

THE POPULAR PULPIT

THE SOUL'S RETURN.

By T. A. K. Gessner
I will arise and go to my father—
Luke xv. 18.

The sweetest of stories told in any tongue among men is this beautiful parable of the prodigal son. Everywhere is it attentively heard. Simple even to plainness, told ten thousand times, it never loses its marvelous charm.

What is perhaps most wonderful about it is that, while the quiet of the wanderer is never for a moment hidden, while his transgression is set before us in characters so distinct as never to be mistaken, we do not for a moment lose our sympathy for the wanderer himself. So the Master wished it. For so He opens the inexhaustible fountains of the divine love to our vision; so He shows us how He receives sinners and eats with them; how He welcomes the gull to the feast of His love and rejoices over them as a father over a child that was lost.

And yet this sympathy turns altogether upon the incident to which this scripture directs us. Let the narrative have another termination and our pity turns to disgust. Let it read: "But he was besotted and rejoiced in the husks with the swine; he longed not for his father's home; he ignored its plenty and died in his wretchedness." We should then say: "Miserable brute, he lived and died as he deserved."

In the strange land to which we have come, whether our feet go into flower gardens or deserts, we are apt to lose knowledge of the fatherhood that is over us. The material advantages of the world, all its profits, honors and emoluments, can never satisfy the highest aspirations of the human soul. We want something more enduring and profound. Nor will art, literature or sentiment satisfy the craving. Not anything that exhausts itself in the realm of the intellect or the emotions alone responds to the soul's highest aspirations. The leverage by which it is to be lifted must be outside itself. It wants God.

The burden of sorrow, care and anxiety that oppresses us requires a higher ministry than this "strange land" affords. Its comforts are but "husks." Many a business man who reads these words to-day shudders as he recalls that the Sunday rest is already half gone and that to-morrow he must resume the grind of yesterday and take up the agonies that had only been laid aside during his resting spell. The mother who left the body of her child in the cemetery a few days ago is not relieved by the thought that she shares only the common lot of mortals. A tenderer hand than that of philosophy is needed to stay the rush of her tears.

No, it is not satisfying, this "far country." Many of its gifts are high and noble; indeed they are all of them of the Father's bestowal—we must not forget this when we are tempted to belittle the world's favors—but they are only the media and not the substance of a divine affection. We need to get beyond and above them all to the perennial fountain from which all beneficence flows if the soul is to be satisfied with perfect refreshment. "I will arise and go to my Father." Let every reader say this to his own soul to-day. Beyond and above all rites and ceremonials to the loving heart of the Father!

There is no room for doubt as to my welcome, for His arms are always open to receive His sorrowing, suffering, penitent children. They are His very own. He gives them a peace which this world can neither bestow nor despoil.

My Father! When every soul shall come to the sense of proprietorship which this pronoun suggests, then shall men cease to tremble before an awful tyrant, and that sense of despair which accompanies the idea of an impersonal or absent power that is above us perishes. The vague yearning that had its birth in our early childhood when at a mother's knee we learned to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," finds a higher realization than was then possible to our dreams, for the heavenly gates have opened and the Father has come down to meet his returning child in an ineffable ministry of comfort, peace and love.

THE RENEWAL OF YOUTH.
By Rev. J. N. Kidd.
In the aged, childhood, youth and manhood are not dead. They still live.

Childhood has only been put to bed; youth has only gone off to school and manhood has only engaged in business or enlisted in the army or gone off on an exploring expedition into the regions of old age. In due time childhood will awake from a long, refreshing sleep and come bounding out of bed more joyful than ever; youth will come home from college with his eyes sparkling with joy and his face shining with wisdom and knowledge, and manhood will return from the battlefields of life and the weakness of old age enriched with firmness, endurance and experience, and together they will blend into one glorious and composite being, embracing all the stages of human life minus their defects and imperfections. Childhood will then have lost its whims, youth its follies and age its wrinkles, sallow skin, dim eyes and gray hairs. Thus youth, it seems to me, is to be the permanent state or condition of redeemed human life in the great future. It is certainly the most joyful and desirable period of life. Goethe has truly said: "All men would live long, but no man would grow old." This desire is of divine origin, and must therefore be gratified sometime and somewhere.

I cannot believe that gray hairs, dim eyes, wrinkled faces, sallow skin and trembling limbs represent the normal condition of human life, because they are evidences of disease, decay and death, and disease is an abnormal condition brought on by sin. God made health the normal condition of life and disease the abnormal condition. Ingersoll once said: "If I had been making the world instead of God I would have made health contagious instead of disease," to which a medical professor replied: "Then he would have been compelled to have made disease instead of health the normal condition of life." How dreadful would this have been! But God knew better how to make a world than infidels do.

Now, if the decrepitude of age is the result of disease, and disease is an abnormal condition of life brought about by sin, it follows therefore that all these abnormal conditions will forever disappear when our redemption is fully completed in the morning of the resurrection. All the weakness, corruptibility and dishonor to which the body has been subjected on account of sin will be exchanged for incorruption, glory, honor and immortality. (1 Cor. xv. 42-58). Where there is no decay or corruption there can be no old age. This was remotely anticipated by Elihu, where he represents an old afflicted skeleton of a once powerful man returning to the days of his youth, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth." (Job xlii. 10-25). The Psalmist also says of the man whose life has been redeemed from destruction that he shall have his "youth renewed like the eagle's." (Ps. ciii. 3-5). And Jesus says: "Behold I make all things new." (Rev. xxi. 1-5). From this it appears that the earth, together with all its redeemed inhabitants, shall eventually be rehabilitated upon the original plan of immortal youth. Age will pass away as winter, and the spring of childhood will bloom out into the fragrant and luxurious summer of immortal youth. Those who were once old and infirm will resume the appearance of their youth and experience again, its health and enjoyments, enriched a thousand-fold by the knowledge and experiences of manhood and old age. They shall look out upon the renewed and glorified earth through renewed and glorified eyes, hear its joyful sounds with the ears of youth, taste its superabounding joys with the mouth of youth, walk its highways with the feet of youth, and enter heartily into all its joys and activities with the vivacity of youth. Oh, blessed state! Oh, happy condition! And it will be immortal. We shall never grow old again. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things (sin, disease, old age and death) are passed away." Look up, then, ye aged, "for your redemption draweth nigh." Your childhood, at times, is partially awakened and your youth may be partly renewed in this life, but you will not embrace them in all their glory until you pass into the great beyond.

Another hundred years will see that the immense sum of money now used to prevent the lower stratum from pulling down the social fabric is disbursed in projects to aid the poor in lifting themselves up. Philosophers like those who originated the Hull House in Chicago, the Tonybee Hall in London and the University Settlement in Boston will have done marvelous work among the submerged class before the year 2000, in spite of ward politicians.

Another club woman, Mrs. Hauke, of Edgerton, Wis., tells how she was cured of irregularities and uterine trouble, terrible pains and backache by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

"A while ago my health began to fail because of female troubles. The doctor did not help me. I remembered that my mother had used Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound on many occasions for irregularities and uterine troubles, and I felt sure that it could not harm me at any rate to give it a trial.

"I was certainly glad to find that within a week I felt much better, the terrible pains in my back and side were beginning to cease, and at the time of menstruation I did not have nearly so serious a time as heretofore, so I continued its use for two months, and at the end of that time I was like a new woman. I really have never felt better in my life, have not had a sick headache since, and weigh 20 pounds more than I ever did, so I unhesitatingly recommend Vegetable Compound."—Mrs. MAY HAUKE, Edgerton, Wis., President Household Economics Club.—\$5000 forfeit if original of above letter proving genuineness cannot be produced.

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The Strenuous Vacation.
Caterby—What are you doing in town? I thought you were living in the country, playing golf, ping-pong, tether ball and going to dances.
Peterkin—I am. But I have to come to town occasionally to get rested.—Detroit Free Press.

To Break in New Shoes.
Always shake in Allen's Foot-Ease, a powder. It cures hot, sweating, aching, swollen feet. Cures corns, ingrowing nails and bunions. At all druggists and shoe stores, 25c. Don't accept any substitute. Sample mailed FREE. Address Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y.

Ancient Gold Mines.
The only ancient gold diggings yet discovered which are of sufficient magnitude to be those of the Ophir of David and Solomon are those of the Zambezi region. The gold contributed by David alone to the building of the temple, being "3,000 talents of the gold of Ophir," would be in value over \$80,000,000.

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Tramp—My dear woman, I would be happy to favor you, but you see if I did that job for 10 cents I would be prosecuted under the new anti-trust law for charging you less than I charge your neighbors.—Boston Commercial Bulletin.

Drains Large Area.
That low lying territory of the Mississippi should at times be overflowed is not surprising if one considers that the "Father of Waters" draws supplies from twenty-eight states, draining one-third of the area of the United States.

Wants Husband's Statue in View.
Mrs. John A. Logan and the residents of Iowa Circle, Washington, where the statue of Gen. Logan is located, are at odds because Mrs. Logan wishes more of the trees cut down in the circle so that the view of the statue will not be obstructed.

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The Deacon's Opinion.
"Yes, sah," said the old colored brother, "dat boy is so fond er tradin' dat I ve'ly believes dat ef he wuz in heaven en dey let him come back fer a holiday he'd sell his return ticket and trust to hein' blowed back by a hurricane!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children the teething season.

Next Thing in Order.
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"Pride goeth before a fall."—Philadelphia Ledger.

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