



Home is a sweet word.—p. 5.

THE
BETTER HOME.

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“HOME is a sweet word,” said a poor sick young woman whom I once met in a journey. She was going to her friends in a bad state of health, and seemed to think she should not recover. “Sick or well, living or dying, home is a sweet word.”

“True,” answered I, “home is a sweet word: it is sweet to live surrounded by those we love; and it is sweet to receive the last acts of kindness from their hands. When we are in a distant place,

surrounded by strangers, it is sweet to think that we shall one day be *at home*. And must it not be sweet to the pilgrims and strangers on earth, to think of their heavenly home? that happy place, where pain and disappointment never enter? that place where the inhabitants shall no more say, 'I am sick:' where 'there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying: and where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' We can know little of that home till we get there. We can know no more of it than is revealed in the Bible. From that we learn that it is a *holy* as well as a *happy* home. That

‘there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth:’ that those who dwell there ‘have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.’ Do you remember those descriptions in the Bible?”

She answered, “Our clergy do not allow us to read the Bible.”

“I am sorry to hear it: sorry, indeed, that when God has required you to ‘search the Scriptures,’ man should command you not to search them. You said you thought you should not get well; do you think you are prepared to die?”

“No, but I hope to have time to prepare myself.”

“And how do you intend to prepare yourself? By what means do you expect to make your peace with God?”

“I do not know; but the priest will tell me, and I will do whatever he says.”

“You are then willing to follow the directions of man; are you equally willing to follow the directions of God?”

“My priest will tell me the will of God.”

“Suppose some kind friend had left you in his will, on certain conditions, a great estate, a happy home,—would you not wish to see the will; to read it, or at least to hear it read; or

would you be content with the account another person might give you of a matter in which you were so much interested?"

"Surely, surely, I should wish to see the will; to read it myself; to know the *very words* of it."

"Let me tell you then, that the will in which your heavenly Father promises his children a home of eternal happiness, is the Bible; and yet you leave it neglected and unread, without a wish to know from it how that inheritance is to be obtained. We are now about to part; I feel interested for you; and it would be a great

relief to my mind to think that you would read your Bible; that you would seek there to know the will of God; to be reconciled to Him through his Son; guided by his Spirit, and received at last into his glory: so that though we meet no more on earth, we may one day meet in that home where parting is no more." So I gave her a Bible.

"I do promise you," said she, "I do promise to read the Bible."

We had now reached the place of separation; and as I took my lonely way homeward, her simple and natural remark again occurred to my mind; and I could not help inquiring whe-

ther I looked forward to my heavenly home with the same joy and satisfaction that my fellow-traveller had in looking forward to an earthly one. There is, thought I, a resemblance in what we look for in the different homes. She expects to meet a tender parent, kind friends, comforts in her affliction; peace and rest after sorrow and suffering. And is there not in that home which is prepared for the children of God, a tender parent who "pitieth those that fear him even as a father pitieth his children?" yea, whose love exceeds even that of a mother to her infant child; for "though she may

forget her child," saith the Lord, "yet I will not forget thee." Do kind friends wait for her in her earthly home, and have not the children of God in their heavenly home "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother?" — one who has been a "brother in adversity?" "touched with the feeling of their infirmities," and "afflicted in all their afflictions?" She also expects to meet with *comforters*. And what a sweet name is that which is given to the Holy Spirit; "the Comforter!" It is He who pours balm into the wounded mind, and cheers the child of sorrow, and makes known to us (if penitent) the grace of the

Saviour, sheds abroad in our hearts the love of God, and seals our pardon. Surely those who have been thus comforted by him here, must remember that sweet name through all eternity, while they rejoice in his presence. Does not the prospect of rest after labour, and peace after troubles, cheer the mind? and must not those who "are in heaviness through manifold tribulations,"—those who are mourning for the sinfulness of their hearts and lives, rejoice in the prospect of that rest which remaineth for the people of God, where they shall be free from sin as well as from sorrow; where they shall no more offend their

heavenly Benefactor, no longer grieve his Holy Spirit, but spend a happy eternity in praise and love?

There is a resemblance between what my fellow traveller expected, and what the children of God look forward to: but in one circumstance there is a material difference. If she finds at home all that she hopes to find, she cannot be certain of its continuance for a day, or even an hour. How soon may sorrow, how soon may death enter her happy home! How soon might she be deprived of those whose society makes it home to her: how soon may she herself be

snatched from them! But it is the happiness of the blessed in heaven that their home is unchangeable and eternal. Eternity is connected with every idea of heaven: it is included in the very name. If those who are there could suppose that at the end of ever so many years, even thousands of thousands of years, their happiness would cease; it would be no longer heaven to them. Eternity is one of the chief causes of their happiness.

Is such a happy home offered to us, and can we have such few and feeble desires after it? Is this earth so free from sin and sorrow that we can be as happy

here as we wish to be? We are commanded to live *above* the world while we live in it, and to have our treasure in heaven. Happy is he who can feel and love the truth of the following hymn:—

There is a glorious world of light
 Above the starry sky ;
 Where saints, all clothed in robes of white,
 Adore the Lord most high.

And hark ! amid the sacred songs
 Those heavenly voices raise,
 Ten thousand thousand infant tongues
 Unite and sing his praise.

These are the hymns that we shall know,
 If Jesus we obey ;
 That is the place where we shall go,
 If found in wisdom's way.





