pay so much attention to their own feelings and experiences as to be of little account for the work that he was busy about, and that he believed was the real way of having religion." He thus probably imbibed a prejudice towards what were called "Holiness people." And the leaders in "drives" may have helped along in all this, for they reasoned that if too much place or prominence was given to Holiness just now they would have nothing at all to do with "Holiness." So attention to these deeper spiritual things was deferred until after a success had been made of the "programme." But just then the King came in to see the guests, and "he saw there a man not having on a wedding garment" \* \* \* "And he was speechless."—Heart & Life.

The bottom of the soul may be in repose; even when we are in many outward troubles; just as the bottom of the sea is calm while the surface is strongly agitated.—John Wesley.

"Now that it is settled that we are going to live forever, it behooves us to fix our eye and set our affections upon the things that will last after time shall be no more."

## "IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS."

Surely this is a hard saying! Am I to thank God for everything? Am I to thank Him for bereavement, for pain, for poverty, for toil? I may believe that the time will come when I shall thank Him; that is an act of faith. But am I to turn faith into fruition? Must I celebrate the victory before the battle? Must I lift up my hands over head and say, "Father, I thank thee that Thou hast taken away my friend?" Is it possible? Is it human? Is it desirable? Is it the will of love that love should violate its own laws? Is it pleasing to my Father that loss should be pleasant to me? Is my heart to make no distinction between the sunshine and the cloud? Is not one-half of my joy just the absence of pain? If I cease to shrink from pain, how shall I keep my joy? Is it good that I should be told to give thanks for everything?

Be still, my soul; thou hast misread the message. It is not to give thanks "for" everything, but to give thanks "in" everything. It is not to praise God for the night, but to bless Him that the night is not deeper. Bethink thee; thou hast never reached the absolute depth of any darkness, never come to the step which has no step below it. You have read of the Son of Man, that He gave thanks over the symbol of His broken body. What does that prove? That He rejoiced in being sad? No, but that He was not perfectly sad. It tells me that even the Man of Sorrows had not reached the uttermost sorrow. Not for the pain, but for mitigation of the pain, did the Son of Man give thanks; not that His body was broken, but that it was broken for me. In thine hour of sorrow give thanks like Jesus. Keep thine eye, not on the step above, but on the step below—the step to which thou hast not yet descended. Look not up at the height thou hast lost; look down on the depth thou hast not sounded.

Thy Father has never allowed the uttermost deep of misery to any human spirit; the cable may creak and strain, but it is anchored within the veil. God never fills the cup of Jesus to the brim; there is always a vacant space reserved for light and air. Is it not written: "He that put thy tears into his bottle; the quantity of thy griefs is measured; there is a bound which they cannot pass?" Thank God for that boundary, oh, my soul.—George Matheson.

## A SMILE DOES IT.

"You can't improve a plain face," said the waitress at the restaurant. She smiled and waited half-expectantly for the reply of the president of a large printing house whom she was serving. He looked at her thoughtfully for a few seconds, and then said, encouragingly: "Yes, you can. Every time you smile you improve it." And those who were seated near and had overheard the conversation realized he had spoken the truth. The girl's face was plain, but a pleasant smile acted as a beauty brush. It softened the lines about the mouth, and enabled one to perceive the warm, kindly sympathy which lighted the eyes. She looked attractive when she smiled.—Zion's Herald.

## HIS GIFT.

"As Thou hast prospered me, so let me give."

Dare I, O Lord, my God, make this my prayer?

Unnumbered gifts—largest of sun and air,

Thy wide world's beauty, free to all who live,

Dear love of valued friends, with whom to share

The boundless good Thou dost, in love, bestow—

Are these the measure of my duty? So

To give as Thou hast given, do I dare?

"As Thou hast prospered me, so let me give."

Dare I, O Christ, not make this prayer to Thee?

Above, beyond all gifts art Thou to me, Thyself Thou gavest, that my soul might live,

Grateful, adoring, at Thy feet I fall,

Myself, not mine, but Thine: take Thou my all.—S. S. Times.

## NO HOLINESS ADVANCE WITHOUT HOLINESS.

The very best means of spreading holiness is to have it. There is not much advance unless we do. Holiness is like salt. Its usefulness is in diffusing itself. The man who has never succeeded in persuading himself to entirely consecrate himself to God and trusting Him for a clean heart will have a difficult task in persuading others. This is the reason many who say they preach holiness, never get any one else into the experience. It takes a holy man to spread real holiness. He who would operate on the eyes of others must have clear vision himself. A blind oculist will never have much business. Jesus said, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

The physician who has never been able to get any good out of his own medicine ought not to prescribe it for others.

The reason holiness lags in some sections is evidently because there is none there to spread. There is no spark to set the region on fire. Whoever has it will start a conflagration of some size—great or little.—Christian Witness.

Human love is either reciprocal, or rests upon affinity, friendship or relationship; but God's love is initiative. He first loved us. It is independent of pleasure and reciprocity, for when we were both enemies and dead in sin He loved us. And it is unending. And this is the love which by His Holy Spirit He would shed in our hearts, those who are strangers to us in the flesh and to our native land and tongue. That we may love those who because of their physical grossness, their mental darkness or their moral degradation are displeasing or even disgusting to us, and love those who still have no grateful response to our love, or appreciation of kindness. And it is by this love that God would lift the world. He would lift it to Himself, and so lift it through us as to let us share the pleasures and the power of a love that is purely and wholly His own. "The love of Christ constraineth us."—Selected.