

tion of the marriage market and the fastness of fashionable life—these are the patent forms at the present hour of the very evils which afflicted the soul of the prophet as he saw them in the life and practice of his contemporaries. Society is at present distracted by a strange uneasiness. Large sections of the wealthier classes, given over to frivolity, are wearied with inherited and moderate forms of amusement, and plunge deeper and deeper into dissipations in which nothing sacred is respected. The female sex especially is loudly claiming emancipation, and the freedom too often demanded is not only from the conventionalities of man, but from the law of God and the very dictates of nature. The corrupt influence of France, which was so predominant two centuries ago, is beginning again to flow back into our literature; and the cheap press makes the garbage on which the cultured classes have already fed a corrupt taste accessible to the million.

Where, in these circumstances, are we to look? Who will carry the ephah forth, with its hidden secrets, that the land may be blessed? Many are looking where Zechariah looked—to the zeal and the strength of woman. She must be the purifier and renovator of society.

Sometimes, indeed, this may be asserted in unwise and extravagant terms. There is a way of claiming for woman superiority to man and of setting her up as his judge and mentor that is irritating and untrue. There is a fussy and noisy way of claiming the rights of woman which inevitably calls forth reprisals. Yet, without leaving her true place at all, woman may exercise an immeasurable influence; and, with the progress of time, women will undoubtedly learn more and more the advantages of combination.

At the present moment it would not be difficult to name reforms in securing which their aid is indispensable. There can surely be no reform lying more obviously to their hand than the rescue of

those of their sisters who have fallen victims to the self-indulgence of man and in their turn have become man's temptresses. This is a work which many ignore; but the evil is too real and widespread to be pushed aside, and the work is of such a kind that men cannot do it. Another reform incumbent on women is, by their combined efforts, so to change the tone of society that money will not be able to open its gateway without the passport of character, and that man, when he breaks the laws of chastity, shall have to suffer for his conduct as infallibly as woman. And a third reform, for which the aid of woman may be confidently invoked, is the discontinuance of those drinking habits of society with which the degradation of both man and woman is so intimately connected.

These are honourable tasks which lie before woman; and it would be easy to add to their number. Only let woman remember that, if she is to help to clear the world of those abuses which delay the appearance of the kingdom of God, she must, like the figures in this parable, be furnished with wings. What are these? One of them is sympathy, woman's native and matchless gift, without which she can do nothing; and the other is knowledge, without which she has existed too long, but without which she cannot rise above the earth or sustain the weight of the destiny with which she is to be entrusted.

Yet there is another thing still more indispensable: it is the wind in her wings; and this is nothing less than the breath and inspiration of the Spirit of God. Mere emancipation or, even along with it, philanthropic zeal can do little. Indeed, few objects are less lovely than the emancipated woman, testifying and bustling in the public cause. Her true glory is the spirit awakened by the touch of the Spirit of God; it is the loyalty of her heart to the Saviour; and her work for man only succeeds when it is done for Christ's sake.

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## Sermonettes on the Golden Texts.

BY THE REV. R. C. FORD, M.A., GRIMSBY.

### Heavenly Intimations.

'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.'—MATT. xvii. 5.

THE lesson for the first Sunday in the month is one which gives us a glimpse of heaven. The manifestation of the glory of Christ was given while He and His disciples were at prayer. They were thus taught that heaven lay round about them, but that their eyes were habitually holden so that they could not see it. From the midst of the glory there came forth a heavenly voice interpreting for them its meaning. The voice told them that this glory which they beheld was a manifestation of—

I. THE LOVE THAT IS IN THE DIVINE NATURE.—The relationship between Father and Son was one based on love. The highest relationships, being spiritual, are based on love in varying degrees. This is love in the supreme degree. The love between Father and Son is the greatest love that exists. It has always existed, for God is love, and we do not call that love which is directed towards self as its object. Thus there has always been a Son who is God's beloved. The love between earthly parents and their children is the faint shadow of this great love.

II. THE FATHER'S INTEREST IN THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.—We speak of being pleased with a person, not for what he is, but for what he does. God is pleased with the Son because of the great work He has taken up. It is a work which has not only His cordial approval, but His hearty co-operation. In that work all heaven is interested. Moses and Elias converse about its crowning act of self-sacrifice. The angels rejoice over every sinner returning to God, as the fruit of that sacrifice.

III. THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.—Christ's glory was manifested as being greater than that of His two attendants, Moses and Elias. He was the Heir of all God's authority and glory. Whatever He tells us of God and heaven we may accept, for He speaks of things of which He knows. We may listen to Him fearlessly, since the voice from heaven has declared that we follow no cunningly-devised fable when we render to Him the devotion He claims.

### The Children's Friend and the Children's Foes.

'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.'—MATT. xviii. 14.

GOD's first and greatest love is for His well-beloved Son. Yet there is not a little one to whom His love does not go out. 'If *one* be gone astray,' He seeks it. 'Despise not *one*,' says He. Each one is the object of His care. They are born, trained, disciplined, redeemed, and enter heaven one by one. The love that does this links earth to heaven.

I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE LITTLE ONES.—The child chosen for Christ's illustration was 'one of these least,' such as might be seen in the streets any day, not a prince sent for by Christ from a distant court, as one painter represents it. One is reminded of the familiar wall picture, entitled 'The Child: What will he become?' The line representing the stages of the upward course dimly, yet inadequately, sets forth God's purpose for each little one. And that His purpose may be accomplished, God appoints angels of highest rank to help bring about the fulfilment of His will.