



HOLY GROUND.

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Holy Ground.



HOLY GROUND.

BY THE

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"The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

ROBERT WHITTET, PRINTER, PERTH.



DEDICATED

TO

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF HIS CONGREGATION,

WITH THE BEST WISHES

OF

THEIR MINISTER.

HOLY GROUND.

I.

See yon pensive mother bending
O'er her sleeping child at even ;
Listen to her prayer ascending
To the God of earth and heaven.
'Tis holy ground.

II.

Mark the penitent low kneeling ;
Hearken to his broken sighs ;
Tears of shame his soul revealing—
Every tear a sacrifice.
'Tis holy ground.

III.

Lo ! the mourner, sadly stooping
O'er that lonely grassy bed,
Where the snowdrops, meekly drooping,
Breathe of springtime for the dead.
'Tis holy ground.

IV.

Watch the dying saint reclining—
" Father, let me part in peace ;
For my soul has seen the shining
Of the land where troubles cease."
'Tis holy ground.

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INTRODUCTORY.

“HOLY GROUND” is commonly associated with temples and churches, with shrines and altars, and other solemn places, where God is approached through the rites and ceremonies of worship. But there are many places besides these where we may well “take the shoes from our feet,” in humble acknowledgment of the divine presence, and say in heart, as the *unseen influence* steals over us, “the Lord is in this place.” The Home, where principles are trained; and the World, where principles are tried; the Sick-bed, where faith and patience are tested; and the Grave, where we earnestly strive to gaze into futurity through our blinding tears,—these are “holy ground,” in the best and deepest sense of the term. No spot connected with the ripening of the human character, and with the education of the Christian graces, can ever be regarded by the reflective as otherwise than sacred; for the great battles of life are fought most frequently

in those by-lanes and obscure recesses of the earth, from which superficial observation would turn aside. There are great victories won and priceless trophies gathered in the homes of the lowly and from the sick-beds of the afflicted; and death is not the only conqueror who stands by the narrow grave of the man of God.

Such are the ideas with which the words of the Great Lawgiver have often filled my mind; and it is my humble endeavour to communicate to others, in the following simple sketches, impressions of the same solemn and improving character.

I. — HOME :

THE PLACE WHERE PRINCIPLES ARE IMPLANTED.

EXODUS, xx. 12.—“ Honour thy father and thy mother.”

HOME! Around that gentle and touching word how many priceless associations cluster and entwine themselves, like the tendrils of the vine around the sustaining trunk of some old and venerable tree. The exile, far separated from civilised customs amid the wide-spread islands of the East, or the primeval forests of the West, often turns, in a painfully-pleasing reverie, to the home of his early days. The ambitious, contending with all their might for the glittering prizes of the world, are soothed amid scenes of turmoil and distraction by the fleeting visions of that far-off haven of peace, from which they have long since drifted into the rough ocean of life. The out-cast, whose path is darkened by the clouds of his own misconduct, cannot help sometimes sending back a wistful and weary glance, when he feels that it is now too late to say, “ I will arise and go to my father.” There, in that sweet spot of shelter, our opening

infancy passed away. There we pursued, with ever-fresh delight, the joyous sports of our short-lived youth. And it is the fond hope of many a world-wearied man, that he may find his way back across the stormy billows of life's perilous ocean, and spend the evening of his days amid the haunts, never-forgotten, of his long-lost home. Something is far amiss in the heart when home ceases to be regarded as a spot of "holy ground." If, then, it would always be hallowed as such, forget not the precept of the sacred writer, "Honour thy father and mother." Of all the commandments no one is more natural than that of the text, or more easy of observance. It derives its power and sanctity from our being, and finds an echo in the heart.

Between parent and child there is a deep and mysterious principle of affection which unites two hearts by a sacred link, which is seldom broken save by the hand of death. Let us, then, trace the nature of this holy principle; let us see in *what the duty of filial respect to parents consists*; let us point out the *grounds* of its *permanent obligation*; and consider the *effects* which should flow from its observance.

I. The honouring of the parental claim implies *obedience* to the *authority* of *home*. Parents, from their age and position, have more *experience* than their children can have; and, therefore, much *natural deference* is due to them. They may not be more *learned*

than their offspring become. Circumstances may have prevented many of them from enjoying the benefits of a liberal education. But they have acquired a ripe wisdom from the silent teaching of experience, and gathered knowledge often better than that of books, in their intense anxiety for the welfare of their children. Their very love gives them an intuitive insight into their children's wants. Thoughtful nights and laborious days have been spent in order that they might shape out a safe course of life for the young ones, whom God has given them as the most precious of all trusts. And often has the Book of Divine wisdom been consulted to enable them to train up their sons and daughters "in the way in which they should go." Hence the beauty and propriety of the expression, "Honour thy father and thy mother." Not simply, *work* for them, or even *love* them—for there springs up in the heart a *natural love*, that is unaccompanied by deliberate thought—but "honour" them,—a term which does not merely imply the more obvious duties of shielding them from want, but which suggests the most constant and delicate attentions—the studying of their wishes, a deference to their opinions, a respect for their purposes, and that tender regard which seeks to lighten every labour, to soothe every care, and whose best reward is in the feeling that filial love has gladdened its home with a joy too holy for words, "too deep for tears."

Honour, therefore, your father and your mother,

by obeying them in all things lawful, following them in all things sacred, encompassing with them the family altar, kneeling along with them in the house of God, consulting them in all the important proceedings of your lives, seeking their advice in every difficulty, and in the midst of sorrows, or even follies, freely laying open your hearts to those whose hope and happiness are inseparably entwined and identified with yours.

II. The *duty* prescribed by the divine law implies *forbearance* and *tenderness* towards your parents in your every action, thought, and feeling. The relation in which you stand to them is the most intimate and sacred that can bind man to man. It was the taking upon Him of this relationship that gave Christ His power over human nature, and that still endears Him to the human heart. He "became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the nature of the seed of Abraham." It is this heritage of human infirmity that makes Him a suitable Saviour for the fallen children of Adam. It was the bearing of this burden that made, and still makes, Him so forbearing and tender towards the sinful and suffering people of this earth ; that caused Him to yearn like a parent for the love of "little children," and opened His heart to the case of the most guilty ; that led Him to feel in John that He had found one friend, while, by the death of Lazarus, He had lost another. And it

is the knowledge of His humanity that gives us courage and confidence to go to Him with our burden of guilt and trouble; for "we know that we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched by a feeling of our infirmities."

And if this human union with us is the element that above all others disposes the Son of God to shew forbearance and tenderness to the children of men, shall the same sacred bond of connection fail to draw us closer in love to our earthly parents? We bear their likeness on our faces and in the structure of our bodies. We carry within us a similarity to them, which often appears through the powers of our minds, the dispositions of our hearts, the feelings and passions of our souls. The same infirmities burden us as we walk through the world; the same seeds of disease are germinating within our frames; and the same blessed hopes, by which the future lifted them above the present, are ever making their appeal to us, and calling upon us to look forward and upward. The nations of the earth are all of "one blood;" and under the great trials of life it is felt that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin," from the Pharoah who weeps in the palace to the captive who groans in the dungeon.

Age does not invariably mellow the temper. The infirmities of the flesh will sometimes render the easiest chair somewhat hard, and the softest pillow somewhat rough, and awaken a querulous and fretful

tone. It is then that an affectionate child will shew the depth and purity of his love. He will then have one of the best of all opportunities of paying back to his parents some of the lavish affection that was showered upon him ; evincing a tender forbearance to the aged mother, who stilled his infant cries and soothed to sleep his childish sorrows ; to the grey-haired father, who bore with his wayward youth, and met with a gentle and considerate chiding his wanderings and follies. The greatest of uninspired poets, in one of the very grandest of his creations, exhibits the aged Lear abandoned by his unnatural offspring, and crying aloud, in his desolation, that the severity of the wintry blast is not half so cold and rude as the cruel conduct of an unfeeling child. The sleety storm, at its wildest, is only acting up to its nature ; but the heart which is steeled against the woes of worn-out age finds no fitting symbol in the elements of creation, and is a gross outrage and libel on humanity.

Every man, however wise and superior in other respects, has little weaknesses of disposition and temper which require forbearance ; peculiarities of nature for which allowance must be made ; habits of thought which ought to be considered ; and even the presence of prejudices which are not always to be roughly assailed. Think how your parents have borne with you, with your outbursts of feeling and temper, with your childish clamours for foolish indulgence, with your daily rebellions against those tasks and restraints

which were ordered by a considerate wisdom, and have borne good fruit. Bear in mind, the happiness of life turns, generally, more upon *small* than upon *great* matters. These are ever recurring from day to day, while mighty and momentous affairs come seldom in common life. Not an hour, perhaps, passes, but there are trifles to disturb and asperities to annoy : to overlook the one requires no violation of truth, and to smooth down the other no surrender of personal independence. But these are the very sacrifices—by no means great ones—which repay the aged in the decline of *their life*, for all the sacrifices by which they sought to sweeten *ours* ; these are the exhibitions of filial love which cause parents to seek a shelter under the strength and tenderness of those who were first sheltered by them ; and all who are not ready to render with cheerful alacrity these little offices of a daily kindness are woefully ignorant of the wants of the human heart, and feel not the full force of the natural law which says, “Honour thy father and thy mother.” As the infirmities of life, then, multiply upon the head of the aged, let the offices of your affection be also multiplied ; so that, when the dust is committed to the dust, you may not be haunted by the recollection of the harsh conduct, or the unkind word, and tormented by the unavailing thought, that you have not done your duty gladly to those who are now alike beyond the reach of all that can ruffle, and all that can smooth, the current of a declining life.

III. The duty of the text implies, that the young shall endeavour to act a *good part in life*, in whatever position they may be placed by the hand of Providence. What is the meaning of all home-teaching, but to dispose and enable the young to pass through the world with credit to themselves, honour to their natural guardians, and uniform praise to Him who "set them in families?" In the virtues of the child the virtues of the parent are reflected. The purity of the stream bears testimony to the purity of the fountain-head, and the success of the young in the work of the world generally speaks, in no faint tones, of the care and prudence, of the love and wisdom, of the early home. Through the probity and worth of the child, you behold the good example of the parent shining clearly and distinctly ; and the old man lives his life over again in the piety and wisdom of his respectful son. And it is sad to call up an opposite picture, wherein the parent is beheld living his life over again in the vices and misery of his wretched offspring, who may roll back the tide of disgrace, and say, "It was the example of my father that led me to this!" Who knows, that when David cried in anguish, "Oh! Absolom, Absolom, my son, my son, would I had died for thee," he was not paying the penalty of his many sins against his own "Father in Heaven!"

Remember, then, that when you go forth into the world, with all its temptations and perplexities, you are followed by the earnest wishes of those who

sought to instil into your hearts, by word and example, those virtues which are man's truest friends, both for time and eternity. If ever about to step aside from the path of rectitude, pause for one moment, and reflect that you are preparing misery for your fathers and mothers. They are deeply interested in all your doings. What act of goodness can you perform, from which your parents do not receive their portion of joy and satisfaction? What duty can you neglect, what evil deed can you commit, without darkening your home with the clouds of sorrow and disgrace? In a word, when about to do anything that is wrong, or when you are stimulated to do anything that is right, bear in mind there are fond hearts at home which you cannot fail to affect most deeply by the *blame* or the *credit* which you bring upon yourselves. When you are disgraced, they will be cast down. When you are wretched, they cannot rejoice. And when you are singled out for praise, they will triumph in your success. Those eyes that smiled or wept over your cradle follow you with increasing affection in the broadways of life, over the seas and across the mountains of the globe; and derive their saddest shade of gloom, or their brightest sparkle of pleasure, from the folly or the fidelity of your earthly career.

IV. But above all other obligations are the *duties of religion*; and to these, of all others, good parents earnestly direct the attention of their children. The command to give *them* "honour" is the command of

the Most High God ; and to honour Him in His Word and in the ordinances of His house is the surest pledge that His command will be respected. Undutiful to the Father of all mercies, and dutiful they cannot be to the source of lesser blessings. Denying allegiance to the Sovereign of the universe, there can be no real heart-homage to creatures of inferior authority. And, while unmoved by the tokens of goodness and wisdom impressed upon the works of creation ; by the expressions of love and mercy that breathe through the Gospel and sacrifice of the Cross ;—the soul of man is incapable of feeling the depth of parental solicitude, and of repaying the debt which he owes to his earthly guardians. The tongue that never faltered with the emotions of reverence and gratitude as it pronounced the simple words, “Our Father which art in heaven,” is not likely to speak of the parental connection in tones of respect and affection. There is not a more beautiful spectacle on earth than a holy family, at the close of a week of labour, joining their hearts together in family-worship, and preparing for the hallowed day of devotion and rest. It is an emblem and foretaste of that Sabbath-calm which closes the toil and trial of life’s long and varied day ; when the great family of heaven, gathered from the countless fields of earthly work, shall assemble around the throne of their Father and their God, with the feelings of a holy brotherhood uniting all hearts, and the devotion of saints giving

melody to every tongue. Then, rising above the turmoil and the trouble of the chequered week of time, they repose beneath the roof of the everlasting home, and are folded for evermore within the arms of paternal love, amid "the rest that is reserved for the people of God."

It would be no difficult matter to sketch a very different picture; for, unhappily, too many models meet us in the world. You have only to go forth into the streets of our cities, crowded with the vile and reckless, to arrive at the melancholy conclusion that, for hundreds and thousands, home has been anything but "holy ground." Many are the dwellings—in a Christian land—where the voice of prayer is never heard, where the Bible is never read, and where the name of the great loving Father of all is never named in tones of reverence. What can the children of vice and misfortune carry forth from such dens of social degradation but the seeds of a criminal disposition, the fruits of which must soon be seen either festering in the lanes, or rotting in the cell, or scattered upon the unhallowed fields of the penal settlement?

Let parents, then, remember, that, if home would be to their children a holy place, from which holy influences are to be carried out into active life, they themselves must shed around it and over it the priceless blessings of a holy example. If they would secure "honour" from their children, let them be careful to study a uniform *self-respect* in their own

lives. Let them bear in mind that society is but a *larger family*, and the world a *wider home*; and that the germs of all that is good and sacred in both are planted and fostered at the Christian hearth. Were there more homes like the home at Bethany, it would be better for the world that lies beyond. Were there more fathers like the faithful Abraham, there would be more children like the obedient Isaac. Mankind are indebted to many wise and noble spirits,—to the Christian soldier who draws his sword in the cause of justice; to the Christian author, who lifts his pen on the side of truth; and to the Christian statesman, who legislates in the spirit of a Moses,—but never more indebted to any than to the Christian fathers and mothers, who light up their dwelling with the lamp of Revelation, who rear up their offspring in the “fear and admonition of the Lord,” and who say daily by their own holy example, “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

And let me say, last of all, that there must be something far amiss on both sides, parental and filial, when the memory of home dies out in the heart. In the soul of the wretched prodigal this holy memory survived every other feeling, and led him to a haven of love and peace. When the last hard crust of a cold charity was consumed; when the last refuge was shut against him; when the world seemed hung as with a pall of darkness and desolation; then did the home of his childhood, hallowed by an affection long

forgotten, rise up before his mind, and whisper of hope and happiness, even for an outcast like him.

Sinner, thou hast wandered far into the wilderness of guilt. Long hast thou played the prodigal, greatly hast thou abused the gifts of heaven, and spurned a Father's love. But remember, in thy despairing loneliness, there is still hope for thee, still one door of mercy open, still the everlasting arms of divine tenderness waiting to embrace thee. And, if in the hour when all seems as darkness and the shadow of death, thou wilt yet listen to the "still small voice," and "arise," and go to thy Father, be assured that a welcome is yet in keeping; and over thy reviving soul a voice will be heard, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And at that supreme moment, couldst thou but hear them, voices of joy are ringing throughout heaven over the return of the penitent wanderer, and sounding the glad tidings beneath the bright roof of thy last and best home.

With regard to the promise, "That thy days may be long," I shall only say this,—that, although it applied primarily to the Jews, it still applies to all men; for every course of conduct, which goes to foster a human virtue or a Christian grace, is friendly to man, both for this life and that which is to come.

CHILDHOOD.

I.

The merry voice of Childhood !
The music of the hearth ;
No music falls so sweetly
Amid the cares of earth.
From happy heart it ringeth,
And it thrilleth through the heart,
A melody of nature,
Beyond the power of art.

II.

The cherub-face of Childhood !
There's nothing half so fair,
Beaming brightly from its halo
Of golden glancing hair ;
With the rose upon its cheek,
And the laughter in its eye,
Melting softly as a sun-gleam
Along the summer sky.

III.

The holy heart of Childhood !
Still ignorant of guile,—
The source of many a ready tear,
And many a ready smile.
If Paradise hath left a flower
To cheer this earthly wild,
It blooms amid the sunny thoughts
Of a little artless child.

II. — SCHOOL:

THE PLACE WHERE PRINCIPLES ARE TRAINED.

PROV. xxii. 6.—“Train up a child in the way he should go.”

THE world is deeply concerned in the training of the young. Home is concerned; for what misery overshadows the hearth that is surrounded by an ill-reared family. Society is concerned; for communities are but larger family circles, the peace and well-being of which are more or less at the mercy of each individual member. Every man carries forth into the world so much of the history of his early training; and the influence of home goes with him where he goes. When you look upon our young people passing into the business of life, you have generally little difficulty of picturing in your mind the holy homes, where the Bible was the light of the dwelling, and where the morning and evening sacrifice went up to heaven “like a sweet incense;” or those, where the Word of Life was seldom opened. No more serious trust, then, does God place in the hands of man, than the trust of a young and impressionable life. “The child

is father of the man." The stream tells tales concerning the fountain. Nature re-echoes the words of wisdom, and cries out from her every department, from the twig that is easily bent, to the brooklet whose course is decided by a falling fragment, "train up a child in the way he should go."

What, then, is training? Education. But what is education? Let me endeavour to shew.

I. WHAT IS EDUCATION?—The question is often put, but the answer is often wanting; for I know of no word more frequently and more totally misconstrued than the word "Education." I most cordially dislike all pretensions to small learning; but the answer to the question proposed is to be found in the meaning of the word itself. "Education" means to feed or foster,—also, a drawing out, or a leading forth—and you will never rightly educate any man, unless you succeed in drawing out, and leading forth the powers of his mind, the dispositions of his heart, and the elements of reverence and adoration that lie deeply buried in his soul. This is not the most generally received view of this important matter. Education is commonly taken to mean "schooling"—and even little of that. An ease and accuracy in reading; a tolerably correct notion of the maps of the most notable countries; a little arithmetic; a sprinkling of science; and the whole seasoned with a modicum of the foreign tongues,—and there you have the stereotyped receipt for making education. But what

about moral training? What about dispositions and habits? What about educating the mind to give itself a better education than any schools can give? It is a great thing to learn a man to think. It is a great thing to learn a man to enquire and to observe properly. It is a blessed thing to learn and to dispose a man to feel. But all these are too often left out of the routine of education. The grand error, then, generally committed in this matter, is arriving at the conclusion, that education is merely a feeding of the mind with certain facts of knowledge, whereas it is learning the mind to know itself, to become acquainted with the character of its own powers, and thus to acquire the art of feeding itself—of extracting the honey of knowledge, of praise, and of love, from every flower with which God has beautified and enriched the gardens of His providence. When a mechanic has mastered the use of his various tools, is he educated? Certainly not. He has just begun to know how to work; from day to day practice brings facility and expertness in the use of means; and the chronometer, the telegraph, and the engine are some of the results of that self-education, which is always going on. And so with the education acquired at school. We go there to learn the use of our various tools, *i.e.*, the powers of our mind, and the dispositions of our heart; and when we have obtained some skill in the use of these, we come forth to the world, and in that great school of labour, and

competition, and trial, we are to work our work during the day of life, and to educate mind, and heart, and soul, for the duties of this state, and for the rewards of a higher condition of being.

When we are told by the highest authority that our duty consists in loving the Almighty with all our "mind," and "heart," and "soul," do you suppose that there is an unnecessary expenditure of words here, and that the one word "mind" is capable of standing for all the three? If you do so, you are wrong. The Being, who forbids the use of "idle words" to man, will never think of breaking His own command. All the three words made use of by God are necessary to express the *full service* required of men. The "mind" represents the intellectual powers; and some great reasoner, such as Newton, or Locke, or Taylor, is well fitted to serve God by means of these noble and useful agents. The "heart" represents the affections; and a simple peasant, or a little artless child, may offer unto God, through these, a tribute far more precious than regal gifts, or the most splendid temples ever raised by the hands of superstition. The "soul" represents those feelings of devotion and those emotions of reverence which occupy, to some extent, almost every human breast; and the rising of a Sabbath sun, the open door of God's house, the sight of a Bible, the sound of a psalm, or the rude grave-stone of the most primitive churchyard, may call up from the soul its purest emotions of reverence, and make

the place, for the time, a temple of the most solemn and holy character. All this should show us what varied powers, feelings, and dispositions, we have to deal with in mortal man, and should convince us that much, very much, is required to furnish all that is included in a good education.

If I have not yet succeeded in making my position sufficiently plain, let me call in the aid of two or three illustrations, to show you how distinct is the homage of the "mind" from the homage of the "heart" and "soul," and how they require, in consequence, a different training. Take, for example, the heavenly bodies. When these magnificent systems are regarded merely through the powers of the mind, you have the astronomer, it may be, the infidel, before you. He may be a Newton, but he may also be a brilliant sceptic of the French school. These men, sweeping the expanse of the firmament with their "magic glass," may be totally absorbed by a consideration of the structure, the orbits, the connection between, and the laws pertaining to, the astral worlds; and they may never once think with awe or with gratitude of the Invisible Architect, whose power fashioned and whose wisdom directs these glorious worlds; and they may retire from their survey enriched with increased mental wealth, and inflated with additional self-conceit, but neither better nor humbler men. When, on the other hand, some simple peasant, going home from his labour, turns his eyes upwards to the vault, by means

of whose lamps he is lighted on his lonely way, his whole *soul* may swell and heave with emotions of reverence ; and were his thoughts at that moment converted into words, those words would be, " What is man that the Maker of these should be so mindful of him ? " In the one case, these mysterious worlds acted the part of teacher to the mind, and drew forth its powers ; in the other case, they gave a species of education to a heart and soul open at all times to impressions and lessons from the Natural Book of God. Consider, as a simpler illustration, a single leaf of that forest whose leaves are numberless. Take up the microscope, and contemplate that leaf through the *mind alone*. What is there apparent ? You perceive its delicate organic structure ; its cells and tissues ; the means by which it breathes, like the lungs within your own breast ; the methods by which it draws food and beauty from earth and air ; and the minute but perfect insect world, living, acting, bustling, and enjoying life upon its surface, like the busiest city under the sun ! Your heart and soul, however, take no part in the investigation, and you turn away as from a curious and amusing spectacle, chiefly gratified to think that you have been ingenious enough to discover something hidden from the vulgar and illiterate. But occupy for a moment the place of one of those illiterate persons, upon whom you look down with a lofty and philosophic scorn, as we might suppose a Pliny or a Columella to have re-

garded one of the rabble of Rome ; cast away your microscope, and contemplate that leaf through the still more revealing, still more marvellous glass of a Christian " heart and soul,"—and what see you now ? You behold the power, wisdom, and goodness of God as plainly written upon the tiny page of that leaf as upon the broad sheet of a vast continent, with its Babylons and its Ninevehs ! You discern a care that upholds the little as well as the great. You *feel* the presence of a love, which folds in its kindly embrace the humble no less than the mighty. You trace the workings of a hand, that clothes " the lilies of the field " as well as the " cedars of Lebanon." You know that over that small production of Nature there watches a Sleepless Eye, by which are alike noted the fall of a sparrow, the revolution of a sun, and the destiny of an empire ; and you feel, what nothing but a heartfelt estimate of things can enable you to feel, that it is a most comforting thing to be in the hands of one whose tender mercies are over all His works ! Consider, as a last illustration, the human frame. The researches of skill and the efforts of the understanding go to furnish and perfect the accomplished anatomist. Working upon the subject that lies upon his table, he discovers a wonderful harmony of parts ; a skilful adaptation of bones and muscles, sinews and flesh, to each other ; but, perchance, this modern Galen huddles up the dissected members with little reverence, and simply assigns to them a place in the

chain of sentient being only a link or two higher than that which he reserves for the ferocious gorilla. But the soul of the Christian, following the mind of the anatomist, beholds the dwelling of God's own image—the residence of thoughts, passions, feelings, and powers, which constitute responsibility, and at once lift the human body out of the mere animal category—the temple, “fearfully and wonderfully made,” of the Divine Spirit; dilapidated and defaced, indeed, as we now behold it, but destined, in due time, to rise in heaven before the Almighty, once more good, and glorious, and indestructible.

I need not pursue farther this department of the subject. If men were to be rated alone by the mind, and treated accordingly, how wide the gulf between a Voltaire and an honest labourer! But throw the heart and *soul* into the scale, and the gulf is all in the other way. The “dead ass” and the “captive starling” of Sterne offer a poor banquet to the lordly mind; but they furnish delightful food to a good, simple, loving heart. Many a brief verse of the Bible yields but a scanty draught to the *dry lip of the understanding*; but it is an *inexhaustible well* to the *devout soul*, and to the *weary heart* of a Christian pilgrim!

Are we to expect that the eye of any public teacher can overlook these three extensive departments during the brief hours of his daily labour? Such an expectation would be most unreasonable. Home influence

must join with the teacher in doing its part in this important work : and man himself must do more than both. The discipline of the intellectual powers may go on very well in the public school ; but, so far as heart and soul are concerned, they cannot have a greater curse, or a greater blessing, than in the private school of the fireside. The home-circle has much to answer for.

When does education cease ? Tell me how long your term of life is to be, and I shall answer the question. Your Education, whether you be a poor man or a rich man, a man grasping the sceptre or wielding the hammer, wearing "purple and fine linen" or the coarsest homespun, your education should only cease with the powers of thought and observation and the opportunities of life. So long as the dim eye can read one sign on the pages of God's works, so long may the mind and soul and heart consider themselves in a school of wisdom. While the ear can drink in the melodies of nature, or the sounds of that finest of all instruments, the human voice, tidings from the seats of knowledge, of goodness, of love, and of grace, may be conveyed to the inner being. When a man is too old to learn, he is nearly too old to live. "I have finished my education," said a gay young gentleman returning from college, to a grey-haired sage. "Indeed," returned the elderly man, "I am only beginning mine." Yet, too many consider their education finished when it should only be beginning.

When we hear of Hobbes sitting down to study the Greek language in his eightieth year, a good many of us have some reason to blush. Consider the following fertile passage from that most admirable practical book, "Self Help," which every young man should read and digest. "Even at advanced years men can do much, if they will determine on making a beginning. Sir Henry Spelman did not begin the study of science until he was between fifty and sixty years of age. Franklin was fifty before he fully entered upon the study of natural philosophy. Dryden and Scott were not known as authors until each was in his fortieth year. Boccaccio was thirty-five when he entered upon his literary career, and Alfieri was forty-six when he commenced the study of Greek. Dr Arnold learned German at an advanced age, for the purpose of reading Niebuhr in the original; and, in like manner, James Watt, when about forty, while working at his trade of an instrument-maker in Glasgow, learned French, German, and Italian, to enable him to peruse the valuable works on mechanical philosophy in these languages. Robert Hall was once found lying upon the floor, racked by pain, learning Italian in his old age, to enable him to judge of the parallel drawn by Macaulay between Milton and Dante. Handel was forty-eight before he published any of his great works." So, young men, emerging complacently from school or college, with a nutshellful of learning, know that you have only been

feeding upon the crumbs that fall from the table of knowledge. And keep in mind, that, if it is "never too late to mend," neither is it too late to learn. We often gather a great deal of good fruit from an old tree.

II. WHO ARE OUR TEACHERS?—We can never have better or more faithful teachers than *ourselves*, if we are only true to our own interest. Men will, no doubt, do much for men; but man can never find a truer friend, or a worse enemy, than he must find in himself. I have often been amused at the noise made about what we term a "self-educated man." Surely this is not a spectacle for wonder. Every man who plays a notable part in the world is a self-educated man. He must be so; for what any man learns at any school or college bears no proportion to what he learns after he has left these behind him; and the most assiduous teachers can learn no man one hundredth part as much as he can acquire for himself. Who, for example, could learn Scott to write the *Waverley Novels*, or Landseer to paint the "Sanctuary," or Watt to bring his condensing-engine to perfection, or George Stephenson to overcome the difficulties of Chat-Moss, or Wellington to give the French such a well-merited castigation, that every bone in the body of that great and vainglorious empire is aching yet? In point of fact, nothing great is learnt to be done except by self-education. All the noble work of the world is the result of self-education. And the history of all the triumphs of

skill, learning, and genius, is just the history of self-educated men.

1st. One of man's best teachers is the *sense of duty*. This has stimulated many a refractory and impracticable boy to grow up into the hard-working, painstaking, and useful man. He emerges from the school, where he has felt the propriety of doing nothing, into the world, where he heard a voice crying, "Be up now and doing, you have wasted too much time already. Be all the more active, then, for the future, and do something to redeem the barrenness of the past." We have all *something to do*; it is often long before a man is convinced of this; but when conviction does come, a *sense of duty* teaches that man to do far more than he was deemed capable of doing, either by himself or others.

2nd. *Discovery of latent powers and tendencies* is another of man's best teachers. See how many *dunces* at school and college have become the lights of the world, the ornaments of their time. They have at length been stimulated into action by the restlessness of *the powers within*. For long they dreamt not of the existence of these. But their *power* is at last felt; their *bent* at last discovers itself; their *mission* in life is at last proclaimed; and, as in the cases of Barrow, Sheridan, Scott, Burns, Goldsmith, Wellington, Howard, Watt, and others, the *mine of gold* is detected by the magician's rod, and the world overflows with the late-found wealth.

3rd. *The necessity of labour* is another most valuable teacher of man. No one knows how much he is capable of doing until the necessity occurs. Necessity drove the ponderous Johnson to the highest place of fame. Place a man in a foreign land, and how speedily does he acquire the language of the natives—a language which he regarded at home as excessively difficult. Why? Because he feels the necessity of making known his wants, and, above all, of giving expression to his thoughts and feelings. “It was the necessity,” said Hugh Miller, “which made me a quarrier, that taught me to be a geologist.” His observing mind was constantly propounding riddles, which, for his own mental comfort, he was under the necessity of solving. The history of obstacles overcome, and of noble work accomplished, is just the history of that necessity for exertion which draws out the powers of all good natures, and leads to distinguished usefulness. I might fill pages with illustrious names, which all borrowed their lustre from the school of necessity. But let me say in a word, that the history of Robinson Crusoe, whether real or allegorical, is the best illustration that I know of the human mind acquiring power from the exactions of necessity.

It is saddening to observe how many young men of promise subside into mere pleasure hunters, or drones, or drivellers, or listless and dissatisfied idlers, simply from having been set down by fortune—rather

misfortune—in an easy situation. A feather-bed is a bad training for a campaign ; and an easy-going life is often fatal to many a fine young fellow, who would have been far happier and more respectable with a good mallet or a hedgebill in his hand. Retired curacies, country parishes, “prospects of something,” above all, small properties, have a great deal to answer for in paralysing exertion, benumbing intellect, and lulling aspiration into a fatal lethargy. *Work, labour, necessity for activity*, — these are the best trainers in life’s earnest school. What an admirable reply was that of Lord Melbourne to Lord John Russell, soliciting aid for the poet Moore’s son : “Making a *small provision* ready-made for young men is hardly justifiable ; and it is of all things the most prejudicial to themselves. They think what they have much larger than it really is ; and they make no exertion. The young should never hear any language but this : ‘*You have your own way to make, and it depends upon your own exertions whether you starve or not.*’ ”

4th. *Trial* is the last, and, although the most stern, often the best teacher of man. “Crosses,” saith the quaint old proverb, “are the ladders that lead to heaven.” Poor Cowper’s trials taught him to write “Charity,” “Hope,” “Expostulation,” and “The Task.” But for the dark and oppressive cloud, we never should have been blest with the copious poetic shower. The hand of trial unlocked sweet springs in

the souls of Baxter and Boston. It proved a marvellous touchstone to the rugged nature of Bunyan. To him the opening of the prison was the opening of paradise. When he entered that place of penance and gloom, he gained a vision of vistas of glory and of blessedness far exceeding in splendour the day-dreams of untried prosperity. "He knows nothing," saith the Persian proverb, "who hath not suffered." There is certainly a vast and varied province of human life, to which trial is man's only guide. What *difficulty* proves to the *mind*, *trial* proves to the *soul*; it teaches it to *know itself*. No doubt it is a stern preceptor; but it acts to all good natures the same part which the angel acted towards Jacob,—it wrestles for the purpose of proving our strength. It is the *key-stone* of *virtue's arch*; and the heavier the weight, the greater the stability.

5th. Let young people be taught to look to themselves for much which no friend, however friendly, has the power to give them. Let them be taught from an early period of their lives habits of *diligence* and *self-reliance*. If man has got hands to feed his body, he has also got intellectual powers to feed his moral nature. Within every human bosom there lies hidden a well of bitterness and a fountain of happiness; and God has given the key of each into the hands of every living soul. He says to each of His rational offspring, "Man, bear thine own burden: Man, prove thy own work." There can be no proxy

at the day of account; and however convenient it may be in the mean time to roll over their sins, as many of the poor-spirited seek to do, upon the shoulders of others, at the "great day" each soul must stand or fall by itself.

6th. Above all teachers let the Bible speak. And who can speak to the soul with the authority of the Word? "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear; He that formed the eye, shall He not see; He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not He know!"

But who is to teach and expound the Bible? *Parents* most certainly; for holy are the lessons that fall from the Mother's lips of earnest love, and from the Father's daily course of holy conduct. No school has more to answer for than the school of Home. *Ministers*, also, most certainly; for their life has been set apart for the exposition of God's word, and on the Sabbath the soul is peculiarly open to holy truths. The church is but a school of spiritual knowledge; and, through the power of the preacher, the Word is an influence "to bring souls to Christ." But, in addition to these, let us not forget the *Teachers* of our common schools—those modest, but effective nurseries of truth, which gather the young together in every street of our crowded cities, and in every parish of our native land. There are many politicians, I know, who will oppose me here. They will say, "Exclude the Bible from the school-house: confine

it to the teaching of parents, and the ministers of those churches, or sects, to which the children belong ; but do not make it the ground of proselytism, by teaching it in the week-day school." To this I answer,—are you to keep shut during the week the greatest book in the world ; simply taken as a book, the most varied in its narrative ; the most interesting in its facts ; the most noble and beautiful in its style ; the most refining in its morality ; and the most elevating in its views, whether of this world or the next ? Besides, *how are you to exclude the Bible ? It is impossible now to do so.* For the Bible runs, more or less, through every work of worth ; its morality is interlaced with every valuable book that issues from the press ; its spirit is interfused throughout every department of letters ; and without knowing the Bible, you cannot read the literature of our country to advantage,—for without the Bible you cannot rightly understand it. As the sea washes into every bay and nook of the land, so does Bible-knowledge fold around, and intermingle with, every department of a Christian literature. I ask not the school-master to teach dogmatic theology. I simply, but earnestly, call upon him to *read the Word of God* along with his pupils. "Wisdom," it is written, "shall be the stability of your times ;" and woe to the time, woe to the people, when the Book of God's wisdom is banished from the school.

Conclusion. Remember, then, that true education

consists, not so much in the *imparting of facts*, as in the *implanting of principles*—not so much in the *communication of views*, as in the *training of powers and habits*. *Intellect*, without *moral training*, may come forth and dazzle, and resemble in its fatal lustre the once bright “Morning Star,” the fallen Prince of Evil. *Intellect*, purified and guided by *spiritual influence*, will resemble the blessed light of heaven, which God called into being, that blessed light of morn, “that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

THE GREAT TEACHER.

I.

The world is like an open page
For man's instruction given,
There greenest youth and ripest age
May read the words of Heaven.

II.

Spring tells of seed-time and of toil ;
The Summer breathes of bloom ;
Brown Autumn triumphs o'er her spoil ;
And Winter paints the tomb.

III.

The suns that set, the clouds that pass,
The russet leaves that fall,
The daisies twinkling o'er the grass,
Are teachers one and all.

IV.

"Glad tidings" ring from every grove,
And brook that warbles wild ;
For these are God's, and "God is love,"
And man His favoured child.

V.

'Tis not in vain yon snow-drop breaks
The frozen wintry clod :
That "still small voice" a gospel speaks—
It comes—a Priest from God !

VI.

Yes, not alone to bloom and fade
The simplest plant or flower is given,
But, like some altar in the glade,
To waft the soul from earth to heaven.

III.—THE PLACE OF ORDINANCES :

WHERE PRINCIPLES ARE STRENGTHENED.

EXOD. iii. v.—“The place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground.”

AN indifference to *memorable places* speaks to a sad decadence of national feeling. A nation that has no respect for its *great names*, has ceased to respect itself. When, with the common consent of the people, we would pull down the house where a Shakespeare lived, or a Newton died, corruption is at the core, and that people deserve not to live. We may repeat the idea with regard to individuals. “That man,” said Johnson, “is little to be envied,”—I venture to add respected, or trusted,—“whose patriotism would not gain force on the field of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.” Verily, he is a poor creature, both in soul and heart, who has not in spirit “put the shoes from off his feet,” feeling that he was standing on “holy ground.” The loss of such a man will create no perceptible blank.

There are many sacred places, which all thoughtful

people desire to see, and which they would all be the better of seeing. Who does not wish to stand upon the scene where Eden bloomed, and where unfallen man communed with his Maker? Who would not gladly spend a solitary hour upon the soil of Bethel, where the desolate spirit of Jacob was cheered by the vision of paradise? Who does not long to wander in the footsteps of St. Paul, and meditate on the path to Damascus, or the rocky shores of Melita? Rather would a reflective man find himself standing upon the Hill of Calvary, the Island of Patmos, the Mount of Olives, the spot that was illuminated by the unconsuming bush, or the fields of Bethany, than upon the scenes of those world-famous battles, where the din of strife rent the startled skies; for there his piety grows warmer, and his hopes soar higher, as he feels himself standing on "holy ground."

It is well that the great and memorable events of bye-gone days exercise a powerful influence over the human mind, and that the places where these events occurred possess a lasting attraction, which no lapse of time, and no succession of changes, are able to destroy. The field where national freedom has been won, the Senate where important affairs have been transacted, the house in which the great man lived, and the scene of martyrdom where the good man died,—around these hallowed spots there gathers an interest, which only seems to deepen and to become more sacred with the flight of years.

There is no spot on the whole face of the globe more holy than Calvary. There an event took place which has no parallel in the annals of the human race ; and whether we consider its own character, or think of its results among the nations of the earth, the crucifixion of Christ is the most marvellous and interesting deed that has ever yet happened in this lower world. It is now a matter of dispute where the cross was raised ; not a fragment almost of the ancient City of Zion remains as a witness ; the descendants of the murderers of the Son of God are scattered over the earth ; but the voice that cried, " It is finished ! " is proclaiming the glad tidings in every quarter of the globe, and the blessings of the cross are enriching the hearts of men in every civilised land !

It is in obedience to that voice that we surround a Communion Table. For all of us that voice has accents of the warmest love, and let me hope, of irresistible attraction. And, even as Moses drew nigh to the burning bush, which glowed with the presence of God, rapture and hope and holy fear all mingling together and agitating his soul ; so upon communion occasions, as the scene of Calvary in all its mingled glory and honour rises before our minds, each devout soul may well hear a voice saying, " The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Let me mention a few of the particulars, on account of which the Place of Ordinances is " holy ground."

I. It is "holy" on account of the presence by which it is blest and hallowed. "Will God indeed dwell upon the earth?" was the exclamation of one who was as much astonished as he was gratified by the influences of heaven. And, in truth, it is surprising for us to think, that the God whom "the heaven of heavens cannot contain," should glorify by His presence any particular spot of a sinful world! If the Psalmist was moved by a consideration of the stars to exclaim, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" how much more should a conviction of our guilt overwhelm the mind with a similar reflection? We do not wonder that the Creator should, in some shape or other, pay a visit to the garden of Eden, ere human disobedience had called down a curse upon its beauty. We are not quite unprepared to hear that one like Moses, or John, should have been favoured by the visitation of the Most High. But when we think of all the guilt and ingratitude and rebellion that has polluted, and still pollutes, the dwelling-places of men, we may be astonished that He asks them to meet with Him, and to accept of fresh favours. But, singular though it may appear, it is no less true. The God of Heaven dwells on earth! The King of Angels seeks the hearts of sinners! The Centre of all Perfection comes down to converse with the fallen children of Adam. He "whose dwelling is the light of setting suns," and who robes Himself in the glories of creation, con-

descends to enter our humblest places of devotion, and to accept with delight our sacrifices of praise! When we think of these things, what but astonishment and humility should take possession of the soul, prompting each grateful spirit to say within itself, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

II. It is "holy" on account of the privileges which we are here to enjoy. In bye-gone times, any approach to the symbol of God's presence was deemed an honour of the highest kind. It was considered an honour to be one of those who were chosen to bear the Ark of the Covenant to its sacred resting-place. And great was the privilege of the man whose office entitled him to enter the "holy of holies" on behalf of the people. Moses felt more than ever the distinction of his place among the children of Israel after he had been permitted to draw nigh to the "burning bush," and when he had heard the voice of God among the solitudes of Horeb. No doubt, the rest of the disciples of our Lord would regard Peter, James, and John, as highly favoured men, after they had seen his glories on Tabor, and been chosen to witness his passion in the garden of Gethsemane. When the Patriarchs and Prophets spoke of their intercourses with the Lord, no doubt their families and neighbours would look upon them as no common men, and would feel that an additional sanctity invested their presence. And what was it that the royal David desired as the crowning privilege of a marvellous life, but that he

should enter the "holy place," and "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever?"

What, then, think ye of your sacred privilege on the occasion of a communion? It is the God of Horeb who admits of your approaches! It is the Ruler of the Universe who permits you to bow before Him! It is the Sufferer of the garden, the glorified Spirit of Tabor, the blessed Victim of Calvary, that calls upon you in these words, "Do this in remembrance of me." Is there no favour, no honour, in all this, for perishing creatures, for sinful men? In all ages, communion with God has been the chief thirst, and the most earnest prayer of the thoughtful and the devout. It was this intense longing that constrained David to cry out, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God!" It was a deep sense of his unworthiness to partake of such a distinction that wrung from Peter the exclamation, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am an unholy man!" And it is still the same feeling of inferiority in the presence of the Most High that constrains the Angels before the throne "to veil their faces with their wings," as they cry out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty."

Think, then, of the privilege of communion with God. Yours are the benefits of disciples—yours the honours of Patriarchs and Prophets—yours something like the distinctions of the Angels on high. You are called into the tabernacles of Jehovah. You are

permitted to commune with Christ. He "brings you into His banqueting-house, and His banner over you is love." Feeling, therefore, the solemnity of the hour, and the sacredness of the occasion, with God for an Auditor and Christ for a friend, is not the language of the text the fittest for you, "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Men esteem it a great privilege to be admitted to an intimacy with the great and gifted of the earth, the mighty, who can advance their temporal interests; the wise, who can counsel them; the good, who can set them a bright example; and the friendly, who can bear with their failings, and correct their errors in a spirit of love. But the privileges of communion with Christ more than embrace all these; for He is greater than the greatest, wiser than the wisest, better than the best, and notwithstanding our sin and ingratitude, He is the friend "who sticketh closer than a brother." He clung to us amid the privations and indignities of His suffering life. He clung to us amid the horrors and agonies of His ignominious death. And He clings to us amidst the glories of heaven; for although surrounded by cherubim and seraphim, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." The place, then, that reminds us of all these benefits is surely "holy ground."

III. And these remarks lead me to say, that the place of ordinances is "holy ground," on account of the great event which we often celebrate there, and

which symbolises to the soul its highest blessings. We commemorate the most marvellous of all events,—the death, not of an equal for an equal, but of a Creator for a creature ; not of a friend for a friend, but of a friend for an enemy ; not of purity for kindred purity, but of a God for a sinner ! What can we do, in consideration of these marvels of mercy, but cry out with Paul, “ Oh, the height and the depth, the breadth and the length of the love of Christ, it passeth knowledge ? ”

And why did he die for such as we are ? We can only answer, because “ God is love ! ” Were one man actually to die for another, still, he is only anticipating an event which he must sooner or later encounter. But Christ had eternal life in Himself. Death had no claim upon Him. He was the King “ eternal and immortal. ” “ His outgoings are from everlasting, ” and he is God blessed for ever. The disorder of the rebellious need never have invaded His kingdom ; and the groanings of creation need never have disturbed His repose. He would have “ inhabited the praises of eternity ” though man had never been redeemed ; and in the government of the spiritual world on high He might have sought and found a joy without end ! But for our sakes He became poor, forgetting the riches of heaven ; for our sakes He assumed a condition of suffering, leaving behind Him the untroubled bliss of paradise ; for our sakes He submitted to death, vacating for a season

the throne of life,—and amid all these sacrifices He had little cheering support, even from the creatures whom He came to save ! They who die for their country take their departure from the world amid honour and praise,—the applauses of the grateful sound across their graves ; and for them the temple of fame throws open its gates, and decrees them at once a place of distinction. But our Lord took His departure amid shame and public disgrace ; and the last sounds that fell upon His dying ear were the execrations of a besotted multitude ! These are mysteries to us unfathomable ; but it is enough for us to know that heaven bowed down to earth, and the sinless dwelt among the sinful for the deliverance of the soul.

The event which we commemorate at a communion table will be felt to be of a truly wonderful character, if we consider its *object*, its *agent*, and its *fruits*. Consider its mighty *object*. It was not a province or a single kingdom that called for help, but the groans of a ruined world appealed to heaven ! It was not a part of human nature that stood in need of a physician's skill, but the whole of a perishing being cried out for a remedy ! It was not an evil or a blessing to be measured by years that was involved in redemption ; but the evil to be averted, or the blessing to be secured, was a thing to be gauged by everlasting ages ! It was not an object whose interest was of a limited kind ; but it stirred heaven to its highest heights, and it shook the caverns of hell to their lowest depths ! It had dole-

ful tidings for the spirits of perdition ; for “ the devils believe and tremble.” It had blessed tidings for the spirits of paradise ; for “ into these things the angels desire to look,” exclaiming “ worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honour, and dominion, and blessing.”

And if the object of the redemption was thus unutterably great, it found an equal in the *agent* by whom it was accomplished. The Son of God ! Had God chosen to send the humblest of His angels to sympathise with us in our “ low and lost estate,” that would have been a kindness for which to be thankful. And if He had chosen to send one of the highest of those seraphims who stand beside His throne, His goodness and condescension might have been deemed beyond all praise. But who is He that bringeth salvation and proclaimeth peace from God ? His rank and glory let a prophet announce—“ Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” “ In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son.”

And, as we might expect, the *fruits* of Christ’s mission are of the most precious and heavenly nature. No name has left so broad and distinct a mark upon the world as the name of Jesus, and no book has done for the human race what the gospel has done. Many a weary heart has been refreshed by that

friendly teacher. Many an aimless life has been rendered useful, and many a wandering soul reclaimed. Many a sorrow has been sanctified, many a loss converted into gain, and many a dying soul crowned at the gates of death with the diadem of everlasting life. Who shall set limits to the power of Jesus? The kings of the earth shall yet bow down to Him. "He shall set peace in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law."

Is there nothing, then, worthy of our holiest commemoration in things like these? Shall a nation glory in its great and memorable names, and shall the name of Jesus fail to awaken our deepest gratitude? Shall kingdoms chronicle the events which are identified with their liberties, and shall we forget to write the victories of the Cross upon the tablets of our heart? Shall days be set apart for the celebration of mere human triumphs, and shall the Christian allow the year to roll past without arresting one day for the most sacred purpose, and marking it for ever by the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving? Surely, if a curse converted into a blessing; if a tempter vanquished and a grave robbed of its spoils; if our undying soul, rescued from hell, and won for heaven,—if these victories be worthy of our deepest adoration, a communion day must bring them vividly before our minds; and, as we enter a house that recalls them, we may well adopt the language of the text, "the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

IV. The Place of Ordinances ought to be "holy ground," from the thoughts and feelings awakened, and the prospects disclosed.

A great writer has said, that he trusted the time would never come when he could pass "indifferent and unmoved over any ground memorable for wisdom, bravery, or virtue." And if the time should ever come to any of us, when we can sit "indifferent and unmoved" at a communion table, depend upon it we have made a great step aside from the way of life, and a degradation has taken place in our spiritual character. If wisdom the most lofty and pure, if heroism the most unflinching and unselfish, and if virtue the most unspotted and unwavering,—if these should arouse within us the most grateful feelings, and the most elevating thoughts, they are all set before us by the scene of communion. In this ordinance we celebrate the death of One whom malice could not accuse, beside whose merits the qualities of angels are dim, with whom a God of purity was "well pleased." This is the Being whom in such a scene we honour, and "who left us an example that we might follow his steps." And if we do honour him in our souls, and if we do for the future walk with Him,—then such a scene is but the earnest of more precious privileges in Heaven, when, standing upon the *holier ground* of Paradise, we shall hold communion face to face with "the Lamb of God." It is but an emblem of the feast on high, where there

is "fulness of joy," at that "table which is never to be drawn."

Conclusion. Let me remind you, then, that "holy ground" demands a holy life; christian privileges call for christian fruits; and it is only the christian walk that can lead to the christian end. The impression of the burning bush would never fade away from the mind of Moses. Abraham would never forget the tangled thickets of Mount Moriah; Jacob the stone pillow of Bethel; James the light of Tabor; John the rocks of Patmos. These would cast an influence over all their after lives, and would hallow the ground wherever they trod. And consider the attachment of far inferior beings to the holy places of their faith and hope. With what devotion does the blinded Brahmin hail the approach of his monstrous idol, the benighted Mexican enter his golden-roofed shrine, and the devout Mussulman turn his face towards the sacred tomb of the eastern prophet! Shall not the Christian be warmed by a similar, but far purer, devotion; and impelled by the vision of a brighter crown, and inspired by a nobler faith, shall he not see in the temple below a faint emblem of the temple above,—and, entering the courts of God's House for the purposes of communion, shall not his devotional feelings incite him to say, "the spot whereon I stand is holy ground!" The spirit of God meeting the spirit of man can alone "consecrate" a temple and make "holy ground."

SABBATH BELLS.

I.

Sweet Sabbath bells ! ye waft my soul,
On your solemn chimes at even,
To the land where life's glad waters roll
Through the "pastures green" of heaven.

II.

Sweet Sabbath bells ! no "temple there"
Gathers a holy throng ;
For every heart is a shrine of prayer,
And "every voice is song."

III.

No weekly calm, in the world above,
Will breathe upon scenes of care ;
For the moments of heaven are bright with love
And each is a Sabbath there.

IV.

No ear for the songs of the blest has he
Who loves not the Sabbath bell,
Breathing its sacred melody
Over city, and field, and fell.

V.

Oh ! take its *shade* from a weary clime,
And its *well* from the desert's breast,
But leave to a world of care and crime
The depth of its Sabbath rest !

VI.

Like islands green 'mid the stream of life
Our blessed Sabbaths rise,
Where our barks may rest from storm and strife
As they float to Paradise.

VII.

O, God of Love ! send forth a blast
From Thy Spirit, full and free,
That their beaten sails may fold at last
In a haven of peace with Thee.

IV.—THE WORLD :

THE PLACE WHERE PRINCIPLES ARE TRIED.

MATTHEW vii. 24-28.

NO man knows what is in him until his principles are tested by that stern disciplinarian, the World ; and it is only there that he comes to learn whether he has founded upon the “ sand ” or upon the “ rock.”

What is the purpose of God's Word to man, but to enable him to walk through this life on his way to a higher and holier state of being ? What but to point out to him the *materials* with which he may build for his soul a dwelling of security, which no tempest of this world can lay in ruins ?

The world is covered with a vast multitude of houses ; the greater number built upon the sand, the lesser number upon the rock. In the former is danger, in the latter security. That is, the lives of some end happily, because they have built upon the merits of Christ, and have obeyed “ His words ; ” while the lives of more end in misery, because they have not

founded on Christ,—because they have not carried the religious principles of the Bible and the christian home into the life of the world, where there is so much peril for the souls of men. One verse in the context sheds a revealing light upon the parable that follows, *i.e.*, “Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

In treating of this passage, some seem to think that the two contrasting pictures are those of an avowed unbeliever on the one hand, and of a sincere christian on the other. But they are not so. Our Lord means to present us on one side with the picture of a decent man of the world, who appears devout, and is yet living for this world alone ; and on the other, with the picture of a christian who looks, through all his conduct, to a higher life. These two are not easily distinguished,—just as it is difficult to perceive whether a house be well founded or the reverse. The thing that enables us to distinguish between them is *trial*. Such is the meaning of the “winds and the rains.” When trial comes, the formalist has nothing to fall back upon,—the christian has. The contrast is between a man who seems to be a christian, and one who really is. The houses are equally good to look at, but not to live in. God alone can try the foundations.

It was long ago declared by the Spirit, that “no foundation can any man lay save that is laid,

which is Christ the Lord." And human experience has proved a thousand times over, that man obtains from the gospel a support to be found nowhere else,—a support for his Faith, for his Hope, for his Practice of whatsoever is praiseworthy, and for his Heart in the season of trial. That support may become the property of any one who is in earnest about his soul, and who chooses to build upon Him who is "the rock of ages."

But many who know this—who seek not to deny it—are no better for their knowledge, and are just as tottering and unstable as ever, when their courage and patience are in any way tried by the occasions of life. The reason is apparent: they are nothing more than speculative and theoretical christians,—“hearers of the word,” but not “doers” of it.

As a warning and lesson to all such, our Saviour spoke the parable of the true and false foundations; or in other words, of real and vital, and of formal and unpractical religion. Such teaching as this is most important. There is a plainness, a simplicity, and, withal, a power about it, which few who consider it attentively can altogether resist. A chain of intricate reasoning might have perplexed many; but this parable is so clear and vigorous, that none, save the most benighted, can evade its meaning.

I. The first truth that strikes us in reading this parable, is the inconsistency of professing christians. Their knowledge of what is right and their practice of

what is right are too seldom united. How many perceive the right road, and how few pursue it! We all know and admit our duty,—would that we were as ready and earnest in its discharge!

Now, nothing can be truer than this, that, to be of any real benefit here and hereafter, the knowledge and the practice of religion must go together. Religion is for our benefit, not for God's. How, then, can it make us better or happier, if we discharge none of its claims, execute none of its works, bear none of its burdens, offer none of its sacrifices? What shall it profit us if we resemble the Pharisees, who say and do not? "If ye know these things," (these commandments and precepts, these calls to repentance and amendment, these obligations to self-denial and spiritual work,) "happy are ye if ye do them!" If faith without works be dead, what shall we say of religion without practice,—of a barren creed, that appears not in the life, and temper, and disposition? "By their fruits shall ye know them."

If we question our own hearts in their better moments, we cannot fail to be surprised at the absurd and inconsistent conduct of mankind; for these hearts admit the propriety of a godly life. And if we consult our Bibles, it may well be matter for astonishment that there should be so much practical heathenism in a Christian country! in a land of light! among a people of so much knowledge as nineteen gospel centuries must have diffused among all ranks and

classes! By living in a land where the gospel is published and preached, where we have so many opportunities of learning our duty and our interest,—where there is always something to point to the way of life, we incur a responsibility of the gravest kind. Living in a Goshen of religious ordinances, why do we not acquire more likeness to our blessed Lord, more aptness in our Father's work, and more fitness for the kingdom of heaven? It is difficult to conceive how accounts so interesting as those of the Gospel, arguments so plain, reasons so weighty, motives so powerful, invitations so persuasive, should yet fall so pointless, and leave the conduct of thousands so exceedingly defective! All this is resolvable into the perverseness of human nature. All to be set down to that general want of earnestness, which leads so many to be "hearers" of the word, but not "doers" of it, and yet complacently to imagine that they do no wrong, and incur no danger. Better not be "hearers" if you are not to be "doers;" for it is far "better not to have known the commandment, than, having known it, to depart from the way." The worst feature of this inconsistent state is this, that there can be no right appreciation of its real wants, of its true condition. Alive to the presence of the disease, you send for the physician. Did we feel how morally smitten we are, we would call aloud for the "Physician of souls!" We hear from Sabbath to Sabbath the sayings of Christ,—are we very care-

ful to do them? Let the levity and idleness and intemperance of the young—let the worldliness of those who are growing old—let the oppression of the strong, and the meanness of many who keep themselves dependent—let the sin that stalks abroad with unblushing effrontery, and the crime that festers in the countless dark corners of a corrupt society—let these bear witness to the fact, that much is unchristian in a christian land.

The Jews were wont to boast that they were descended from the old and only true stock of faith. "We are Abraham's seed," said they, in a spirit of pride and bigotry, thinking that this was all that was necessary; that there was something essentially meritorious in being descended from so illustrious a specimen of religion; and that this gave them a title to sneer at others, holding themselves to be a "peculiar people," sanctified and saved by their religious pedigree alone. Now, I fear that something similar takes place among professing christians, and to an unwarrantable extent sways their minds. They call themselves of Christ, they think that the very name of christian is almost enough, they have ranked themselves upon the right side, they have espoused the true cause, they profess the pure old doctrines of the cross; and all this must surely be sufficient distinction between them and the poor degraded children of error and superstition. Yes! distinction sufficient and glory enough, provided they live up to their

creed, and shew themselves to belong to Christ, not by virtue of an empty name and a formal profession, but in very deed and truth, by their daily lives, their inner dispositions, abundance of good works, and a "conversation in heaven." But not unless. Better a sincere, earnest heathen, groping about among the ashes of his vain altar-fire, than a pretentious and insincere christian, no better in any respect on account of his creed, as a man, as a parent, as a child, as a brother, as a member of society; only a "whited sepulchre" after all, full of corruption.

Many people are what may be called "negative christians." Their outward life is perfectly respectable. They do no positive harm, it is true, and cannot be accused of very heinous offences; but it is equally true, they do little positive good, and manifest no zeal, no fervour, no earnestness in the religious life. You cannot point the finger of social scorn at such; for they have ever been honest, and decent, and peaceful members of society. But where are their sacrifices in the cause of Christ? Has religion ever caused their hearts one real pang, as they thought of their short-comings in the work which she prescribes, and as their minds were turned by her towards a judgment to come? All this freedom from the grosser sins may arise from one of two reasons—from the constitutional temperament of the individual, or from the circumstances in which he is placed. The peculiar temptation may not have been presented,

and, therefore, he has not betrayed his want of all real religious principle. Let me illustrate this position about negative christianity. Some people, for example, are so constitutionally good-natured, that they would never dream of inflicting injury, or of doing a cruel deed ; while, at the same time, they are so apathetic and indifferent, that they would never stir themselves up to assist the feeble, and never start forward to the relief of struggling virtue ; and, in fact, are just as little remarkable for doing good as for doing evil. It is much the same with many in religious life. They almost "cease to do evil," so far as gross offences are concerned ; but they neglect the other half of the injunction, they do not "learn," with all the energy of a deep conviction, to "do well," and to discharge the duties which God requires of man. With them—naturally amiable and good-humoured people—religion consists more in abstaining from the graver sins of the law, than in a minute and punctual attention to the smallest duties enjoined by the gospel. But this is not the religion of the cross. I have known an avowed infidel to possess as much religion as this. I have seen such a man—benevolent, amiable, and friendly—but without a particle of the christian faith. His virtues were rather the remnants which the fall had left, than the gifts which the gospel had conferred. It was the religion of a naturally warm heart, but not the religion which the Spirit of God breathes into a man, raising him

above the highest efforts of mere human nature, and giving to his character a beauty, a sincerity, and a consistency, only imparted to a sinner by a divine influence—a breath of the Holy Spirit.

II. Having thus dwelt upon the inconsistency of so many professing Christians who hear the words of life, but comply not with their demands, let us ask a few simple questions, by which the folly of such conduct will appear.

Religion, like every other good, must be tested by observing what it is practically worth. What is the use of a tree if it bear not fruit, or in some other way prove of benefit in the hands of man? What is the field worth, if it cannot carry a fair crop in due season, and so reward the toil and care of the farmer? What is a branch of knowledge worth, if it neither does good to the mind that has cultivated it, nor to the community in which its possessor is placed? What is the value of a vessel that cannot stand the perils of the deep, and which, notwithstanding her painted sides and her snowy canvas and her flaunting colours, must go down to the bottom with the first tempest she encounters? And, in like manner, what is the worth of that religion which makes man no wiser, no better, no happier,—which purifies not his heart nor elevates his hope, nor guides his life, nor establishes his faith, amid the storms and trials of life? If a man's religious creed make him no better in the various relations of life, it is no creed at all. If a

man's religion shed no comfort upon his heart when tribulation assails—if it give him no help when temptation solicits and importunes, what better is it than no religion at all? If a man's house were to tumble about his head and to bury him in its ruins when the first tempest beat upon it, the sooner he left that house the better—the sooner he pulled it down the safer, and built up another with surer foundations. What though the stones of that dwelling were well-hewn and goodly to look upon, what although its door-way consisted of the most beautifully sculptured pillars of marble, what although its roof was splendidly adorned with gilded vanes, what of it all, if its foundations were false and hollow? And what about a fair pretence of religion, what about a creed which is nothing more than sounding, empty talk, what about the spurious piety which trusts to nothing better than a few good deeds done out of formality now and then, or a few sermons heard out of motives of decency from time to time, but which was not founded upon the merits of Christ, the great “Cornerstone,” the “Rock of ages?” After all, like the fool's house, it would be nothing better than a “refuge of deceit.” Let the blasts of affliction blow with their cold, icy, breath; let temptation assail, with its whirlwind violence; let sickness invade, with its wearing out and weakening power; above all, let the king of terrors arise in his might, and hurl the bolts of his vengeance against that tottering, pretentious edifice,—and

down, down, it would go to the dust, and great and complete would be its destruction.

Such a destruction we behold every day, just because so many have trusted to a religion which was all profession.

1st. Take the case of a man who falls first into comparative poverty, then into crime. In other circumstances he appeared to be an honest and industrious person. Surrounded by the comforts of his position in life, he appeared to be contented and cheerful. So long as there was no want, he seemed to be upright and exemplary enough. But the test at length comes ; and, without any power of enduring a temporary evil, he puts forth his hand and steals, or resorts to violence, or is guilty of a system of fraud, and falls from a fair name into infamy and disgrace. And why? Because his principles, after all, were weak and wavering. Like a house in calm weather, these apparent principles stood strong in the day of prosperity. But as the ill-founded edifice could not stand the tempest, so his integrity and honour were not proof against the assaults of adversity. That man fell, for he had "built upon the sand."

2d. Or take the case of a man in high health and robust bodily vigour. He never complains, and is always cheerful and placid ; and you might fancy all this equanimity to be the result of a well-disciplined mind,—perhaps, even, a religious frame of spirit. But sickness comes. He who was never tried by

pain and weakness, and never accustomed to restraint up to that hour, is confined to the dull atmosphere of a silent chamber, and is bound down by the hand of disease to a feverish bed. Where is his placidity, where his contentment now? What has become of his well-disciplined mind? He is far more difficult to manage than a sick child, and consumes his days and nights in unmanly repining. Why? Because, after all, he had no grounds of religious faith and hope to rest upon. His courage was the creature of high corporeal vigour, and that gone, he falls into something like imbecility; for he, too, had "built upon the sand."

3d. Consider a case of affliction—not uncommon. That man was a fine preacher of resignation to others whose hearts were bleeding; indeed, so pious were his views, and so sensible his remarks, that you would have thought that he was the very man to carry a cross, to suffer martyrdom, to rejoice with James that tribulation had given him an opportunity of glorifying God, and setting a bright example to others! But no such thing. His own season of affliction arrives,—and then is it seen that his fine speeches and sentiments had no *depth*, no stability whatever. He is at once prostrated by the hand of bereavement, and can take none of that consolation he dealt out so liberally to others in the days of his happiness. Why? Because his religious principles had no root. He, too, had founded "on the sand."

4th. Or take, last of all, the case of a young man untried, unproved. He goes to a situation, and he does well for a time—so well, indeed, that you fancy him a model, and point him out to others as a pattern of sobriety and sterling worth. But the peculiar temptations at length steal forth, and begin to solicit his feeble virtue. He discovers that his employer is an easy, careless, confiding, person. Then Satan, in the form of pleasure, whispers in his ear, and he puts forth his hand and takes what is not his own, and falls into vicious indulgences, into courses that may lead him to a felon's doom! Why? Because, after all, his principles were weak and corrupt. He had remained honest because untried; but when the trial did come, it was discovered that he had no real integrity of soul, that he, too, had "built upon the sand."

Now, reverse all these. Behold a man who remains honest, though poor—resigned, though distressed—submissive, though afflicted—upright, though tempted. That is a spectacle to admire. Each of these stood firm, because his principles were founded on the Rock of Faith! No man need expect to pass through the world without trial. It is therefore his duty to prepare against it a well-disciplined mind. Some flee to the refuge of intemperance, of infidelity, or of philosophy—none like religion to shelter the soul.

Application.—See, then, that your religion be something better than a mere profession. What good

will the christian name without the christian life and disposition do to any man? How vain will your Sabbath attendance prove, if you take not an influence along with you into the week, with all its duties, trials, and cares! And such an influence will never grow up in your hearts unless you follow up the lessons of the word by an active practical piety running through all the departments and occasions of life. In the world, when we would attain a certain end, do we not employ the proper means? And if we would reap the real fruits of the christian faith, we must labour diligently in the christian field.

If you find that your religion is of no benefit—not blessing you under trial—not acting as your counsellor and guide through the perplexities of life—do not blame the Author of that religion, but blame yourselves; you have not laid the proper foundation. Christ offers you all the necessary materials, and the Spirit will help you to build them up into an edifice of shelter. But you must lend yourselves as willing and earnest labourers. Many people are astonished at the results of their own conduct, and seek to condemn everyone and everything, *save themselves* and their own folly. If a man choose to build with the materials of sloth, or intemperance, or prodigality, or licentiousness, or any other wretched rubbish that Satan would suggest, how can that man suppose that he is building up comfort, or health, or any kind of solid happiness for himself? For a while he may

fancy that all is well ; but the season of sickness, the stroke of calamity, the bed of death, the chamber of bereavement, the bar of judgment,—these will try the strength of his house, and convince him that he has founded, not upon the Rock of Peace, but upon the sand of Ruin !

“ In the world ye shall have tribulation :” so said our Saviour—so repeats human experience—such is the echo of every passing day, “ in the world ye shall have tribulation.” From that doom there is no escape ; from that “ warfare no discharge.” Life, at the best, is but a victory ; for if you can at last point to a triumph, at the same time you are forced to deplore the slain. But peace at length will crown the struggle of those who learn to overcome through an alliance with Him who said, and still says, to the soldiers of the cross, “ Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” Yes, build firmly upon the rock of His merits, and that house can never be destroyed. It will refuge your soul through the ages of eternity.

THE WRECK.

I.

The ship was goodly to the sight
As ever ship might be,
And amid the cheers of thousands
She glided to the sea.

The World :

II.

The breeze blew freshly from the south,
It filled her snowy sail ;
And the shrouds, like a mighty harp, rung out
The music of the gale.

III.

She passed from sight, that goodly ship,
With all her canvas spread,
Like a snowy cloud that melts away
In the blue sky overhead.

IV.

She passed from sight—and never more
Was seen that stately form.
With all her crew she sunk from view
In some dark night of storm.

V.

No epitaph shall mark that tomb
Far in the polar deep ;
No flowers above that grave shall bloom,
No mourners come to weep.

VI.

Ah ! thus I've seen a buoyant youth
Launch forth into the world,
With joy, and strength, and hope, and truth,
Like spotless sails unfurled.

VII.

And friends with beating hearts were nigh,
And lips that murmured prayer ;
And the course of that young spirit seemed
All prosperous and fair.

VIII.

But when we ask, in distant years,
"What came of that goodly ship?"
The eye grows dim with the mist of tears,
And the word dies on the lip.

IX.

For the winds and the waves of many a sin
Arose and ruled by turns ;
And the life so bright went down in night
'To a grave where no one mourns.

X.

Go, ask of the greedy sea to yield
The wreck and the shroudless dead.
Go, ask of the world to render back
The peace that in guilt hath fled.

V.—THE HOUSE OF MOURNING :

WHERE THE FRUIT OF PRINCIPLES IS GATHERED.

LUKE xxii. 42.—“Not my will, but thine be done.”

THERE are few spots on earth more holy than the house of mourning ; where the bereaved one bows meekly to the rod of discipline, communes quietly with his God, and says in the spirit of submission, “Father, not my will, but thine be done.” Superstition can point to the most appalling sacrifices, and fanaticism in her blinded zeal prompts to many painful acts of devotion ; but the perfection of piety has been reached, and her best fruits have been gathered, when the man of faith can say from the heart, “Father, not my will, but thine be done.” Such a tribute of homage is more acceptable to the God of heaven than all the altars that superstition ever raised, than all the sacrifices that fanatical zeal ever offered.

The words of the text embody the holiest sorrow that this world ever witnessed. They were wrung from the soul of the greatest mourner who ever poured

forth his grief in this vale of tears. They have made Gethsemane the most sacred spot of ground, save one, on the whole face of this earth. They present to us the most perfect picture of resignation to the divine will ; and every one, who imbibes their spirit, and can make a heartfelt use of them in his hour of trouble, converts the scene of his suffering and sorrow into " holy ground."

The utterance of the words of Jesus in the text implies three things most sacred and precious :—
1st, Faith in the dealings of God. 2d, Cheerful resignation to the decrees of heaven. 3d, Personal profit from the season of trial.

I. The utterance of the text implies faith in God. What is it that disposes a mourner to give expression to his burdened feelings in these few and simple words, "Thy will be done?" It is perfect confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God. Unless you feel that "God is love," and that "He will have mercy and not sacrifice," you will never be in a condition to seek relief in the words of a "smitten" and "wounded" Saviour. But when you do feel that the hand which smites does so in love and not in anger, then the house of affliction becomes "holy ground" for you, and something of the sacredness of Gethsemane overhangs your scene of trial.

The beauty and simplicity of the filial tie was never more touchingly expressed than in the words of Jesus. What although sorrow sat heavily upon his soul?

What although the darkness of trial's saddest night was closing in upon him? What although his companions had forgotten him in the oblivion of sleep, and he was left to "tread the wine-press alone?" What of it all, since he felt it was the hand of a Father that had sent forth the thick clouds, but whose face was still beaming in love behind their deep gloom? Hence the *friendless one* knew that a more than common friend was near, and therefore he could take comfort and say, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Thou knowest best what is good for thy Son. Thou hast a wise purpose in the wildest storm as well as in the most blessed sunshine. "It is the Lord, and let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Feelings of the very same nature are busy in every earthly family wherein a sacred bond of communion binds heart to heart, where the light of a good example has been visible in the parent, and where christian love has ever borne rule. The child cannot fathom all its father's doings. Many of his dealings are wrapt in mystery. But that child has never experienced anything save parental love. It has grown up in an atmosphere of affection and domestic care. It has seen nothing save looks of kindness, and heard nothing save words of tenderness and consideration. And, with an instinct far stronger than any process of reasoning, it feels that in all its father's doings there is a hidden meaning of love. Carry that instinct into religion—for an earthly parent substitute God—and

you have the workings of that high and holy principle which the Bible calls Faith. Man cannot fathom the meaning of all God's doings and discipline. But they come from that Being who sends the sun and the rain, the gospel and the Saviour ; and, therefore, man bows his head to the visitation of trial, and says, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Thou knowest best what will benefit that life which thou hast bestowed upon me, and in thy hands I cannot suffer evil.

How touchingly was faith in the parental wisdom and love manifested in the cases of Isaac, Jephthah's daughter, and other characters which pass so vividly across the fields of Bible teaching, These, at once, and without suspicious questionings, sunk their own will and pleasure before the arrangements of their parents, and felt no desire to resist the superior authority. The most notable of all the examples of this sacred principle appears in the garden of Gethsemane, labouring under the pressure of no common sorrow, and carrying away from the scene of conflict no common triumph. This last, of all others, is the example of man who "is born to trouble ;" and never are we thoroughly of Christ, until, like Him, we can carry faith into the gloom of affliction, and say, in humble trust, "Father, not our will, but thine be done."

The lesson of the text, like most precious lessons, is no doubt a hard one for human nature : but the

same God, who upheld Christ, and sent an "angel to strengthen Him," will also strengthen us, and both dispose and enable us to suffer, as well as to do, His will. Near to the man of duty there is ever a good angel, though he sees him not.

Without faith there can be no love, and a soul without love is the most desolate thing in the universe. "Faith worketh by love, and purifieth the heart." Infidelity is but another word for want of feeling; Atheism another word for emptiness. Each of them exhibits the heart in a state of wintry desolation, where there is no blossom of faith to expand, and no fruit of hope to ripen. With few exceptions, Infidels and Atheists are hard and unloveable men. Faithlessness is not the material out of which friendship weaves her holy ties. A wilderness without a fountain, or a night without a star, is not more dreary and cheerless than a human soul without the presence of faith. In its hour of sorrow or decay where shall it seek for a refuge? Without, it can look upon nothing save a Fatherless world; and within, there is a voiceless chamber, where the fire of hope was never kindled, and where the warmth of true love is never felt. Time is a void,—Eternity a blank.

II. The utterance of the words of Jesus farther imply cheerful resignation to the decrees of heaven. As the stream flows from the exuberant well-spring, or as the fruit expands from the healthy blossom, so does resignation grow upon the stock of faith. Where

the one is, the other must arise in due season. If the child believe in the love and wisdom of the parent, it will submit to the authority of home, and will shrink neither from the task prescribed nor from the restraint imposed. And if the creature have faith in the Creator, it will bow to the arrangements of that Supreme Power, and will say to the roughest road of trial, to the bitterest cup of affliction, to the heaviest burden of probation, "Lord, thou knowest best what is good for thy creature:" "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." Submission is the unloving offspring of necessity, resignation the meek and affectionate child of faith.

And here reason most unmistakably re-echoes the voice of religion. What can a Being of infinite majesty mean by the trials of life, but the ultimate welfare of those to whom they are sent? He can have no pleasure in seeing my sorrows. He can have no delight in witnessing my sufferings. He can be no gainer from my sacrifices. "God afflicts not willingly the children of men." Their trials are the bitter medicines by which the soul is made better. Their toils and cares, their losses and sorrows, are the angels in disguise that point the way to heaven. And pondering over the lives of those ancient sons of faith who are now "inheriting the promises," and looking to the cross of Christ as the symbol of the most spiritual triumph, the believer ever regards God in the light of a Father, and bows to a will that is but a fountain of the purest love.

III. The utterance of the words of Jesus implies personal profit from the season of trial. The man of faith profits by his discipline, for he "learns obedience from the things he suffers." "The natural mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to His law, neither can be." Until the law of God becomes the law of our life, we must live in a state of constant rebellion against the decrees of heaven.

1st. In a state of nature man rebels against the ills of the flesh. The diseases that prey upon his strength, and the pains that rack his frame, are the sources of a misery which he seeks not to control, and instead of "learning obedience by the things he suffers," he is ever asking "why he was made as he is, and not sent into the world in a condition free from disease and pain?" Very different is it with the well-disciplined soul of faith. From mortal frailty it learns humility and vigilance. Laying its many sins beside its many mercies, it feels that the language of gratitude is much more becoming than the language of repining. When it beholds daily the crumbling of those walls, whose "foundations are in the dust," it learns to walk in thoughtfulness through the ways of this world; and from a contemplation of the elements of decay it studies to acquire a fitness for that scene of immortal youth which lies within the future, where the soul shall at last be freed from its tottering tabernacle, and shall be lodged in a house worthy of a deathless spirit: even in a spiritual "building not

made with hands, eternal in the heavens." To its present body of pain and weakness it can say, "Thy will be done."

2d. In a state of nature man rebels against the arrangements of Providence—is ever finding fault with the fortune to which he is born, and asks "why his lot is not one of ease and sunshine—why his 'bread' should be wet with the 'sweat of his brow'?" To the eye of faith life appears in a very different light, and it beholds in its irregularities and labours a holy meaning. It learns to bear with patience the yoke of earthly toil, and it gathers strength from the burden of probation. In the spirit of Paul, it learns "how to be abased and how to abound." Instead of finding fault with the obscure spot in the "vineyard," where Providence has ordered it to labour, it endeavours to present as much fruit as it is possible to rear. Its great aim is to make out its "day" with credit and profit; keeping in mind that he who is faithful to the humblest mission here will rise to be a king and priest to God hereafter, in the glorious regions of the "new heavens." Such is the lesson which it has learned by the light of the Word, of which life is one long and oft-repeated echo.

3rd. In a state of nature man rebels, above all, against the visitations of affliction and death. "Why," he cries, "am I born to trouble? Why does a drop of gall embitter my cup? Why do the arrows of death make havoc in my dwelling? Why are my

treasures taken from me one by one? If the Lord be with me, why, then, have all these things befallen me?" The man of faith regards his afflictions in a far different light, and death speaks to him in solemn and sacred tones. He remembers how the best were the most severely tried. He remembers how one of old declared, "it is good for me that I was afflicted." He remembers that life sprung anew from the "troubled waters." And he seeks to walk through his trials in the spirit of Job and Eli, of Stephen and Paul, above all, in the spirit of Him who took upon Him a body of pain and weakness, and was "made perfect through suffering." What a holy depth and power of meaning lie in these simple words, "perfect through suffering." It is "suffering" that gives the finishing touch to a human character, and raises it to perfection. Work is good, but it does not perfect. Meditation is good, but it does not perfect. Prayer is good, but it does not perfect. It is in the furnace that the gold is refined, and fitted once more for the impress of God's divine image. It is in the "flaming forge" of trial that the manly purpose and the christian resolution are thoroughly wrought and tempered for endurance. What is the soldier, who knows not the suffering of the weary march and the gory battle-field? What is the parent, who has not watched and wept over the sick-bed or the grave of the child? What is the minister, who has not mourned over the backslidings and wanderings of his flock? And what is the chris-

tian until, with his Saviour, he has suffered in doing his Father's will? The man of faith often beholds these words glowing before his eyes in letters of living fire, "hast thou resisted unto blood?" Oh, no, no!—we have not "resisted" to the "bloody sweat" of Gethsemane, or the crimson drops of Calvary; and whosoever recalls those agonies endured for him will summon up courage to drain his own cup, saying, "Father, not my will, but thine be done!" Saith an old proverb of the east, "He knows nothing who has not suffered." And no man knows what it is to be of Christ until he hath bowed amid a Gethsemane of trial, and felt, in meekness and trust, the awful "hidings of his Father's face."

Conclusion. It is not my purpose to harrow your feelings by painting scenes of bereavement and misery. In the world we have enough of the reality, without resorting to the fancies of fiction. When you gaze upon the homes of men, you are also gazing upon the haunts of sorrow, where affliction sheds the bitter tear, and where the desolate heart sends forth the voice of lamentation. The hearth of Bethany, with its vacant chair, the funeral train that winds through the streets of Nain, "Rachel weeping for her children" and refusing comfort,—such scenes are repeated every day in the world of the perishing, and point from time to time the sad but salutary moral of our human frailty. No, my purpose is not to reproduce such sorrowful scenes; for the echoes of death's stealthy

foot are never silent ; but it is my earnest desire that man, in the midst of fading things and fleeting joys, would ever cherish in his soul a constant remembrance of Him who is the best judge of what is for our well-fare, and who is our only true refuge in time of trouble. Let us never forget, that so long as we have Him for a friend, we are far from desolate. Let us bear in mind that trial is not wrath, tribulation is not spiritual desertion. God is amid the gloom of Gethsemane, as well as amid the sunlight of Goshen ; and under the influence of His good Spirit, many a saddened but confiding soul will find that the house of sorrow may also be the house of God, and the gate of trial the gate of heaven.

Life to many may appear as one scene of trouble ; but let them remember that the same hand which troubles the pool is also near to put them in and bless their trial.

T H E P A S T.

I.

When the long farewell is spoken,
And the light of life has fled,—
How blest the simplest token
That recalls the sleeping dead !
That gilds the dear departed
With the olden smile they wore,—
The pure-souled, the sunny-hearted,
Who gladden home no more.

II.

When I walk the dewy meadows,
Some common flower will cast
On my path the gliding shadows
Of those who long have passed.—
Passed away from home's bright number,
From earth and all its joys,
To the bed of dreamless slumber,
To the crowd without a voice.

III.

When, beside the glowing ember,
I muse at close of day,
By that light I well remember
The faces passed away.
Then memory loves to greet me
With some familiar tone,
And, though shadows only meet me,
I feel not all alone.

IV.

And thus I love to wander
Among the dewy flowers,
Or to sit and gently ponder
Through memory's vesper hours.
Oh! Wisdom, cold thy warning, —
To me 'tis not in vain
To fancy back life's morning,
And live it o'er again.

RESIGNATION : THY WILL BE DONE.

I.

Clouds and darkness are about Thee,
Shrouding Thee, "Thou better Sun,"
But my soul shall never doubt Thee ;
God of Grace ! Thy will be done !

II.

Lo ! Thy path is in the waters,
And Thy steps are seen by none ;
But Thy hand all blessings scatters :
God of Love ! Thy will be done !

III.

All Thy meaning who can gather ?—
From repining keep Thy son !
'Tis the doing of a Father,
And Thy will, not mine, be done.

IV.

'Mid the darkest night of sorrow
Make me like Thy Holy One,
And, in hope of heaven's bright morrow,
"Father," say, "Thy will be done."

VI. — THE GRAVE :

WHERE THE TRIUMPH OF PRINCIPLES IS PERFECTED.

1 COR. xv. 55.—“O, death, where is thy sting ! O, grave,
where is thy victory !”

THERE is something intensely attractive in those memorable fields where the great battles of the world have been fought ; where ardent spirits have contended for things more lasting than the hour, and more precious than life. From age to age these sacred spots of ground are visited by thousands. Multitudes pour themselves over the burning plains of the east, and vast savannahs of the west ; the rocky ridges of the Crimea, and the vine-clad slopes of Spain ; the sunny fields of France, and the formal flats of Holland ; the cultivated vales of England, and the brown moorlands of the north ; all eager to stand upon the places where the brave struggled together for fame and freedom, and where many of the rival combatants now slumber quietly side by side, their contentions all forgotten and buried in the warrior's grave.

But there are other battle-fields than those of the soldier, and there are struggles more memorable than those which have agitated this world, and kindled the passions of its eager multitudes. There are wounds more serious than those inflicted by the sword, and victories more precious and noble than those which are proclaimed by the trumpet of historic fame. When you stand beside the grave, you stand beside the most famous battle-field which this world contains; for there the most sacred interests of man were secured, and there the mightiest despot of this world was conquered. On that "holy ground" the cause of liberty was fought, the welfare of souls made sure, and the greatest dominion of tyranny for ever overthrown. When you stand beside the grave of the humblest believer who ever waged war with sin and sorrow upon earth, you behold the triumph of something far higher and holier than either civil or religious opinion; and the ear of faith must be dull if it catch not the echoes of blessed words rolling through the caverns of the vanquished tomb, "O, death, where is thy sting! O, grave, where is thy victory!"

This grand burst of the Apostle's faith always recalls to my mind a solemn strain of music, ending in the tones of an anthem worthy even of the angels,—words through which we seem to hear the halleluiahs of heaven. The theme which was passing before the soul of Paul was the most momentous that could occupy the thoughts of an immortal; and no power,

save that of inspiration, could have made him equal to the great occasion. How terrible was the reign of sin, before a mighty Victor stood forth, in all the calm and unconquerable majesty of a spotless life, and cried to the great destroyer, "thus far, and no farther!" That destroyer can still molest the best of men for a season; still can he enter their dwellings; still can he tempt and embitter their souls. But there is now a limit to such implacable persecution; for no sooner is the humblest man of God laid in the dust, than his soul soars upwards beyond the influence of sin, singing in its heavenward flight the ecstatic song of triumph, "O, death, where is thy sting! O, grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!"

We have often stood—sorrowful and dejected enough—beside the grave of the loved and lost. In the "human weakness," which even our Saviour owned, we have watered with tears the clods that hid our friend from our view, as his dust calmly slumbered in the "valley of the shadow of death." But amidst his natural sorrow, the man of God felt that he stood upon "holy ground"—ground breathing to his heart of spiritual triumph and victory. He felt how "holy" was the "ground" where the ruined house of the soul was laid—that house, into which the Spirit of our Lord condescended to enter for a season—that house, which He himself tells us is "the temple of the Spirit"—that house, which is yet to arise from its fragments,

a spiritual building of exceeding beauty and stability, over which time shall have no more influence, and destruction no more power.

Let us fancy ourselves standing upon that "holy ground;" and let us ask what lessons we should gather from a field so fertile to the soul of the believer?

I need not dwell upon the extent of the ruin which lies before us—upon the might of the evil which we so deeply deplore. Death, like his parent Sin, is a universal presence. From the most obscure haunt of man, to the vast city, through which the pulses of human life are ever throbbing with feverish force, his traces are visible; and "all kindreds of the earth" are compelled "to wail because of him."

None can escape him long; sooner or later all must prepare for his visit. No more does the silent transformation of Enoch, or the flaming chariot of Elijah, convey the sons of men beyond his reach. Even Christ could only defeat him by entering the dark valley. But all may obtain the victory over him, and the lowliest life that bows beneath his power may go forth into realms forbidden to him, uttering the war-cry of faith in the moment of victory, "O, death, where is now thy sting?"

God will not "discharge" any man from the "warfare" of mortality; but He offers to every man the "armour of light," by the aid of which the weakest can become "more than conqueror." There are *two weapons*, by the help of which the victor may be

vanquished, and what is now a curse may be converted into a blessing. These two weapons, tempered in the altar-fire of grace, are simply a christian faith and a christian life; and all, who contend with these weapons in the name of God, will break the "sting" of death, and deprive the grave of its "victory."

I. If, then, you would oppose the Destroyer with a force mightier than his own, see that you meet him with the bright weapon of a *Christian Faith*. "Who-soever believeth on me," said Christ, "shall not perish, but shall have life everlasting." "I will give them life," He declares of the faithful, "and will give it more abundantly."

Do you for one moment doubt His power, or His will to make good these promises? Go to the grave of Lazarus, and behold a three days' corruption giving way to a word, and the warmth of friendship taking possession once more of the heart that had ceased to beat. Go to the streets of Nain, and behold the bier deprived of its inanimate burden, who steps forth again into the ways of living men. Go to the house of the Centurion, where the dark finger of death's dial is arrested and put back, while the current of recruited life once more flows freely through the channels of health and joy. Repair to the hill of Calvary, hollow with the caverns of the grave, and see the cold sheeted dead come forth from the places of their long captivity, and pass into the city that was hallowed by many a miracle of power, and wisdom, and love. Or

accompany the daughters of Judah to the sepulchre in the rock, where lay the mangled form of One over whom death had exulted, as he rent the tabernacle of clay, with unwonted ferocity; and behold! the light of immortality breaks over that dismal cell of the grave, while a voice, breathed by one of heaven's undying messengers, exclaims, "He is not here: he is risen, as he said: come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Remember, then, that in each of these risings you have an emblem of your own. The man who yields to the common assault of disease; the man who has passed from the world by the hand of violence; the man who has slowly "given up the ghost," under the pressure of trial's bitter "cross,"—each has a picture of new life for himself in the gospel; and over the grave of each the angel of heaven is yet to exclaim, "he is not here: he is risen, as the Lord of life promised: Come, see the spot where death's victim once lay."

Only have faith in the power and promise of Him who baffled death by dying, and you also will break his "sting," and sing the song of victory.

II. If you would encounter Death with a power even mightier than his own, be careful to meet him with the power of a *holy life*.

What gave death at first his power over man? Man's own sin and folly; and it is still the same human depravity that arms the destroyer with his fearful power. Had there been no guilty weakness in Eden,

there had been no human suffering in the world. Hence the meaning of the expression, "the sting of death is sin." It is sin that pierces the soul with agony. It is sin that founded the dominion of the grave. Whatever, then, lifts man above the influence of moral corruption, lifts him also above the influence of death ; for the very same blow that puts an end to this marred and imperfect life, translates the man of God into a new and perfect state of being, where there is no tempter to corrupt, and no tyrant to destroy.

Place yourselves under the influence of grace ; walk in the footsteps of Him who is the " way, the truth, and the life ;" and you pass from the hands of your greatest enemy into the household of your greatest friend. The good man, in whom the spirit of holiness abides, has nothing to fear, either in this world or the next. Henceforth his better being is " hidden with Christ," and although he must still suffer as a fallen creature here, the hour of his death is also the hour of his victory. What a dismal power death exercises over the man of sin ! Memory can bring him no pleasure from the past. Reflection can give him no happiness in the present. And those thoughts, which must often travel into the future, return to him with no " olive branch " of spiritual hope. What a scene of misery must the sick-bed be to such a man ! What awful dimensions must death assume for him ! What clouds of darkness must gather around the dominions of the grave ! Well is the grave called the " valley of

the shadow ;" for the dread substance of its power is yet to come ; and it is the thought of this that makes the soul of guilt as " a troubled sea."

But the man who walks with Christ has far other feelings and far other prospects. From a past, which has been hallowed by a godly life, he can draw the materials of solid comfort. From a present, which is blessed by the influence of the Spirit, he can extract a pleasure which passeth knowledge to the wicked. And when his thoughts go forth into the future, as the dove went forth upon the watery waste of the deluge, they return to his soul with those earnest of coming glory, which the approach of heaven can alone bestow. The hand of the destroyer can stretch that man upon a bed of suffering, and it can drag him hour by hour towards the " house appointed for all flesh ;" but over his spirit the destroyer has no power, and over the meditations of such a man he has no control. In the spirit of the Psalmist he can say, " Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou, my Saviour, art there ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me, and I shall dwell in the house of my God for ever." This, indeed, is to defeat the destroyer of all flesh. This is to break " the sting of death." This is to deprive the grave of its " victory."

Would you win the victory, then, like your Saviour, even in the hour of death ? Let your life be like his—a life for God. What power has death over

the good man's holy life? That life is already laid up, like a treasure, in heaven. What power has death over a good man's thoughts? Those thoughts are already keeping company with the angels of God. What power has death over the good man's prayer? That prayer is now bending with the seraphs before the throne of the Eternal. What power has death over the good man's hope? That hope is growing brighter every moment with the light of Paradise, and soon will it be swallowed up in the fruition of a "kingdom that cannot be moved." The life, the thoughts, the prayer, the hope, of a holy man, all unite their voices and exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!"

He who abuses life gives death a triumph for future ages : he who sanctifies life through faith, and prayer, and obedience to the will of God, gains a victory over death for all eternity. Think of the men of the Bible, and let them be your guides and models as you pass through the world. Think how blessed it will be to destroy the destroyer by the purity of your life ; to be able to regard the "dark valley" with the courage of David ; to be able to pass through the furnace with the three heroic saints, who would not bow the knee to idol-things ; to be able to look to heaven with the eyes of Stephen ; to be able to fall asleep in the hope of Simeon ; to be "ready to be offered" with the calm mind of Paul ; to be empowered with Jesus to declare at the latest hour of your earthly pilgrimage,

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Never for a moment lose your faith in Him, who never for one moment loses an interest in you ; for “lo, he is with you always,” and his spirit waits at the door of your hearts. Let the victory of that lowly pilgrim, that “man of sorrows,” speak to you in your seasons of human weakness, and at the hour of your departure ; and be assured that he will enable you to “overcome, even as He overcame,” and is now in the kingdom of His heavenly Father. Yon frail body, nailed upon the bitter cross, may seem to the eye of sense but a poor opponent to contend with the prince of evil. But, as the small pebble from the brook, wielded by the hand of a stripling, brought to the dust the proudest warrior of the Philistines, so did the meek and pure life of Jesus smite the Goliath of sin, till, for the second time, he fell before the majesty of heaven. The life of some humble, godly man, who passes unheard and unnoticed amid the ways of the world, may also seem a small weapon for the warfare, to which every man is born ; but over that life the destroyer shall obtain no conquest, for of all powers in the wide universe, the purity of a believing soul is the mightiest by far. It is that purity before which Satan quails. It is that purity which robs the grave of its victory, and passes with its precious tribute to the foot of God’s throne.

Conclusion. Be patient, then, thou man of God ; and death shall never boast of spoils won from thee

in the battle of life,—only be patient. You plant a tree in goodly soil; you water it; you train it; you look patiently for fruit; and though years may elapse, increase at length rewards your patience, and crowns your toil. Plant the tree of faith in the goodly soil of sacred conviction—conviction matured by long and careful acquaintance with the word of God,—tend that plant by thought, and prayer, and holy living; and be assured it will bear much fruit, both in this world and in that which is to come. When disease strikes down your beloved, that faith will enable you to gaze into the future, where you shall meet again, and thus gazing, to ask, “O, death, where is thy sting!” You may separate us for a time, but your reign must be short. And when the destroyer of all flesh severs your own tie of life, sorrowing, but believing, friends, can exclaim in hope, “O grave, where is thy victory!” You have only opened a door for the escape of a ransomed soul, which is now rejoicing in the light of that face which once beamed upon men amid earthly scenes, and beams over His own for ever in the kingdom of the blest.”

Thus, through the foregoing sketches, I have endeavoured to present the picture of human life, from its opening to its close—from its blossoming to its decay—from the quiet home of its infancy to the still more silent home of its worn-out age. I have endea-

voured to give vividness to the truth, that every spot of man's journey is "holy ground;" for what we call life is but the travelling of the soul onward to higher worlds—the ripening of a deathless principle for more spiritual duties and more spiritual joys. Yes,

"Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal:
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul."

No, truly, no! Here man is only laying the first stones of a building, which can be completed only in the future; and there, in obedience to the ever-rising aspirations of the immortal, that building shall tower upwards into nobler proportions, a temple meet for God's image, with holy desires for its incense, and holy powers of thought for its ministering priests.

EDEN : OR THE NEW LIFE.

I.

Basking in sunshine and sparkling with dew,
How lovely thy face, thou green earth!
In the dawning of morn when we gaze upon you,
We might think of a new-born birth,
And ask of a scene so enchanting and fair,
"Can the shadow of sin or of sorrow be there?"

II.

Ah! yes, there is grief on the voice of the gale,
And blight in the bloom of the flower ;
Death reigns on the upland and lurks in the vale,
And man is the slave of his power.
For Satan the spoiler hath found an abode
On the throne of his heart, in the temple of God.

III.

But vain is thy victory, "Father of lies!"
A limit is set to thy reign ;
On the wreck of thy kingdom a world shall arise,
Where God shall dispel every tear from our eyes,
And call us to Eden again !
Where sorrow and sin may not come to "annoy,"
'Mid pastures unfading and "fulness of joy."

"GOD SHALL WIPE AWAY ALL TEARS FROM OUR
EYES."

I.

In grief we may part, but in glory we'll meet,
When time and its voyage are o'er ;
The winds—let them blow, and the waves—let them beat,
They are wafting us on to a sacred retreat,
Where the tempest is heard never more.

II.

No tear ever falls in that scene of delight,
No sigh ever burdens the air ;
Never black with the clouds and the shadows of night,
The dome of the sky is as blue and as bright
As the bosom is free from a care.

The Grave:

III.

No foe ever enters that "City of God,"
 No friend from its portal is driven ;
 No sin with its frown, and no "curse" with its rod,
 No death with its "sting," and no grave with its sod,
 Can sadden the moments of heaven.

IV.

Oh ! how shall we rise to that land of repose ?
 To guide thee the Gospel is given.
 Be faithful in trial, be patient in woes,
 And the evening of life, when it wears to a close,
 Will prove but the morning of heaven.

THE VACANT CHAIR.

I.

Ah ! many a saddening sight we see
 In this dark world of care ;
 But saddest of them all to me
 The vacant chair.

II.

The face on earth no more to smile,
 Smiles sadly, sweetly there ;
 Fond, foolish fancy for a while
 Refills the vacant chair.

III.

It stands as if the lost would come
 Our evening mirth to share.
 Vain dream ! he fills another home
 That sees no vacant chair.

IV.

It keeps the place it ever kept :
Can change have fallen there ?
Have bosoms throbb'd ? have eyelids wept
Above that vacant chair ?

V.

Hark ! well-known steps the threshold press !
What voice is in the air !
Vain fancy ! add not to distress ;
Oh ! leave that vacant chair,

VI.

What earthly home hath stood for years
Amid this world of care,
Nor seen its smiles melt into tears,
Nor mourn'd its vacant chair ?

VII.

In one it is a parent old—
In one an infant fair—
In one the playmate blithe and bold,
That makes the vacant chair.

VIII.

And oft, when Christmas revels call
Sad hearts to banish care,
A spectre slowly treads the hall
And fills the vacant chair !

IX.

Oh ! may we reach that home above,
Where sadness hath no share—
Where breath is bliss—where life is love—
Where stands no vacant chair,*

* "*The Pleasures of Home.*"

Reader, who hast followed me through these humble pages, ere we part company for a time,

“ One warning take : a better home than this
 Invites the soul divine to holier bliss.
 Far purer streams from purer founts arise ;
 Far sunnier fields bask under sunnier skies ;
 Far nobler mansions rise, by God designed,
 To lodge His image, the regenerate mind.
 No tumults wake in that immortal land,
 Where robes of white array a sainted band.
 No sickness pines, no grave may open there,—
 From pain exempt,—from sorrow, sin, and care ;
 A happy race, from all probation free,
 Taste the bright fruits of heaven’s unfading tree,
 With golden joys and spirit-pleasures rife,
 And bathed by waves of purity and life.
 Oh ! then, however sweet, however dear,
 The home-delights that yield enjoyment here,—
 With pilgrim-heart alive within our breast,
 “ Let us press on,” for “ this is not our rest.”
 And, as the traveller, on his devious way,
 Bears the rude blast of many a toilsome day,
 Cheer’d by the thoughts of those who watch and wait
 To give him welcome at his cottage gate,—
 So let us bear the burdens and the woes.
 That round our path of earthly travel close ;
 In hope to win the Christian’s home above,
 And see God’s face of light, and hear God’s voice of love.”*

* “ *The Pleasures of Home.*”



X

