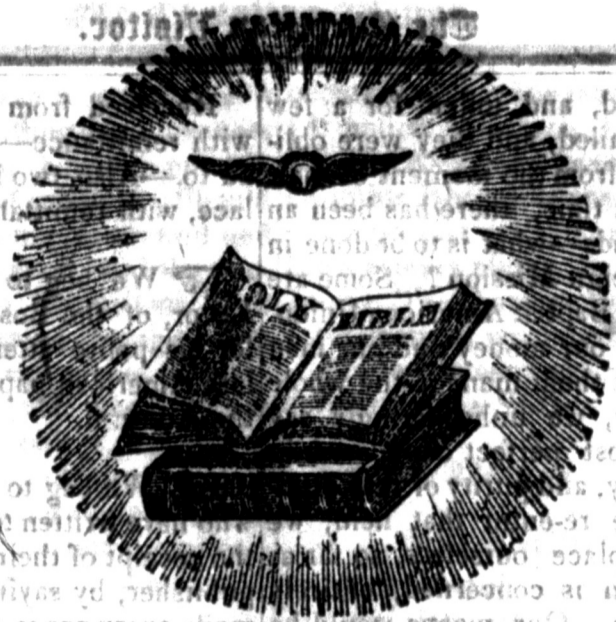


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LET THY WIDOWS TRUST IN ME.

Oh, give us faith, our covenant God,
To bow to thy decree,
To rest upon the gracious words
Which bid us trust in thee.

When cares assail, and sad we think
Of helpers now no more,
Give strength to cast those cares on thee,
To triumph and adore.

When grief's dark wing o'ershadow's all
Those prospects once so bright,
And mournful to the past we turn
With feelings wrapt in night;

Oh, send the promised Comforter
The darkness to illumine,
Bid faith and hope spring up, and point
To joys beyond the tomb.

Blest words of comfort to our hearts,
That thou our Guide wilt be,
Well cast our burdens on thy arm,
And firmly trust in thee.

THE IDOL.

BY H. C. C.

A beautiful child lay, tossing in fever upon its bed. It knew not the mother who sat beside it, vainly striving with softly murmured words and the pressure of loving fingers to soothe it into quietness. But beneath that outward calm there was a fever, a delirium in her own heart wilder than that which was consuming the idol of her bosom. The physicians have just told her that there is no hope; that her blind-eyed Alice, her life's only treasure, is about to pass away from her sight. She had not before allowed herself to think of the possibility of such a result. There has been no preparation of feeling. A dark and dreadful certainty has suddenly started up in her flowery pathway, whose shadow has in one instant withered all her joys. But her fear and grief do not melt in tears. Her whole soul is nerved to battle with that dark spectre for her child's life; it must not, it shall not die. But ah! how dreary, how solitary seems the conflict! How she wishes that in her idolatry of this child, she had not forgotten the hand that gave it. Then she might have invoked an Almighty Helper; then she might have leaned upon a Father's arm; then she might have wept in a Brother's ear, and her request would have been heard. But now she dare not venture, both because of past transgression, and because she could not mingle with the prayer, "Thy will be done!" She shrunk even from the thought of reconciliation with her Father and Saviour; for it seemed to her that the first proof of acceptance and love would be to take her idol from her.

Thus through the hours of that long desolate night did she watch,—her poor heart tossed like a vessel without helm or anchor. Towards morning a change came over the child, and it seemed to be dying. Then the extremity of a mother's anguish conquered all else. She fell prostrate at the bed side, and sent up from her heart's core a silent cry, which seemed winged with power to pierce the heavens: "Oh God! spare my child, and she shall be thine all the days of her life!" The prayer was heard. A quiet fell upon the little sufferer. The burning veins grew cool. A sweet composure settled on its features, and it slept a balmy sleep. The crisis was past; the child was restored.

When the physician made his morning call, he declared that the change seemed little less than a miracle. And deep in the mother's

soul spoke a voice, kind, but stern even in its kindness: "Remember thy vow!"

The fair human bud has blossomed into girlhood. Day by day, year by year, has the mother watched as its graceful lineaments unfolded, putting on, as it seemed to her, with every morning new charms, till now it stands an expanded blossom, rejoicing in its own life and loveliness, and shedding gladness into every heart that beholds its beauty. In mind, in disposition, in person, Alice was alike lovely. Fresh, guileless, amiable, full of quick and generous sensibilities, and with a mind which drank in knowledge as its natural element,—no wonder that she was a universal favorite; that

"None knew her but to love her,
None named her but to praise."

Yet was Alice not found in the path where we should expect to find the child of prayer. The charm of the fashionable circle, the brightest star of the ball room, the cynosure of all eyes at the opera, she seemed destined to become the mere votary of worldly pleasure. It was not, however, the path she would herself have chosen. Her refined nature rather craved retirement, the endearments of home, the society of a few congenial friends, the higher intercourse with the master-spirits of thought, and deep under all was there a vague longing, a silent sighing in the depths of her spirit, after something purer, truer, nobler, more lasting than earth could bestow. Who was it, then, that with criminal earthly fondness, had drawn her into the unsatisfying ways of folly? Who urged her to the gay assembly, when she would fain have remained away? Who decked the victim for the sacrifice, and triumphed with idolatrous joy in the incense and garlands that marked her way? Ah! the mother had forgotten her vow!

Two years more have passed. Alice sits alone in her beautiful chamber, her earnest gaze directed through the open window towards the sea. The sunset light falls softly on the calm waters of the haven, where many a gallant ship rides at anchor, and touches with beauty the sails of others which have just caught the favoring breeze and are putting out to sea.—A marked change has passed over Alice, since we last saw her the favorite of fashion. A higher cast of reflection, a thoughtful quiet in her eye, the calm seriousness of the smile playing around her mouth, betoken a new and nobler life within. A serene spiritual joy breathes over her whole aspect. An open Bible lies upon her lap, her finger unconsciously pointing to the just read words, which still float through her reverie like celestial music: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The young disciple has this day decided that, with her mother's consent, she will accompany him to whom she long since gave her heart, far hence to the heathen. And of her mother's consent she does not once doubt. The honor seems so great, the period of sacrifice and toil so brief, the end so triumphant. The promise on which she has leaned her heart, is like a rock in its strength, like a sea in its fulness, like the sun in its light and warmth. She floats like a bird with poised wing, in a flood of sunshine. Earth vanishes from sight; the great cloud of witnesses stands revealed; Jesus, he that was dead and is alive, and lives forevermore, reaches out to her the immortal crown of life and glory.

The high rapture of the hour gradually faded; but, unlike earthly joy, it only melted into a still sweeter peace,—peace that flowed like a deep full river from the throne of God. She slept that night as if in the land of Bea-

lah, within sight and sound of the Celestial City. She waked often, but lightly "as if touched by an immortal finger," to hear the words again whispered with heavenly sweetness to her heart: "Lo, I am with thee!" and to drop again into that balmy slumber, which only He giveth to His beloved.

Another change! Alice is again in her chamber alone; but the brightness, the celestial peace are not there now. Deep sadness, anxious care, cloud her brow; the light in her eye is full of troubled thought. Her form is thinner than it was. Her cheek has lost the freshness of its bloom. She has wept much; but a conflict too stern for tears is now going on in her soul. For months she has waited in the vain hope that her mother will at length relent and yield her up cheerfully to the Saviour's call. At times she seems half persuaded. When her daughter with sweet persuasive eloquence has dwelt upon the all sacrificing love of Jesus, the joy of giving up all for him, the certainty and bliss of a speedy reunion for those who love him, she has shed floods of tears which seemed to come from a heart just ready to give way. But the time at length came when a final decision must be made, and she had this day made it. She could not give up her only child. The cords that bound them together seemed stronger than life or than death. The idol enthroned in the very sanctuary of her being, could not be relinquished. Alice would have tried to move her by gentle remonstrance and entreaty, but her resolve was not now to be changed. "No more, my daughter," she replied almost harshly,—"my mind is fixed. I will never consent. Let this subject be dismissed forever. I charge you, on my blessing, urge it no more!"

Alice retired from her mother's presence with a bursting heart. She cast herself on her knees, but she could not pray. Darkness, clouds and tempest were in her soul. She knew not what was duty, what was right.—She who had never crossed her mother's slightest wish; who had ever held the precept, "Honor thy mother" as a sacred law of her being,—should she now go counter to her express commands, thwart her dearest hopes, risk even the loss of a mother's blessing? On the other hand, the voice of One dearer than any human friend, was heard saying: "Whoso loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." But above all other grief rose the anguish of feeling, that her mother had made a resolve fatal to her own peace, and that it was she who had separated between her mother and her God. In that bitter hour she wished she had never been born, thus to become a source of sorrow, an object of sinful idolatry to her that bore her.

But it was only a passing tempest that thus shook the young faithful heart. The leaves and blossoms were scattered by its fury, but the roots had struck too deep to be thus moved. Ere long, a light beamed faintly through the darkness; a voice was heard, saying to the troubled elements, "Peace, be still!" "My Father!" she cried,—"I am thine, all thine, only thine! The cup which thou givest me I will drink. Not my will but thine be done!" Then the wearied heart sunk on the bosom of Infinite Love, and lay there in sweet submission like a weaned child.

But it was the heart only that rested. The nervous system, long excited by hope and anxious fear, and completely overwrought by final disappointment and the bitter conflict which followed, now gave way. At midnight the mother was aroused to find her child raving in delirious fever. And ere the third morning, the idol from whom she could not part, was parted from her. The child was accept-

ed, but not as the mother's gift. No lucid interval was vouchsafed to mitigate the anguish of separation; no moment of loving communion between the mother and her child.—Those stern words had proved their last farewell.

The beautiful remains, shrouded in spotless white, rested in the narrow coffin. The rich brown hair was parted smoothly over the meek brow. The long lashes lay peacefully upon the white cheek. Round the lips hung a sweetness not of earth. In one pale hand was clasped a pure white lily, that ever lovely symbol of virgin purity. Other fragrant flowers, many costly gifts from the conservatory, were scattered upon the coffin; but no other seemed worthy of a nearer place beside the solemn beauty of the dead. A long succession of relatives and friends passed with slow and measured tread, to take their last look of one so much beloved. The first glance at the marble sweetness of that face, blooming so lately as the fairest flower in the domestic and social circle, melted every heart and drew tears from every eye. Several poor women were present who had been indebted to Alice for many a kind word and act. The children, too, whom she gathered into the Sabbath school from the lanes and byways of poverty and ignorance, were there. These could not be so satisfied. They hung around the coffin, read and re-read the inscription on the silver plate.—"Alice G—, aged 20," and wept and sobbed over their young benefactress, in all the unrestrained outflow of simple-hearted grief.

But the mother wept not. She stood apparently unmoved, her whole being concentrated in the last intense gaze upon the idol, from whom she was now separated forever.—Forever? So said her self-accusing heart; for now,—alas, TOO LATE! the mother remembered her vow!—*Macedonian.*

Living unto God.

Having determined in general to form resolutions for regulating my life, I must descend to particulars, and settle some rules with myself, to resolve my future life wholly into holiness and religion. I know this is a hard task to do, but I am sure it is no more than what my God and my Father hath set me, why, therefore, should I think it much to do it? Shall I grudge to spend my life for him who did not grudge to spend his own blood for me? Shall I not so live that he may be glorified on earth, who died that I might be glorified in heaven? Especially considering that if my whole life could be sublimated into holiness, and moulded into an exact conformity to the will of the Most High, I should be happy beyond expression. I am resolved by the grace of God, to try to make every thought, word and action, pay their tribute unto Him.—*Beveridge's Private Thoughts.*

The Two Lives.—Beautiful is old age,—beautiful as the slow-dropping mellow autumn of a rich glorious summer. In the old man, nature has fulfilled her work; she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and, surrounded by his children and his children's children, she reaks him softly away to a grave, to which he is followed with blessings. God forbid we should not call it beautiful, but not the most beautiful. There is another life, hard, rough, and thorny, trodden with bleeding feet and aching brow; the life of which the cross is the symbol; a battle which no peace follows this side of the grave; which the grave opens to finish, before the victory is won; and—strange that it should be so—this is the highest life of man. Look back along the great names of history; there is none whose life has been other than this.—*Westminster Review.*