

countenance in the glories of the universe was admitted to a life of far more intimate knowledge and friendship than in the sunniest days of unclouded happiness (iv. 26 ff.).

The presentation of Ewald's views, thus briefly summarized, involved him in incessant conflict with one side and the other. But now that the

smoke of battle has cleared away, we can see how he has raised the whole subject of Old Testament poetry to a new and ampler plane. The succeeding generation was largely dominated by Ewald; and his work still remains as a powerful inspiration for all who seek to enter the real heart of the subject.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

THERE is much latitude allowed in giving the children their portion, whether in Church or School. Margaret Hardy offers stories pure and simple; and highly imaginative are the stories. Here is one of the shortest. The title of the book is *Goblin Gold* (Kingsgate Press; 2s. 6d.).

Johnnie's Gift.

Johnnie was eight years old now, and quite a big boy. Next Sunday he would have to leave the Primary and go into the big schoolroom where the children all brought Bibles and hymn-books and where the lessons were quite different. Johnnie was sorry, because he loved Miss Hudson so much, but she had given him such a dear little Bible with gilt edges, and written his name in it so nicely, that he was looking forward to carrying it on Sundays and reading from it like the other boys; besides, Miss Hudson had promised always to keep a picture lesson-card for him if he would come and fetch it.

Johnnie's last afternoon in the Primary had been such a happy one. They had a most beautiful lesson-story about a little boy who gave his lunch to the Lord Jesus, and though it was only a piece of bread and two fishes, like the sardines Johnnie sometimes had for tea, Jesus was able to feed five thousand people with them because, teacher said, when a little boy or girl gives anything to the Lord Jesus, no one knows what wonderful thing He will do with it. Then Johnnie had to make the loaf of bread and little fishes in plasticine, to help him to remember the story, and after that they learned a new verse to say all together, which was about giving, too, and now Johnnie was going home wondering very much what he could give the Lord Jesus.

He was very thoughtful all through tea, and as soon as ever it was over he went up to his little room and examined his small possessions. There was his knife with one blade gone, and his cricket-bat with the handle tied up with string; he could not offer these to the Lord Jesus. His few books were torn and stained; money he had none; what would a little boy only eight years old be likely to own that the Lord Jesus would accept? Johnnie could think of nothing, and went to bed feeling very sad.

Now that night Johnnie had a wonderful dream. It seemed to him the room grew full of light, and a beautiful being with wings and a white robe came up to Johnnie as he lay in bed, and spoke to him.

'Johnnie,' the angel said, and his voice was as clear as a silver bell and as sweet as the sweetest music, 'the Lord Jesus had sent me to ask you for your gift.' And Johnnie was ashamed and hid his face. 'I have nothing good enough to give Him,' he stammered at last, and the angel smiled. 'But my Master heard you in school this afternoon offer Him something,' the angel went on, and waited, but still Johnnie did not reply.

'What was the new verse you learned,' asked the angel helping him; 'could you say it to me now?' And Johnnie sat up in bed and repeated:

Two little eyes to look to God,
Two little ears to hear His word,
Two little feet to walk in His ways,
One little tongue to sing His praise,
Two little hands to do His will,
One little heart with His love to fill.
Take me, Lord Jesus, may I be,
Ever and only, all for Thee.

'Ah,' said the angel softly, as Johnnie finished, 'that is the gift the Lord Jesus desires. Give him your heart, yourself, your life, all your thoughts

and words and deeds, for the Lord Jesus can have no dearer gift'; and the angel vanished, and Johnnie awoke. His little room was quite dark now, but he remembered his dream, and did as the angel asked him, and the Lord Jesus accepted the gift and made a wonderful use of Johnnie that I must tell you about another day.

Wouldn't it be nice if some other boy and girl were to do like Johnnie, and give Jesus *themselves*, before they went up from the Primary?

Readiness.

'Be ye ready also.'—Mt 24⁴⁴.

When the army is in the field, the commanding officer may come at any time to any part of it, and he expects when he does so to find every one at his post, whatever that may be. The sentinels must be on duty, and watchful and alert for the coming of the enemy. The soldiers must be drilled and disciplined, and their guns must be clean and in working order. Whenever he comes he must find them ready.

At the time of the Boer War in South Africa, when it was necessary to send Lord Roberts out to take command, it is said that he was asked if his health was good enough to bear the strain, since he was an elderly man. He replied, 'Yes, I thought I might be wanted, and I have kept myself fit.' So he was ready when the need arose. But he would not have been able to go if he had allowed himself to get slack and indolent and out of the habit of active exertion.

You know the motto of the Boy Scouts. It is 'Be prepared.' If a Boy Scout sees an accident, and gives 'First Aid,' or saves some one from drowning and restores him by artificial respiration, it is because he had himself been trained in ambulance work and swimming, so that when the need arose he was ready to meet it. When Christ comes He will not come like a general on the day of a public review, when the day has long been fixed, and every man knows he must be at his best. He will come as the general comes when he pays a surprise visit to his men, to see how things go on when he is not expected. Or He will come as a friend comes, without an invitation, to a house where he is familiar and walks in upon the family. He is not expected and no special preparation has been made for him, but he 'takes them as he finds them.'

Once a rumour ran through the little Scots fishing village of Newhaven that Queen Victoria, who was then in Edinburgh, would visit the fisher-folk on a certain day. So they laid aside their work and made their cottages neat and smart. The women donned their holiday costumes, and with bright shining faces awaited the coming of the Queen. But the day passed and she never came. They were sorely disappointed, but they were busy folk and could not afford to wait idle any longer, and next day saw the women hard at work again in their rough serge dresses, with bare heads and arms, washing creels, cleaning fish, and coiling and baiting lines, with grimy fingers. Suddenly there was a clatter of hoofs and a rattle of wheels, and there passed through their midst the little old lady whom we used so to love and honour.¹

This is a great test of readiness. If the sentry is not always on the alert, he may be caught napping when the commander comes. If the mistress of the house is an untidy person, and her house is fit to be seen only when she expects company, the visitor may come when she is not ready for him.

What would Christ wish to find us doing when He came? Just the work He has given us to do, whatever it is. We have all something to do, which has been given us to do, and He would like to find us doing it, and doing it well. It may be very humble work, and very uninteresting, as monotonous as that of the sentry pacing his rounds, but it is ours, and just what we should be found doing, if we were taken by surprise. To be ready for Christ's coming we must be fighting sin. What would the general say to his soldiers if he came and found them resting and enjoying themselves, while the enemy was scaling the walls of the fortress?

That was a wise judge who, when sudden darkness came on, and people thought the end of the world was at hand, said, 'Bring lights, and let us go on with the case. We cannot be better employed, if the end has come, than in doing our duty.' Flighty impatience of common tasks is not watching for the King, as Paul had to teach the Thessalonians, who were 'shaken' in mind by thought of the day of the Lord; but the proper attitude of the watchers is 'that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.'

Lastly, we must be getting ready for heaven. If you knew that you were to be sent alone to live in France or Germany, would you not try to learn all you could about the country to which you were going? You would try to learn the language and to find out about the customs, that you might not feel a stranger when you came there. If you are

¹ S. Robertson, *The Rope of Hair*, 47.

to feel happy in heaven you must be learning to live the heavenly life now.

A gentleman in the South, before the war, had a pious slave; and when the master died they told the slave that the master had gone to heaven. The old slave shook his head. 'I'se afraid massa no gone there,' he said. 'But why, Ben?' he was asked. 'Cos, when massa go North, or go a journey to the Springs, he talk about it a long time, and get ready. I never hear him talk about going to heaven; never see him get ready to go there!

A little girl one day said to her mother, 'Mamma, my Sunday school teacher tells me that this world is only a place in which God lets us live awhile, that we may prepare for a better world. But, mother, I do not see anybody *preparing*. I see you preparing to go into the country, and Aunt Eliza is preparing to come here; but I do not see any one preparing to go there; why don't they try to get ready?'¹

If Heaven be the land we hope to reach,
Is it not time to learn the heavenly speech?

It were so sad, amid the shining band
To roam, lost children, none could understand:

While blessed eyes should learn a sweet despair,
Knowing we never could be happy there.²

Diamonds.

BY THE REV. F. C. HOGGARTH.

I. There is a legend of a palace in the Garden of Eden, built of all kinds of precious stones. Owing to man's sin the palace was destroyed and the angels came to scatter the jewels to the four winds.

In this way men sought to explain the existence of jewels in different parts of the earth.

Their existence, however, is more wonderful and mysterious than any scattering by angels.

A diamond, for instance, is the same chemical substance as a piece of charcoal or the graphite in a lead pencil, and yet it is worth a hundred thousand times as much. No one knows how these jewels gained their hardness and their brilliance. They shine with an inner radiance. The light passes into them and is reflected from inner surfaces. It is then split up into different colours, and there arise the flashings and the lightnings that constitute the jewel's supreme value. Their formation is nature's secret, God's secret. All that we know is that somehow in the deep central fires of the earth, mixed with all kinds of

stones and rocks and molten metals, carbon is changed into diamonds, that crystallize out embedded in tons of stone. It is one of the wonderful works of Him who out of the dust and the slime fashions the lily, and out of the smoke of the city forms a sunset.³ Nor are His works less wonderful in human affairs, for He is ever bringing good out of Nazareth and resplendent characters out of the fires of affliction and sorrow.

II. But God, even in His gifts, makes demands on human effort. The precious things in life are to be sought diligently and even painfully. Occasionally diamonds have been found on the surface, but, for the most part, in dust and in toil are they won. In the depths of the earth, half-naked negroes, bathed in perspiration, must dig and blast and shovel and wheel.

The work is unpleasant and heavy, injurious to health and full of danger to life and limb.

A great authority says that four million tons of rock have to be crushed for a few bucketfuls of diamonds.

Nor is that the end of man's task, it is only the beginning. When the rough jewels have been sorted from the crushed rock, they have to be cleaned. The dross and dirt is eaten off them by a boiling solution of nitric and sulphuric acid. There are also painful processes of cutting and of polishing before they are ready for the King's crown or a lady's ring. And were we asked in regard to such a finished diamond, 'Who made it?' we could only say, as Ruskin said of the Cathedral at Amiens—'God and man.'

III. Not all jewels, however, come through these processes perfectly. Some are marred in the making.

There are cases where tiny bubbles of gas, filled under enormous pressure, are embedded in the diamond. The effort of this gas to escape causes a strain in the stone, and it is not uncommon for a diamond to explode on reaching the surface. Others have been known to burst in the pockets of miners, or even when held in the warm hand. Valuable stones, says Professor Crookes, have been destroyed in this way.

And even where not destroyed, the value of the stones is enormously lessened by such flaws, which are so minute as to be visible only through a magnifying glass. The tiniest fault can mar the lustre of the brightest jewel.

How much we need to watch and pray, that we

¹ D. L. Moody, *The Way to God—Heaven*, 85.

² F. Langbridge, *Little Tapers*, 28.

may come through the fire and pressure of experience without embodied imperfections, that in Christ we may be found without flaw, in the day when He makes up His jewels.

Cura Curarum.

BY THE REV. A. F. TAYLOR, M.A., ST. CYRUS.

'We will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word—and in that order—was the determination of the Apostles. He can have little of the true spirit of a priest who has no longing to bear some part in that ministry of intercession in which he knows that his Great High Priest is ceaselessly engaged. . . . There are those who may be qualified to undertake many parts of the work of a parish, but who will make good the losses incurred by an unprayerful priest? On the other hand, who can measure the gain in all departments of work where the pastor is known and felt to be a man of prayer.'—ROBINSON, *Personal Life of the Clergy*.

'If we look for guidance to the example of our Lord we are struck by the way in which the years and days of His public and social ministry were balanced, so to speak, by spaces of silence and retirement. . . . With all of us it would seem to be essential that we should from time to time withdraw from our work for the sake of our work.'—ROBINSON, *Personal Life of the Clergy*.

'I am profoundly convinced that one of the gravest perils which beset the ministry . . . is a restless scattering of our energies over an amazing multiplicity of interests which leaves no margin of time or of strength for receptive and absorbing communion with God. We are tempted to be always on the run, and to measure our fruitfulness by our pace and by the ground we cover in the course of the week.'—J. H. JOWETT, *The Preacher, etc.*

'I have no confidence whatever in the ministry which calculates its afternoon's work by the number of door bells it has rung, and the number of streets it has covered, and the number of supposed calls that can be registered in the pastoral books. I attach little value to the breathless knocking at the door, the restless, How do you do? and the perspiring departure to another door where a similar hasty errand is effected.

'I attach even less to a series of short, sharp, afternoon gossipings which only skim the surfaces of things and which never come within sight of those stupendous heights and depths that matter everything to immortal souls. . . . I say this kind of ministry, burdensome and tiring as it certainly is, is effeminate work and is a tragic waste of a strong man's time. But here again a clear and well-defined purpose, large, luminous, sacred and sanctifying will be our sure defence against puerilities and against all sinful trifling with time and strength.'—J. H. JOWETT, *The Preacher, etc.*

'The decay of steady visiting by the clergy would mean the decay of Christianity in England.'—MASON'S *Ministry of Conversion*.

'Our interest in a minister is very peculiar. He is to us what no other professional man can be. We want him not to transact our business and to receive a compensation, but to be our friend, our guide, an intimate in our families, to enter our houses in affliction, and to be able to give us light, admonition, and consolation, in suffering, sickness, and the last hours of life.'—W. E. CHANNING.

'No personality can deeply impress more than a certain number of people, and that number is not so great as is often supposed. The man who is willing to enter and willing to stay in some apparently obscure and isolated field, and who preserves his own habits of growth and his highest ideals, will do an intensive work as vital and dynamic as that accomplished in the midst of the totally different conditions which obtain in the modern city. One need only recall the streams of influence which have gone forth into the cities and into the life of the nation from certain humble rural parishes led by men of real greatness to realize the force of this contention. Some of the greatest men in the Christian Church . . . have been country ministers little known and unheralded. Jonathan Edwards exerted a world-wide influence from a small parish. The same was true of Keble. Charles Kingsley spent his whole life at Eversley, "a little patch of moorland," as he himself characterized it, in Southern England, a parish with but seven or eight hundred people, not one of whom, when he began his ministry, could read or write.'—J. R. MOTT, *The Future Leadership of the Church*.