

The Family Circle.

THE SWEETEST WORD.

One sweet word of holy meaning
Cometh to me o'er and o'er,
And the echoes of its music
Linger ever—evermore;
Trust—no other word we utter
Can so sweet and precious be,
Tuning all life's jarring discords
Into heavenly harmony.

Clouds of thickest blackness gathered
O'er my soul's dark sea of sin,
And the port of heaven was guarded
From my guilty entering in;
Then came Jesus, walking to me,
O'er the surging waves of sin,
Calling, clear above the tempest,
"He that trusteth heaven shall win!"

Now, through all the sacred pages,
Where my woe and doom had been,
Gleam those golden words of promise,
"He that trusteth heaven shall win."
Blessed, sure, and blood-bought promise,
Let me drink its sweetness in—
He that trusts his soul to Jesus,
"He that trusteth heaven shall win."

Trust—oh, Saviour, give its fullness
To me at thy feet in prayer,
Grant my dying lips to breathe it,
Leave its lingering sweetness there;
Sweetness there, to stay the breaking
Of the hearts which love me so,
Whispering from his loving coffin,
"Trust the hand which lays me low."

Loved ones, as ye rear the marble,
Pure above my waiting dust,
Grave no other word upon it
But the holiest, sweetest—Trust;
For this password know the angels,
Guarding o'er the pearly door,
Password to his blessed presence,
Whom I trust for evermore.

HERBERT NEWBURY.

LITTLE GEORGE'S PRAYER.

"Henry, I would like you to go to the store for me to day," said Mrs. Gray to her husband, as they sat in the neat cottage kitchen, at breakfast, on a frosty December morning.

"I guess you will have to wait until tomorrow. My work is in the other direction," replied the cottage.

"I don't see how I can. We are about out of everything. Not so much as an end of candle, and I've got eggs and stockings and yarn to trade with."

"Send George. He knows the way to the village by the road or through the wood-cutting."

George, a bright little boy of six years, cried out, "Oh, mammy, let me go; it will be so nice!"

"Henry, he is so little, and it is so cold," said the mother, hesitatingly.

"Nonsense, wife; George is no baby. But I will tell you what to do. Send both the little ones to Sister Ann's. You promised her they should go to spend a day, and you know Jake always brings them home before dark."

So it was arranged that George and little Bettie, the four year old girl, should go to spend the day at their aunt's in the village, a trip which they often took, the hired man always bringing them home.

Very carefully did the mother wrap up her little treasures, so that, as Bettie said, "Jack Frost should not nip her nose." She made out the list of her wants at the store, and packed the little basket which George was so proud to carry. Then throwing on her own cloak and hood, she went with them over the hill, until the village was in sight. Then she said to herself, "Now they are all safe, and it is not as cold as I thought it was."

George was so anxious to make his purchases at the store that he stopped going through the village, and had his basket packed with the goods for his mother. When they arrived at their aunt's, she had gone several miles away, to stay until after night. George proposed returning home immediately, but Bettie wanted to stay and play with the two children left at home. The little boy consented, and the hours slipped away. The servant-girl gave them dinner, and they had a happy time. The short winter afternoon wore away, and as the sky had clouded over during the day, it was looking very shadowy when the girl told them they had better start for home. Jake had gone with his mistress, so they had to go alone. If they had had to go to the store all would have been well, but as it was, George thought he would take a near route, as it was late, and go through the woods.

"It will be night in the woods, George; see how dark it is," said little Bettie.

"But I know the road, Bet, and we will get home in a jiffy. The little path will take us right to the kitchen door, and mammy will have a big light. We can see, oh, ever so far."

"Mammy won't have a candle till we get home, Geordie, they are all in the basket," urged Bettie, still holding back.

"Don't be scared, Bettie. I can take care of you, and mammy's got pine knots that will make a sight bigger blaze nor all these candles," said brave little George, and hand in hand they ran along.

When the two children entered the woods, twilight was gathering fast, and it was beginning to snow. On they trudged, George talking to amuse his sister, and thinking every moment to see the lights of home. But the path seemed to grow wider and then to be no path at all. Large limbs of trees lay in their way, and everything around seemed unfamiliar. Bettie lagged far behind and,

"Geordie, I'm so tired. Why don't we see mammy's light?"

"We will soon, Bettie; don't cry, mammy will give us a nice supper," said the brave boy; but his own great brown eyes grew larger still, as he strove to peer through the darkness, and his heart gave a great throb of terror. The shadows of night closed black and heavy around them, while the snow fell in a blinding sheet, and piled up in the pathless woods before them.

Poor little babies, alone in the vast woods, on a bleak winter night, with the snow drifts gathering higher and higher, and an icy chill striking to their little hearts. For awhile the boy strove to push his way onward, but his little strength failed him, and poor Bettie was fast giving way to the numbness of icy sleep.

"Are you very cold, Bettie?" asked little George, as they both sank down upon a fallen tree.

"Oh, so cold, and so sleepy," moaned the little one. George made a desperate effort, and rousing himself up showed all the noble nature that was in him. He took the woolen comforter from about his neck and wound it around his little sister's head and face. Then he put his own coat under her shawl, and sitting down he gathered her, as best he could, in his arms, that she might receive all the strength of his little body.

Lovely angel boy! not alone was that noble child, when he thus sacrificed his life for his little sister. In the midnight darkness of the dense wood, the eye of Him who never sleeps nor slumbers, looked down from the vast canopy of heaven upon those forlorn little creatures. And will He, who suffers not a sparrow to fall without His notice, let those little angels perish there? Some such thought as this must have entered the mind of little George, and as he drew Bettie closer to him, he rallied his little strength once more to put himself under the protection of his Heavenly Father. His little voice rose clear and shrill on the night wind as he prayed.

"Oh, good, kind Jesus who loves the little children, you know every thing, and you see us here. I know I am a naughty boy, but poor little Bettie is good, so keep her warm and safe dear Jesus, and when pappy and mammy find us here, let her be awake to tell about it, and if I die dear Jesus take me to heaven. I did not mean to be naughty or do what was wrong. Let the angels watch us both, but most take care of Bettie—my sweet little sister."

The blessed Saviour heard that innocent's prayer, and according to his own good pleasure, answered it. Dr. Walton had been to visit a very ill patient at the terminus of the pine wood, and as the night was so bad, he preferred walking to running the risks of driving along the road. He had a large snow dog, of the kind which the monks of St. Bernard have to hunt travellers lost in the snow drifts, and he was with him. The doctor came within a short distance of the children, and then to reach his home, the path led away from them. As he turned around Bernard placed himself right in his way, making a great fuss, and trying to force him the other way. He walked on a little way to see what the dog wanted, and as he drew nearer the fallen tree, he heard little George's prayer. With feelings indescribable, he hastened to the spot where Bernard had already preceded him, and there of a surety, he said are the "Babes in the Woods."

Betty was asleep. What kind of sleep he could not then stop to ascertain, for little George was unable to stand, and fast losing consciousness. It took but a short time for the doctor to strap Bettie across Bernard, then wrapping the boy in his own fur-lined cloak, he bid the dog seek the path to the village, and followed.

All day there seemed to be a weight hanging over Mrs. Gray, and twice she almost made up her mind to go after the children, but thinking it foolish, she waited their return at dusk of evening. The dark set in early, and snow fell, but they did not come. She walked up the hill calling to them, but got no answer. On returning to the cottage, she found her husband, and he started immediately for his sister's. The girl told when the children had left, and then they knew the horrible truth, they were lost in the woods in the snow storm. Several persons started to search for them, led on by the nearly frantic mother. When the doctor had nearly reached the cottage, he met the parents. When Bettie's numerous wrappings were taken off, she was found to be in a warm, healthy slumber, but what clothes George had left upon himself, were frozen to his body, and his long leather boots, the doctor almost feared would never come off. When the child opened his eyes, and found he was at home, he asked:

"Where is Bettie? Is she well and warm?"

"Yes, my darling boy, you saved Bettie's life."

"Oh, I am so glad, she did not want to go in the woods, it was my fault, I was naughty." Then he told them all that had occurred, and turning to the doctor he said, "The dear, kind Jesus heard my prayer, and he sent you and the big dog to save us, did n't He?"

The doctor's voice was husky, as he answered, "Yes George, He heard and answered your prayer. Jesus always hears a prayer of faith, and He will not suffer harm to come those who really love and trust Him."

"I knew he would not let Bettie die, for she is so little, and she was not naughty. He has been so kind to me too. I will love Him more, and thank Him for hearing a naughty boy's prayer," and the little fellow turned wearily on his pillow and sank into a feverish slumber.

Anxious days and nights followed, as parents and friends watched beside George's sick-bed, and, as they all thought, death-bed. But he only hovered on the confines of eternity, as he passed through the valley of shadows, although it was not until the spring days had come that he was given back to the arms of his parents, but given how? A helpless cripple all the remaining days of his life. Those poor little frozen limbs could never be brought back to warmth and life, although the heart beat on as nobly as before. The bright summer days came, the flowers bloomed in wild luxuriance around the cottage. Under the large oak tree in the green grassy meadow, little George sat day after day with his books and his playthings around him, a sweet smile always ready to play over his countenance, or a gush of childish melody to break forth in song. Bettie ran about gay as a bird, bringing flowers and berries to the little brother whom she was taught almost to worship.

Years passed, and although George was so much of a cripple, he was by no means useless. He had early taught his hands to work, for he said, "God heard my prayer in the woods, and saved my life, not to be a burden to those around me, but to do all that I can with the strength He gives me."

At the cottage firesides on stormy winter evenings, when the little children gather round their parent's knees, and beg for a story before they are tucked in their warm little beds, they are often told of the terrible snow storm, long years before, and of the two little children lost in the woods, while many a lesson of trust and faith is both taught and learned by the touching story of "Little George's Prayer."—*Vera Montrose in Ger. Ref. Messenger.*

THE THREE NAILS AND THE MARKS THEY MADE.

"Find a piece of board, six nails, and a hammer, and bring them to me," said Mr. Andrews to his son Philip one Monday morning. Philip collected the articles required, but greatly wondered to what use his father was going to put them; so on entering the parlor he said,

"I thought, father, that you were going out this morning for the whole week?"

"So I am, my boy, and the board, the hammer, and the nails are for your mother's use while I am away. There are six nails—one for each day; the board is for the nails to be driven into, and the hammer is to drive them in with."

Philip was not a wicked boy, but whenever his father was from home he took advantage of his absence, teased his brothers and sisters, constantly neglected his lessons, and had a hundred thoughtless tricks, which gave his mother annoyance and trouble. Whenever Mr. Andrews returned from a journey, his peace was always broken by a long list of complaints against this pervers son.

"I have talked, and talked, and talked again," was always part of the mother's report. "I am tired of talking; I am sure nobody has more said to him than Philip, and yet I don't see that it does him a bit of good."

Mr. Andrews quite believed this, and therefore he had thought of a new mode of registering Philip's feelings; so he said,

"Now, Philip, ask your mother to please to come here, and I will explain how the nails and the board and the hammer are to be used."

The three were quietly seated, when Mr. Andrews, in a calm and affectionate manner, said,

"Philip, you are so often troublesome when I am away from home, that my pleasure is spoiled with the thought that you are giving your mother so much unnecessary trouble. I wish, therefore, to have your conduct written on this board, with this hammer, and these six nails—one for each day."

Philip's face wore a very comical inquiring sort of look, as his father proceeded:—"If you are good every day of my absence the board will have no nail driven in, but will be as smooth and clean when it is shown to me on Saturday night as it is now. But for every day you misbehave yourself a nail will be driven in; if, however, you should afterwards be good, a nail will be drawn out for each day."

Philip certainly feared a stern look from his father, much more than the long lecture of his mother. On this occasion Mr. Andrews did not look stern, but he looked very lovingly and anxiously and so long at him, that Philip felt the tears trickling down his cheeks, and no sooner had his father given him an affectionate kiss than he stole out of the room, fully resolving that the board should be given in on Saturday night as clean and smooth as it then was.

Philip, however, in making this good resolution, had never thought of asking help from the Strong Arm, and beside that he had no notion of offering up a prayer to God, except his usual morning and evening prayer. After trying to be good for a few hours, he found it so difficult that he gave it up, and when night came, his mother said,—

"Philip, I am very sorry, but I really must drive a nail into that board to mark this day's misconduct."

"Ugly nail!" said Philip, when he saw its black head on one side of the board, and the point half an inch through on the other. On Tuesday the same careless, thoughtless conduct was repeated, and another nail was driven into the board. On Wednesday he was worse than ever, and a third nail was in-

serted. On Thursday night Mrs. Andrews told him she really believed he had been trying to be good, so she would knock a nail out. She, therefore, turned the board over, hitting one of the nails on the point, and out it fell on the floor. On Friday, Philip secured a good character, so another nail was removed, and about an hour before the return of Mr. Andrews on Saturday night the last "ugly nail" was knocked out.

When Mr. Andrews returned, he gave each member of the family an affectionate greeting, and they sat down to tea. Philip hung about his father's chair all the time, but he did not look happy. He said he was glad his father had come back, but still his face showed that he was uneasy about something.

"Now, Philip," said his father, as the tea-things were carried out of the room, "let me see the board."

Philip carried it to his father. After thoroughly looking for some time at this silent reporter, Mr. Andrews said:

"Well, my boy, I am glad to see there are no nails in. Not a single nail, eh?"

"No, father," said the weeping boy, "but there are the marks!"

"Ah, yes," said his father, "there are the marks. You have removed the nails, but the marks remain. So it is always, my dear son with sin. Every sinful word you speak, every wicked act you commit, you make a mark on your soul—a spot, a stain, which cannot be removed by any earthly means. But if you repent of your sins, and turn with humble trust to your Saviour, all your sins shall be removed, and when you are called to give up your accounts, you shall give them up with joy and not with grief."—*Youth's Magazine.*

DILIGENCE.

Every present holds a future in it
Could we read its bosom secret right,
Could we see its golden clue and win it,
Lay our hand to work with heart and might.

True it is, we shall not live in story,
But we may be waves within a tide.
Keep the human flood to near the glory
That shall shine when we have toiled and died.

Therefore, though few praise, or help, or heed us,
Let us work with head or heart or hand;
For we know the future ages need us,
We must help our time to take its stand;—

That the after day may make beginning
Where our present labor hath its end;
So each age, by that before it winning,
To the following link in turn shall lend.

Each single struggle hath its far vibration,
Working results that work results again;
Failure and death are no annihilation,
Our tears, absorbed, will make some future rain.

Let us toil on; the work we leave behind us,
Though incomplete, God's hand will yet embalm,
And use it some way; and the news will find us
In heaven above, and sweeten endless calm.

INDIVIDUAL EFFORT.

"I love your meetings for prayer," says the Rev. Dr. Guthrie; "you cannot have too many of them. But we must work while we pray, and pray while we work. I would rather see a man, saved from the gulf below, standing on a rock casting a life-line to others struggling in the maelstrom of death, than on his knees thanking God for his own deliverance; for I believe our blessed Master would look on that effort as the highest possible expression of gratitude that a saved soul can offer."

Now, this is the principle which must underlie all Christian work in order to its being successful; and it has found many striking illustrations in the history of the Christian enterprise. When Andrew was called by Christ, he brought Peter to Jesus; when Philip was called, he brought Nathanael to Christ; when the woman of Samaria was converted, at the side of Jacob's well, she returned to the city, and said to every one she met, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did—is not this the Christ?" and when the maniac of Capernaum was delivered from the powers of evil, he wanted to follow Jesus, but Christ told him to go home to his neighbours and friends, and tell them what great things had been done for him. And as with the individual, so with the Church. When Paul planted the first Christian church in Europe, at Philippi, he gave the members to know that they were to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life;" the master a light, the servant a light, the child even a light—each one illumining his own sphere, and known as brethren.

In modern times, the same principle has received apt and most encouraging illustration. When John Williams, the great missionary, and the martyr of Erromanga, was a youth, he was loitering at the corner of Old Street, London, when a lady, a member of a Christian Instruction Society, in which every member had something to do for Christ, spoke kindly to him, and persuaded him to go to the tabernacle, close at hand, and hear a sermon. That night he was converted. When the late James Smith, the martyr of Demarara, was near Euston Road, a Christian friend met him and induced him to go to Tonbridge chapel, in that neighborhood, where he heard the word which brought him to Christ. And the late John Angell James, in a little tract, tells us how one Christian layman was the means of impressing about one hundred young men, most of whom were brought to Christ; and one worker in Mr. James' church, rejoiced in the belief that he had been honoured to have "three in heaven."

But the most remarkable illustration, perhaps, which has been presented in these days, is that of the individual work of the members of the Baptist churches, which have sprung from the first church formed by the Rev. Mr. Oncken, of Hamburg, now more than thirty years ago. That minister, when he formed his little church, solemnly resolved that they would receive members only on these conditions:—First, Spiritual life in the soul. Second, That every one received would do something for Christ; and Third, That one and all of the fellowship should give for the support and extension of the gospel.

For many years the original church had to face the most cruel and bitter persecution and scorn; but, in the course of ten years, it established itself as a central power, with a missionary character; and now nearly 100,000 profess to be worshippers, of whom 50,000 are members in connection with the churches and mission stations belonging to the parent society, but spread all over Germany. We have heard, from Mr. Oncken's own lips, within the last ten years, the story of this enterprise; and can trace the triumphs of grace to the consecration of the individual doing something, and just what he could best do, for the Master.

If, then, individual effort were realized, as it ought to be, and might be, how soon would the world be converted! Suppose, for example, there were but 200 Christians among the three millions of people in London, one million of whom are living in open neglect of the means of grace; and suppose that each Christian should resolve to be the means of converting one sinner in 1867, and suppose those converted should be the means of saving one each in 1868, and that this rule of conversion, one in a year, should continue for eleven years, how many would be saved? Why more than all the millions who are now making no profession of the Christian faith. Go then, brother, and do this work.

"Sow, though the rock repel thee
By its cold and sterile pride,
Some cleft there may be riven,
Where the little seed may hide.

"Work while the daylight lasteth,
Ere the shades of night come on,
Ere the Lord of the Vineyard calleth,
And the laborer's work is done."

—*London Christian Times.*

WAS THOMAS PIOUS OR PROFANE?

In reviewing, some weeks ago, an article in the *Liberal Christian* on the "Sonship of Christ," we made the statement that Thomas called Him "my Lord and my God." The above named paper, after quoting our words, says:

"This is a fine specimen of evangelical reasoning. The involuntary exclamation of Thomas in his surprise and bewilderment is taken as a cool statement of opinion. . . . There is no reason for imagining that Thomas really thought that Jesus was God."

It is but a poor compliment to Thomas, and not much more respectful to his Divine Teacher, to suppose that after having been intimately associated with the latter for more than three years, he had not yet been cured of the vice of profane speech. For, as *Olshausen* has remarked, such an exclamation, in view of the stringent character of the law, would have been a transgression of the command, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." We are quite willing to have our interpretation of the words of Thomas submitted to the severest tests of impartial criticism. *Alford's* note on the passage is so comprehensive, condensed, and forcible, that we cannot do better than to present it entire.

"The Socinian view, that these words are merely an exclamation, is refuted (1) by the fact that no such exclamations were in use among the Jews; (2) by the introductory expression, "He said to Him; (3) by the impossibility of referring the words "my Lord" to another than Jesus; see v. 13; (4) by the New Testament usage for expressing the vocative for the nominative with an article; (5) by the utter psychological absurdity of such a supposition; that one just convinced of the presence of Him whom he deeply loved, should, instead of addressing Him, break into an irrelevant cry; (6) by the further absurdity of supposing that if such were the case the apostle John, who of all the sacred writers most constantly keeps in mind the object for which he is writing, should have recorded anything so beside that object; (7) by the intimate conjunction of "thou hast believed." (v. 29.)

HAVE YOU NOT A HEAVENLY FATHER?

Rev. Samuel Kilpin, a Baptist, gives the following account of his son:

"On one occasion when he had offended me, I deemed it right to manifest displeasure; and when he asked a question about the business of the day, I was short and reserved in my answers to him. An hour or more elapsed. The time was nearly arrived when he was to repeat his lessons. He came into my study, and said: "Papa, I cannot learn my lessons except you are reconciled; I am very sorry I have offended you; I hope you will forgive me; I think I shall never offend again."

I replied, "All I want is to make you sensible to your fault; when you acknowledged it, you know I am easily reconciled with you."

"Then, papa," said he, "give me the token of reconciliation, and seal it with a kiss." The hand was given, and the seal most heartily exchanged on each side.

"Now," exclaimed the dear boy, "I will learn Greek and Latin with anybody;" and was hastening to his study.

"Stop, stop," I called after him; "have you not a heavenly Father? If what you have done has been evil, He is displeased, and you must apply to Him for forgiveness."

With tears starting in his eyes, he said: "Papa, I went to him first; I knew that, except he was reconciled I could do nothing." As the tears fast rolled down his cheek, he added; "I hope he has forgiven me; and now I am happy!" I never had occasion to speak to him again in tones of disapprobation.