

the veil is rent; the unseen world is more certain, and more real than the seen; no barrier hides from him the High Priest. His presence and His interest and His intercessions are the cardinal fact to which the soul responds. When the writer said 'God' he could not but think of the spiritual activity of Christ in the very heart of the Godhead. Prayer had always been an approach to God, now it was an approach to *that* God. From Him proceedeth a torrent of redeeming energy; from Him the mighty currents went forth to draw the soul; His was a throne of grace, and that must mean a magnetic throne. For the believer to pray must be to come within those currents; or, to leave figures, to become more and more at one with the mind and will of *that* Lord. Prayer would still be in correspondence with the man Christ Jesus, but it would be also in union with the eternal heart of God in Christ Jesus. 'Let us come confidently to the *Throne of Grace*.'

Prayer is a response to the belief that God is and God welcomes.

Prayer is a response to the revelation and establishment in Christ of a final order and way of life, where its values are perfectly disclosed, and its methods made clear.

Prayer is a conscious fellowship of the redeemed

soul with the eternal energy of the Divine Redeemer.

If when the Letter was read to that group of believers they accepted the message, they would go forth without the camp to bear the reproach of Christ, but before that they would learn to pray with a freshness and a mastery unknown before.

They would recall, when they knelt in prayer, the facts of the strange new world in which they now were set. They would remember Christ in Gethsemane, Christ in the Unseen Holy of Holies; their place—the Throne of Grace; their time—the Age to Come. Sure of their bearings, they would apply to the new way much that had been learned from the old; the Book and the Ritual would have their permanent value; all the old promises would be translated into terms of the new; but the new would not be less ordered and methodical and scientific than the old. They had not exchanged something definite for something vague; they had lost the shadow to win the substance. In prayer henceforth they tasted the powers of the 'age to come'; they trod already the streets of the Heavenly Jerusalem; they were taken into the service of the great interceding High Priest, and they began to reign with Christ.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

'On His Majesty's Service.'

BY THE REV. ROBERT HARVIE, M.A., EARLSTON.

'The king's business required haste.'—I S 21⁸.

At the beginning of last week I received a letter which had not, like most letters, a penny stamp on the face of it. It was one to which I was to reply, and the request and instructions were like this: 'Reply by return. Use the enclosed envelope for your answer. Don't trouble even to put on a stamp. The King's business requires haste.'

When *you* come to write letters, you will probably find that when you have finished one, very often you have not an envelope at hand, and you have to go and look for one. Then, a good many people who are busy during the day put off letter-writing till the evening, and it is not an uncommon

thing to discover that you have no stamps left, and the post office is shut, so that unless you can find some one to oblige you, the letter cannot be sent off with the earliest post. All that causes delay and sometimes annoyance, so the instructions are given: 'Reply at once; and in order that no time may be lost, here is an envelope at hand, and in this case there is no need of a stamp. It is the King's business. It requires haste.'

When you write an ordinary letter, you must buy a stamp which bears upon it the image of the King, but on the envelope I received, and on the one I sent off, there was nothing like that. Instead, there was something which showed the kind of letters these were, for on each envelope were printed the words 'On His Majesty's Service.'

That set me thinking in this way. When a letter is part of the King's business, not only does

it require haste, but there is this also about it, that you can see the kind of thing it is, just by the look of it. *Its character is written on its face.*

Now that is true also of people. The poet Tennyson tells of a man who had been a follower of the great King Arthur, but who had given up the life of war and noise, and had retired to a monastery to pass the rest of his days in meditation and prayer. Yet, though his manner of life was now so much changed, he could not hide what he had once been, and what his real character was. One who watched him closely in the monastery, guessed from many signs that he had been a servant of the King. He knew even by the courteous tone of the voice and by the noble bearing of his body.

For good ye are and bad, and like to coins (he said)

Some true, some light, *but every one of you Stamped with the image of the king.*

All boys and girls are like that too. You can tell, just by watching them, whose business they are doing—in whose service they are employed. Christ is a King, greater than King Arthur, and if we are His servants and follow His example, people will see us kind and humble, generous and thoughtful for others, and they will say, 'You don't require to give me any further proof of the kind of boy or girl that is. You don't need to put on a stamp by saying, "That is a good boy or this is a Christian girl. I can read their character distinctly just by looking at them." One sight of their face tells me that they are "On His Majesty's Service."'

That letter about which I began telling you, concerned a friend of mine. He had been tested by examination whether he was clever and intelligent and well informed, and they had taken quite a long time before saying what the result was. It looked as if there was no special hurry to answer these questions. But when these tests were over—passed with satisfaction—there was a far more important question still to come. That was the question which was put to me. Was he a good man? Was he honest? Was he truthful? The other things could be found out at leisure, but not this. Here is the matter which concerns the King most. 'Reply at once. Don't put off time looking for an envelope, here is one at hand. Don't delay even to put on a stamp. The King's business requires haste.'

You see, then, what you and I may learn from this envelope. It matters a good deal whether you are clever and keen on lessons. In fact, you won't go very far without these things. But what matters far more is this. Are we good? Are we honest? Are we truthful? Are we generous and thoughtful for others? These are the marks of Christ. He is our King, and all His followers are stamped with His image. You can't answer these questions too soon, you must do it at once. And if the answer be 'Yes, we are servants and friends of Christ,' we shall not require to go about telling the fact. People will read it for themselves. They will see that we are

'On His Majesty's Service.'

The Rev. Evan Williams has published three-and-twenty of his addresses to children, calling the book after the title of the first address in it, *The Chimes of Bruges* (Cardiff: Educational Pub. Co.). One of the addresses will show the resourcefulness of this preacher to children.

Wanted: Oil!

I read the other day that the best watch oil cannot be made to-day. Nobody knows just what it is, although there are many who would pay a good-sized fortune to know. The secret of how to make it has been lost. If a man could only discover that secret he would soon be a millionaire; for every watchmaker, big and little, on the face of the globe would want to buy it, and would pay him his own price. Oil for clocks and watches must be very fine, or it will thicken and stop the works. Years ago a man invented some wonderful oil, but no one seemed to realize its value, and he himself did not realize it, or he would have been able to prove its worth. Some thirty years ago he died, without telling the details of the mixture to any one. At the time of his death, his book-keeper, who had about £120 due to him, took what oil was left. There was not much of it, for the maker had not been encouraged to give it a fair trial. But the book-keeper sold it at a good price to a famous clock-maker, and he put it to a remarkable test. They were fitting out a ship to go to the Arctic Seas with delicate instruments, and they used that oil. It was a great success. There had never been any oil like it. When the ship returned it was as fresh as when it was first put in. But unfortunately there were only about

four quarts remaining, and it was sold for £40 a quart. All that oil has by this time been used up, and no one knows how to make more like it. If a man could only find out the secret he would be sure of a fortune.

We read a good deal in the Bible about oil, and it is clear that it was regarded as an element of national wealth. But I was thinking when I read that article that the clock oil was not the only oil whose secret some of us have not yet learned. Let me mention a few, and while I do so, you ask yourselves the question whether you have any. There is the oil of gladness mentioned in the Bible. It is a figure of speech used to mark the joyousness of life. I am sure that some boys and girls know nothing of it, because they look so glum and sour. They always seem to have a pout upon their faces, and rarely do you see them smile. They are like some of the dull days we have had during the past week—they seem to have no sunshine. Now it makes a lot of difference when we get into the company of people that are not cheerful; you feel it is as bad as a London fog. But in the company of those who have sunshine in their faces, and who have it in their faces because they have it in their hearts, you feel that you are being braced up. Sunshine is a tonic. Cultivate it. Learn the art of cheerfulness, and carry sunshine with you wherever you go.

Then there is the oil of tactfulness. We say

that a person has no tact when unthinkingly he blurts out something which hurts another. If the scholar sitting next to you at school has some disfigurement on the face, it would be very rude and very tactless on your part to make him uncomfortable by looking at it, wouldn't it? Some people are splendid at patching up a quarrel. They bring divided ones together quickly. They are tactful folk. A visitor was taking dinner in a certain household one day, when the little girl said excitedly to the visitor, 'We are having pudding to-day, because you are here.' That was tactless, was it not? Well, look for the oil of tactfulness. It is a very precious oil in life.

Then there is the oil of healing. You remember that the good Samaritan took the wounded traveller and poured into his wounds wine and oil. You may never find such a case of distress in your path; but you will doubtless see many cases that need help and pity. If you can only say a kind word to cheer another, you are pouring in the oil of healing. For what is so healing as a kind word? If you can make somebody's load lighter, you are using the oil of healing. For what is so precious as practical sympathy, being sorry for others and showing it?

Well, have you the oil of gladness, the oil of tactfulness, and the oil of healing? You will need them as you go through life. If you have not learned their secret, go to Jesus and ask Him to teach you.

The Gadaren Demoniac.

BY THE REV. J. E. SOMERVILLE, B.D., MENTONE.

WHEN Jesus said to His disciples, 'Let us pass over to the other side,' little did they know the wide and lasting issues that were dependent on their traversing the lake of Galilee that evening. Probably they thought their Master wanted a rest after the laborious day He had spent discoursing to the multitudes on the shore in those parables which had held the crowds enraptured and which have captivated the minds of millions ever since. He was utterly exhausted, as was shown by the deep sleep into which He fell soon after embarking, from which neither the raging of the winds nor the dashing of the waves was able to rouse Him, but

only the cry of His terrified followers. The Good Shepherd, who had been feeding His great flock, left them in safety on the west side of the lake, because away on the other side there was one lost sheep He resolved to seek and save. And so He faced the darkness of the night, the wildness of the storm and the danger from exhaustion and exposure, for they 'took him even as he was,' apparently without food and without sufficient covering. He went in search of one, who was out in the waste, lost, terribly lost.

The mission of Jesus to the Gadarene, or more correctly the Gergesene, shore might almost be