

POETRY.

"The Lord is our Refuge."

"I flee unto Thee to hide me."—Ps. cxliii. 9. From sin's unwearied temptings, From Satan's deadly lies, From all the world's vain pleasures, That charm my foolish eyes.

I flee to thee to hide me, Thy terror-stricken child; Forgive me, I have lingered, By wayside flowers beguiled.

The foes are drawing round me, They throng on every side, And trembling lest they stop me, I flee to Thee to hide.

Not only from foes outward Do I for shelter call— O save from self, my Father, The deadliest foe of all,—

That like a mighty mountain, Towers ever in my way; O blessed "Rock," that's "higher," I flee to Thee to-day!

The way-side dust has blinded My eyes, I cannot see; But yet there is a Refuge, And, blindly, there I flee.

O blessed, blessed Refuge, How safe, how sure Thou art! O perfect, perfect shelter From every poisoned dart!

Here, here in peace and safety, O make me to abide; From all my foes and tempters I flee to Thee to hide!

—London Christian.

FAMILY CIRCLE.

A Sermon to Lads.

BY REV. T. R. STEVENSON.

"There is a lad here."—John vi. 9.

You see, my boys, Jesus Christ does not despise lads. Some of His followers now and then act as if they did: the more's the pity. When a minister gives fifteen minutes on Sunday in talking to young people, certain folk have a silly and wrong habit of looking unamiable and "speaking things that they ought not." So selfish are they, that they want to have all the sermon to themselves. They remind one of the disciples who were vexed at the mothers for bringing their children to Christ. Don't you think it would be a good thing for them? So recollect what the Saviour said, and how displeased—yes, "much displeased"—He was.

It is a blessing that we can say as we go into many houses, "There is a lad here." Boys and girls are the sunshine of life. I wonder who that has any sense or heart would choose to be without them? The psalmist spoke of children being like arrows in the hand of the mighty. So they are—arrows that strike and slay a vast amount of unhappiness. The venerable old patriarch exclaimed, "Bless the lads"; and "let all the people say Amen" to his benediction. A home is wonderfully brightened and cheered by lads and lasses; it is amusing to see what a stock of nervousness and "starch," to speak plainly, is knocked out of people by their presence. When one beholds an ancient maiden lady so stiff and precise that she hardly knows which foot it is prudent to step with first, one cries inwardly, "Oh, that she had been married, and that there was a lad here!" That would cure the dear creature. Or, if a husband and wife live a wrangling, nagging sort of life, it is almost impossible not to wish, "Would that there were a lad here to give them something better to do than perpetually to wrangle and bicker."

It is not hard to know when there is a lad here. Of course you have all read, or had read to you, that prince of tales, Robinson Crusoe. You remember that when Robinson found, one day, the footmark on the sand, he knew that there were people on the island. So there are certain signs by which we can easily tell whether "there is a lad" in a house. If I find letters cut out on a tree, remarkable heads of men, extraordinary galloping horses, and quite newly-shaped ships drawn in odd places, I say, "Ah, there is a lad here." Or, supposing I come across marbles, kites, tops, and whips, I am bold enough to conclude, "Certainly, there is a lad here." Now, you lads here at this juvenile service, will you listen a little to what is said of the lad spoken of in the text?

See, for one thing, he was useful, was he not? With his loaves and fishes, he aided our blessed Lord in feeding thousands of hungry folk. Yes, and depend upon it, all lads can be of real service. Hear what a Dutch boy once did. You know Holland is surrounded by water; "stolen from the sea," some call Holland. To keep out the water there are big dams or dykes. One day a little lad saw a small hole in the dyke, and a thin stream of water was trickling

through. By and by it got larger, and he knew that, unless stopped, there would certainly be a frightful break-down, flooding and destroying the town. He did not hesitate, but thrust his arm into the hole and kept it there until somebody came who raised an alarm and got the dyke mended. Useful lad! May all of you be thoughtful and courageous as he was! To give another instance. A lad playing near a railway found that a bridge had given way. No sooner had he discovered it than he heard the rumble of a train in the distance. If nothing were done, an awful accident must occur. He pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, and waving it with all his might, ran towards the train. Providentially the engine-driver saw him; brakes were put on, steam was reversed, and the carriages were brought to a standstill in time to prevent them being hurled to ruin.

Better than all this, "a lad here" may do good spiritually, good "to souls," as we often say. Some years ago a preacher used to go now and then to a few villages and try to bring sinners to Jesus by his kind and earnest words. He spoke well and powerfully. Now, you would have thought that anybody would have rejoiced at that. But no! the prince of darkness can always find tools to work with, and he did in this case. When the juvenile-looking youth went to preach some sneered at him, and what do you think they called him? "The jacket preacher." "Oh, it's the jacket preacher again, is it," said these wise and zealous Christians. Yes, it was "the jacket preacher." But, jacket or no jacket, he did a great power of good. And who do you suppose he turned out at last? No other than our dear and honoured friend the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. Paul said to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth"; and it would be well for their good name if those who try to snub and put down young people would take the apostle's plain hint. Anyhow, do you, my lads, try to "put to silence the ignorance of sinful men," by getting good from the Redeemer, even the pardon of sin, and victory over sin, that you, under the influence of saving love, may be useful. The Lord help you thus.

Some say that the "lad here" had the loaves and fishes to sell. You have often seen at wakes, fairs, reviews, and the like, boys with different things to sell. Perhaps the "lad here," knowing that there would most likely be a number of people to hear the preaching of Jesus, got together his stock-in-trade in order that he might do a stroke of business. If so, he was not out in his reckoning, for he had done so well, commerce had been so flourishing, with him, that he had only five loaves and two fishes left. Here is another hint for us. Some of you, although so young, have to work, don't you? You toil as well as go to school. Now, let me say to you, Do your work well, as well as ever you can. "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well"—a golden proverb that. How hateful slovenly work is! I wonder that people have the impudence to show their faces and expect to be paid for shabby, badly-done work. Away with all such idleness as this! One day I was looking about in a beautiful Independent chapel in Devonshire, when a gentleman came and began to examine the heating apparatus. He had a couple of workmen with him, and they took up a piece of the flooring for him to see the pipes, or something of the sort. When he had seen enough of it he said to me, "Scamped, sir; scamped work!"—scamped, an expressive word meaning badly-done work. And it is quite right, too, for a man who slips or slurs in his work is undoubtedly a scamp. Boys, be as good at your work as you know how. Jesus Christ was once a carpenter. How do you think He did His work? "Go thou and do likewise."

Be on your guard against temptation in the midst of your work. Resolve not to do wrong, God helping you. There was a boy named Adam, an apprentice. A piece of cloth did not measure as much as his master wanted it to do. "Stretch it," stretch it," he cried to Adam. Not a bit of it, Adam knew better. He refused to cheat a customer in that style. He afterwards became the celebrated Dr. Adam Clarke. "Good measure, Joe," cried a wide-awake person, who thought he could do pretty much as he liked with "a mere boy." "Good measure to-day, Joe, for you know your master's not in." "Oh, yes, my Master is always in," was the reply. Recollect that God's eye is ever upon you. Your Master is always in.

It has been thought that, instead of being a small trader, the "lad here" carried the loaves and fishes for his mother and sisters. It may have been so. Whether or no, we may do worse than take the oppor-

tunity of reminding each other of the duty of being obliging and attentive to others. Now, Sam, my young friend, tell me the honest truth, What did you say the other evening when your mother told you to put on your cap and "fetch the girls home"? "The greatest plague of life, girls are." No wonder that you look silly and can't help laughing at yourself. I beg we may never hear such a thing again. What! "girls the greatest plague of life!" Ah! a few more years will totally change your sentiments on that point. "Be kind to the loved ones at home," is the motto of a song, and ought to be the maxim of each life. Yes, and be civil and accommodating to all not at home. To be polite is not to be simpering and smirking; it is a duty and a blessing. Englishmen have a name for being boorish and vulgar when they go abroad, and it can't be wondered at. It is a great stain on our national character that we should so frequently misbehave ourselves when we get over the Channel. I defy you to point out a rude act on the part of Him who is our pattern. "Be courteous," is a Bible command.

Lads should be lads. Though this remark doesn't at all come out of the text, it is not a long way off it, and it is a pity it is not better attended to. "Boys will be boys," we sometimes say. So they should be. I'm afraid, however, that we must often put a disagreeable little word in. I mean the word "not." "Boys will not be boys." Too often that is the state of the case nowadays. Mark Lemon said, "There are no boys in the present day; they are all 'young fellows.'" An amusing question was asked by a child a while ago. Speaking of a certain person, she said:—"Mamma, is — a big boy, or a little man?" Certain it is that many big boys try hard to be men, even if it be only "little men." What a pity! How sickening to see a lad try to smoke (I hope it makes him feel awfully bad behind the scenes); how shameful for a lad to drink ale regularly, or even sip spirits. So of talk. When one hears a lad call his father "the governor," and use slang on the most solemn occasions as well as on trivial ones, it makes one think, "Oh, that there was a lad here." Lord Macaulay tells us that William III. was never young. A great pity. Lads, be lads. No pretence! Don't put on airs. A healthy, hearty, happy lad we all like. Be yourselves, and mimic nobody.

Be good lads—good in lessons, work, play, everything. Think of Him who was once a boy. Ask Him to make you noble, and brave, and pure. Serve Him, and He will at last bring you where He is, and, I think, angels, as they see you enter through the pearly gates, will cry: "Hallelujah! there is a lad here!"

Talking while Eating.

Never attempt to talk while eating, or at the time of eating and swallowing. If one will take time for eating (not Yankees) and indulge in pleasant conversation, that is all well and even favorable to good digestion, but to attempt to eat and talk at the same time, is but little less than swinish, beside being actually dangerous. The passage of food into the stomach closes a trap-door—the epiglottis—to prevent danger to the lungs, since solid and insoluble substances thus taken in the lungs—"going down the wrong way"—produce death if the coughing at the time fails to eject it. A sudden laugh may, and often does, raise this door, when the sudden effort to close it by drawing in the breath, done involuntarily, often takes along with it morsels of food, which produce a suffocating sensation, causing great disturbance, if not dissolved by a juice thrown out for the purpose, or by the effort of coughing. Again, this constant talking tempts one to eat too rapidly, or the one expected to answer a question impolitely asked while one is masticating food, too suddenly swallow it, thus making one almost swinish, in consequence of rapid eating. Such rapid eating is dangerous to the lungs, and certainly to the stomach; the food thus robbed of the chewing, the saliva, etc., robs the body of the needed nourishment. Eat slowly, and do the talking while resting or at the close of the meal.—Watchman. J. H. H.

Many people fail to be saved, by making it too hard a matter. The way of faith is simple; you are to drop into the arms of Christ as the child into those of its mother. You are not to do, in order to be saved; you are to give up and Christ will save you. Though you are not to do in order to be saved, you are to do because you are saved. Your doing has no merit, only as it evinces the vital and gracious principle within. If you cannot be saved by works, you cannot continue saved without works. If faith justifies you, it is works that justify your faith.—Zion's Herald.

POWER OF THE CROSS.—How powerful is the preaching of Christ,—yes, one or two words about Christ and the cross, how powerful are they in changing the hearts of men! Preach, if you like, about the great deeds of kings and generals, and their courage and glory;—these things will please men for a little time, but they will not convert them. But preach concerning Him that was crucified, a subject apparently ignominious and foolish,—and then the story of the cross which is foolishness to them that perish, will be the power and wisdom of God to them that believe.

A Baptist Church in Palestine.

BY REV. PHILIP BERRY.

Twelve years ago, when a missionary in Northern Syria, I learned from various sources that there was a mission school at Sychar, the city of the Samaritans. The nature of the school I could not exactly ascertain, only the general fact that it was not altogether orthodox, and was irregular in some respects. The missionaries of the American Board, regarded the work as ill-devised and crudely conducted. I ascertained, however, through J. T. Barclay, M. D., author of the "City of the Great King," that through his influence, as missionary at Jerusalem, considerable mission work had been done in regions about Jerusalem, reaching as far north as Nablous, the ancient Sychar. Dr. Barclay was a very pious person, and his principles were Baptist, although he was denominationally a Disciple.

I was, therefore, prepared in part to read from Bishop Marvin's book entitled, "To the East by way of the West," the following, written while halting at the city of the Samaritans:

"Meanwhile we repaired to the little Baptist mission, where the pastor, the Rev. Mr. El Kari, a native of Palestine, but educated in England, was in the midst of his sermon. The hearers were all seated on the floor, their shoes having been left at the door. When we were discovered, they politely drew to one side and the other, opening the way for us to pass through to a settee near the preacher's stand—for pulpit he had not. The greater number of the auditors were children of the Sunday school, but the few adult persons present were remarkably fine-looking. The pastor himself had as fine a face and head as you will see in a month's travel. The communicants are only nine, but the Sunday school is well attended, and the mission is a handful of heaven in the meal. After the service we had some pleasant chat with the pastor and his intelligent Liverpool wife, and saw their three beautiful children—after which we made our way to the summit of Mount Gerizim."

This certainly is interesting, and we cannot doubt of the success of Baptist doctrine in that land, where the language, ruins of baptistries, associations and scenery combine to impress the immersion idea with peculiar force upon the native mind.

I trust I may yet learn that the Jordan is the scene of many a precious convert's baptism, and its waters moved by the feet of willing disciples, who shall come hither to profess their Lord.—National Baptist.

Encompassed as we are, and often oppressed with a sense of the frailties of humanity, we long to see a life from which these defects have been eliminated. But the desire is a foolish one. In our fallen state we are not prepared to deal with a perfect humanity; we should be disheartened by its very completeness. Perfection would only cause us to feel how impossible it is for us to imitate it. We are as equally indebted to the weaknesses of men as to their virtues. Weakness is a bond of sympathy, an encouragement, an inspiration of hope. The estate of an angel in the present life we despair of reaching; but it is possible to be as good as our frail fellow man. His frailty incites us to the contest and the victory. He has been required to conquer like ourselves.—Zion's Herald.

Charity should be prompt in the preacher when he sees a hearer asleep during the services. Probably he has been working hard during the week, or setting up with the sick the night before; or perhaps he is not well, or is suffering from the vitiated air, or the dullness and prosiness of a poorly prepared sermon. Judgment ought not to be given against him till all this is thought over. After all, it will be found that the soundest sleepers of a congregation, who do not even try to keep their eyes open, are the men who, in any form of worldliness, will keep awake day and night. A heart in the service will sustain the ninety-nine worshippers in their wakefulness, and make the one hundredth fight against his besetting sin.—Zion's Herald.

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