TRUTH AND GRACE

Writings of R. H. BOLL

Composed chiefly of selected editorials from the Gospel Advocate for the years 1909 and 1910 with some previously unpublished matter etc.

Containing a Biographical Sketch of the author by E. L. Jorgenson

and

An Introduction by
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INTRODUCTION.

The author of this volume was trained from infancy in the Roman Catholic Church, which caters to a certain weakness in human nature—the desire for a mediator. There is a sense in which the desire for a mediator is lawful and pleasing to God. To the man who, on the one hand, has any conception of God; on the other of his own unworthiness, a mediator is necessary, and this need of man is provided in the "man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2:5.) But the doctrine of Rome does not encourage one to face even the God-appointed Mediator alone and unsupported. The Virgin Mary and other saints of lesser degree must be sought between man and Jesus Christ. In fact, the whole Roman system of priesthood is but the interposition of human mediatorship between man and God.

On this account the author was led to kneel for hours before the image of some saint hoping thereby to gain the favor of the saint so that he would carry his request before that God whom the Roman theology had put so far away from his hungering heart that he dare not approach him through the name of Jesus Christ as the only mediator. Above all he sought the Virgin Mary, in whom he fancied a womanly, motherly love and tenderness, such as he had found in his own mother; and he doubted not that she would take him into her tender compassion.

The superstitions and idolatries of the Roman Church held him in bondage without the faintest hope of deliverance till he emigrated from Germany to this country, at the age of fifteen, where his surroundings were

more favorable for enlightenment. In the course of time he came under the influence of Professor T. E. Allen, then of Lavergne, Tenn., who devoted much time to teaching him the way of the Lord and deeply impressed upon him individual responsibility to God and as to how he regarded his word, and dealt with it and convinced him that he could not screen himself behind any priest or church, but that he must answer to God as to whether he believed him. This greatly disturbed him concerning his religion, for he did not know whether he believed it or not. Later on he came under the influence of Dr. J. M. Gooch who made no particular effort to convert him from Roman Catholicism, but took especial delight in discussing, among other things, religious questions with him and in presenting objections to Catholicism. He soon became deeply conscious of the fact that he was too grossly ignorant of the Bible to make any defense of his position. Having been thus humiliated, he resolved to make thorough preparation to meet all attacks made on his religion. So he began reading and studying the Bible as never before. At first he did this that he might be able to meet successfully the attacks of his adversary. This purpose soon gave way to an intense desire to know the truth. He now gave it a fair hearing, disposed neither to accept nor reject blindly, but after faithful examination. Hence he "searched the Scriptures"—gave attention and painstaking diligence to investigate what they say concerning Christ and salvation through his name. This honest purpose, candid hearing, and diligent examination of the testimony finally brought him to the faith which the gospel requires. The conviction expressed itself in action on Sunday, April 14, 1895, when he confessed his faith in Christ and was baptized into his name.

The diligent search for the truth did not cease when

he was baptized, it was only begun. He has made it the great concern of his life. In this volume the reader will find a clear statement of some of the things that he has learned. I bespeak for him the attention which his talent and the importance of the subjects discussed command.

J. W. SHEPHERD.

Detroit, Michigan, July 18, 1917.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Henry Boll was born June 7th, 1875; which makes him at this writing, 42 years old. The birthplace was Badenweiler, a small but far-famed watering place in the heart of the Black Forest, Southern Germany. His mother, whose maiden name was Magdalena Ulman, was born in Altbreisach on the Rhine and his father, Max Boll, in Schliengen. Both parents were ardent Catholics. In the Cathedral at Freiburg there stands the marble statue of one Bernard Boll, first Archbishop of Freiburg, an illustrious kinsman on the father's side. As for the mother, it was her wish that Robert should be a priest, a wish in which he himself shared enthusiastically. But in God's good providence he was hindered even from beginning that career.

The father seems to have had no such influence over the son as the mother exerted; and that partly because he died before Robert was ten years old, while his mother lived and kept in touch with him in one way and another until her death, when he was twenty-two. The mother (who never came to this country) was described to me by German friends who knew her well as a beautiful woman of most expressive face, strong intellect, and high ideals. The son remembers her with love and longing and speaks of her in tenderest terms. The father, say these friends, was of rather a roving disposition. He removed the family to Basel in Switzerland when Robert was three years old; and, after a short residence there, to Karlsruhe in Germany. Thence, following a hard experience, the bitter memory of which lingers to this day, the father brought the family to Muhlhausen and from that place to Freiburg, a beautiful city not many miles from the River Rhine.

Here Robert went to school. Here the younger of his two sisters died, and in the same year his father also. At eleven he entered the Lyceum or Latin School. Though ever a lover of books and precocious also, the German school system seemed to him needlessly severe. But perhaps that hard training accounts in part for the strong student habits which have characterized him ever since, and for more than the average power of concentration throughout long periods of study. But if it was good in the end, it was not pleasant; and often relief was sought in communion with nature in long walks through the German woods, and in the companionship of a mother who was to the son, adorable.

When Robert was fourteen, the mother married again; and it turned out as it so often does, that the stepfather cared not for the child at all, nor the child for him. This incongeniality, and the loosening of the bond between him and his mother that naturally came with it, paved the way for Robert's departure to America. With an aunt by marriage (Mrs. Ulman), and other friends who were sailing September, 1890, he came to this country and stopped first for a brief period with them in Zanesville, Ohio. It may be of some interest to say, that the present sketch is being written in Zanesville where the writer has been at pains to trace things accurately and gather much information, in addition to that furnished by Brother Boll himself.

In Zanesville, Robert worked for a time and found it tough enough for a school boy utterly unused to it, and of a frame somewhat slight besides. As a musician, an artist, or a story writer, had he given himself to one of these pursuits, he might have "made good" and made his head save his heel; but at manual labor he has never been a great success having no turn for it—though he is not a whit worse at that or at anything else than he

makes himself out to be. For several years after this, he was a farm laborer—in Tennessee, where he went after leaving Ohio. It was in that state that he obeyed the Gospel. Brother Sam Harris took his public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Lord and it was in Columbus Brittain's pond (near Nashville) that he was baptized on Sunday, April 14, 1895. The manner of his gradual relinquishment of Romanism which led to this step and his turning toward original Christianity is of great interest, but cannot be fully related here.

In the fall of that same year, 1895, he entered Nashville Bible school where J. A. Harding was still president. By reason of Brother Harding's mighty faith in God he was taken in to "work his way"—although all such chances were in fact filled before he applied. Robert had walked twenty miles through the rain to present himself at the school; and in God's good leading, it was this comparatively little thing which touched the big Harding heart, and led to his admission. Brother Boll considers himself greatly indebted to J. A. Harding and feels the greatest appreciation also of his teaching. He has paid back what money was spent upon him; but the debt of love that is due can never be repaid.

His first sermon was preached in a mission meeting at the Nashville jail; and the first protracted meeting was at a schoolhouse named "Accident," not far from Nashville. The following account of that first meeting, written some time ago by Brother Boll himself will interest the reader:

"It was through the enthusiasm of my friend Bob McMahon (who in the meanwhile had also entered the Bible School), that I was inveigled into holding my first protracted meeting—which meeting well-nigh played out in the middle of it. Bob had made arrangements for the affair without having half consulted me about it. He

just *knew* I could 'hold a meeting.' It was to be at 'Accident,' a little log schoolhouse that sat as if blown there by some favorable accident on the hillside by the big road, near Bob's home. And it was too small a thing in Bob's eyes to start in for *a week's* meeting—two weeks seemed too common even; we must arrange for a three weeks' campaign at least. So he pulled; and I, however reluctantly and diffidently, tumbled into assent with his ambitious plans. The date was June 15, 1896.

"So after the school had closed I stayed around some days. A few days before that 'appointment' was due (I shook in my shoes at the thought of that) there was a prayer meeting at the Bible School chapel; and it happened that there were present a number of notable men of God: David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, T. W. Brents, J. A. Harding, J. W. Grant and J. W. Shepherd. The assembly was small and I do not remember how it came about, but I made a talk in the imposing presence of those brethren. As we went out Brother Shepherd slapped me on the back and said to me, 'Go right ahead; you will come out all right'—which was but a kind word dropped by the way, but helped me up so greatly that I never forgot it.

"The big meeting started off fairly well, but after the first flush of curiosity had passed the audience dwindled to a few, and then fewer; and these few looked bored; yawned, smiled, and a few young couples who were there for their sweet company's sake, did valiant courting. And my lofty looks were brought very low and my speech and my preaching became weaker and more stumbling and halting. On Wednesday night, which had been particularly dispiriting, I ventured the suggestion to Bob on the way home, that it might be well to close Sunday. Bob said he thought so too. That was a blow I had not expected, for Bob's faith and comfort had

alone upheld me. The first effect was to arouse me. I could do something and I simply *would*. So Thursday I went in for a special effort. I picked out the best theme I had in reserve and felt rather confident that I could talk for an hour on it and to edification. But my big sermon failed me more miserably than any previous one. I got entirely through with it in twenty minutes and stopped with a feeling of being lost in the woods. On the way home that evening it was Bob who suggested that the meeting ought to close Sunday—*if not sooner;* and that straw broke my back. The next morning I took my Bible and fled to the woods, where I spent the day crying, praying, studying; and on Friday night, like a poor sinner to the gallows, I went back to Accident to preach. But lo—how it came no man could trace—there was a new atmosphere, a larger audience, a new interest, and to every one's astonishment (my own especially), I preached with ease and power. And that proved the turning point. Saturday night the attendance was unusual, and I preached if anything better; and Sunday night it was said that such a crowd had never before been seen at the little school house. Well, the meeting ran over two weeks, and about seven were baptized in the course of it. Often since then I have found that when I came to the end of myself God was a never-failing help, and that when I was weak I was strong."

For several years after this—one whole year, and in the other years through the vacation period, Brother Boll preached wherever he could; in barns, in school-houses, in church-houses, in the open, under arbors; and his work bore good fruit.

In 1900 he left the Bible School, but he did not cease to be a student, nor to go to school. His *special* study ever since has been the Bible in various languages. His knowledge of its facts is remarkable, and his grasp upon

its spiritual truths, profound. About that time also, his work as a preacher began in good earnest: in Texas, in Tennessee, in Kentucky; and in evangelistic meetings frequently in other States. In 1903, he made a first visit to the congregation at Portland Avenue, Louisville, Ky., where the beloved George A. Klingman had labored seven years, and in 1904 took up the work there, One year (1910-11) excepted, during which he taught the Bible department of the Lawrenceburg (Tenn.) High School on behalf of that nobleman of God, J. H. Stribling—he has remained with the Portland Avenue congregation ever since. In Louisville he was married to Miss Villette Schang, and three children have been born to them, of whom the first God took when she was two years old.

R. H. Boll excels as a preacher, a teacher, and a writer, of religious truth. In which capacity of the three he is the strongest would not be easy to say. In his preaching he denounces sin terrifically, but brings hope and "strong encouragement" to all who hear. He is logical, his outlines being well arranged and easily remembered; but he is not logical in the sense of being dry or merely intellectual in appeal.

As a teacher of the Bible he has been instrumental under God in raising up many Gospel preachers. A number have gone out from his home congregation to bear the message; and many from all parts of our country almost,— east, west, north, south — have come in for the help and blessing of the classes which he conducts every winter in Louisville; among these many, the writer of this sketch. And whether it properly belongs in such a sketch or not, I cannot refrain from expressing here my appreciation of one thing specially: that Brother Boll has helped me be "a Christian only," an independent Christian separate from all ecclesiasticism, recognizing

no *authoritative* teacher aside from Jesus Christ; bound by no string or human bond to any man or set of men, obliged to agree with no one but God.

It is, however, as a writer for the religious press, that the subject of our sketch is most widely known. In 1901, he became one of the editors of the Gospel Guide. In 1909, he became first page editor of The Gospel Advocate. This post he held for six years; and when in 1915 he resigned it, five other papers offered their columns to him. About that time he purchased the monthly magazine, Word and Work, removed it from New Orleans to Louisville, and assumed the work of publishing and editing that paper; in which work he continues—along with his preaching and teaching—to the present day.

E. L. Jorgenson.

TRUTH AND GRACE

FIRST THINGS FIRST.

Emphasis and proportion enter into all affairs of life; and whether a life is false or true, whether sane or distorted, depends largely on where the emphasis has been placed and the right proportion has been observed. In art—if every feature and lineament of a face had been drawn exact in every detail, but out of their proper proportion, the portrait would be unrecognizable. In language—if every letter in a word were correctly sounded, pronunciation, enunciation, articulation perfect, only the emphasis (accent) on the wrong syllable, the word would be unintelligible. So, likewise, if every doctrine of the gospel be truly presented, but the proportion God gave it lost sight of and the emphasis misplaced, the result is not the truth of God any longer. It is a false gospel.

Weightier Matters of the Law.

There are some features of Christ's doctrine that have been made specially important by the Lord; not that smaller matters should be neglected, but that the greater should never be left out of view, and all the lesser should revolve around them as the planets circle about the sun. It was the shame of the Pharisees that they lost them-

selves in minutiæ and ceremonial details, and had left the chief things out of view—a condition which always attends spiritual decay. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith; but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel!" (Matt. 23:23,24.) We hear much exhortation not to "despise the day of small things." Would that some hero of God would usher in the day of big things among us, that our little things also may be done rightly and be well-pleasing to God! For "justice, and mercy, and faith"—when these are held most important, they will of themselves adjust the smaller matters, and will go far to settle minor questions and difficulties; while without them the smaller matters, though never so punctiliously attended to, are of no value before God.

WHAT GOD EMPHASIZED.

What if the church at Ephesus works and toils and bears for His name's sake without growing weary? What if they have tried the false apostles and opposed the Nicolaitans? They were losing their "first love." If that is not remedied, their Lord will move their candlestick out of its place, and their light shall shine no more, their testimony for Christ go out no longer. True love is shown by works; but what of the works that are done without love? "If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. 13:3.) It appears from God's word that in the Christian life he has put love in the foremost place. Put the emphasis elsewhere, give chief prominence to any other feature, and

you have defaced and distorted the gospel.—February 11, 1909.

WANTING TO BE GOOD.

Speaking of newspapers, a certain writer said recently: "The distinction between a good paper and the 'yellow' kind is not that the one always contains the truth and the other does not, for both may print false reports. But the line runs between those papers that try to tell the truth and those who make no special effort; and between those who care if they have failed to be correct and those who print anything that sounds well and do not care whether or not they misrepresent facts; and between those who are quick and glad to make a correction and those who have to be forced to do so with the strongest compulsion." And the distinction between good and bad men, in like manner, is not that the one never sins, while the other does; but that the one "stumbles and rises again, while the other lies down and wallows;" the one sins and does not care, the other does care and confesses and repents. "Does not God see everything?" asked a very little boy of my acquaintance, when he had been scolded for being naughty. "Yes," said his mother. "He sees, then, that I want to be good, doesn't he?" And the mother could not deny it. Yes, God sees we want to be good, and it is a long step toward him to even believe this and to long for the better things. But we cannot stop at that, for intentions are not yet conquests. Nor do we need to stop there. We have the help of Him on our side who is able to fulfill our every desire of goodness and work of faith with power. (2 Thess. 1:11.)

PRESENT NEEDS.

Some of these days we will realize that we have not exactly the same class of people to deal with the pioneer preachers had, and we will try to meet the needs of actual prevailing conditions. Instead of a religious stock, who, though reared in sectarianism, knew God and believed in his goodness and power, and had been taught the awfulness of sin and the preciousness of God's grace; whose reverence and piety and devotion to God were as marked as their ignorance of the way of salvation, and who needed nothing so much as to be shown where they were in error and what they must do—instead of that, the bulk of the hearers now is composed of men who need to be convicted of sin, whose consciences need awakening; men hardened, indifferent, or conceited, or entirely ignorant of all that pertains to God, or fiercely partisan. Instead of detailed and polemical discussions of the "plan of salvation," these need to be taught of God; made to realize their individual responsibility to him and their personal relation to him. Christ needs to be held up before them. Jesus said: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." And again: "That every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth in him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." When men are made to see the Savior in his love and power to save, and they begin to trust in him and to love him, they are ready to listen to his commandments and to do them aright.

MISSING THE MARK.

There is too much taken for granted. Men hear of, get interested in, dispute about, items in the scheme of salvation, who have no conception of God, or of the

Christ that stands behind the "scheme" and gives it meaning and power. Some of the preaching is hardly calculated to bring these sinners face to face with God, or to awaken humility, contrition, and true repentance, and loving trust toward him, and fear of his holiness and reverence and awe. Now if instead of that these hearers get a series of noisy, blustering assevertations—"thus and so," and "this and that," and "such and such a fellow is wrong"—a pretense of deep thinking and acuteness, a vain show of logic, a mouthing of big words and rattling of dry precepts and empty directions that have no motive back of them, Christianity tends to become a "process," a dead wheelwork of regulations, a philosophy that busies itself with abstract arguments and contentions, while God is left out of view, Christ taken for granted, life and love and power lacking. Lord, deliver us!

GOD'S THOUGHTFUL BOOK.

"It is sternly impossible," said John Ruskin, "for the English public at this moment to understand any thoughtful writing, so incapable of thought has it become in its insanity of avarice." The situation is no better with us. Greed or care and the fever of money-making are spoiling the best that is in men. They are incapable of quiet, noble, high, uplifting thought. The spirit of noisy haste of the age cannot take time to get quiet and to think. They have long ago classed all books that require thoughtful study as dull. The Bible is full of the purest, deepest, and noblest thought—God's thought. So, as we might expect, it seems dull to the shallow, world-fevered throng. It is widely circulated, but who reads it? And who of those that read it endeavor to get at its treasures? Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the

Lord and who meditates on it. Blessed is he who has taught his soul to be silent before God, and his heart to listen to the word of truth from God's book!

CHURCH HISTORY.

What goes under this name is not the history of the true church. The true church history is yet to be written or to be revealed in that day. It is known only to God. It is the record of congregations that kept faith and hope and love through all trials; of obscure individuals who struggled for the love of Jesus against every manner of hindrance; of humble men and women whom the world never knew and of whom it was not worthy. It is a history of obedience and prayer and self-sacrifice and childlike trust, and withal the history of a minority. But "the Lord knoweth them that are his."

THE CHALLENGE OF MAN'S UNIVERSAL FAILURE.

The trial in the garden of Eden ended in man's failure and expulsion. The next period of time culminated in the flood; the age succeeding it, in man's blasphemous ambition, the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion, of Babel. The Mosaic dispensation issued in the captivity of Israel, the punishment of their persistent unfaithfulness; from which captivity only a small portion of the people ever returned, and those never to have a king of their own again, nor any independent government, except for a moment in the days of the Maccabees. The Jewish age closed with that most atrocious of all crimes, the murder of their Messiah.

The church was set up. Prosperous at the first, it soon began to go the way of the dispensations preceding

it. It is a misinformed imagination that pictures to us the apostolic church as perfect, free from the difficulties, offenses, divisions, heresies, enmities, strifes, defections, desertions, that trouble the church of Jesus Christ today. Corinth's condition is almost unbelievable, and that, too, after nearly two years of Paul's faithful, unremittent labor. The Galatians were "so quickly removing from him" that called them "into the grace of Christ," "unto a different gospel," which was not another gospel —of course, it could not be. The Hebrews were backsliding. Ephesus lost its "first love." Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, were in many respects in an awful state. Laodicea, the rich, the self-complacent, the self-deceived, was simply rotten, without room for one word of commendation from the Savior, only the assurance that he still loved them and stood at their door knocking for entrance. (Rev. 3.) To Thessalonica, Paul writes that "the mystery of iniquity" was then already working, though as yet under restraint. But the later letters, those to Timothy, abound with allusions to false workers sprung up even at that time, and the falling away of those who once seemed faithful. At Paul's first defense no one took his part, but all forsook him. "All that are in Asia," he writes, "turned away from me." "Demas forsook me, having loved this present world." So, likewise, John's epistles, breathing the mingled sweetness and fierceness of that notable soul, make it evident that he is set bitterly against the false teachers of that day, in whom he recognizes the spirit of the coming Antichrist. Such was the condition of the church at large in the days of the apostles.

Since then matters have grown no better. Heresy succeeded heresy; falsehood trod upon the heel of falsehood; abomination followed abomination. Long since has dawned the day foretold by Paul in his farewell to

the Ephesian elders, when "grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20: 29, 30.) Long since has come the time when men "will not endure sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts." (2 Tim. 4: 3.)

So has it been, so will it be. Our own day bears witness to the same decadence. When a century ago one of God's servants said to the religious world, "Let us lay down denominational names and shibboleths; let us cast away human creeds and preconceived notions and stand together on the simple word of God," and thousands and tens of thousands responded, it looked hopeful. But in this also—how quickly the majority removed from the truth and have let the love of the world and of show, rather than the love of God and the love of their brethren, control their way! How many others are wasting their strength in profitless controversies, and pharisaical puerilities, hobbies, and wranglings, to the neglect of the work of God, and are being marked by the deathlike indifference that comes of spiritual perversion and starvation! As some one has said about money, "The first generation makes it, the second spends it, the third must begin anew;" so in religion. The fathers fought for the truth; the children, having come by it easily, let it go easily. Or else—and this is just as bad—they try to keep simply what their fathers gave them; and that means stagnation and death. And what will the future bring?

There is an optimism in the religious world which is cheerful because it is blind. They think to see the victory approaching when the truth shall have dispelled all error and the church shall have swamped the world. Truly, there is a day of triumph coming, but not now;

the eye of faith sees it, but not nigh. And the word of God forestalls the false expectations. The Lord's ominous question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall we find faith on the earth?" implies a negative answer. Instead of things getting better, the Spirit of God points to worse things ahead as the coming of the Lord draws near. He says "expressly" that in later times they will give heed "to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." (It is worthy to note here that the modern spiritualism dates only about sixty years back.) The rest of this passage (1 Tim. 4:1-3) applies to some points in the teaching of "Seventh-Day Adventism," and with fullest force to the waves of theosophy, Buddhism, "Christian Science," occultism, and other isms which have in late years begun to sweep the country. "In the last days," furthermore, "grievous times shall come." (2 Tim. 3:1-5.) Follows a description of a fearful corruption among a professedly religious people, which—alas!—fits most religious bodies to-day only too well. One need go no further even than the so-called "orthodox" churches. In fact, we might find some of it even nearer home. That these things have always been in a measure present among professed Christians detracts nothing. They are so prevalent now as to suggest that we are moving into the shadow of "the last days." This dispensation, as those preceding, will end in a failure, fearful in proportion to the high privileges that were offered. As in the days of Noah, as in the days of Lot, the few will be delivered—those who are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. 4.)

Has God failed then? God forbid. And does this seem disheartening? God never disheartens his people. He has told us these things, and they are full of hope and encouragement to him that trusts; for, while they may make him despair of self, they will draw him closer

to God, even as the traveler drew his protecting coat closer about him when the rain storms began to play around him. This is the lesson of it all, and God pointed it out himself. "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (2 Tim. 2:19.) And: "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. 2:22.) This story of constant failure is but a call to fly to God for refuge; a call to individual faithfulness, righteousness, purity, and love, let others do as they may, that God may indeed count us among those "that are his." It is an encouragement to stay on God's side, even with a pitiful minority; for God cannot fail, while men always will. It will leave our minds undazzled by the world's, and the religious world's, great numbers and show and pretense. If only we have God; if only I am true to his word; if only I keep faith and love; if only I am unspotted from the world! Let cowards say, "There is no use;" faith says, "We are well able to possess the land;" and it bases its confidence on Him who came to save, not the great or the strong, but the lost who take refuge in him. And the man in such realization of helplessness, driven and cast upon God for his hope, will also have the greatest power to help others.

"But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare; for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34-36.)—February 25, 1909.

GOD WILL NOT FAIL.

God is not finally thwarted in his purposes. He sees the end from the beginning. He knows what he will do, and is in no nervous haste. He can brook delay; one day, a thousand years—it does not disconcert him. Slowly but majestically, like the stars in their courses, move his purposes on to their fruition. He swears by them as he swears by himself: "As I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah." (Num. 14: 21.) He can afford to seem to fail for a time, even a long time if need be; but firmer than the heavens stands his word, and he will yet do all his pleasure. Why so anxious and so fretful? Is it because we fear his cause will go down and everything will end in wreck and chaos? It is unnecessary. Let us do what God has appointed us in God's way. If the gospel does not convert a man, *we* cannot convert him. If the truth does not save a church, no personal power of ours can truly preserve it. Our responsibility ends with the simple task he has intrusted to us. When it is lovingly done by the help of God, we may leave the burden of the universe to the Shoulders that are better able to bear it. Sometimes we take too much on ourselves.

CLAPTRAP.

Occasionally a man will use in preaching, or, more frequently, in debate, an argument which indeed sounds plausible and can be made very evident and striking to the audience, but which is not true. Not all plausible points are true. Sometimes, it is to be feared, the preacher knows they are not true. Sometimes he hopes they may be, but does not care so much whether they are or not, so long as it makes a good point against the other man.

This is sophistry, and God hates it. Does it ever serve the cause of truth? Even if so, no man may do evil that good may come. Besides, while a temporary effect may seem to be gained, one cannot cast out Satan by Satan.

PROGRESS IN THE TRUTH.

We must not digress, but we must progress. We must not overstep the bounds of God's word, but we must go on in it. We must not abandon the first principles but leave them as the mason leaves the foundation and goes on to perfect the building of the house. To the man who comes to seek, it will continually reveal new truths and new light on old truths. But if one goes on the preconception that he has about the sum of the truth already, and studies the Bible in that light, it will yield him nothing. He will be hardened and blinded and become a sectarian though he may never have a written creed. The unwritten can become just as contracted, unscriptural, tyrannical. As one of our beloved and venerable brethren sometimes says in the pulpit: "*We* are not right, but the Bible is right." So it is ours to go to God's word daily, with open eyes and ears and hearts and in poverty of spirit, not to confirm our ideas, but to get God's. One of the first results will be the sense of unbounded riches and privileges of which we have never availed ourselves. Another effect will be to humble us and to take some of the censoriousness and self-conceit, with which we are always apt to be afflicted, out of us.

"CHRISTIAN SCIENCE."

The peculiar mark of the Antichrist is his denial of the coming of Christ in the flesh. He distinguishes between Jesus, the man, on the one hand, and the Christ,

the "Divine Principle," on the other. He denies that Jesus is the Christ. This is an old falsehood. It was widely spread even in the days of John, and has often since been revamped. To-day it is one of the tenets of the so-called "Christian Science." Denying the reality of all matter, they necessarily deny the real existence of the flesh, or that Christ has ever come in the flesh. "I am grateful to Christian Science," said a certain Jewish lady, "because it made Christianity reasonable and believable to me. That the Christ came down from hevean, became actual flesh, hungered and suffered, and died by public execution—I never could have believed. But when Christian Science explained to me that it was the Christ Thought that came among us, I gladly accepted Christianity." But what she accepted was not Christianity. It lacked the foundation and central principle, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was Antichristianity. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already." (1 John 4:2, 3.)

Note now what follows. There being no real flesh, according to the fundamental assumption of that strange religion, all matter being only an illusion of the "mortal mind," it is a foregone conclusion that Christ did not come in the flesh. He could not have suffered, because suffering has no real existence. He could not have died. Therefore he could not have risen again. He did not shed his blood. His blood was no atonement for any man's sins. The whole gospel is set aside as but a figment of mortal mind.

If the reader thinks I am unfairly forcing the consequences of this doctrine, I would refer him to the chief

text-book of the cult, Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health and Key to the Scriptures," where these conclusions are boldly and openly avowed. And this book is the prescribed spectacles through which the Bible must be read, and according to which it must be interpreted; and it nullifies almost every statement of God's word.

The phenomenal growth of this monstrous system is chiefly due to its performances of physical healing. Its successes in that line are well attested—as well certainly as are the miraculous cures of the Madonna of Lourdes and those of John Alexander Dowie. We would not attempt to deny them; there would be nothing gained if we could. What we do deny is that these cures are of God. Even if they were beyond dispute miraculous, then, coupled as they are with these Satanic falsehoods, they would come under the head of the lying miracles so often warned against in God's word. (Deut. 13 : 1-3; Matt. 24 : 24; 2 Thess. 2 : 9.) But they are not miraculous. They bear no resemblance to the cures wrought by Jesus and his apostles—neither in principle, for he dealt with sin and sickness as with bitter realities, not imaginations; nor in fact, for his cures were universal, instantaneous, and complete, his power even extending to the raising of the dead four days after burial. But "Christian Science" is simply a method of psychotherapy the same in general nature as Dowie's, as that of Lourdes, as Weltmer's, as Dr. Elwood Worcester's of the Emanuel Church of Boston, and as that practiced in some secular institutions of Suggestive Therapeutics. Its necessary conditions, limitations, and failures are the same as theirs, though, of course, "Christian Science" fervently denies that. Never a demonstrated case of the cure of any organic trouble stands on record, as far as I have known and heard; and it fails probably quite as regularly in the case of severe functional disorders.

They will present lists of cures, to be sure. But Dr. Cabot, in a recent magazine article, has shown how unreliable and inaccurate these accounts are, both as to diagnosis and as to their cure.

But "Christian Science" bears the unique distinction that it freights its system of healing with the biggest consignment of falsehoods that was ever forwarded to the public on such grounds. It brazenly takes the Bible out of the hands of the people, while it leaves the printed book in their hands; for the Bible no longer means to those followers what it says, but only what Mrs. Eddy —the greatest fake that was ever palmed off on a credulous generation—decrees it shall mean. Its God is not the God of the Bible. Its Christ is not the Christ in whom Christians believe. It has no personal God. He is "Life, Light, Good, Mind"—anything you choose, but not a person. Christ is an idea. Devil there is none, for the impersonal thing called "God" fills all the universe, and there really would be no room left for a devil. All the universe is God, and vice versa. Hence we also are part of God. Everything is part of God. So everything is good. If anything appears to be not good, it is only an illusion. All men are good—they are all divine. So there is no sin. Evil is imaginary and has power over us only as long as we believe in it and in the testimony of our senses. No personal God, no Christ, no cross, no blood, no atonement, no sin, no hell, no devil, no matter, no decay, no sickness, no pain, no death.

And who believes that? Thousands upon thousands, and the number is daily increasing. Even members of the church of Christ have bitten the delusive bait. Among its adherents there is a large proportion of the highly educated and intelligent. Do you think it strange? It has always been so; not by iron decree, but in the nature of things. For some of the greatest minds of history

have been humble believers in God's word, but pride of intellect lays a man peculiarly open to the worst of delusions. "Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes," said the Lord Jesus to his Father. (Matt. 11:25.) "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." (1 Cor. 1:26-29.) And it happens again, as it has in olden times, that "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Rom. 1:22.)

One more point of distinction. As some one has pointedly remarked, there is one peculiar form of matter that Christian Science seems to believe in, and that is money. They believe in cash. Christ became poor, but Mrs. Eddy has gotten rich. So have many of her helpers. They know how to charge, and are not likely to accept imaginary compensation. When a certain noted Christian Scientist accused the professed churches of the country of not fulfilling Christ's commission, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons," he very wisely left off the last clause, for by no pretense could he prove that he or any of his cult practice it—"Freely ye have received, freely give." Mrs. Eddy may have the effrontery of claiming that her revelation is superior to that of Christ, but she could hardly claim that her methods are superior. And God has warned us of those that shall come, "and in covetousness shall . . . with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not." (2 Pet. 2:3.)

And now just a word of loving warning from God to all that may for any cause have been attracted by this evil teaching and may chance to see this: "Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves, that ye

lose not the things which we (apostles) have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works." (2 John 7-11.) And this applies here so fully that no truer name could be given the system than "Antichristian Science."

A FATAL OVERSIGHT.

It is so easy for men to lose themselves in the contemplation of secondary causes, to the forgetting of Him that owns the universe and controls it according to his own will; without whom not a sparrow falls; who "maketh poor and maketh rich," who "bringeth low and lifteth up;" who woundeth and healeth; who has done what he pleased "in the heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all the deeps." Thus many scientists become infidels and materialists because behind the laws and forces they have been studying they see no God, nor any place for a God. Thus also faithless Israel understood not whence came their blessing, nor the real source of their afflictions. It was for this cause and for that, that they had conflicts and were smitten by their enemies—bad policy, perhaps, blunders in generalship and tactics, bad military discipline, insufficient forces or arms. All of which things may indeed have figured in their disasters, but they did not constitute the cause. And while thinking of these things they did not "regard the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the works of his hands." Their thoughts did not rise so high as that. They broke down houses and repaired the walls, and gathered reservoirs of

water against the days of siege; but, as Isaiah pointed out to them, "Ye looked not unto him that had done this, neither had ye respect to him that purposed it long ago." (Isa. 22:9-11.) So do we get exceeding wise sometimes with that blind wisdom of the earth. We can see why this happened and why that. We can figure out the whys and wherefores of things. We have reasoned about the "how" until we have forgotten the "what," and until God is left out, his promise discredited, prayer seems valueless and useless, and we feel justified to make sport of the childlike faith that believes God will do what he said even when we do not see how he can or by what means, and to laugh at the man who humbly says, "If the Lord will." O, ye wiseacres, that blind the minds of men by your cheap reasonings!

"FROM WHENCE SHALL MY HELP COME?"

When it comes to pass that men leave God out of their calculations and deal only with secondary causes, then it follows that they no longer look to God for help, but address themselves to secondary helps for assistance and relief. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent to King Jareb." Alas, Ephraim! King Jareb cannot help when God rises up against thee, nor can he cure the wound God strikes. (Hos. 5:13-15.) And when the Christian becomes steeped in the futile wisdom of the world, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind, he will seek refuge in the world's rudiments, in pagan philosophy, in poet's sentiments, in art, in music, in logic and disputatious self-conceit. He will begin to prate about "psychology" and "character building" and "self-culture" and "will power" and "formation of habits," and about politics and sociology—things which Aristotle and Socrates

and any other heathen might have set forth with equal force; things that never did save and never will, until a man can lift himself up by his own bootstraps. And they hope to compass the salvation of men's souls by that message of death! But where is the gospel that can lift up the publican and harlot? Where the story of God's love that melts stony hearts? Where the transforming power of "Christ in you, the hope of glory," and the teaching concerning "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus"? And when the gospel is taught, it is often with such an affectation of great deepness and in such adulteration with human philosophy that the cross of Christ is made of none effect. (1 Cor. 1:17.) Blessed be the day for Israel when they shall give up the vain help of man, and say: "Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; . . . for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy." (Hos. 14:3.) And happy are those to-day who lift up their eyes and say: "Our help cometh from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth." (Ps. 121:1, 2.)

THORNS BEARING GRAPES.

Once, in the days gone by, when Jesus and his apostles taught, the world was represented as very evil before God. Satan was the prince. The whole world lay in the wicked one. It loved its own, but it hated Christ and his followers. "If any man love the world," warned John, "the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." (1 John 2:15-17.) Now what has happened? Has the world come around to the ways of Christ? Has the thorn bush begun to bear grapes, and the thistle figs? One might think so, to see the love-

making—lovemaking of the wrong sort—between the church and the world. Be not deceived. The world is still the world. And if a friendship has sprung up, it is the church that has compromised the principles of its Master.

How Bad is the World?

We are told that the world is not wholly bad, and that much good—things honorable and lovely and just and of good report—is found in the world; and would we be unjust? Far be it from us. But these things existed in a measure even in the days of Christ and the apostles, without in the least affecting their verdict. We prefer to go by that which the Holy Spirit has stated concerning the world. The facts are these: The world moves on the fleshly plane, and is not controlled by faith. That is the whole secret. They eat and drink, buy and sell, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage. The virtues and excellencies that favor these occupations, such as industry, frugality, thrift, patriotism, unselfishness, soberness, are highly esteemed and much practiced in the world, and the corresponding vices opposed. But not because these are sinful. The world raises a great wail over the sin of drunkenness, but it is because of its fearful results. A hundred worse sins, especially sins against God, go unnoticed, or are, perhaps, even encouraged. Lectures on morality are indeed welcomed. They are of the world, they speak of the world, and therefore the world heareth them. But with God sin is sin because it is sin. He does not go by results. Neither has the morality, the self-control, and the sacrifice of the world any religious value at all, because it is not of faith nor done as unto him. We must measure these things by God's standards. But yet let us not forget that "God

so loved the world;" and he sends us forth into the world to testify the gospel of the grace of God, "to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God."

RELIGION AS A SUBTERFUGE.

God made his religion a refuge, but men often make it a subterfuge. Whenever a man thinks that by religious observances he can condone for a wicked or selfish life; when he thinks that he can screen himself from the eye of God behind churchgoings and making prayers and giving money for religious work, and under cover of these things pursue his own fleshly course, he has just miscalculated the One with whom he has to do. He may smother his conscience by that kind of maneuver, but he cannot fool God. He may cheat men, himself to boot, but God is not mocked. When he will be dragged out from behind the screen of names and claims and empty performances, into the light of God's countenance, all pretense will be at an end. If anything on earth disgusts God, it is this effort to cheat him with appearances. Read Isa. 1: 11-18. God looks with mercy upon a weak, faltering child; but the hypocrite shall bear his iniquity.

LOOKING FOR JESUS.

One can imagine how a church of new converts in heathen Africa, when they heard of the promised coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ, would with childlike faith begin to look for his return every day. That was the attitude of the early church, as many scriptures testify—a constant looking for his return to take his own to himself; and this gave their whole life an unworldly turn. (Phil. 3: 20, 21.) This should be the attitude of

the church now. But in our preconceived notions we have no room left for the coming of Christ. We look for death. We expect Christ away at the other end of a thousand years of triumph; but not here, not now. It fills no essential place in the scheme of God's plans as we understand them. Hence it is a neglected topic. Yet the word of God has so very much to say about it, and so many exhortations to watch and to wait. Had we not better let our notions go and begin again to look for Jesus every day? It cannot be very long now. If he was near then, he is nearer to-day. Blessed are those whom he finds watching.—March 18, 1909.

THE PERPETUAL MESSAGE OF GOD'S WORD.

Because all that God tells us in his word is so universally true, whether of himself, or of the world, or of human nature, it has perpetual application in every man's life. It is, after all, just a simple little melody which constitutes the music of life, and the ages and generations only play the variations on it. This nation's history, that man's life, the deed that is blazoned abroad or the thought that lives unknown in the innermost heart—they but repeat the song with varying emphasis, with chord and discord, truly and falsely, but in essentially the same strain. Without detracting in the least from the literal, historical truth of the Bible, I see a spiritual meaning constantly accompanying it like a shadow. These circumstances I read about other peoples and men and times—somehow it seems to me I have passed through them myself. Every new experience of mine which a day may bring, I find there already tabulated and described in words better than I could have chosen, and I wonder why I had not noticed it there before. Never a subtle suggestion, never a note of praise, never

a pang of sorrow, remorse, penitence, but it is already expressed there through the Spirit of God.

I have tasted the innocence of Eden. I also ate forbidden fruit and have in my time tried to hide from God and to cover my shame with flimsy pretense of fig leaves. The hatred of Cain has rankled within my breast, and I have shared in the obedience and persecution of Abel. I have sought, like Cain's descendants, to compensate with worldly pleasure, business, works, and arts, the missing of Jehovah's favor. I have walked with God as Enoch and Noah. Like Abraham, I went forth by faith into uncertainties; and I, too, had to learn to give the dearest things of life to God, that from his hand I might receive them again. The discipline of Jacob has fallen to my lot. I wrestled with the angel at Peniel and came off limping, by my daring efforts to force the purposes of God, but was blessed of him when in realization of my weakness I threw myself on his mercy and clung to him. I have been in Egyptian bondage, and, bought with blood, I passed through the Red Sea. I fumbled many needless years in the wilderness because of unbelief. I passed over into Canaan by faith, and won victories and found rest. Israel-like, I failed to make a clean sweep, and was led away from God by the unconquered, unsurrendered things in my heart, and went into captivity. I hanged my harp upon the willows of Babylon and in bitterness of soul remembered Zion. So has the hope of Israel also found its response in my heart: "When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the nations, Jehovah hath done great things for them."

These things I read, and it seems to me like a reminiscence, as if I had been there myself and participated in

them long ago. Nor only that. The thoughts that were in my heart unknown, unrecognized; the motives that led me; the feelings that worked there unconsciously—the word of Good so portrays them before my eyes and reveals them to me that I cannot go on longer in self-deception. It diagnoses, it points out, it prescribes the remedy, it heals. Wonderful book! Look in the psalms of David. There is the whole gamut of the human heart. What joy have you had, what sorrow, what doubt, what fear, what longing, what satisfaction, what hopes, what despairs, what deep things of the heart which you would shrink to reveal to another? Lo, they are all there, openly told.

Now this does not clash at all with the fact that God spoke unto us by his Son, and to the fathers, on the other hand, in times past, by the prophets. In matters of worship and religious practice we are exclusively under teaching of Christ. Nevertheless, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; and "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and through comfort of the (Old Testament) Scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4.) There are immutable principles revealed, and an unchanging God, and the same human nature, with whom God deals at every point and angle. And so, in all its parts, the word of God bears a perpetual meaning and message to all men everywhere and of all times. For this reason, "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (2 Tim. 3:16, 17.) May that Word become more and more precious in our eyes and fill us with hope and love, with motive and strength unto every good work!

"WE WOULD SEE JESUS."

The Greeks said to Philip: "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip tells Andrew, and they two come to Jesus and tell him. (John 12: 20-33.) Evidently they had some doubt as to the propriety of the request. Philip would not tell him by himself; he must put part of the responsibility of bearing the hazardous message upon Andrew. And what did Jesus answer? It says he answered them, but we have to read it twice and think on it awhile before we see an answer in it. He did not say "Yes," and he did not say "No." He sent no message to the aspiring Greeks. But before his eye opened the view, most wonderful and sweet to the lover of souls, a vision of men of all nations seeking him and finding in him all their great need supplied. "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob. . . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." (Isa. 49: 6.) And this request of the Greeks was an earnest and first fruit of world-wide salvation. So, instead of directly replying, he foretold his coming sufferings, when, as a grain of wheat cast into the earth, he would perish that he might become the light of many. "And I," he said, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." There is in our hearts also the longing for Jesus. We, too, would see him, and we feel that there, in his presence, would be our rest and our salvation; there we could unburden our hearts forever, the still unsatisfied yearning, there find love and help and confidence that would chase every fear away. The request of the Greeks in a deeper and broader meaning comes from our own innermost hearts.

"We would see Jesus, the great Rock Foundation,
On which our feet were set by sovereign grace;
Nor life nor death with all their agitation
Can thence remove us when we see his face."

When he was lifted up and his heart was breaking for our sakes, he drew us unto himself. And we come and behold him by faith, and being transformed into the same image, we bide the time when we shall be like him, and shall, forever in the Father's house, see him as he is.

GOD HEARING PRAYER.

God has pledged himself to answer every prayer of faith, although he never pledged himself to give us precisely the thing asked for, except under certain conditions. We often ask for foolish and hurtful things. A hungry child might see a stone in his father's house, and, deceived by the resemblance, might think it to be a loaf, and ask for it. Not even a man would be mean enough to mock his child's desire by giving him the stone, let alone God. Or mistaking a serpent for a fish, as we so often do, we might make request for it. But God is far too good to give it to us. If even we know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall the Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him! Is that a problem? It's an easy one. Just as much more as God is better and wiser than we are. The emphasis here is not so much on the giving as on knowing how to give the right thing. But note, further, he does give something always—we never ask in vain; if not the thing we ask for, then a better thing; always "good things." And no true prayer falls to the ground. "O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

A SETTLED QUESTION.

A noted preacher once stated that in his childhood home the question of going to church on Sunday was not a debatable one. This thought reaches further. A good deal of failure in Christian life comes of our leaving it an open question whether we will do God's will or not. Then when the time comes to obey, we consider and debate and halt between two opinions until the day is lost. "O that my ways were established to observe thy statutes!" wrote the psalmist. Yes, if we would but settle the question in our hearts, once for all, beyond further discussion, that, whatever may come or go, we will first of all do God's will!

DELIVERED UNTO SATAN.

It is a mistake to suppose that the withdrawing of fellowship from a man cuts him off from the body of Christ. The very fact that he can come back by repentance, and does not have to be baptized again, shows he was not out of the church. It is also a mistake to think that the withdrawing seals the offender's perdition. Quite the other way; it is God's means—and, if understood aright, a most powerful means—to save him. When the church, acting under the instructions of Christ, withdraws from a brother, God ratifies the action. (Matt. 18:18.) It will be a blessing to the church and also to the sinful member. And what is the blessing to him? He will be delivered unto Satan—not for damnation, unless he remains stubborn unto the end; but for chastisement, that he may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Now what Satan can and will do to a man under leave from God, and within the limit God sets him, is plentifully illustrated in the case of Job. A man in this

way formally delivered over into the hands of Satan must pass through a severe discipline. This appears in the very language Paul employs: "Hymenæus and Alexander, whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme." (1 Tim. 1:20.) "In the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (1 Cor. 5:4, 5). This commandment, so solemnly given, has been treated as if it were an optional matter, greatly to the hurt of both the church and the erring members.

CAN EVERY ONE BE REACHED?

A certain writer takes the position that every human being is approachable to the influence of the gospel, and that there is a way to every soul, and in every heart a chord that may be struck. So, he concludes, if we fail to reach any man, it is simply because we have failed to find the right road. Now this is simply a big mistake. If every man could thus be reached, Jesus and Paul would have swept everything before them. Yet how often we read, "Some believed and some believed not." Was it Paul's fault? There is one means to save men—the gospel of Christ, not in word only, but backed by its embodiment in the life of the Christians who bear it. Beyond this every means employed will not make Christians, but only nominal followers. Our responsibility does not extend to the converting of men, but only to the faithful and earnest presentation of the gospel in word and life. But the frantic efforts of some evangelists to swell the number of converts by any means possible have been a great curse to Christianity.

WEIGHING THE CONSEQUENCES.

The chief priests and Pharisees were troubled about Christ. It was not so much the question whether he preached the truth and obeyed God that worried them, for, in a pinch, they could have winked at a little weakness along these lines; but his doing and preaching might create troublesome consequences. "What do we?" they said one to another, after the raising of Lazarus—"for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." So out of pure policy they decided to avoid trouble by killing him. (John 11:47-53.) Now the Pharisees were men, and human nature is human nature. A man might to-day be tempted to repudiate or neglect, or entirely to explain away, certain parts of God's word because it might have a bad effect. To fairly and squarely present one passage might cause some folks to think that, after all, the "sanctificationists," or some other "ists" or "ites," had a grain of truth; or another passage might leave the impression that there is something in "election" and "predestination," or that a Christian cannot fall from grace. A man might be afraid to duly emphasize some features of the word because the sectarians make much of them; or he might look ahead and calculate that if he lets a certain statement of God's word go at its face value he cannot abide its logical issue—all of which is essentially the same motive as that which led the Pharisees to suppress the Christ. We must leave results to God. Instead of asking, "Is it expedient?" let us ask first, "Is it right and true?" Did God say or command it? Of all people, Christians should be the least trammeled by what others may think or say or do. Having no human creed to uphold; having

a divine right to all the truth of God's word in its fullness, it no longer matters whether any one else believes and teaches what I teach or not, or whom it offends or confirms, as long as God said it.

DREAMING AND DOING.

In a recent publication I note a quotation from Carlyle: "Our grand business in life is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies closely at hand." This is true as far as it goes; but the shallow wisdom of the world seems to be unable to utter more than a half truth. For a fact, the first appeal of Christ is to things dimly in the distance, which we can see only by faith. Having perceived those, we are ready to consider the things that lie nearer. If we leave or neglect the wondrous themes of God's great plans and future dealings, the coming of the Lord, the glories and terrors of the ages to come, and confine ourselves to the consideration of immediate duties, those duties themselves become dreary and oppressive and commonplace. We need all the motive we can get. Man lives by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God—poetry and prophecy as well as precept. True, dreaming alone is of no value. But all great action and earnest life is backed up by such "dreams" and visions as God's word furnishes. Hope is inspiration to do, and not an empty dream. "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) But nothing is more blighting than a bald, bare utilitarianism.

DOCTRINES APART FROM CHRIST.

It is always a bad day for the church, as history abundantly testifies, when it begins to deal in doctrines

and schemes of salvation in the abstract. Nor is it good to make a special plea of loyalty to "the cause" and to "principles." That is a mistake. What God wants is a personal trust—a true, loving devotion and unshakable loyalty toward the Lord Jesus Christ himself. That is the essence and gist of it all. The highest loyalty to cause and doctrine follows of itself if the right relation to Christ exists and all things are done in reference to him. But to handle doctrines and arguments and "points," to hold these things as valuable in themselves, and to suppose that they constitute Christianity, is like leaving the central sun out of the solar system, while taking all manner of pains to have each planet in its proper path. But how can they keep their orbit when the central attraction is not there? There is not too much doctrinal preaching, but too much doctrinal preaching without vital reference to Christ; too much pleading for the cause, when little or no personal devotion to the Lord exists; too much exhorting to be loyal—to an abstract "scheme" or "plan." Such religion is like that of the Pharisees, who, in their solicitude for ceremonies, overlooked the great commandment; and it has no real power over the hearts of men. Preach Christ.

MUST.

"Must" means compulsion, bondage, servitude, the hardness of which depends altogether on who the master is that says, "Thou must," and who the servant to whom it is spoken. If the master is self, the flesh, sin, the world, Satan, the bondage is increasingly bitter, and finally becomes insupportable, to the selfish, pleasure-loving man who mistook license for liberty. Less severe, but still a hard bondage it is when an unwilling man is lashed by the fear of retribution into compliance with

God's law. That kind of service is weary and disappointing in its results. The gospel takes hold of man's love, through faith and hope, and gives him motive and power. Moreover, it deals with us as sons rather than slaves. It appeals to the heart: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice." But the "must" is always there. Even Jesus, "though he was a Son, yet learned obedience." There were "musts" in his life. "I must preach the kingdom of God." "We must work the works of him that sent me." "The Son of man must suffer many things." These "musts" were inexorable. But Jesus was never anything but free. The secret of it was this: he knew God so well that he appreciated nothing so much as that sweet and adorable will of his Father, which he knew to be the embodiment of all the Father's infinite wisdom and irreproachable love. It was sweeter to him than food. "My meat is to do the will of the Father." (John 4:34.) He hugged it to his heart as his sweetest treasure; for no one understood better the good and the truth and the loveliness and blessing that lay wrapped up in the priceless will of God. "Then said I, Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is written within my heart." (Ps. 40:7, 8.) To understand this and to follow it means faithfulness and freedom and happiness and peace in seeking and obeying the "musts" which God has appointed for us.

THE HIGHEST PRINCIPLE.

Second-class principles, it has been said, make second-class men; and when a second-class man has to meet a first-class test, he goes down. The only principle that will abide all tests is whole-hearted, whole-souled devo-

tion to Christ. He who puts not Christ above father, mother, home, possessions, above self and all self-will and desire, will end either like the man who began to build with insufficient funds, or like him that went out with ten thousand to meet another coming against him with twenty thousand; either he is not able to finish what he began, and simply gives up; or else he will make compromise with the world, the flesh, and the devil, whose overwhelming force and influence he is not able to face. (Luke 14: 25-33.) Settle it, therefore, in your heart, as a principle irrevocable, that at all costs Jesus Christ shall be the controlling power of your life.

WHO IS YOUR MASTER?

"When two men are walking down the road and a dog following them, you cannot tell whose dog it is until the road forks. Then you can tell. The dog will follow his master." It may seem for a time that the Lord's interests and ours are running side by side. But there unavoidably comes a time when the ways part. Then watch. Then it will appear beyond a contradiction who the real master is—whether God or mammon, whether Jesus or self, whether Christ or the world. When it comes to the point that one or the other must be neglected; that one or the other of the two interests must be sacrificed; that one or the other of the two masters must be slighted—that is the day that distinguishes the wheat from the tares. Few men reject Christ entirely at such a crisis; but if they push his claims into the background, or if they make aught else beside his will the paramount issue, the choice of masters is unmistakable.

JESUS PRAYING.

When Jesus came up out of the waters of the Jordan, he was praying. Before choosing his apostles, he prayed all night to God. He was praying at the time of his transfiguration. On occasions he had no time to rest, sometimes no time so much as to eat; yet he never failed to find time to pray. Late in the night, early in the morning "a great while before day," he was out in the solitude praying. He did not content himself with simply raising his heart in the midst of the multitudes, but he must get away from the crowd, away even from his disciples, to be alone with God. They were not always the calm, easy kind of prayers; for at times the burdens upon him became so heavy and the urgency of his needs rose to such height that "he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." That was in the days of his flesh. But now his is even more a ministry of prayer. There at the right hand of God he pleads and intercedes; and he is able, therefore, "to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The followers of Jesus, imbued with the influence of his spirit, placed what might seem to us an extravagant weight on prayer. The Book of Acts often mentions their praying and often implies it. After they returned to Jerusalem, they continued steadfastly in prayer while awaiting "the promise of the Father." The first converts, taught by the apostles, continued steadfastly in prayer. (Acts 2:42, 46, 47.) They prayed at their first persecution. (Acts 4:23-31.) The apostles gave themselves steadfastly to prayer and to the ministry of the word. (Acts 6:4-6.) At their prayer the converts of Samaria received the Holy Spirit. And so on. It is

pray, pray, pray. The Epistles make equally as much of it. In Colossians, for instance, we have within four short chapters ten references to prayer and thanksgiving. The time would fail me if I would attempt to enumerate the things taught us about prayer. But this much we see, that the emphasis God placed upon prayer was a very extraordinary one, and that in his mind it holds a very great and important place—just as in ours it holds a small one.

It may be because we can not reason out how it can do any good (for we are great reasoners, and loath to accept anything we cannot see through); it may be that, in reaction to some sectarian teachings, we have unduly minimized God's part and unduly magnified the activity of man, so that it seems to us that "doing" is a long way more important than praying, and we have hardly a place left for prayer; it may be because we lack the boldness and faith to approach the throne of grace on the ground of the shed blood—be it for this or for that, prayer has greatly gone into decadence. Evidently some change of spirit has come upon us since the days of the apostles. Will not obedience bring results? it is asked. Then what essential place does prayer fill? And is not God eager to save sinners? Then what could our prayers add to his willingness? And can any sinner be saved without obedience to the gospel? Then what is more useless than praying for him? Better be at work trying to get him to obey. Now it is certainly not intended that we should do nothing but pray. But we might well note that God was understood, in apostolic days even, to be eager to save men; nevertheless Paul writes "that . . . prayers . . . be made for all men;" for "this is good . . . in the sight of God, our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:1-4.) And it was as much necessary

then that men go and preach, yet Jesus said: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." And even an inspired apostle depended on the prayers of the Christians that a door might be opened to him to preach the gospel, that utterance might be given him, "to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel." (Eph. 6:19, 20.) True, "prayer is no substitute for duty;" but neither is "duty" a substitute for prayer. For, "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain who build it." We need more prayer, more prayer! And first of all, to ask, "Lord, teach us to pray"—not "how to pray" so much as "to pray"—that we may find it practicable and sweet to spend very much time in the presence of God.

CONVERSATION.

A scholar was once invited to a social gathering of noted people. "How did you like the company?" some one asked him afterwards. With a smile the wise man answered: "If they had been books, I would not have read them." It is amazing how much nonsense and pure folly comes to light in our conversation. If the loose talk of an evening were recorded verbatim and submitted to us, we would not own it. We think lightly of it, but God attaches considerable importance to what we idly say. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting; but rather giving of thanks." (Eph. 5:3, 4.) Our talk, especially our unpremeditated, spontaneous talk, is an index to the heart; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Therefore, also, the "idle," unpremeditated words become the criterion of judgment. "For by thy words thou shalt be

justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt. 12: 35-37.) "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt"—not with sugar, nor yet with vinegar and gall. Not flattery, not bitterness, not cynicism; but gracious, helpful, uplifting speech should come forth from our lips. The mouth of the righteous is a wellspring of life.

THE DANGER OF CRAFTY TEACHINGS.

There is considerable harm done by the reading of certain religious books, especially those written with a view to propagating some strange doctrine. No man, for instance, who is not well grounded in the word of God, should read a book setting forth Mormon beliefs, or "Millennial Dawn," or Seventh-Day Adventism, or Roman Catholic propaganda. In the first place, you are under no obligation to do so. Secondly, it is dangerous. Any skillful handler of words can make a very plausible argument on any side of any question that could be imagined, and especially if he has his heart set on it. By the craftiness and subtlety of men simple-minded Christians are often led away into error; and, strange to say, the more absurd and outrageous the error, the more fascinating becomes it when a man is once under its spell. We have the word of God, and no limit placed on it. Let us follow the voice of the Shepherd and flee from the voice of strangers. We can accept a Bible truth, to be sure, no matter what the stripe of believer or unbeliever by whom it may be pointed out; for a Christian has a right to all the truth, and need never turn into any kind of sectarian in order to accept any portion or phase of it. The ground of all true union, God's word, comprises all truth. But to delve into the writings of divers and strange religionists in search of truth is worse than a waste of time.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The teaching concerning the Holy Spirit is not so obscure. It is hard to grasp the facts God presents, and the human mind, endeavoring to reconcile them with reason, reaches out for explanations; and these "explanations" are the things that mystify us. When one says, "I can't understand it," it may turn out that he really means: "I can't believe it, the way it stands." He cannot make it fit in with whatever else he knows. It is not so much a question of understanding, sometimes, as of believing what the word of God says even when we can't systematize it. The teaching concerning the Holy Spirit is greatly neglected. About the truth is that many are afraid of it—afraid it might lead them into "abstract operation," or lend countenance to some of the extravagances with which the name of the Spirit of God is often disgraced. Others fear that the word of God might be depreciated, or that people might be deluded by mistaking their "feelings" for the work of the Spirit. And so forth. These fears are groundless, in so far at least that a faithful study, acceptance, and presentation of God's teaching on this subject can produce only good results; and any abuses of it cannot be laid either to the truth or to the faithful preacher who presents it. See how much and how important things God says about the Spirit. Follow the subject through Acts or the Epistles. Set aside for the time the consideration of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and "miraculous gifts," and mark that which can and does apply to all Christians. Interpret every passage at full face value, and with as little comment and "explanation" as possible. The result will not be bad. You will be surprised at the sweeping statements some of those men of God dared to make. There will come a larger faith, a stronger hope, more courage

and reliance upon God, and your fidelity to the word of God will not be a whit abated. Let us seek to understand all God would have us know about the Holy Spirit. It is one of the great needs of the church to-day.

HOW THE BIBLE TEACHES.

It is commonly accepted that "the Bible teaches by direct command, by approved example, and by necessary inference." Of these three ways, the first is unqualifiedly safe. What the word of God directly states or commands is unerringly true. But it is well to look carefully to distinguish between what it really does say and what we may have read into it. When, however, we take the second statement, "The Bible teaches by approved example," we face a danger. Most of the long, useless controversies that have troubled us, and a great many hobbies, have arisen from the misapplication of the "example teaching." The authoritative teaching of the Bible is by outright statement; but approved examples are only illustrative. They illustrate the carrying out of God's will under varying circumtsances. And by no means must it be supposed that we are restricted and limited to copy these examples in their minute particulars. If, for instance, the Lord in his great commission said, "Go," Paul's going on foot or by ship is indeed an approved example, but does not debar us from going some other way. As long as we go, and as long as in our particular method of going we do not infringe on any other principle or direction of God's word, we are obeying God. This is plain enough. Nevertheless, most of us have heard of brethren who contended for going afoot or by boat, because that is "the New Testament example." When in Acts 2:42 we see the manner of the first church, how they worshiped and served God, it

is well for us to follow the example; but we are not limited to the order in which the items of their worship and service were arranged, nor yet to the time of day when they met, and such like matters. "Can you find any example in the New Testament where the Bible was taught in a class?" one brother asked another. "What if I could not?" he replied. "The command to teach authorizes me to teach anywhere, in any manner, at any time of day or night—granted, of course, that I use no means or methods that contravene any of God's teachings elsewhere." It is only where the "approved example" touches a vital point not clearly taught by outright instruction that we should confine ourselves to the copy of it; as when in Acts 20:7 we find in the course of such an example the only plain indication in the word of God as to the day when Christians, as taught by the apostles, took the Lord's Supper.

This principle is not dangerous. It gives no room for the creating of societies, for example. The society is not a method of preaching, but an organization which itself uses methods. This principle authorizes no instrumental music, as some might fear; for playing an organ is not a method of the singing which God commanded, but an addition to and an obscuration of it, involving the perversion of the whole spirit and purpose of worship. No, to refuse to be limited by approved examples, and to maintain the right of obeying God in any and every right method and time and place, is not dangerous, but to limit one's self by the "examples" is dangerous—it is the occasion of numberless hobbies and cranky conceits which spoil the spirit of Christianity and cramp and fetter every willing soul.

The last of the three ways in which the Bible teaches —"necessary inference"—is also problematical. Not in the strictest sense, perhaps; but its strictest application

is rarely adhered to. I would not object to inferences, necessary or otherwise, for they often open up great fields of interest and may open our eyes to facts we would not otherwise have noticed. But we cannot be too cautious in making or weighing inferences. There is where men err. Thence come creeds and theories. We may infer, but we cannot be dogmatic about our inferences. Our logic may be good, but our premises may be mistaken. Our premises may be true, but they may not be comprehensive enough. Men blunder and blunder—always have, always will. And often just in proportion as their field of vision is contracted do they bluster and assert and dogmatize. The greatest minds have ever been most modest in presenting their conclusions. The things which God has said we may speak with all authority. But our reasonings, if presented at all, should be understood to hold a strictly secondary place, and should be held with a very light grasp; for these things mislead, these things create endless controversies, and in these things men tyrannize one another.

Finally, when a man, for the love of God and out of his great desire to do God's will, seeks for the details set forth in the Word, he is on a good road and not likely to go astray; but if, for controversy's sake or to exhibit his own superior correctness in doctrine, he goes to ferret out finer and finer distinctions, he will end in the false, trivial, puerile scrupulousness of the Pharisees.—April 15, 1909.

FACING THE FACTS.

Often a physician will, in order to save a patient's feelings, deceive him as to his hopeless condition. Now, while it may not be best to discourage a patient when there really is hope for him, yet a man is always better

off to know the truth about himself. It may give him a chance to make his peace with God or to throw himself more earnestly on God's mercy and help for his possible recovery. But especially in the great spiritual disease of mankind, sin, it is absolutely necessary that a man understand all his miserableness and doom. This shallow modern optimism that makes a jest of sin and judgment and hell is a lie. Men encourage themselves and one another with pretty sentiments and false hopes, and try to doctor themselves, and take courage, just because they do not understand the seriousness of the trouble; and they never come to until it is too late to be saved. But God is faithful. He tells you your estate, and does not minimize nor exaggerate. He draws a fearfully dark picture of a sinner's condition and position; but in him is also help and forgiveness and salvation, that men may fly to him for healing and refuge. "I don't care for a religion that sends men to a never-ending hell," said an opponent of Christianity. No; no one would. But this is just the opposite. The religion of Christ turns the light on the ruin of the man and then saves him. "For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him." (John 3:17.)

THE NARROW BED.

A sect can be started on a few new tenets, but not even a little sect can be sustained by these few tenets very long. Much less could the church of Christ. If it were attempted to maintain that great institution of God on a few fundamental points concerning faith, repentance, and baptism, by debating a few issues with sects and with "digressives," it would lead only to failure. These things, however right and good and necessary,

cannot sustain interest and spiritual life. Man liveth by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God. By thus narrowing the bed until no man can stretch himself on it, we cause many, before they half understand their position and privilege as Christians, to become discontented, and fall an easy prey to "digressivism," or any other "ism" that may promise a freer scope and a fuller spiritual life.

THE LETTER TO PHILEMON.

As in a dewdrop the whole sun and sky can be mirrored, so a comparatively trifling private affair can become the mirror in which the whole glory and beauty of Christianity is reflected. That is demonstrated in the short letter of Paul to Philemon.

Philemon is not an epistle of *public* scope or importance. It was written by a man to a man about a man. The writer was an inspired apostle, Paul; the man addressed was his friend and brother in Christ, Philemon; and the one concerning whom the epistle treats is Onesimus, a runaway slave of Philemon's. But as unimportant as its whole matter may appear in the view of the wide world's interests, the circumstances set forth in this letter were of deepest concern to the three persons involved. The truths also and principles that shine out through this little inspired writing are of highest importance to us who read it to-day.

The facts underlying Paul's letter to Philemon are these: Onesimus, a slave, has run away from his master, Philemon, a Christian, and a man of some wealth. Moreover it is implied that the fugitive slave had also been a thief. The slave Onesimus arrives at Rome, and there, either by chance, or by seeking, finds Paul, who at the

time is a prisoner. Through contact with Paul he is converted. Now, first of all, old wrongs must be righted. The severe and unflinching rectitude of the gospel must be vindicated. Onesimus must return to his master.

No one who knows anything about slavery in the days of Rome will underestimate the gravity of the situation. To be a *fugitivus* was an enormous offense, punishable in the most terrible way. A slave had at the best *no rights:* no redress for injuries, no protection against the cruelest injustice, no chance even, however innocent, to answer and vindicate himself against any charge or accusation. Instances enough have come down to us to show how common a thing it was for a slave to have to suffer cruel mistreatment, even unto death by crucifixion, for the merest semblanace of a cause, or for no cause at all, save the will of his master or the whim of his mistress. But to be a *fugitive* was a terrible crime, sure of a swift and awful retribution. When long-standing custom, backed by law, demands a certain course, it is exceedingly difficult for the individual to forsake the rut, or even to disengage his mind from the power of the current judgment. What would Philemon do in the matter? Public opinion would demand the extremest punishment of the runaway slave. If he should have him beaten unto blood and unconsciousness, it would be all too lenient. There was a hope that the punishment would be mitigated, but what Philemon might do was a sore problem. In the face of all risks, however, *Onesimus must go back to his master.* Such is the high and stern righteousness of the gospel.

It was a great test for the converted slave, a test of the sincerity of his repentance, a test of his courage and of his trust. It was an equally great test to Philemon. Would the gospel prove its power in his case? Would faith and love prevail over long-sanctioned custom and

legalized unmercifulness? Between the two, to make each one's test less severe, to draw Philemon to the ways of Christ and to comfort and strengthen Onesimus, intervenes Paul's fervent love in the Lord for them both. And this love expressed itself in the tender and powerful intercession to Philemon for the poor slave redeemed by Jesus' blood. That is the soul and purpose of the epistle to Philemon.

There is tact in this letter: great carefulness and wisdom, a sanctified diplomacy which is not the same as policy and worldly shrewdness; but which springs of the tender regard and consideration and sympathy of a genuine love. As he never at any other time had used flattery, or acted with a double motive (2 Cor. 1: 12; 1 Thess. 1: 3-5), so all the courtesy and rhetorical skill displayed in this letter were but the sincere and unstudied expression of a heart made tender and sensitive and wise in that true love, which is the fruit of the Spirit. We note first the warmth of the whole-hearted

SALUTATION.

"1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-workers, 2 and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

It is *Paul* that here speaks. What weight and force the beloved name carries to Philemon's heart! But more is to be added—he is now Paul, *the prisoner of Christ Jesus;* that is to say, for Christ's sake he is now in prison; and as he was the Lord's when he was free, so now bound he is the Lord's prisoner. Will thy heart feel the unspoken appeal of this word, O Philemon? *Timothy the brother* joins in the greeting. Now the address: *"to Philemon"*—and two things he calls him: *"the beloved*

and fellow-worker." Beloved by whom? By the apostle? Surely. But more: by the Lord himself. Not by man, not by the greatest and best of men only, but like Daniel (Dan. 10:11), like the saints at Rome (Rom. 1:8), this brother is the object of Christ's love. May he abide in it! (John 15:9.) And fellow-worker! When we consider the world-wide, age-lasting importance of Paul's great work, what claim had the simple and limited work of a private brother to be mentioned alongside of Paul's? Philemon a fellow-worker of Paul? From God's viewpoint, yes; for He gave to every member in the Body his place and his gift, and made each honorable according to his faithfulness. But there is a sweet condescension in this recognition of Philemon as an apostle's fellow-worker. This also is of love.

Apphia, Philemon's wife doubtless, comes in for special mention. She is *"the sister," "our sister,"* and *Archippus* a son, or a preacher, abiding with them (Col. 4:17), is *our fellow-soldier."* Appreciation, though not definitely expressed, stands out in the very form of the salutation. It develops also that *the church* met *in Philemon's house.* It was a common thing in those days for the church to meet in a private home (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15). and it would be a good and desirable arrangement now in many more cases than is generally thought expedient.

Now, the apostolic greeting and blessing, *"Grace to you and peace"*—grace before peace, for there can be no peace except through God's free grace. What better thing could be embodied in the blessing than these two? And not favor (grace) from a human source, nor the sort of "peace" that men find in forgetfulness, or in some fool's paradise of New Thought, or the misnamed heresy of "Christian Science," which ignores the real evil and mentally drugs them into a false dream of peace

which must sooner or later find a rude awakening—nay, but this peace is *"from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* It is from Him who met the evil and the curse by his love, the God who alone can give true peace; and from Him who made peace and bought peace at the price of his blood; even the true peace, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." May that grace and peace be ours also!

EXPRESSED WITH THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER.
Verses 4 to 7.

"4 I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers, 5 hearing of thy love, and of the faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; 6 that the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ. 7 For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother."

To Paul every true and faithful Christian appeared as a gift of God, good and precious. And truly such they are. Whatever there is of true faith, of love unfeigned, of real goodness, it did not spring out of the fleshly nature of the brethren. Such things come only of the grace of God. If God had left these brethren as natural men, to pursue their own course, and to work out the way of their own nature, they would have been only "children of wrath," even as the rest (Eph. 2:3). If now they are different from "the rest," it is because they are God's workmanship, created over again in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10). For their very willingness to do right, and their very efforts to overcome (which is their side of it)—for whatever they have done and accomplished, the praise and honor belongs to God; for it is He that hath worked in them both to will and to

work for his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13); and they are the trees of God's planting, the work of his hands, that he may be glorified (Isa. 60:21). By the grace of God they are what they are. Well may Paul give God thanks for them — not only on their behalf, but *for them* (1 Thess. 1:2). for they are the living blessings, walking treasures, God's good gift to his own church and to all the world.

"I thank my God always," Paul writes therefore, *"making mention of thee in my prayers."* For Paul had heard of Philemon's love and faith—likely heard it from this very Onesimus himself—a *love* and *faith* which went out in its fruit both *toward the Lord Jesus Christ and toward all the saints.* His prayer now is for Philemon's future walk—that he might continue, grow, go onward from glory to glory, and from strength to strength. Unlike ourselves, Paul prayed as fervently for the strong Christians as for the weak. Both were urgently in need of God's mercy and help; the one that he may be brought back to the right ways of the Lord; the other that he may not faint or grow weary, but go on "abounding more and more." For it has been well said that "We may never go back, but there is a point from which we will never go onward." And that, too, means failure, the more insidious because it often leaves the heart unaware and self-complacent. When therefore Paul heard how the gospel had taken good hold in a church or in a Christian, and was bearing good fruit, straightway he turned to intercession on their behalf, that they might not let up, but press on to better things still (Eph. 1:15-19; 3:14-19.

So he prays for Philemon *"that the fellowship of thy faith"*—the partnership with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Lord's work, into which we have entered by faith (1 John 1:3-7)—*"may become effectual in the*

knowledge of every good thing which is in you, unto Christ." For there are great things implanted in us (comp. Jas. 1:21), gifts which wait to be stirred up (comp. 1 Tim. 4:14, 15; 2 Tim 1:6), hidden blessings and possibilities which await discovery and development—in fact all the virtues and powers which are comprised in the expression, "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1: 27), which came in and became ours when He came in to make His abode with us. It is not what we have that does us good, but what we *know* we have. Let every Christian seek for light and understanding from God, that he may come into fuller knowledge and possession of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 1:17-19). Then will the fellowship of our faith become *effectual unto Christ.* For He shall be able to bear his fruit in and through us.

And, indeed, Philemon was well on the way. Already he had been drinking of the water Jesus gives (John 4:13, 14); and already it had become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life; and others had been refreshed from this springing well within him. *"For I had much joy and comfort in thy love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through thee, brother."* What a refreshing it is when our souls are much discouraged because of the way, to meet with a heart strong and joyful in its faith and love; how it revives us to drink of the sweet streams that flow out of that heart; how our eyes are lightened; how the dark doubts fly, how hope comes and with it new courage and confidence! How welcome these well-springs of healing in our time of need, even as when

" * * Travelers in a desert land,
Beneath a burning sky,
Long for the cooling springs at hand,
For they must drink or die."

THE INTERCESSION FOR THE SLAVE.
Verses 8 to 20.

"8 Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, 9 yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: 10 I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, 11 who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: 12 whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: 13 whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel: 14 but without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. 15 For perhaps he was therefore parted *from thee* for a season, that thou shouldest have him forever; 16 no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. 17 If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. 18 But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth *thee* aught, put that to mine account; 19 I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. 20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ."

At last Paul comes to his point. He has carefully prepared the way for it. A man will lend an ear to those who think well of him and love him. Paul's love and appreciation for Philemon were the best assurance that Philemon would listen to Paul's request. And then, it is not amiss for a brother to be reminded of his past goodness and good work in Christ. We all have a strong inclination for consistency, whether

in evil or in good. If we have begun to do wrong, it is easy enough to look back and make our present conduct of a piece with our former. A similar pull lies in our past good deeds, to draw us yet onward unto more of the same sort of thing. Philemon's past faithfulness and love will stand him in good stead now in this present test (for a great test it is). The precedents he set for himself in former days, and the habit and character of Christlikeness he had thus far wrought out, will help him to do the Christlike thing now. For what I do to-day helps or hinders me in tomorrow's trial, according to whether it is good or bad.

The apostle could have commanded. As the ambassador of the Lord he had the right and the authority to do so. It is good that Philemon should remember this, and that, after all, Paul's words are not so much Paul's as the Lord's. If the act required had been one that involved less of the tenderer emotions than this present act of mercy which Paul was about to demand of Philemon, and which, if it is to be worth anything, must not be strained—Paul might have commanded. In fact if the appeal of love had failed, he might have commanded. But it is not an outward performance done perfunctorily, if not sullenly, that was wanted; but a deed of tender love. Love must ask here, and Love must draw forth love; so that Philemon might not act "grudgingly or of necessity," but that he might do it freely, under the constraint of the love of Christ. For when a man acts in love he is free. The law of love frees us from all other commandments. *"Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech."* This throws a light on some other of Paul's beseechings (1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 5:20; Rom. 12:1). It was the beloved Paul beseeching—*"Paul the aged,"*

grown old in the service of Christ; nay, now even in prison in the Lord's bonds. Paul counts on Philemon's love; Philemon will not say him nay. But behind Paul it is Christ beseeching yea, God himself—"as though God were entreating by us" (2 Cor. 5:20). Did Philemon understand that? Thus does our love for Christ work through our love for his servant. It is not independent of Christ's servants, for it is through them that He becomes known, and is loved. For that cause Paul strove to magnify Him in his body, whether by life or by death. Who loves the Lord Jesus Christ because he has known and loved you, my brother? Yet the time may also come when we must love Him independently, when all men shall fail us, and we must look to Him alone. That will be a still greater test.

Finally comes the name of the unfaithful, unworthy slave—a name which at the beginning of the letter might have roused up an indignation, which, however just, might easily have shut the door to reason and entreaty. But Paul was thoughtful of Philemon. *"I beseech thee for my child Onesimus."* "Paul's child?" muses Philemon as he reads—"Of whom can he be speaking? Surely not that fugitive slave." But yes—even he, *"Whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart."* Now all wrath must stop, and all thought of vengeance and retribution becomes impossible. To touch Onesimus is to strike the heart of Paul—it will never do. If Paul loves him so, then I must treat him as Paul himself. For so does the knowledge of the love of God work in us. First of all I begin to realize how very dear I am to Him. (1 John 4:10) Next it grows upon me that my brother is as dear to Him as I am. I must love him for God's sake. Philemon was well caught. The meshes of the love net Paul had thrown over him were closing in and binding

him on every side. Yet the skilful fisher of men continued to draw. *Who once was unprofitable to thee,"* truly he had been a worthless wretch—*"but now"*—O believe in the transforming power of Christ through the gospel! *but now is profitable to thee and to me.*

"Whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel." As Philemon reads his wonder grows and with it a confidence and affection toward the new and different Onesimus springs up. "Not on my account only," Paul would say, "do I ask you to receive Onesimus with love and regard: he himself is a different man: worthless once, worthy now; once of no account, now so able and helpful that I should like to have kept him to help me in my gospel-work!" The only reason why Paul sends him is that he would not presume upon Philemon's goodness by forcing a good work upon him. For if it were not wholly of Philemon's will and own choice to give Onesimus to Paul for a helper, it would count nothing for Philemon. God accepts no such forced benevolence. Love respected the rights of Philemon in the matter, and looked on his interests, and guarded his privilege of personal choice. It is too common for Christians to force and push one another into good works. But Paul says, *"Without thy mind I would do nothing, that thy goodness should not be as of necessity but of free will."*

But back to Onesimus. Paul discerns God's special providence in this case. The inspired apostle expresses here the knowledge and conviction that God does such things. Although in no wise implicated in the wrong of which Onesimus was guilty, God had so overruled and used the circumstance to give him back to his master, a redeemed man, that Philemon might have him in a higher possession and for ever. *"For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou should-*

est have him forever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord."

It would seem at this point that Paul had said enough and had pleaded in full for Onesimus. But not yet. The apostle sweeps the ground thoroughly, and leaves not a splinter that might hinder the path of the desired conciliation. "If Onesimus has stolen anything"—nay, it is too hard a word—*"if he hath wronged thee at all,* or if his escapade has put you to financial loss, and thus *he oweth thee aught, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee that thou owest to me even thine own self besides."* So Paul would himself make good any financial deficit if Philemon were disposed to make a difficulty of that—which of course he would not; in fact he could not since Paul stood security, not that thereby the deficit was covered, but because it would be out of question to let Paul pay it, seeing Philemon owed Paul his very life. So the bad account of Onesimus must needs be cancelled if not for Onesimus' sake, at least for the love of Paul who assumes all Onesimus' liabilities.

Thus does Paul take the part of the poor runaway slave, and even identifies himself with him. It cannot be summed up in better words than these of Martin Luther:

"This epistle showeth a right noble, lovely example of Christian love. Here we see how St. Paul layeth himself out for the poor Onesimus, and with all his means pleadeth his cause with his master; and so setteth himself as if he were Onesimus, and had himself done wrong to Philemon. Yet all this doeth he not with power or force, as if he had right thereto; but he strippeth himself of his right, and thus enforceth Philemon to forego his right also. *Even as Christ did for us with*

God the Father, so doth Paul for Onesimus with Philemon: for Christ also stripped Himself of His right, and by love and humility enforced the Father to lay aside His wrath and power, and to take us to His grace for the sake of Christ, who lovingly pleadeth our cause, and with all His heart layeth Himself out for us. *For we are all His Onesimi,* to my thinking."

Which, with a bit of reasonable allowance for the figure, is very true indeed.

CONCLUSION AND SALUTATIONS.
VERSES 21-25.

"21 Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say; 22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope through your prayers I shall be granted unto you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; 24 *and so do* Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

There is a reassurance in these last words. "I did not plead because I doubted you Philemon, or thought it needful to persuade you with argument. I know your readiness to follow God's will in every matter, and while I am writing I am assured that you will not only do all I ask, but more," says Paul in effect. As the delicate seismograph senses the slightest tremor of the earth's crust from afar, so Paul's sensitive heart feels that Philemon might be grieved. "Did Paul think it necessary to write to *me* on this fashion? Did he think he needs to plead so insistently in order to persuade an unwilling heart to do that which is good and noble in God's eyes? "Nay brother," replies Paul, "I *knew* you were willing and full of love. The mention of the right course, the

suggestion of my wish and God's will, are enough. You will do, and more than do, all that I ask."

A final, personal message: *"Prepare me also a lodging."* I am coming. How does Paul know? Possibly the prospects were that he would be released from the Roman prison in the near future. But Paul ever recognizes the hand of God in his life; and the fact that *God's movements are affected by the prayers of his children.* There was in Paul none of that dead rationalism which repudiates whatever it cannot understand—which, so far as it can, explains the supernatural out of the universe, or the Bible or the Christian faith; and in respect to the latter dares to say that prayer has no effect save by reflex action upon the person that prays. Paul said, and strictly meant, *"I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you again."* My unbelieving friend may ask here, "How could the prayers of a few Christians in Asia affect the course of Roman justice and open the gates of the imperial prison to a prisoner?" But the answer to that question is not difficult to the believer. God's word has it so. If the prayers of the Lord's disciples could affect the movements of an army so that a certain siege would not occur at a season unfavorable to flight (Matt. 24:20)—or numbers of similar examples—we may confidently believe that God hears prayers and can act in response to them. The "how" is his; ours it is to believe and to pray.

Epaphras, also in prison in the Lord (for wherever a Christian is and whatever he does is "in Christ"), and others who were near Paul, *Mark* (probably the same Mark whom Paul had once refused to take with him, Acts 15:36-40) *Aristarchus, Demas* (who later forsook Paul, preferring the present world, 2 Tim 4:10) *Luke,* "the beloved physician," and writer of Acts and of the gospel that bears his name—send salutation to Philemon.

And as he set out with the benediction of grace and peace, so now he closes with a like doxology:

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

SINCERITY OF PURPOSE AND BELIEF.

When a teacher forgets his true work and begins to work for admiration, when he makes efforts to show his pupils how clever he is, and how much more he knows than they, he is like the salt that lost its Savor—good for nothing.

When a preacher is taken up with his reputation, and works to make an impression, and to have it said of him that he is a great and learned and powerful man, he loses all his worth. Besides, he is pursuing small game; for what if he gains his end? People speak in highest terms of a man to-day and forget him to-morrow. Next day they may hiss him. Is it worth while?

The heart feels more than it knows. If you are a man-pleaser, a flatterer—if you are self-seeking in your work, courting smiles when you should woo souls, grasping at recognition and glory when you should snatch brands from the burning, you may earn the praise of men's lips for a season, but their hearts will despise you. On the other hand, if you are true to God and to yourself and your fellow-men, they may condemn you with their lips, but in their souls they will respect you. Strange dual beings, men are! They may not know why, they may not be conscious of it sufficiently themselves to even state the fact, but the heart of the most ignorant, even of a child, feels genuineness and distinguishes it from falseness, and discriminates twixt love and selfishness. On the surface is the flesh, boisterous and blustering, applauding what pleases it, condemning what opposes;

but beneath is the truer tribunal, the higher self. When the storm of carnal passions has ceased, it asserts itself. So it happens that though it is

"Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne,"

yet "that scaffold sways the future," while the throne falls into night and nothingness. Deal with the hearts of men, not with their flesh or their carnal minds. Behind every human eye sits an awful judge who will justify or condemn you according to your real deserts. If you want real power and abiding praise, you must be true and unselfish. "He that rebuketh a man shall afterward find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue" (Prov. xxviii. 23).

THE CONTROL OF THE WORD.

Our best impulses, our faith, our hope, our love, our zeal—all need to be constantly controlled and restrained or directed. For this serves the word of God. The locomotive may chafe continually against the track as if in effort to set itself free; yet without the track it would swiftly plunge itself into perdition. How good and beneficial is that restraining, directing, controlling track! So is the word of God to us, a track and a guidance. It checks and it balances; it impels and restrains. Our sentiments and notions would run wild, as the branches of the vine would waste their strength in luxurious tangles of shoots and tendrils, were it not for the pruning knife, the word of God. (John 15:2, 3.) Our religious zeal would soon run riot and lead us into all manner of follies and extravagances if we should leave the word of God.

A LACK OF APPRECIATION.

Some church members know so little about what the Bible teaches and have made such little progress in the spiritual life that they seem destitute of appreciation of preaching on Christian living. A teacher would as well be lecturing a class of children in the A grade at school on higher mathematics or astronory as for a preacher to preach to such church members on self-denial, generosity cheerful giving, the beauties of holiness,etc. They see, for instance, no need of the daily study of the Bible or the efficacy and power in daily prayer. Of them Paul speaks as follows: "Of whom [of Christ and his priesthood, his intercession and help] we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing [not studious of the word of God, but sluggish and dull]. For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But solid food is for full-grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil." (Heb. 5: 11-14.) This passage declares that some do not know what "the word of righteousness" teaches, and are, therefore, inexperienced in its practice; that they do not know the difference between good and evil, because they have not excercised their senses in order to discern this difference; and that God does not expect his children to remain babes always, but that they should go on to full growth and become teachers of others. No one can become a child of God without becoming a babe. "Except ye turn,

and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3.) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3-5.) But the child of God must not remain a babe always. "Putting away, therefore, all weakness and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." (1 Pet. 2:1, 2.) Through the study of God's word, which contains "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," and the subjugation of animal appetite and passions, God's children "become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2 Pet. 1:4.) By prayerful self-examination we should know how far we have escaped from this corruption and to what extent we have become partakers of the divine nature. God's children with a normal spiritual appetite, hunger and thirst after righteousness. "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my moouth." (Ps. 119:103.)

"DOWN TO HIS KNITTING."

Illustrative of this lack of appreciation on the part of a few of preaching on godliness and true holiness, the following incident is given. A new preacher to a certain congregation began a meeting for it; and, in his usual way, while telling sinners what to do to be purged, or saved, from old sins, he preached on right living—against lying, defrauding, extortion, covetousness drunkenness, fornication, etc., and on the importance of forgiving one another, loving one another, loving our

enemies, and "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts" and living "soberly and righteously and godly in this present world," while we earnestly look for and desire the coming of the Lord Jesus; and a certain brother of intelligence and influence said to Bro. William Anderson, about the middle of the meeting: "Say, when do you suppose that preacher will get down to his knitting?" Bro. Anderson replied: "You have the matter exactly reversed. You will have to get up on the plane where the preacher is; he will not get down to you at all, he has gone on and left you." With a few, one does not preach unless he argues always against the religious theories of others, and he is not considered strong and bold unless he challenges and dares others to a discussion. To preach firmly and fully the word, to preach "Christ and him crucified," to preach the gospel, to preach the whole counsel of God, is every preacher's duty, and all Christians should encourage him in doing it.

AN EXPERIENCE.

I do not think it out of order to relate a trying experience I had soon after I began to preach, in speaking on the subject that is commonly called "giving." I had no better sense about preaching then than I have now. I though then, and still think, that all God's commandments should be preached and obeyed, and that all God's commands concerning any given thing must be preached and obeyed. In studying the Bible, therefore, I found much said on the subject named above, and one morning during a meeting announced that as my subject. I did so with as much innocence and with as pure a motive as I ever announced and preached on the love of God, because I thought all God's children de-

sired to know his will on all subjects. But I was mistaken. I had uttered only a few sentences when I discovered a great indifference and uneasiness on the part of the church. The brethren hung their heads and begun to turn and rattle the leaves of their hymn books as though they wanted to sing the "invitation song" just then. I found I could not look at them and preach; so I turned to the sisters, feeling sure they would encourage me. But I was disappointed. Their heads were down, too, and they were twisting the corners of their handkerchiefs and picking at their fans. All seemed ashamed of the young preacher and looked as though they wished he had not chosen that subject, for some of the religious neighbors were present, and these neighbors might think he was preaching a "begging sermon." I was forced to stop. When I paused, all looked up, of course, to see what was the trouble. I waited until I saw I had the attention of all, and said: "Brethren, it is not time to sing yet; so let us close up and put down the books and all listen to me. I have made no mistake; I have chosen this subject on purpose; it is a Bible subject; God intends for us to consider it and to practice what he teaches in regard to it. I am not preaching thus that it may be so done unto me; I am not seeking yours, but you; I am not speaking in respect of want, but seeking fruit that may abound to your account. But I am preaching that you may obey God and be saved; for unless you obey God in this matter of being liberal and cheerful givers, you will never be saved; and if I do not preach and practice it, I cannot be saved." By that time I had undivided attention, and proceeded with good effect. When the children of God are made to realize that their growth in grace and salvation in heaven depend upon their being liberal, "rich toward God" (Luke 12:21), and "rich in good works" (1 Tim. 6:

17-19), they are willing to give this matter more earnest heed; and this and every other duty should be placed on the high plane of service to God. "Honor Jehovah with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy vats shall overflow with new wine." (Prov. 3:9, 10.) How can we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven and be rich toward God unless we use our money and means as God directs? He who does not desire to learn and do his duty in this particular does not desire to obey God.

An Unanswered Argument.

The most powerful and therefore the most convincing of all arguments is the one of doing. If congregations and individual Christians do not make this argument against error and sin, they would as well quit theorizing. The strongest declaration of the faith of Christians in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is their meeting on the first day of the week to break bread. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." There is, also, not a more logical and eloquent way of preaching the gospel. Ten thousand congregations, and more, meeting on the first day of the week to break bread in memory of Jesus is a mighty proclamation of the gospel! He who neglects this neglects the proclamation of the gospel and helps to destroy, to that extent, the influence of its proclamation by others. The only successful way to prove that the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" is for the church everywhere to support the truth as God has commanded it to do. When every congregation goes to work and demonstrates by practice that nothing more than the church is necessary in order to evangelize the world, all

missionary societies will die; the action of the church will kill them by demonstrating that they are among the "non-essentials." "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?" This is true with regard to every work God has committed to the church. It is encouraging to note that many congregations are doing more and more toward evangelizing the world. Some, however, are behind and will not do anything regularly toward this great work.

August 17, 1905.

PROVING DOCTRINES.

It is a very preplexing thing to many, both in and out of the church, that so many differing doctrines are taught from the Bible; and many have concluded that the Bible must be rather indefinite and that it lends itself to the support of almost any theory. "They all prove their doctrines from the Bible, and they are all good people," is a very common verdict. The implication is, it does not matter so much what you believe, if you are only "good" and sincere. Now, almost any preacher can indeed "prove" (or do what commonly passes as "proving") his doctrine from the Bible. But there is a vast difference between preaching a "doctrine" and then "proving it from the Bible," on the one hand, and preaching the Bible as your doctrine, on the other. "I charge thee," said Paul to Timothy, "preach the word." Not a theory that can be propped up by various and sundry fragments of the word but the word itself. Whether we can harmonize the statements of the word or not; whether we can systematize them or not; at any rate and by all means, "preach the word!" The man who takes up a portion of scripture, shows its setting in the context, brings out its thought, illustrates and emphasizes it as

the need may be without changing, diminishing, adding thereto, explaining away—that man is doing the best preaching.

April 29, 1905.

TRUSTS AND COMBINES.

The Beef Trust or the Standard Oil is not the worst menace in the trust line. What when men form trusts, tyrannizing and iron-handed, controlling God's truth, so that none under their power can get the word of life except as it passes through their hands? They have done that, and are doing it. They will let you have truth, some truth, but is must bear their stamp and trade mark, and be limited, qualified, and sometimes adulterated according to the peculiar "orthodoxy" of the combine. They keep their customers cowed; they cow one another.

In passing through Colorado, my train stopped at a small town, and a swarm of boys came, crying out, "Cherries; ten a bag! Ten a bag!" Now, the "bag" looked like it might hold a dozen or so of cherries. They did not sell hardly one bag. When they stood discussing I stepped out on the platform and said: "Boys, that's outrageous—you know that so few cherries are not worth ten cents. You must be fair, and 'live and let live.' If you try to make exorbitant profits, you will be losers in the end. If you put the price down to five cents, it will still give you a fair profit, and you will sell more. No reasonable man likes to be robbed, even of one nickel. I will take a bag for a nickel, and probably a good many others would." The boys looked guilty and half-minded to give in. The question was who would give in first. Probably all were anxious to sell at a nickel (for that would have evidently paid them well enough), but each one was afraid of the rest. One little fellow dared to

advance on the proposition. "Say you'll take one for a nickel?" I told him I would. He hesitated, took a sack from his basket, half held it out to me, the others looking on with queer expression, and looking at one another. Just then one of the boys cried, "Scab, Jack!" And quickly Jack put the sack back into the basket, and turned away saying, "You're too cheap for me."

I have thought about that little scene often since. Those boys had an understanding, a combine, and had one another mutually cowed. How often that is done in larger spheres of life—even (I might say especially) in spiritual spheres. You have seen men convinced of the truth, and afraid to acknowledge it. Afraid of what? Afraid of their comrades, fellow-members of the spiritual combine. And they perhaps equally anxious to accept the truth, but each one afraid of the rest; yea, and each one ready to wall up his eyes and utter pious anathemas upon the head of him who should first dare to follow his conviction. Strange, power of a combine—and hard to tell where the power is located! You may say that it is vested in the people that compose it and manage it—but each one of them may feel the bondage and be anxious to escape, but where is the hero who will brust the fetters and face the meanness and weakness of those whom he is emancipating? It would be interesting to read the deeper thoughts of some assembly that have met for mutual fortification. How many have doubts as to the strict truths of a tenet they are loudly contending for, even to the very leader himself! If they would just speak out their real heart, perhaps they would all be found like-minded on some higher and nobler conception of truth. But, no! The leader can not afford it, partly because of his reputation, partly because he is afraid to put notions into the head of the flock and turn them away from the good, beaten path; whereas of the

rest each trembles at the thought of being stigmatized as heterodox or unsound by his fellows. So they talk much and loud, and condenm the heretics, and call one another orthodox, and instead of being true to the light they see, they choose darkness, comforting themselves in one another and in the crowd, all because of sheer moral cowardice.

There is no way of escape from such bondage, except through the Word of God. You must lay aside all that preoccupies your heart and your mind, and go straight to God's Word. There listen, there learn, and obey, no matter where it may lead. For shall any middle-man and manufacturer come between you and the Fountain? What man has more right to the pure and whole truth than you? What man has authority to limit you to such and such portions and interpretations of it? Must you howl with the wolves? Is the name of being "orthodox," "straight," "sound," and whatever else they call it, more to be coveted than sincerity and truth? As for being with the crowd and the multitude—can that help you? Nay, you are alone. Alone you will be judged. What others believe and call true can not affect your individual responsibility before God. You must know your own way, must hear with your own ears, must see with your own eyes. No man may lord it over your heart and must believe. No man dictate to you what you conscience. No threats or smiles, commendation or condemnation, honored prejudices, granted tenets. popular voices, must influence you. Nothing is true but the truth. Before I can accept any it must stand the test of truth to my mind. But if you follow that principle, you will have occasion to face enemies and say, as Luther once said, "Here I stand—God help me! I can not do otherwise."—"Christian Leader and The Way." April 4, 1905.

FAITH.

Abraham went out, not knowing whither. Thus God tested his faith. He must trust God's wisdom as to the desirableness of the place whither he was going and God's fidelity to guide him into the right road. Had he known the road and the country whither he was going, it would have been forever uncertain whether he was going, it would have been forever uncertain whether he went by faith or by sight, whether he walked by his own judgment or relied on God's. Moreover, it is not good for us to know so much ahead. We row with our backs to our destination—God holds the rudder. We could not endure the prospect of a year's ups and downs; but if we trust him, then as our days, so shall our strength be. Some look ahead and fear they cannot always be true to God. They see it in years. Furthermore, they want all the road explained and to know just into what kind of places Christ may lead them, that they may decide whether they want to be led of him, according as the prospect suits them. But Christ desires implicit faith—men who will say, "Lead thou me on," regardless of anything or everything it may involve, assured of nothing except the perfect faithfulness of Him that leadeth. So, instead of troubling your heart about thorns and rocks and flowers that may come along the road of your Christian life, begin with a whole-hearted faith and surrender to Jesus, knowing full well this only, that he will bring us home by the shortest and best route.

LOVE AND PRIDE.

There is attraction in love. "By loving-kindness have I drawn thee," said Jehovah to Israel. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself," said the Lord

Jesus Christ. Love attracts people to one another. It is the cement of the church. Pride also is magnetic; it is the repellant principle. It is in many respects the direct opposite of love. Love is God's characteristic; pride, Satan's. Love lives for others; pride is concentrated selfishness. Love makes itself a servant; pride exalts itself. Love is willing to be a stepping-stone to another; pride makes stepping-stones of others, and tramples them down in its contemptuous ambition. Love empties itself; pride inflates itself. The effects of the two are at opposites. Love unites; prive divides—faction, strife, division follow in its wake. Love gathers; pride isolates. The proud ultimately find themselves standing alone without help or sympathy. Pride strikes, wounds; love heals. Love saves; pride damns. A proud person would spoil the bliss and happiness of the New Jerusalem, and there are no middle grounds in eternity. There is intellectual pride, social pride, spiritual pride; but they are all of the same piece. God save us from it!

FROM FAITH TO KNOWLEDGE.

It is thought by some that Abraham had a vast advantage over men to-day, in that God spoke to him directly, while we to-day are assailed by doubts which to Abraham were not possible. But this is a mistake. If there is a possibility of doubt with us, so was there with him. In fact, upon this depends our free choice. If there were no escape from the conclusion that the Bible is the word of God; if it were as absolutely demonstrable as a proposition in mathematics, our faith would have no moral value. It could not be said then that we chose light rather than darkness. Our faith comes in largely in giving the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ (because they stand for all that is right and good and

true and because of the God they reveal), the benefit of the doubt. This is choice.

God gave Abraham sufficient and reasonable grounds to believe that it was he that spoke, saying, "Get thee out of thy country;" just as to us he has give ample and reasonable grounds to believe that the Bible is the word of God and that Jesus is what he claims to be. Abraham could have refused to accept the evidence and could have plausibly reasoned against it, just as we can. But, being reasonably certain that God had spoken to him, rather than to risk disobeying him, he gave God the benefit of whatever doubt that might still have attached to the situation, out of sheer preference for God and God's way. So he acted upon it. When he arrived in Canaan, God spoke to him again, to the effect that this was now the land of his inheritance. Then assurance was made doubly sure. At the palpable manifestation described in Gen. 18, where Jehovah in human form talked with him about the impending destruction of Sodom, faith grew to certainty; and when Isaac was born, it became knowledge.

The confirmation of our faith also comes in the path of obedience. The man who begins by taking God at his word and obeying him is walking in that path of dawning light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. His faith becomes assurance; his assurance, certainty; certainty, knowledge; so that no longer any sneer, scoff, or argument could remove the evidence of the fact of God's dealing with him.

This growth of faith is beautifully illustrated by the case of the nobleman recorded in John 4:46-53. At the first this man had enough faith to go to Jesus for help. Jesus sent him away, telling him his son lived, and he had the faith to go without question. "The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his

way." Now, arriving at home, he learned that it was even so, and that the fever had left his son at the very hour Jesus had spoken. Then the last lurking fear and doubt were dispelled, and again with a new emphasis John uses the word believed: "And himself believed, and his whole house." It was faith on top of faith.

Jesus pleaded with his disciples to believe that he is in the Father and the Father in him, if only for the very works' sake. Only believe me! Then he makes them the promise of another Comforter on condition of their obedience, and foretells the day when they should *know* the thing he had just asked them to believe; for if they showed their love by obedience, he also would show his love, and would manifest himself unto them. Judas (not Iscariot) was perplexed about this. He wanted Jesus generally known, not simply to be manifested to a few. But Jesus reassured him that it was not only to them, but "if a man"—any man—"love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14: 11, 20-23.) Thus does faith go on to certainty.

God cannot be reasoned out. He cannot be grasped by the intellect. The moral sense alone apprehends him. No man was ever made a believer or an unbeliever by a mere logical argument. It is only the way of faith and obedience that leads into perfect assurance concerning him and his word.

"EXCEPT A GRAIN OF WHEAT—"

To accomplish a really great work in the world and become a blessing to others, a man must abandon once for all the idea of caring for self, whether by way of laying up money or of getting himself a name and world-

ly glory. These things, though they may seem to spur a man to effort, are in his way and prevent him from doing his best work. It is only as a man dies to self, and in proportion as he dies, that he becomes fruitful unto God and to his fellow-men. "Except a grain of wheat fall onto the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." (John 12:24, 25.) But many a man's promise is killed and his usefulness thwarted by the shadow of his own self falling upon his work.

AT EASE IN ZION.

There are of Christians two kinds. Of these, the one kind have the more comfortable view; the other, the more profitable. The one kind are the self-complacent; the other, the dissatisfied and yearning ones. In a sense, it is true, every child of God is satisfied. The fact that he has found the Savior and the forgiveness of sins and the Advocate at the throne of God and the promise and prospect of every good thing through Christ, gives him peace and joy. But as yet he has only just touched his lips to the cup that Christ gives him. To drink that water of which if a man drink he shall never thirst again, requires all his days. Now there are Christians who but wet their lips and set the bowl down, and live the rest of their days on the remembrance of that, first taste; and there are some who eagerly keep drinking. There are some who fall into a spurious rest now—a rest based on the fact that they have been baptized; that they are wearing Christ's name; that they are attending the meetings and doing their share of the giving; that they are "trying to live right." And there are some to whom their present state, however good, seems as nothing in view of the

visions of truer love, more unselfish service, higher worship, deeper trust fuller devotion, that continually unfold before them. These grow more dissatisfied with themselves and more increasingly satisfied with the face of the Lord Jesus Christ that beckons them on. To which of these two classes do you belong, my brother?

POPULARITY AND INFLUENCE.

These two are often confounded, and they are not at all the same; yea, they oftener than otherwise exclude each other. Jesus, of all men most unpopular, forsaken by all, condemned to death by his own people, crucified between two thieves has proved the most influential person of history. There have been, on the other hand, those who had the applause of multitudes, but whose memory and name rotted as quickly as their bodies. Behind much show of popularity there may be no real power. A certain "ugly little Jew" (so Renan calls him), in his day a wanderer a prisoner, an outcast, for his Master's sake, finally executed at Rome, and eighteen hundred years in the grave, holds to-day more sway over the hearts of men than any man living. Many of the great ones of his time would have been entirely forgotten but for the fact that this despised Jew's life incidentally touched theirs. Truly, things are not what they seem. Yet there are those who seek popularity rather than influence: who curry favor with the public, and hold much on policy, and are very jolly, and join all sorts of clubs and open and secret societies, and mingle into civic affairs, for the sake of prominence and notoriety, which thing they mistake for influence. Verily, they have received their reward. "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their

fathers to the false prophets"—those prophets who sugar-coated the judgments of God and healed the wound of their people slightly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace!

LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE.

A friend writes inquiring concerning the teaching of John 6, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood," etc. Some Catholic priests had come holding evangelistic services and perturbing the minds of many. Among other things they insisted on the literal interpretation of the passage referred to above. Now the presumption is always that any passage in God's word means what it literally says, and is not to be taken figuratively without evidence that a figure is intended. If only the Roman Catholic Church were willing to abide by that principle and by the authority of the word of God! But where it suits them they fiercely insist upon the literal meaning of the Bible; and where that does not fit into their scheme, they explain it away and go to the "fathers" and to the pope for authority. For the legs of the lame are unequal.

"He that Eateth My Flesh."

Eating and drinking, when figuratively used, have a two-fold significance: either the figure is the satisfying of some inward longing, represented as a hunger or thirst of the soul, or the assimilating of a thing, so as to make it a part of ourselves. In the sixth chapter of John, Christ uses both these figurative meanings, showing also, as plainly as speech can, that a figure is intended. The first interpretation, given in advance, is: "He that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that

believeth in me shall never thirst." (John 6: 35.) Here is the satisfying of hunger and thirst. The "eating" and "drinking" in this case which satisfies the hunger and thirst is shown to be equivalent to "coming to" Christ and "believing in" him. But as the thought of literally eating him took possession of his hearers' minds, Jesus gave them a further hint as to his meaning. As for his actual body—it was about to return to the Father. (Verse 62.) He was indeed the bread that cometh down and giveth life to the world, and he had indeed said: "The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." But now he adds: "It is the spirit that quickeneth [giveth life]: the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." (Verse 63.) (The quotations are from the Catholic Version, indorsed by Cardinal Gibbons.) That the Catholic hierarchy would accept Christ's explanation is not at all to be expected. But to those who hold to the word of God it should be plain that this has no reference to the Lord's Supper. Peter got the right idea and expressed it in verses sixty-nine and seventy. The Lord's Supper has nothing to do with this, except as the taking of it reminds us of Christ's life and death and our faith is thus renewed and strengthened. It is through the word of life we are drawn to him and come to him and believing make him our own, until our hunger and thirst are satisfied, and, united with him through faith, we dwell in him and he in us.

AFTERTHOUGHTS.

It strikes me that it is fair that a man should defend any practices he hold on the grounds on which he has adopted them, rather than with arguments and excuses afterwards invented. There are many arguments made

in defense of instrumental music in the worship—so many as to make one suspicious. The battle ground is now shifted mainly on the Greek word "psallo," and it is claimed that this word, though translated "sing," involves, or permits, the instrumental accompaniment. There are just two little reflections on this. One is the wonder of it that the Greeks, who probably understood their own language as well as any one else, have never, from the first to this day, permitted instrumental music in the worship. The Greek Catholic Church has always opposed it. And the second question is: Did the brethren who introduced the organ do so because of their conviction that "psallo" bears such meaning as they now claim, or was this only an after-thought? And are they willing to defend their practice on just the grounds on which they first adopted it?

COURAGE.

Men hold one another in bondage by mutual consent. It is quite possible that each one of a given company is desirous of doing a certain thing, or expressing his truest sentiment, which is perhaps the common sentiment of all; yet each one is afraid or ashamed of the others, who indeed (such is the littleness of human nature) would instantly turn on the bold one that would dare to step out of their little conventional circle. Ah, the frowns and the sneers and the jeers and the bitter criticisms of our fellows, the thrusts of our foes, and, worst of all, the reproaches of our friends—how they deter and compel us! But without courage the man is naught. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." If you have faith in Jesus, God grant you courage and boldness to speak as you ought to speak. It will not make you popular. Even

the apostles felt that pull and cried to God that they might not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God. (Acts 4:29-31; Eph. 6:18-20.) A good sister sent a certain young preacher a bit of verse, which came in very good time and added a little firmness to his backbone when it was greatly needed. I give it that it may help others:

Nay, now if these things you yearn to teach,
Bear wisdom in your judgment, rich and strong;
Give voice to them, though no man heed your speech,
Since right is right though all the world go wrong.
The proof that you believe what you declare
Is that you stand firm though the throngs go by;
Rather cry truth a lifetime to void air
Than flatter listening millions with a lie.

DISSATISFACTION.

When a man becomes dissatisfied with himself, that is the time of his crisis. He will not remain there very long. He will seek rest from his dissatisfaction, and it will either be by sinking down further or by rising higher; he will give up his ideal or strive to attain it; he will fight or he will compromise; he will forget the things behind and stretch forward to that which is before, or else he will look back and console himself, and compare himself with those who have done worse, and find content in being as good as some other respectable man. Either way—but one way he must take; and the one is unto life, while the other ends in failure and death. Remember this, and God make you dissatisfied and enable you to gain the upper road.

"AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

Perhaps not. But this conclusion is unavoidable, that you are your brother's brother. That involves some care of him. Now when your brother does wrong, don't say: "It is none of my business." And when he does you a wrong, don't say: "I'm above that; I simply consider the source." Don't think about your side of it so much. If he has done these things, he is in danger, and ought you not to lift him up? "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." (Luke 17:3.) Tell him about it. He may not have done it, and your speaking to him will give him a chance to explain; or of he is guilty, he may repent, and then you have gained your brother. And could you get richer gain? Even under the law it was said: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah." (Lev. 19:17, 18.) And now he says: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you." And that is more.

LOVE AND CONGENIALITY.

The man who loves you knows you better than he who hates you; for love gives an insight and tender interest, and interprets every act in its best light. And the man who is congenial and in sympathy with you understands you better than the man whose turn of mind is far different from yours, though the latter be ever so good a linguist and grammarian. If you would understand and know God, seek to do his will; for this is the love of

God, that you keep his commandments. The disobedient man who says he knows God speaks falsely. (1 John 2:4.) Would you have a deeper insight into God's word? It will come to you as you become more congenial with its Writer. As you take in and assimilate the truth you have, you are fitted for more; for to him that hath shall be given. It is not so much the learned and scholars that get at God's meaning, though scholarship has its place, but he who is in sympathy with God's views and ways and purposes. A man, for instance, who does not love his brother is not able to rightly understand God's word. He "walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." (1 John 2:11.) He is out of rapport with the mind of God.

ON BEING JOLLY.

The spirit of the world has so far made inroads on Christian views that seriousness goes at great discount. It is "Laugh and the world laughs with you," nowadays. The sober-minded man is dubbed "long-faced," and that finishes the consideration of him; and our hard-run "humorists" have to draw largely on the long-faced church member and his supposed woe-begone look for their fun. Now there is certainly no room for melancholy in the religion of Christ—not in it, least of all. But if a man turn to the Lord, he gives him first of all an insight into the terrible earnestness of life and the awful issues that hang upon it, that he may no longer while away his days in idle pleasure and fritter his life away in frivolity and play. Be "jolly" in the face of the things God reveals if you can! Christ's religion gives a deep joy and peace; but "the laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot," and has nothing in common with the fruit

of the Spirit, which " is love, joy, peace." It is God's will "that aged men be temperate, grave, sober-minded; that aged women likewise be reverent in demeanor." And while God takes account of the buoyant spirit of youth, he nevertheless exhorts the younger men likewise to be sober-minded, and the young preacher to show himself an example; "in thy doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity"—which latter is exactly the opposite of levity. God wants glad service and gladness of us all. Why should we not be glad when we are right with him? But that shallow mirth that is twin sister to folly, that much-prized jocoseness, is not of God, and is not good for men. It only veils and distorts the solemn verities that underlie all things.

DIFFICULTIES OF 1 JOHN.

We find many hard problems in the first Epistle of John. They arise from the sweeping statements he makes, and the sharp line of division he draws between light and darkness. He appears to know no middle ground, to make no allowance. He most certainly leaves no room for compromises between Christ and the world, nor for lukewarm lives. In this there is no difficulty; but the problem comes in when we remember that the best of us has his faults; and while there is no inherent necessity for it (as some seem to think), yet the fact remains that true Christians are known to stumble at times. But while John makes his statements so absolutely, and draws such sharp lines, we must note two facts that throw light on the whole Epistle. First, he constantly exhorts them to fulfill the conditions necessary for this perfect approval of God. If in 3:9 he says that the begotten of God "doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him," he exhorts them in 2:24 to "let" it abide

in them. He utterly condemns those who love the world and those who love not their brethren; yet he exhorts those whom he regards as God's people not to love the world, and urges them to love one another. Secondly, though he entirely shuts out sin and sinners, he not only admits the possibility of a Christian's sinning, but makes provision for his restoration. (Chapter 2:1, 2; 5:16.) The Savior's teaching in Matt. 7:16-20 presents the same difficulty. Both are sweeping in their statements, and demand a pure goodness which indeed is answered perfectly by that new nature created within us, that new man who is begotten of God (cf. John 3: 6) and who is perfectly good, but as yet encumbered and hindered by the old man "who waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit." The flesh does its evil works when it gets a chance; and the Spirit brings forth his fruit. Our business is to put off the old man, to put to death the members which are on earth, by the Spirit to put to death the deeds of the body, to crucify the flesh, so that the perfect man begotten within us, who is after the image of him that created him, may have entire control.

HUMAN CHANNELS OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

When Jesus says, "Love one another, even as I have loved you," the requirement seems too much. Of such whole-souled, infinite perfectly pure and self-forgetful love only the Son of God is capable. But God does not leave it there. He gives to us first that we may be able to return. "We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19.) "I made known unto them thy name," said Jesus in his prayer, "and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them." (John 17: 26.) It is then through the perfect revelation Christ gives us of the Father's

name (that is, his character) that his love—the love God has, that infinite love wherewith he loved his Son —comes to dwell in us. And thence it must flow forth in an irresistible stream unto others. Like some rivers which take their rise from a large lake of waters, the love of the Christian toward his brother and toward all men takes its rise in the love of God. "Beloved, If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:11.) "The love of God"—as the context shows, his love toward us—"hath been shed abroad through the Holy Spirit which was given to us" (Rom. 5:5), and so it comes that "the fruit of the Spirit" is first of all love (Gal. 5:22).

THE MARK OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

God draws the line at this point. While faith is fundamental, and hope indispensable, and love the result of these two, love is at the same time the evidence—the only evidence God will accept—that faith and hope have entered the heart and that the person is God's child. The Christian who does not love has either never been God's or has allowed the flesh to overcome the new nature to such an extent as to make his Christian profession null and void in God's sight. This is affirmed over and over. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (I John 3:10.) And our own assurance concerning our salvation depends on it. (I John 3:18, 19.) Wherefore, "follow after love."

LOVING AND "LIKING."

Loving is not the same thing at all as "liking." The

latter is a matter of personal taste, and does not come into consideration. Love is a principle that involves all a man's life and conduct. "Let all that you do be done in love." It is the whole plane of action. "Liking" has to do with self and pleasure; loving, with the help and blessing of others. "Liking" is partial; love is universal. Yet love will not be without kindly, tender emotion and feeling.

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The church of Christ is no private institution; it is public, opened for "whosoever will." It is not owned by any man or set of men, nor has any concern a monopoly on it. It belongs to God, who paid a price for it. It is not built in any one's back lot, but on Mount Zion, easily accessible to all. It seems that those who would be members of it, and simply Christians, should most zealously guard against a sectarian spirit, and always occupy true union ground, so that all could meet them on it and, without offending against scripture or scripture-enlightened conscience, work and worship with them.

THE INFALLIBLE MAN.

Of all men, the hardest driven is the "infallible" man —he who never makes a mistake, or will not acknowledge having made one. He is not to be envied. He spends at least one-fourth his energy trying to uphold his reputation and dignity; another fourth trying to be consistent with all he ever did or said in the past, and lengthily explaining what he meant when he said thus and so, which requires much squirming and mental juggling; another fourth to defend himself against any who dare assail him and resent any insubordination to his

infallible judgment. That is a weary, toilsome occupation. And it leaves only a fourth of a man to do any real, useful work. Besides, he is the biggest sectarian in the world, though he claim to be "only a Christian," and is either a thoroughly self-deceived man or a fraud.

THE MANNERS OF HEAVEN.

An editorial article in a religious paper of rather old date contains the following good thing: "An English humorist rises above his usual level in a story he contributes to a weekly magazine, describing the stay of an angel in a London boarding house. The heavenly visitor has put on the fashion of our humanity, and passes for a man among his fellow-guests; but they are tempted to think him a fool because of his unselfish ways and his generous estimates of all around him. He seems unable to see the pettiness and shabbiness which display themselves under his very eyes. He thinks of each man as filling an honorable place in society in a brave and worthy fashion. But their astonishment is greatest when he comes into close relations with them. He takes it for granted that each of them is living the best life he knows of, and is walking on the heights of duty and of joy. He sees an infinite worth in their opportunities and their ideals, and rejoices to find himself in their company. The effect is that the better nature in them awakens, the pretenses and in the insincerities slough off, and they find themselves impelled to live as if all he saw in them were there in full abundance of life."

IMMANUEL.

There was once a heavenly visitor—not an angel, for,

as that writer justly remarks, an angel could not fill such a role as that—but One who had been with the Father from the beginning, and came down to be with men as man, and whose name was Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, "God with us." He lived just the kind of life the fancy of that humorist sketched—with one important exception: he was not blind to the faults of men, and at times rebuked severely. But his was the love that "taketh not account of iniquity." He saw it, but not to condemn. He had come to heal and to save. As a discord pains a sensitive ear, so the iniquities around him wounded his soul, for he was holy as the Father was holy. But his reproaches were few, his encouragements many and strong. When it was not necessary to point out a wrong, he did not expose it. He said not a word to the woman who bathed his feet with tears about her past life, but, seeing she knew, he sent her away into peace. He never mentioned Zaccheus' sin to him. Zaccheus knew it well enough, and there was no gain to discuss it. It was not the real Zaccheus, anyway, that had lived that covetous, fraudulent, publican life all these years. And, lo! the false Zaccheus slipped off as the man slid down the tree, and there stood before Jesus a new man who was without regret giving away half his fortune to the poor, and ready abundantly to undo the evil of other days, which he did before he had known love.

THE WAY OF LOVE.

Now love is appreciative of others. It sees the good and the possibility of good in them. It takes account of their weakness and their trials and the struggles, whether vain or successful. It appeals to the best in them as to the true self. It beholds every man an ideal

of that man, and will address itself to that ideal, in nothing put off by what the outward appearance may present to the contrary. It will say to a man who is all impulse and bubbling over as water, "Thou art Peter a rock!" and will hold that name before him through all vicissitudes and failures until he has realized it. It fancies to hear in the babe's prattle the articulation of a word, and answers accordingly, repeats the word and coaxes until the babe actually says it. It lifts up and does not tread down. It has confidence. It has courage, for the love of man conquers the fear of man. It lends endurance, for it "suffereth long" and "beareth all things."

REPAIRING HUMAN HEARTS.

Back in the woods stood an old country inn which boasted of a piano. But the piano was old and distressingly out of tune, and the strings rattled loud and metallic, like the beating of a tin pan, and some notes were dumb. Everybody had banged on the old piano, and the children had hammered on it with their fists and with sticks. Now and then a guest sat down to it and touched it and turned away in disgust, or else laughed aloud and exposed the jarring sounds in a spirit of fun. But one day there came a master—one who knew and loved pianos and music; and he, too, touched the keys and drew back at the weird sounds. Being at leisure, however, and having the necessary instruments, he set about to restore it. He turned, he tightened, he loosened, he adjusted, he glued bits of felt on the hammers; and when he had finished, he once more ran his hand up and down over the keyboard, and was satisfied. Then he began to play with masterly hand, and as the melody filled the house young and old gathered around; and they who had before abused and ridiculed the old

piano now looked at one another and said: "Who would have thought it?" And there are souls, sinful, embittered, unlovely, abused, hated ridiculed, condemned, waiting only for the hand of the Master, the healing, helping touch of love, to redeem them; and from them, too, shall rise the song of praise of the love of God, the sweetest music in earth or heaven, unto the ears of the Father. My brother, have you that touch of redeeming love? Do you help to save or to destroy?

RETURNS.

It has been well said that "curses come home to roost." Yea; so do blessings. Every ray of sunshine we send forth into the world comes back to light up our own hearts. That bitter, fault-finding, censorious, judging spirit has its intensest effect on him who has it. It mars his happiness, it embitters his life, it destroys his power. Worse still, he will begin to think of God as being that way, for we cannot avoid measuring him by ourselves. Thus we grow hopeless and are driven away into the darkness of despair. For "he that loveth not knoweth not God." But love increased a hundredfold comes back to him that has abandoned self in the love of God and man.

SELF-RESPECT THROUGH LOVE.

No man can realize himself loved of God and be at all appreciative of that love, without at once becoming more self-respecting. If God so loves him, personally and individually, he may not throw himself away; for this love, even if responded to even a little, gives God a claim on him, even as it gives him a claim on God. He is no more his own; he is bought with a price, a

love-price, even the blood of Jesus, who in seeking the wandering sheep followed its path, and was made as a sinner in my behalf that I might be righteous in him. And as a poet said:

"Shall I not take care of all I think,
Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear—if I be dear to some one else?"

And this love is also the love of Christ that constraineth us to serve him for the blessing of others.

"WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS."

It is the way of the world (and very naturally) to make much of any matter pertaining to this life—eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage; to harp on the material things, the welfare of the body and the mind, industrial and social affairs. These are of paramount importance to "men of the world, whose portion is in this life." (Ps. 17:14.) These engross their thought and call forth their best efforts. Over these they become greatly wrought up. Immersed in these affairs up to their ears will they be found in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed. (Luke 17:26-30.) Money and labor, traffic and industry, science and invention, politics, and governmental, socialistic, and communistic schemes for the betterment of earthly conditions—these are the topics beside which others pale away. The final beneficiary of all this stir is, we are reliably informed, "the belly." (Phil. 3:19.) But that unworldly generation, which though living in the world are not of the world, whose citizenship is in heaven, whence also they look for the true hope of mankind, are of another turn. To them the things of the Spirit, the things of God, the things of eternity, compose the overshadowing issue. Eat and

drink, buy and sell, plant and build, they must and may; but God comes first though all else be lost. Though filling their place in the world efficiently, working and loing their duty as God directed, they hold those earthly matters lightly, as being only a temporary makeshift, and are not greatly exercised over them. The will and kingdom of God comes first though every worldly prospect fail. The saving of souls, the redeeming of ruined lives unto God; the service and worship and praise of him—these things consume their thought and interest and emotion. And of all people they alone are really sane. They alone see things in proper proportion and according to their relative importance. The Lord increase our faith and give us such a spirit as that, that when Jesus comes we may be found waiting for him, our minds set on things above, not on things of the earth. (Col. 3:1-3.)

ABASING WOMAN.

Replying to the charge brought by some, that those who would shut out woman from the sphere of public activity and of competition with man abase and sacrifice her, Adolphe Monod says: "There is one who abases and sacrifices woman: it is this same world, sometimes frivolous, sometimes bold, which treacherously takes up her defense. You abase and sacrifice her whenever you entice her, to satisfy your egotism and glorify your thories, from the path which God has marked out for her. You have abased and sacrificed her in placing her upon the pedestal and man at her feet, in your fiction, in your plays, in your salons; because, instead of the mission to aid and glorify man, you have substituted that of weakening and effeminating him; because for the mission which she can and ought to fulfill, you substitute one in which she cannot succeed and to which she ought

not to pretend. What idea, then have you of woman if you believe her willing to exchange the humble glory of accomplishing the mission which belongs to her for the mortifying vanity of failing in that which belongs to another — satisfied with being an incomplete man when she might be a complete woman, and of losing her natural and legitimate influence in the barren pursuit of an influence fictitious and usurped? Nothing more remains to her than to regret the nature God has given her, and to indulge this regret by begging without shame from our sex the name and dress and gait of man." This was a French preacher, long since departed, and who has had occasion, I doubt not, to turn over in his grave a thousand times since, because of the heaven-crying follies that have been committed by would-be emancipators of woman in his country and elsewhere— these "woman's rights" agitators who are the real enemies of womankind, who abase her and destroy her womanliness. But God's children who are of the gentler sex know the place God assigns to them, and glorify it and him by faithfully filling their place.

YOUR MEDICINE.

If there is a passage in the Bible that you do not like— that you skip or hasten over in your reading; on which you do not like to dwell; to which you do not want your attention called; about which you would rather hear nothing—rest assured it is the very passage you need. It is the very medicine your condition demands, and, however bitter it may be, it will help you. Turn back now to it. Do not try to explain it away, to get around, over, or under it. Meet it squarely. It will cut like a two-edged sword, but to heal. It will convict and condemn you, but that it may save. Let it sink into your

heart. Humble yourself, and smite your breast, saying: "God be merciful to me a sinner." In that way you will get the good of God's word, and in no other; for as long as you refuse any of it, the rest will not help you.

THOSE "EMANCIPATORS."

"These self-appointed, self-styled apostles of liberty," says Goethe in substance, "these professional emancipators, have always been a disgust to me." Why not? These men that thirst for leadership; these agitators that embitter the heavy lot of the burdened by increasing their discontent and holding up fictitious and, in the nature of things, unrealizable visions of a golden age to be brought about by this or that move—have they no object except the welfare of the people? Are they such self-sacrificing paragons, angels who live only for the blessing of their fellows? Is the rule of Danton, Marat, Robespierre and Company so much better than that of the despicable Louis XVI.? Fooled a million times, the human race is yet again ready to follow into a swamp after the next will-o'-the-wisp that holds out a specious promise. But over against all of these bogus liberators, I would set the example of the true Liberator, the real Benefactor of mankind—Jesus, our Lord. Living under a government as iniquistous as any other, he spoke not a word against it, but rather taught his followers to obey, to respect and honor those in power, to give Cæsar the things that are his, not discussing whether they be his justly or not. His reform came not in the way of organizing movements, haranguing mobs, stirring up discontent in the hearts of slaves and bondmen. It was not the civil government that he was concerned about. The trouble as he saw it lay in the heart of the individual, in his relation to God, and there he began.

His instruments for the bringing about better conditions both for this world and the next was the word of God. He converted one, two, three, a dozen, a small assembly, and made good trees of them that their fruit might be good. He instructed them to deny themselves and follow him; and set them to be thus the salt of the earth, the light of the world. He said not a word about throwing off the Roman yoke, or the yoke of slave owner, landowners, capitalists, officers, taxgatherers, but only the yoke of sin. The rest will adjust itself, or be adjusted by him, in due time. And to his people now he would say: "Let the dead attend to their dead. Let the world work out, according to their will and wisdom, their schemes and plans for the redemption of mankind. But follow thou me." So let us do. It is to our limited minds not the most plausible course, but it is the only one that will not finally come to miserable failure. We follow it by faith. Every time you turn a soul to the Lord, you have done more toward the blessing of mankind than all the Utopia mongers and stump orators in the universe put together.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POWER.

The power of the gospel through a Christian is twofold: direct, in converting men to Christ; indirect, by the influence of the godly example upon public standards of life and conduct. When boys compete at jumping, and another boy comes along and lays off a new mark to jump to, beating them all, the "racing instinct" will take hold of the rest and they will beat themselves trying to equal the stranger. Sir Philip Sidney lay wounded upon the battlefield, his tongue parched with tormenting thirst. A friend found him and, in response to the desperate cry, brought him a cup of water. Just as Sir Philip was raising it to his lips, a soldier, one of the enemy, a Frenchman, lying near by, terribly mangled,

unable to speak, groaned and stretched forth his hands for the water. Instantly the English nobleman put the cup to the dying man's lips, who drained it to the last drop. This one act of self-sacrifice did more good than all that war; it probably did more toward lifting up men, toward raising the standards of humanity in subsequent warfare, toward promoting good will among men, than all the politics of that generation. So a Christian's Christlike acts have an unseen, but immeasurable, influence for the betterment of the lot and circumstances of those multitudes who never obey, and hardly hear of, the gospel of Christ. But they must be Christlike acts—conventional benevolence will not do it; words alone will not do it; but acts of pure, self-forgetful love; sacrifices that cost, that draw blood, like that of the Master upon the cross. My brother so interested in the welfare of the masses, how faithful have you been in these things? Have you so served your generation by the will of God? Talk and politics are cheap; have you given that better thing?

OUR HALFWAY EFFORTS.

Our efforts and methods for reaching sinners are strangely inadequate. We have, in common with the sects, the church-house craze. We almost thing there can be no church without a special house. Then the church is being bottled up, walled in, just as the devil wants it. The gospel sounds loud and strong in a room forty by sixty or so. But the world is not getting it. Preaching in the open on corners and streets has lost its dignity since the poor Salvation Army has taken it up, and we must conserve our dignity first of all; working from house to house has also gone out of fashion since the days of Paul. The Mormons seem willing to endure the reproach and indignity of that sort of work,

but of simple Christians very few. We are comfortably settled. The zeal of the Lord's house is not consuming us. We have not much smell of that fire upon our garments. It is Laodicea over again. O, that God may awaken us to truer effort and service, and fill us with his yearning love for souls that counts no cost, that we may carry the good message to all around us in the spirit of Christ!

WALKING BY FAITH.

One brother explained to another the force of 2 Cor. 6: 14-18. "That would then prohibit a Christian's belonging to any lodge or fraternity or secret society?" "Exactly." "Well, I belong to such a fraternity, and they stood by me nobly when I was sick. I should hate to quit them." "You would quit them for God, would you not?" "But does God require it?" "Judge for yourself. What does this say?" (2 Cor. 6: 14-18.) "But I cannot see that belonging to them does me any harm." "Well, when you 'can't see,' then is the time to walk by faith. There is nothing greater than that a man should do what God says, even against his preferences, and when he sees no particular use of it." I give this little conversation, which in substance actually occurred, because it illustrates a great and essential principle. How we sometimes shrink from obeying God! How, when we are struck fairly between the eyes by a passage of the scripture, we yet try to let it glance, to find an excuse, to explain away what God has said! How all kinds of considerations rise up and mistaken notions of duty, gratitude, or love, and we even persuade ourselves that in our case it would be wrong to obey God! "How weak is thine heart, seeing thou doest

these things!" says Jehovah. To be sure, "we cannot see;" but we walk my faith. To be sure, there are "ifs" and "buts" in plenty, and excuses, and preachers without number who will explain the very face off of any passage of scripture that goes against our wills, and, if you are looking for such consolation, "opinions do differ." But if you will obey God, you need not be perplexed, and you will know what God said and do it at any cost, and God will bless your faithfulness. For such things are tests, and God sets much by them.

HOW FAITH IS.

Once, so runs a tale, a boy dreamed that he had hold of a string the other end of which was many miles away and had a priceless, precious jewel attached to it. So he began to pull it in. It was long, tedious work; but when he flagged, he remembered the jewel at the other end, how it was well worth the while and the trouble, and began to pull and gather in again; for every arm's length he drew in brought the treasure that much nearer, and he knew he could not miss it if he kept on pulling. Whether he slept long enough to get to the jewel, the story does not tell; but here is one of the finest illustrations of faith. For away off in the land of promise is the jewel, and my faith is fastened to it and it to my faith. Keep pulling. You know it is there; you know every day of trusting life will bring it nearer, and in due time you will receive "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (I Pet. 1:9.) Nay, you are receiving it day by day as each day's pull brings it nearer, and you may confidently say with Paul: "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed." (Rom. 15:11.) But when your spirits flag and you grow doubtful or weary or impatient, remember this:

"My righteous one shall live by faith: and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul." (Heb. 10: 38, 39.) "For we are become partakers of Christ [joint heirs], if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." (Heb. 3: 14.)

PRESENT BLESSINGS OF FAITH.

As most other human illustrations of God's things, the one given above, good as it is, is deficient. The string with the distant, unseen jewel attached does illustrate that idea concerning our faith that it is our connecting line to the promise of God, and the means for attaining it, and beautifully represents the lesson that we must steadfastly preserve in faith to receive "the end of our faith." But it shows not an item of the blessings of faith here and now. The dry, bare string, even if it has a treasure at the other end, is not good enough for us, God thinks. The while we pull on it there comes to us blessings and grace for grace. Our faith brings joy with it—joy in the midst of afflictions, and songs in the night; joy unspeakable and full of glory. (1 Pet. 1: 6, 8.) It holds peace—the peace which the world seeketh and cannot find, even the peace of God which passeth all understanding. (Rom. 15: 13; Isa. 26: 3.) It guarantees us the unassailable protection of the Almighty, for we "by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1: 5.) By faith we live, stand, walk, fight; and by our faith we gain the complete victory unto all assurance and hope. (1 John 4: 4.) Would you have such glorious faith? Hear the word of God and put your trust in it, and, through it, in him. (Rom. 10: 17.)

IF THINE EYE CAUSETH THEE TO STUMBLE.

We sometimes let a great evil run on in our lives in the indefinite hope that something may happen some time and some how and remove it from us painlessly, or at least without the exertion of our will. We dread the pain of tearing it out of our lives. We think we could not endure the suffering if we resolutely severed the tie or association or abjured the gain or the pleasure or whatever it be that makes the sin sweet. We shudder at the thought of a quick stroke cutting off forever that curse from our existence; yet, unwilling to altogether renounce our God, we comfort ourselves with the hope that time will slowly wear it off. Alas, my brother! If you escape hell at all—and it is doubtful, seeing how you are entangled and overcome—what suffering is before you, suffering incomparably greater than that which the renunciation you are now unwilling to make would cost you! The best way to avoid injury from a flying ball is to stand and face and catch it; for if you shrink and it hits you, it will hurt much worse. A foot is a priceless thing, a hand even more so, and an eye is not to be estimated for value; but there are circumstances when the loss of these would be actual profit—the loss inconsiderable in comparison to the gain, and the injury, great as it is, not to be compared with the greater calamity that comes of the effort of keeping them. So whatever it be that holds you in the bonds of sin, be it persons or things, be it sweet and dear and valuable to you even as hand or foot or eye, hearken to the Savior—he knows best, he is the true Friend—"cut it off," "pluck it out." "cast it from thee;" for it were better for thee to go into life crippled and blind than to keep all and be cast into the eternal fire. You would probably find that the pang of the severance is not so terrible as you had anticipated,

and that the peace of God then yours would go far to mitigate any suffering you had incurred for him; but however this may be, at any rate, tear that evil out of your life; kill, slay utterly; let not thy hand spare nor thine eye pity.

CURIOUS BOOKS.

A man was reading the "Millennial Dawn" when a friend remarked to him: "You would do better to put in your time reading the Bible." "But this helps me to understand the Bible," replied the reader. "Yes, and it may also help you to misunderstand it." And here is the matter in a nutshell. Not only the Millennial Dawn, but all other religious literature advocating systems and theories are like Moses declared the bribe to be in its effect—"it blindeth the eyes and perverteth the judgment." It is contrary to man's best interest, and any man that values truth and his soul's salvation does well to renounce all this religio-philosophical stuff that is littering the world to-day. And I make no exceptions. Whenever even simple Christians feel called upon to promulgate theories and build up systems of doctrine, their work also should be discarded. We need no "theology;" or, if we do, let every man construct his own on the Scripture, and have it to himself alone before God, and not put colored glasses before his brother's eyes. I have a book which if a man read (granted he is unpre-possessed, open-minded, and not more versed in scripture and dialectics than the average) will make him a Catholic, another which will make him a Mormon, another which will make him a Christadelphian, another which will make him an Adventist. Our minds are plastic clay—let us take heed into what fashioning hands we commit them. Those theories and systems are each and

every one subtle and plausible and some even fascinating. Beware! I also have a book which if read and received by an open mind will make a man just a child of God, one of the Lord's people, a possessor of all truth. We know the name of that Book. How far different it is from the theories that have been spun around it, and what the distinction between the teaching of it and the teaching of a theory, may presently be seen.

THEORY SPINNING AND SYSTEM BUILDING.

There are few things that hinder the truth more, that darken counsel, warp the eye, and sustain error so effectually as theory spinning and system building. It is easily done. A passage here and a passage there—the two fit admirably. Another passage or two—that is enough for the underpinnings. Upon that we build. Sleepers and joists of plausible conclusions and logical deductions come next. We reason of what can and what cannot be, granted this and that. On hypothetical premises we rear proud structures of absolutely certain conclusions. It could hardly be claimed that the building goes forward without sound of saw or hammer, for there is much work to be done. Contrary texts have to be spliced or sawed off, according as they are too long or too short to fit; rebellious passages must be hammered into submission. The plane and the chisel have to be plied, and that which God has not joined together must be united with the glue of human reasonings (that I say not guile), and that which God has joined together must be put asunder with maul and wedge. Then when it stands all finished and dovetailed, the builder wipes the sweat from his honest brow and comes in for merited praise from his admirers. It is so convincing it confirms him, himself, and—alas!—convinces

perhaps thousands of others. He glories in it, as Nebuchadnezzar over his fine city: "is not this great Babylon, which I have built . . . by the might of my power?" And if he could be cured by it, we could wish he, too, would go to grass for seven years.

THE CURSE OF A THEORY.

The victim of a human theory, newfangled or old, is injured in many ways—chiefly in that he is robbed of the word of God. The Bible is still in his hand, to be sure, perhaps more than ever; but it is now no longer God's word drawing near to his soul to speak to him. The warmth and beauty and fragrance and the personal communion with the Father are gone. The Book has become an arsenal of weapons, a collection of proof propositions, a pincushion full of points to stick somebody with. The beauty has fled from the fairest, sweetest chapter, and it has no longer any worth or relevancy unless it bears in some way upon the theory. Like a buzzard who sweeps over a wonderful landscape and has eyes for nothing except a carcass, so the man poisoned with a theory sees just that in God's sublime revelation which goes to confirm his theory and enables him to meet some one's objection to his system of doctrine. Alas, poor man! As a worm gnawing at the root of a vine makes it to dry up and die, so is your theory doing its deadly work in your soul; and from a living, warm-hearted child, you have grown to be a dry, disputatious argumentatious, talkative dogmatist, whose world revolves around the idol theory your mind has conceived or seized. Your fountain of life has dried up. You will grow no more. Never again shall you hear (if, indeed, you have ever heard) the heart beat of your Father's love, except by some means you be delivered from the

snares in which you are taken captive. "Who steals my purse steals trash;" who "filches from me my good name" has done me a greater wrong; but he has done me the immeasurable harm who robs me of the word of God.

HOW THEORIES ARE MADE.

I said above that this theory spinning and system building is easy. Let me point out the method of making a new theory—not, I hope, to aid any one in constructing one, but to expose the poor little secret of them all. First, it may be from a partial glimpse of God's word, or from some suggestion received from man's wisdom, or out of his own philosophy, a man conceives a certain idea or scheme of doctrine; second, he goes to the Bible to find support for it; third, he goes about to explain away any text of scripture that conflicts with the theory and which might be used against it; fourth, he tries to make the new theory which has been thus established an absolute essential to salvation, if possible so far as to baptize people again on the strength of it. For if that latter item were omitted, people would say, "Yes, it is very good," and go their ways; and the poor inventor, having thus lost his patent, remains to blush unseen, instead of becoming "a prominent figure on the ecclesiastical horizon" and the leader of a great movement, and, if possibe, the "founder of a new church."

THE EASE OF WRESTING THE SCRIPTURE.

As for the task of "explaining away" difficulties, that is the easiest part of all. There never has been a passage so plain that some one could not make it appear to mean something else than what it said, or nothing at all.

It takes but a little shrewdness, a little sophistry, a little Greek or Hebrew if necessary, a little imagination and assertion, when—lo!—it is done. "How about the law which is written and engraved on stones, mentioned in 2 Cor. 3:7, and which is spoken of as 'passing away' in verse 11?" I asked a person somewhat taken with Seventh-Day Adventism. "That was not the Ten Commandments," was the reply. "But they alone were written on tables of stone." "But the Adventist make a distinction between 'stones' and 'tables of stone.'" I expected as much. They are simply obliged to make a "distinction" or something, else their theory is exploded. Just so the various stripes of soul sleepers and annihilationists are absolutely compelled to "explain" the story of the rich man and Lazarus. It would never do to let it stand just as it is. It must be "explained;" for if it goes at face value, our theory is done for. So it is made a parable; nay, an old rabbinical myth which the Savior but relates and applies; nay, a fable which does not and cannot truly represent the state of the dead, for this grave reason or that; nay, an allegory in which Lazarus was the Gentile, the rich man the Jew; etc.—anything, only so this passage is got rid of and the precious theory saved. If it should be a plain term that stands outright in the way, it can be made figurative. You ask how? Well, let us assume it is the word "all" that must be removed to save the doctrine. Turn back now and see how "all Jerusalem and Judea" went out and were baptized of John. Now there "all" did not mean "all." It was used figuratively to mean "a great part," "many." Therefore "all" does not mean "all" here; do you see? And he smiles in his triumph over the obnoxious word. But wisdom is justified of her children. I could pledge myself to "prove" anything at all, if I am allowed to deal with the Bible in that way.

"HARMONIZING THE SCRIPTURES."

There is another vicious principle of Bible interpretation constantly adopted by theorists. It lies in the "harmonizing" of apparently conflicting texts. Here is a passage making a statement; over there is another which seems to declare the opposite. Now for those who simply believe God's word it is not difficult to see that there must be a higher harmony between the two which does violence to neither, and that we are at liberty to believe and preach both these passages just as they stand —and that whether or not we are able to perceive the tie that unites them. But with the theorist it is otherwise. One of these passages is for him, the other against him. One of them, therefore, is accepted at what it says and strongly emphasized; the other has to be knocked out of commission. I do not have to tell you which one it is that will be demolished and which one will be saved. Thank God that a Christian needs not learn the serpentine arts which those who have a theory to defend are obliged to practice.

THE LIBERTY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

To be a Christian, to be a member of the church of God, simply and only—this means that the word of God is ours; for the church of the Lord teaches nothing officially. She is content to let God do his own teaching through the simple word. The Christian has no positions to force, no one-sided notions to sustain, no foreign meanings to infuse into God's word. All the truth belongs to him by birthright. If any sects have any truth (and they all have, some more, some less), it already belongs to the Christian; but he does not have to go to the sectarian teacher for it. Standing on the Rock, Jesus

the Christ, having confessed and received him as "it is written," he already possesses all the truth in the universe, and finds it his sweet privilege to explore this great Mine in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. 2:3)—and that not with intent to unearth curious doctrines that he may shine before men as a great Bible scholar; but to know and do the will of God, leaving the deeper mysteries that baffle the mind to solve themselves in the future, here or beyond, and seeking the things that profit. And such a man, if he will diligently study the word, will also in the end have a deeper insight into God's ways and plans than all the creedists and theorists of the world. For the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. (Ps. 25:14.) And we belong to no man's following. With freedom hath Christ set us free—let us stand fast in him, and not be entangled in any man's bondage. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the word, of life, or death, or things present, or things to come; are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. 3:21-23.)—December 2, 1909.

THE HEATHEN.

"Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee," wrote a saint of old who himself had at one time tasted all the bitterness of being without God in the world. Man is peculiar in this respect, that he was made for God, and can never be happy without God. The human will shall never work its possessor any good or bring any satisfaction till it is sunk into unison with God's will; the outreaching tendrils of man's affections shall never find true hold until they entwine themselves around God; the eye shall never be

satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing, till we see and know God.

It is for this reason that our God is a jealous God. His jealousy is not based upon selfishness, as ours. What glory can we add to him? What advantage is it to him if we obey him and praise his name? What profit does he derive from our service and worship? For he is not "served by men's hands, as though he needed anything," seeing it is he who "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Why, then, is he jealous of our affections and worship and service? For our sakes simply. He loves us. His anger burns when he sees men turn away from him, the true God and the only fount of light and happiness, unto false gods and consequently darkness and destruction.

See what idolatry has done for men. Read in your Bible, and in ancient history, of the human cruelties, of the incredible licentiousness, the abysmal moral degradation, the heartrending miseries that cursed the lives of the idolaters, and you will find why God hates idolatry. Read the first chapter of Romans. Is it overdrawn? By no means. Even today the missionaries of India are accused of interpolating the first chapter of Romans into their Bibles so as to have a text against the prevailing religion, which is a full admission that they found their own lives and works fairly described there.

When we compare the state of morals and human happiness and welfare in this country with that of heathen countries, we can begin to appreciate the benefit of the word of God. This is not a Christian country. There are no Christian countries. But there are a few Christians in this country, and the Bible has been so widely circulated and read that to some extent public opinion, public morals, and the laws of the land have been affected by it. That is what makes the difference between heathen

lands and "Christian," and the respective conditions of the peoples.

Aside from all question of the soul's salvation, no greater benefit can come to a nation than the breaking in of God's light upon them. "What advantage, then, hath the Jew," asks the objector, "if he is rejected for his disobedience along with the Gentiles?" "Much in every way," Paul replies; "chiefly that unto them were committed the oracles of God." This in any case is a blessing and a glory to any people. The hardened conscience stands aghast at the enormities practiced; the hard heart would melt at the dreariness, suffering and despair hidden beneath the name of heathenism; and the gospel is the only remedy.

Look now, from a religious view, at the vain struggle of individuals here and there to free themselves from their fetters of brass and iron; their longing for peace; their pathetic groping after light. Here is a man whose conscience is awakened. The law written in his heart condemns him utterly; his conscience judges him. His life is a burden; and the hereafter—if his thoughts have been taught to stray that far—holds no hope. What shall he do? He brings a sacrifice. It does not avail. He realizes the emptiness of the performance. The heart will not be put off with it. He begins on himself. That is better. It brings some relief. It seems like a satisfaction to the outraged sense of justice. He fasts, cuts himself, cudgels himself, torments himself, shuts himself off into silence and solitude. But peace is not thus easily bought. When he rests and the self-inflicted sufferings cease, the sin and the condemnation return. He must go on, on, on. He has not suffered enough. His tortures have not yet counterbalanced his sin. So his life wears away in distress. Oh, for some one to teach him of a Friend mighty to save; of the spotless Lamb of

God, and how God has "laid upon him the iniquities of us all."

See that Hindoo devotee, hopeless resignation written upon his countenance. Ask him what is the chief end of man. With a sad look he answers: "Cutting the eighty-four." What does he mean? The "eighty-four" are "laps" of birth. A "lap" is a hundred thousand. By and by you learn the astonishing doctrine, child of the soul's despair, that every man must pass through existence eight million four hundred thousand times—be born that many times, and die that many times. Each one of these lifetimes is clouded with suffering and woe. As one of their sages put it:

> How many births are past, I cannot tell;
> How many yet to come, I dare not say;
> But this I know, and know full well,
> That grief and pain embitter all the way.

Says a missionary in *Record of Christian Work:* "In India you will see, especially at the time of the great festivals, myriads of men and women going on pilgrimages, dragging their weary feet over the hot plains, some of them literally crawling on their hands and knees on the burning sands, measuring their distance with the length of their bodies, and prostrating themselves with their heads upon the earth. They draw a line in the dust with their finger, and then planting their feet upon that line, prostrate themselves again and continue those prostrations for days and sometimes for months. In South India I have seen them again and again making the circuit of holy mountains in this manner, and they make the circuit one hundred and eight times, traveling many a weary mile. Others make a vow to hold their arms up in the air until the arm becomes stiff and rigid and the

fingernails have grown to the length of four or five inches. Others lie out on rocks, exposed to sun and wind and rain, summer and winter, day and night. The object of all this is to cut short 'the eighty-four' and obtain salvation. These things seem to you awful, but they are nothing compared with what took place in India less than sixty years ago, when infants were sacrificed to Gunga, when pilgrims threw themselves from precipices, and widows cast themselves alive upon the funeral pyre of their dead husbands. And these very things would be taking place in India today were it not for the firm hand of the British government and the increasing power of Christian sentiment there. Hindooism is cruel; it is a devouring monster that takes from the body of every Hindoo—poor, weak, lean though he may be—its pound of quivering flesh."

And when this "salvation" they so earnestly toil and suffer for is examined, its blessedness is found to consist in simple annihilation—extinction of being; reabsorption into the infinite, into the everything (or nothing, which is the same). This is the Nirvana, the blessed goal to which they hope to attain; the glorious privilege of non-existence, of rest in nothingness, to be forever let alone by conscience, terrors, pain, and by their monstrous gods.

Never shall yearnings torture him, nor sins
Stain him, nor ache of earthly joys and woes
Invade his safe eternal peace, nor deaths
And lives recur. He goes
Unto Nirvana. He is one with life,
Yet lives not. He is blest, ceasing to be.
Om, Mani Padme, om! The dewdrop slips
Into the shining seal! . . .
"This is the doctrine of the Karma."

Blessed hope, even at that! For who could endure forever the curse of such benighted life? But oh, that some one had been able to show them the true hope in Jesus Christ, and the vision of the city that cometh down "as a bride adorned for her husband"; where they hunger no more nor thirst any more; where "there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and the Lamb shall be therein; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads"; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Truly it is life eternal to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent!

Much more could be said to impress the pitiable condition of the heathen life. But this suffices to show that Christianity is a blessing even in temporal existence, and does greatly alleviate the condition of those to whom it comes. Yet, after all, that is a side issue. What about the world to come? What does eternity hold for the idolater? Besides this all other concern becomes insignificant. It is inconceivable that there should be a Christianity that cares only for self—salvation for self, heaven for self, glory and blessing for self—and coldly sees other men go down into darkness. That is not only unchristian, but antichristian. It is proof positive of the utter absence of any thing like a Christlike disposition. It is in its essence, as all other selfishness, of the nature of Satan. It is the old enemy of souls, the Deceiver, who, taking advantage of the natural sophistry of selfishness, suggests such quibbles as, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and "Who is my neighbor?" and "There are enough heathens around us," and "Those heathens will be saved on their ignorance," etc. I write this, not to condemn you who have such arguments, but to open your eyes as to their real source. The man devoted to "saving the heathen around him" is usually the man whose prayers

and money and help extend to the benighted peoples far away. The Christ-like mind that impels him to take interest in those near him also constrains him for those greater sufferers of Satan's oppression in far countries. Whereas he who excuses himself from helping them on the pretext that there are so many home heathens, will be found doing next to nothing for those at home. For the same selfish indifference that deadens his heart towards the one does the same toward the other; and the same unwillingness that seeks for an excuse in the one case will not fail to find one to suit the other. Such a man gives evidence that he himself is not in a saved condition. He certainly bears no likeness to Him who gave himself up as a ransom for the many.

And what about that very common argument that God will save the heathen on their ignorance? I believe that it is Ruskin that calls attention to the fact that the Turk habitually exclaims, "God is good!" when he means nothing more than "I am lazy." Is is only the Turk who does that? That is a peculiar way, indeed, of casting one's burden upon the Lord and finding "rest." How deceitful is the carnal heart!

Admit that the heathen are saved on their ignorance—that is God's concern. What about our obligation, the debt of love we owe to all men for Christ's sake, and the fulfilling of the charge God has left us? No matter what God is going to do with the heathen—have you been faithful to God's commission? The matter begins to look different when seen in this light. Now, in the next place, whence comes that strange doctrine, that people are saved on the ground of their ignorance? From the Bible? If you have studied the Book only a little, you must have noticed that ignorance is exactly the thing that ruins and damns people. True that Christ says it shall be more tolerable in the day of judgement for Tyre and

Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah, who had less light, than for Capernaum and other cities where his mighty works were done and his invitations and warnings fell on deaf ears. But that makes it worse for the latter, not better for the former. Infer, if you choose, where little is given little is required--that is not salvation on ignorance. That "little" is required. What if they have fallen short of that? Who shall then save them? And then it remains on the other hand, that where much is given much is required. One thing that God requires of us is that we send forth to others the light he has bestowed upon us.

There is no use in discussing whether the heathens that have had no chance at all shall be damned. It is no time to speculate. It is for us to give them the chance. Wherever the gospel goes souls are saved, men are helped temporally and eternally. Where it does not go they must miss an immeasurable advantage which, but for our ingratitude toward God and lovelessness toward men, they might have had. It is enough.

GOING, PRAYING, GIVING.

What shall we do? Go to the heathen and preach to them the unsearchable riches. That is the first thought. "But I cannot?" Are you sure of that? Or do you mean it would be inconvenient, or bad pay, or that it would upset some of your earthly hopes and plans? Have you ever offered yourself to God to do as he pleases? It may be in your particular case he does not want you to go. He may need you and want you elswhere. "How shall I know?" Have you ever surrendered yourself entirely into God's hands, wholly, truly, without hypocrisy, without reserve? This do, and he will use you. He will lead you step by step, and will make it clear to you in his own

way, so that you need not fear or doubt. Neither need you tremble at God's will. Lt is the best, sweetest, and kindest government in the world; for God is entirely unselfish and will do for your welfare and blessing also, as well as through you for others.

But say you can not go. Then what? Pray for the work. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." You can be an actual, real helper in the work by your prayers. Do not stop with that. If you belong to God, so does your money. Give freely to the work done among dying souls in Christ's name. It is your duty. It is more than that. May God so fill us with the love of Christ and constrain us that we may forget and lose the word "duty" in that greater word "love."

(1916)

"DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP."

Two passages should be kept continually before the Christian's eyes, or, better, be written on his heart. They both mean, "Don't give up the ship"—only that in this case the fight is greater than the one in which those words were uttered, the issues infinitely weightier, the command backed up by a Power that stands security of our final victory. The passages are: "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof"; and, "Neither give place to the devil." Directly opposed to what God calls "the boldness of faith" is that faintness of heart that capitulates at the first sight of the enemy or at the first struggle. God says: "Hold the fort." We say, "We are too weak," and haul up the white flag. This is not weakness; it is unbelief. "For this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." For who is it that backs us in the fight? and who is he that promised to be

with us? and who has given assurance of the victory? Is it not He at whose call all the hosts of heaven rise up together? To quail before the demands of the flesh; to make allowance for the devil; to calculate upon defeat; to surrender to the forces of evil—this is not weakness, but distrust of God, a cowardice born of unbelief, precisely the same that kept Israel from entering Canaan (Num. 13:14; Heb. 3, 4). For God knew they were weak, just as he also recognizes the same in us. Was it not because we were weak that Jesus came to save us and called us to himself? But when he promised Israel the possession of the land, and the defeating of all the giants, and even on that they would not go, "he sware in his wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." So they were not able to enter in because of unbelief. And we have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. But when in the desperation of utter self-despair we fling ourselves wholly on the promise of God and fight by faith, we shall be more than conquerors. "If any man shrink back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

SUCCESS AND VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST.

When Peter was walking upon the waters (Matt. 14: 22-32), his power to walk and his safety lay entirely in Him who had called him to himself. It was no skill or power of Peter's that supported his steps. The treacherousness of the element on which he was walking, the winds and the waves, Peter could not have battled with, and, in fact, had nothing to do with. That was the Savior's business. Peter's part was to fix his eye and his faith steadfastly upon the Savior and walk ahead. That was what upheld him. But Peter became afraid of the waters and—sank. It was not because Peter was a bad water-walker. The Lord knew at the time he called

him that he could not walk on water. Yet Christ's invitation to come was Peter's guaranty of ability to do so; and in faith he obeyed and walked. But when he ceased to trust in the One who sustained him, nothing could prevent his fall. Now the same Jesus calls us to walk in his steps—not because we are such moral giants that we could do it of ourselves, for he knew that we could not; but the sustaining, overcoming power lies in him. And he bids us to run our race "looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith." My brother, when you fell, it was because you ceased to look to and trust in Jesus! There remains a consolation. When Peter, sinking, cried out, "Lord, save me," Jesus put forth his hand, lifted him up, and, gently rebuking his unbelief, walked back to the boat with him, they two together. And I do not read that Peter faltered any more.

"SANCTIFICATION" STANDARDS.

Notwithstanding the grave mistakes and misunderstandings of the Bible which may be laid to the charge of the sanctification people, they deserve, wherever they are sincere in their purpose, due honor for the exaltedness of their aim and for being dissatisfied with the worldliness and the easy-going standards of the average church membership. While it is our duty to oppose errors, it is our privilege as Christians to adopt good wherever it is found—to take, in this case, the rebuke implied against Christendom in the modern sanctification movement strictly to ourselves; to seek, the more intelligently, as we claim to occupy higher ground of knowledge, the same high plane to which they aspire. The brethren who labor to convince us that we can not live without sinning (alas! we have found it so only too plainly in our own experience, and are only too prone already to excuse our-

selves on such grounds)—those brethren could do us a good turn if instead they would show us how to meet the temptations of life and to attain to the high standards God has set for us in his word. Can we attain them? Let us be assured that what God requires of us he will give grace and means to perform. Wherefore "let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, pefecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

June 3, 1909.

MUTUAL SUBJECTION.

Tucked away in a chapter so full of good things that we are apt to miss the full force of any one of them is a precious piece of a sentence which deserves to be blazoned in big letters in every meetinghouse, for it would settle about nine-tenths of the difficulties that arise among brethren. It reads thus: "Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ" (Eph. 5:17). This does not mean to agree to practice that which is unscriptural or wrong, or to cease that which the Lord requires to be done, for the sake of brethren. The words "in the fear of Christ" forestall that idea. But those little items which depend on personal taste or judgment—the size, shape, location, seating of the meetinghouse; the baskets, the paraphernalia, the arrangements of time and methods, the expedients, the hundred and one little things about which there always have been, and evermore will be, differences, and which are at the bottom of much friction—in these let each submit to the other. Let no one set himself to have his way; but and if he does, let us give in to him. Do you say it is hard to do? It must be hard on the flesh, for it will nip in the bud those works of the flesh which are called "enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, . . . and such like," which things God hates.

A LOST SHEEP.

A sheep away from the shepherd and his supervision is lost. The loss is a great one on both sides, but must in the nature of things result much more bitterly to the sheep than to the shepherd; for he manages to get along without the sheep, but the lost sheep must perish. Yet it is the shepherd that manifests the most concern and goes after the sheep. The loss is the shepherd's indeed; yet it means vastly more to the unthinking sheep. For what is a lost sheep? Unable to care for itself, without natural weapons of attack or armor of defense, or fleetness of foot to escape, and without the instinct and cunning of the wild things, it is already doomed and done for. For a while it may enjoy its freedom from the sheepfold's restrictions, but the end is all too sure. And when the shepherd has found it, the sheep is saved, and it is the shepherd who rejoices. Joy in heaven—over one sinner? What a revelation of the love of God and of his estimate of one sinner—even of a sinner who has long lost all respect for himself!

THE BIBLE IN MODERN EDUCATION.

Recently a young brother, seeking admittance into a certain university, when detailing the work he had done elsewhere, enumerated five years' work in the Bible. "We do not count that," replied his examiner. "But I have done as hard work on that as I possibly could have done on any other branch," protested the young brother. "We can give you no credit on that," was the answer. The young brother knew that beforehand; but to get the full expression from that educational representative, he let the point come up.

The absurdity of the situation becomes apparent when

we consider what the Bible is, and what, on the other hand, it is that really is counted as "work" by those who do not recognize the Bible as being of any account in the curriculum. Barring the inspiration of the Bible and considering it simply as a common book, even then there is a liberal education in it. Morals, ethics, philosophy, poetry, literature, history; the human interest that, because it constituted the chief excellence of the heathen classics, gave them, in sum, the name of "humanity"; finally, in its English form, the purity and beauty of its language—where, even as an uninspired book, does the Bible find its equal along its chosen lines? In what other book is there so much that is worth while? But, to those who believe, the Bible means immeasurably more. Not only literature and human learning is it to them, but a revelation of God and of man and of the unseen world; in it they learn, not language and philosophy so much as eternal principles of righteousness, faith, hope, love, that will enable them to cope with the problems of life as nothing else can. That is education indeed—to know God and Christ, to be made fit for this life and for another, an eternal life to come. And this is comprised wholly and alone in the book that counts for nothing in the world's curriculum.

But what have they in our schools that counts so solidly? Here I will not myself speak, but quote from a gentleman of undisputed scholarship and of international note—Richard G. Moulton, M.A., Ph.D., the pioneer and apostle of the literary study of the Bible, who in his book on this subject, in the preface, calls attention to the strange inconsistency between our educational aims and standards. He says:

"It has come by now to be generally recognized that the classics of Greece and Rome stand to us in position of an ancestral literature—the inspiration of our great

masters, the bond of common associations between our poets and their readers. But does not such a position belong equally to the literature of the Bible? If our intellect and imagination have been formed by the Greek have we not in similar fashion drawn our moral and emotional training from Hebrew thought? Whence then the neglect of the Bible in our higher schools and colleges? It is one of the curiosities of our civilization that we are content to go for our liberal education to literatures which, morally, are at an opposite pole from ourselves—literatures in which the most exalted tone is often an apotheosis of the sensuous, which degrade divinity, not only to the human level, but to the lowest level of humanity. Our hardest social problem being temperance, we study in Greek the glorification of intoxication; while in mature life we are occupied in tracing law to the remotest corner of the universe, we go at school for literary impulse to the poetry that dramatizes the burden of hopeless fate. Our highest politics aim at conserving the arts of peace; our first poetic lessons are in an *Iliad* that can not be appreciated without a bloodthirsty joy in killing. We seek to form a character in which delicacy and reserve shall be supreme, and at the same time are training our taste in literature which, if published as English books, would be seized by the police. I recall these paradoxes, not to make objection, but to suggest the reasonableness of the claim that the one side of our liberal education should have another side to balance it. Prudish fears may be unwise, but there is no need to put an embargo upon decency. It is surely good that our youth, during the formative period, should have displayed to them in a literary dress as brilliant as that of Greek literature—in lyrics which Pindar can not surpass, in rhetoric as forcible as that of Demosthenes, or contemplative prose not inferior to Plato's—a people dominated by an

utter passion for righteousness; a people whom ideas of purity, of infinite good, of universal order, of faith in the irresistible downfall of all moral evil, moved to a poetic expression as fervid and speech as musical as when Sappho sung of love or Æschylus thundered his deep notes of destiny. When it is added that the familiarity of the English Bible renders all this possible without the demand upon the timetable that would be involved in the learning of another language, it seems clear that our school and college curricula will not have shaken off their mediæval narrowness and renaissance paganism until classical and biblical literature stand side by side as centres of our highest culture."

FIGHTING ERROR.

In our opposition to error it behooves us to be both just and merciful. Most of the errors held in Christendom have been maliciously fabricated, but oftener represent effort at grasping and stating some truth taught in the Bible. The doctrine of "unconditional election" did not originate in a willful intent to deceive, but rather as a misguided effort to do justice to a certain class of texts. The doctrine of "justification by faith only" was not hatched by servants of Satan with a view to destroy souls, but rather stands for an uncomprehensive statement of certain inspired doctrines of Paul and clashes with most other false doctrines. Worse than the error is the partisan and sectarian zeal which, accepting a partial or distorted view (which under other circumstances might have been balanced and corrected) and making it a party tenet, becomes blind to all further reason and scripture. This we must remove with gentleness and fairness; and the error we must combat on general ground rather than by impugning the motives and character of those who teach them.

BLUSTERING.

Is is astonishing how much a little bluster will accomplish in some quarters. Big assertions often carry the day over proof and truth. A doctrine is called "diabolical" or "soul-destroying and God-dishonoring" or branded as "the worst kind of sectarianism," or as "fearful! awful! terrible!" and straightway the people turn from it in dismay—especially if they have some confidence in the preacher who uses these lurid terms. But this is not right. The cause of truth is served best by examining and judging sanely and fairly whatever comes our way, and every verdict should be based upon sound reason and the word of God. The leader who plays upon the prejudices and ignorant fears of the people abuses his position.

RESPECT THAT COMES OF LOVE.

One can not read the letters of Paul without being impressed with his—not courtesy, for that word seems almost too shallow; but the depth of his tender, respectful love he held for all his converts and brethren. He speaks of them in terms which we would feel extravagant if we heard them used today. "Whether any inquire of . . . our brethren, they are the messengers of the churches, they are the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. 8:23). Now it stands to reason to suppose that those "brethren" were not paragons, any more than true, earnest brethren today; not without fault, not without failure. But he calls them "the glory of Christ." Or, again: "Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus . . . to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker, and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house" (Phile. 1, 2). Philemon seems to have been a man of private occupation; Archippus, a member, perhaps, of the household and a minister of God (Col. 4:

17); but to Paul they are alike fellow-workers, fellow-soldiers, whom he mentions with a certain pride, as a mother would blushingly tell you of her son's great success. Or look into the last of Romans—the affectionate salutations, the individual and honorable mention, the appreciation, the profound regard, the thoughtful consideration, the love and respect that crops out between the lines—it is refreshing and helpful to us, even as it comes across the centuries. How much more if it had been to us personally! I believe Paul would have a good word to speak to each one of us, and a good name to call us by, for love finds such things. And his respect for us, which amounts almost to reverence, would needs make us respect ourselves more. It is the spirit of the Master, and there is need of it among us.

IF THE TRUE CHURCH WERE HERE.

It could hardly escape the reader of the Bible that Christ built his church; that that church certainly existed during the days of the apostles, and was known as "the church of God," "the church of the Lord"; that Christ never built or acknowledged any other; and the conclusion lies near that men can and may and should and must now belong to it. These things, I say, are plain. Nor is it any harder to see that with the New Testament in his hand any man can mark the kind of preaching that led men into the church at the first, and the steps they took to become members then; and that a man can render the same obedience of faith today in the same way, and thus become a member of the same body.

But it is not such a simple, easy thing, after all. A Babel of opinions, creeds, prejudices, party sentiments, plausible arguments, objections, human considerations, drown out the clear note of the word of God, until it seems next to impossible to pick it out and follow it amid

the hubbub and contention which surrounds us. "One church is as good as another," and "There are good people in all churches," and "Just so a man is honest," and "We can't all see alike"—and so forth; we have heard all these things over and over. But if we ignore them, and set our faces to the light, to find and to do the will of God, what then? The world, more particularly the religious world, would find means to make the way pretty bitter for us.

Let us suppose that a congregation of the church of God of the apostolic days—one begun by the apostles themselves, and in every way meeting God's pattern, and whose name and claim as the church of God is not open to dispute—were carried across the gulf of the eighteen hundred intervening years and set down in our midst, unchanged, except as far as the language, dress and social manners of the members are concerned. Now, if God would thunder from heaven and say, "This is my church,' or would write words to that effect in blazing letters upon the sky, there might be no trouble about it. But missing such miraculous evidence—just what would people say about it? They would call it another sect, of course; and in that they would be utterly wrong. A "sect" is a faction or party "cut off." But this is the church of God. It is not, as someone once expressed it, "a chip off the old block"—it is the old block itself, the one concerning which God has protested emphatically that he did not want it chipped up (John 17:20; 1 Cor. 1:10). They would call it a "denomination." But it is not a denomination of anything, but simply the church—the one and only church of the Lord. They would call it a "strange" thing and its ways "odd"; but, in fact, the denominations round about it are "strange" and their ways are foreign to the word of God.

This little church would—if, indeed, it received any

notice at all—get no end of sneers from the pious and scholarly gentlemen who are leaders of the various denominations. Preachers would hate it—partly because it would have the impudence (as they would count it) to wear the New Testament name and to claim a position higher than the denominations; partly because it would be busily engaged in that abominable practice of "proselyting," than which naturally nothing disgusts the average "pastor" more. For surely these members of the body of Christ would miss no opportunity to invite and persuade all other professed believers of the Lord to lay down party name and creed and haul down partisan flags and stand in faith and love with them on the word of God alone.

So (and it is a severe comment on present religious conditions) the church of God, if it came among us, would not be recognized, but rather opposed, hated, ridiculed, sneered at, and that most especially by the religious people of the day, as formerly its Lord was abominated by the religious leaders of his day. And that is not saying that among the sects there are no true, good souls—far from it. But such would be the blind partisanship of the many, most particularly the leaders of the sects, that it would set them to fighting even against God. But to the persecuted church of Christ there would be this consolation: "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."

The difficult position of this church of God would be made the harder if in its rank and file dissension should arise. If before that she had been the target for the shafts of its enemies, she would now become a laughing-stock and an object of contempt unto them. "But," you would object, "the true church surely would have no internal difficulties!" And why not? Did not the apostolic churches have them? In that church transferred to us

from the days of the apostles as supposed above, would there not be found so much as one man who would grow self-willed? Or among its converts would there be no false brethren that crept in unawares? Has the enemy ceased to sow tares? It is a common mistake to assume that the true church of God would have no trouble maintaining its ground, and that her power and vitality would be extraordinary. The case is not so, however. Things tend downward. Light is maintained at a constant expenditure of energy, but darkness comes of itself. Philosophers prate about the "necessary progress of mankind"—as if things necessarily must tend upward. But "necessary degeneration" would strike nearer the facts; for light and truth and growth and progress are maintained only through a constant exertion and interference on the part of God. The gravitation of evil would carry everything along its path if it were not for God's providences, and his word, and his instruments who carry the word forth in speech and life. Every farmer knows that the finest apple tree suffers most quickly from drought or insects; the finest pear tree most readily takes the blight; the finest hogs are the most susceptible to cholera and other diseases; and weeds grow and flourish without care, while corn must be cultivated. What do I mean to say? Simply this: The false churches are hardier than the true church.

The true church stands on delicate foundation. It walks by faith—like Peter walking on the water, which, to human eyes, looks precarious enough. It depends every moment on God. It is held together by the bond of love, which, humanly speaking, is a slender enough tie. I am not saying that when faith and love are there she is not invincible; for then indeed, as Israel when God was among them, she stands victorious and secure. But faith and love must be maintained; and the price of her life and strength is eternal vigilance.

See, for instance, how Paul pleads with the church at Phillippi to "be of the same mind" (Phil. 2:1, 2). The success and continuance of the church depended on their heeding this plea. Now in the Roman Catholic Church, for example, it does not matter so much whether they all be of the same mind or not. In fact, they have no mind. There is just one mind in the whole organization, and that is the pope's. If aught occurs or is taught that displeases you, you have to swallow your displeasures (for you have no voice in the matter) or else get out. If you do not get out of your own accord, you may be assisted. You could not create trouble in that most perfect of ecclesiastical machines. And the "practicalness" of its arrangements for its ends is very evident. But it is neither God's church nor God's ends that they are after, nor God's way of attaining ends. Not by subjugation, but by loving submission; not by holding bodies together by ecclesiastic sway, but by knitting hearts one to another and to himself through faith and love, does God hold his people in the "one body." When one or more of those hearts grow worldly, self-willed, or in any way faithless and loveless, there will be trouble. But even then the firm foundation stands, and the Lord knows them that are his.

So the church of God would have its troubles. Men would arise of their own number, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. In one way or another—by offending against the consciences of brethren through the introduction of things not required by the word of God (as has been done in these days by the bringing in of instrumental music; on account of private difficulties; by the self-exaltation of elders who have overlooked the charge not to lord it over God's heritage; by the coldness of some and the ignorance of others—factions and divisions would occur, even as they did in

apostolic times. Which would indeed throw discredit upon God's true church in the eyes of men, but not in God's sight. For she is not to be blamed.

FOR MEN OF TODAY.

Now it is not necessary to suppose a church bodily transferred from Paul's day to the present; but such a church can be constituted among us today. If a man will read Acts 2:14-42, giving every word its fair value, as he would if he were reading a letter from a dear father; if he will accept the directions given in verse 38, and obey as the sinners of Jerusalem did (verses 41, 42), then by the same word, the same rule, the same God, will he and all that do likewise be added to the same church; and other name they need not wear, other claim they need not make, other constitution and by-laws they need not seek. But know this, that when you do so, all the opposition, sneers, persecution, troubles and difficulties to which the true church is liable you may then surely expect to fall to your lot. But there is a sure reward.

ONE KIND OF FREEDOM.

The weight that presses down a man's spirit until he will not be brave and honest; the chain that stops the wheels of the gospel chariot; the gripping fetter that holds charity from extending her hand of helpfulness—is called "the love of money." The power that drives men into ignoble, selfish self-sacrifice even unto death, that makes thieves and liars of upright men, demagogues and time-servers of statesmen, clowns and actors and perverters of truth of preachers, ferocious beasts of good-natured, tender-hearted people; the demon of darkness that hides light and hinders progress; the fosterer of all

crimes; the corrupter of family, state, and church; the tyrant that sways millions of slaves and drives them on even unto perdition—that is the love of money. "Be ye free from the love of money" (Heb. 13:5). What a desirable freedom it would be! What an unbinding of hands and hearts to do good, true work of God! What men we could be—just, strong, brave, true—were we free from the love of money!

THE GENEALOGY OF COVETOUSNESS.

The Lord Jesus invariably traces covetousness back to anxiety as its root. That is where it really begins. "Ye can not serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink" (Matt. 6:24, 25). Or, again, requested to assist in dividing an inheritance—one of the few requests Jesus refused—he said, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," and gave an account of the foolish rich man who laid up treasures for himself and was not rich toward God—and again the warning: "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (Luke 12: 13-22). The anxious man is a covetous man in the making. Directly he has laid up for today's need, he grows concerned for tomorrow, and still frantically grasps at supplies for the coming weeks and months and for a year. Then the shadow of possible accident falls on his soul, and he is driven on to secure himself still further. That accomplished, comes the fear of losing what he has, and perpetual eagerness to add more. A thousand imaginary needs trouble him; and artificial needs arise with increasing wealth. He gets poorer as he grows richer. He can

afford much less now in proportion for good works and for God's kingdom than in the days of his poverty. He has to scheme and manage more to make the best showing, to control outgoings and to prepare against possible losses. His financial matters give him more care than ever. Added to that, the subtle fascination of the gathering instinct, and the ambitious racing instinct—the endeavoring to be richer than another man, the grasping at social preference—how will it end? It is the commonest sin of our generation to sell the life for meat and the body for raiment. And this is the service of Mammon, which begins in anxiety and which is incompatible with the service of God.

THE END OF ANXIETY.

"In nothing be anxious." How impossible this sounds as a piece of advice! Yet God said it, and, as usual, he meant it, every word; and the one through whom that injunction was given, Paul, had known turbulent days in abundance and was even then in a prison, uncertain whether he would be released or publicly executed. It was no mere pretty theory he was advocating; but what his Master had taught him and enabled him to do, and what had been tested in the fires of all furnaces and in the uproars of the elements, in the course of his eventful life—that he quietly commended to the Phillippians. "In nothing be anxious." It is too hard on you. Troubles you can bear, but worry is too much. God did not intend it. Then, it is dangerous. The cares of this world will choke out the word of God as quickly as riches and pleasures (Matt. 13:22). They unfit us for the occasion of Christ's coming (Luke 21:34). It is absolutely necessary to be free from anxieties and cares. But how shall we avoid them? Let Paul explain. "In nothing be anxious,

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6). Then comes promise of a guard stationed at our hearts to keep out the enemy—the bitter, corroding, distracting cares: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (verse 7).

BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED.

If it is right and good to pick out the good wherever we see it, we can not help thinking that some of the features of "the old-time religion" would be very desirable now, and feeling some small misgivings lest the reaction against some of their errors had carried us on some points rather too far. One of those commendable things was that they made much of the grace of God and spent their days wondering at the greatness of that "amazing grace . . . that saved a wretch like me." They had strong convictions of sin in those days, like the people of Pentecost, who were "pricked in their hearts," and Felix, who "trembled," and who, when they were "saved," were proportionately thankful. Those preachers, whatever else they did or did not do, cried aloud and spared not and showed the house of Jacob their sins, and preached about hell as though it really existed. Those hearers were brought low and were made to see their pitiable, lost estate, and the contrast of their own vileness with the unapproachable holiness of God. Accordingly, like the woman of the street that came to the feet of Jesus and washed them with the rain of her hot tears of penitence and love, they loved much because much had been forgiven them, and they extolled the grace—the unmerited, unmeasurable goodness of the Hand that saved them. But it comes to pass in these

times that men march up unhumbled to make their confession, feeling, to all appearance, as if they were doing God a favor. And now sinners, especially well-to-do, respectable ones, are so much courted by this preacher and that, in the many competitions of the day, that they have come to think that God is greatly in need of them, and are "coy, uncertain, hard to please," even after they have been brought in. Man's part should not be overlooked; but it might be as well to put a trifle more emphasis on God's part, especially his grace, which takes all boasting out of all mouths.

TAKE HEED HOW YOU HEAR.

We readily understand our responsibility for our actions when we know what is right, but are hardly as ready to see that we are also responsible for our hearing and understanding and knowing. We say, "I did not know," or "I did not understand," and we think that releases us from all blame. A young man fails to keep an important early appointment, and explains that he is sorry, but absolutely did not hear his alarm clock. That is good just so far. If he did not hear it, it would be unreasonable to expect him to respond to it. But that is just half the tale. The next question is: "Why did you not hear it?" And then it appears that time and again before this occasion he had heard and ignored the call of the clock until it had ceased to make any impression on him. Then came a critical test, and he failed. He was responsible for not hearing the clock. And a man excuses himself for disobedience on the grounds that the gospel does not "appeal" to him, or that he can not believe, or that it is not plain enough, and often he has ignored the call of truth and stifled the voice of conscience; but there is no evading the ultimate responsibility for him who refused the Light.

TOO GOOD TO BE BELIEVED.

There are men honestly skeptical toward the revelation of God, for no other reason at the bottom than that it is too good to be believed. This is especially the melancholy mental attitude of the highly educated, where they are of that more ingenuous class who weigh the matter seriously and who do not deserve to be numbered among the shallow, indifferent scoffers. It seems incredible to them, in the first place, that God, the Maker of all things, would speak to us. Their studies in science enlarge their conception of the universe, in the enormous vastness of which the earth amounts to nothing, and enhances their reverence and awe for its infinite Creator; and it also removes God far from them. They feel infinitely insignificant in reference to him and his works. For them, they are convinced, not an atom would change its relation, not the least law of nature would vary ever so little. They are as a stranger in a great city—lost in the multitude of the wondrous workings and creations of God. God, as Science sees him, is far off, inaccessible. If he were accessible, it could not avail; for laws govern all things, and they can not change in favor of any man. In fact, God is superfluous in the scheme of science, except, perhaps, as a hypothesis for the ultimate origin and cause of all things, which, after all, must stand as one of the unsolved mysteries. So many scientists have abandoned him entirely or plead agnosticism. But in any case he is not a living Power to be reckoned with. Above all, he can not care particularly for the individual.

To such a mind, that the Maker of all nature and the world has taken notice and specially cares; that he loves the world and every man in it; that he has spoken to us, or even sent his Son to be his Representative and to die on our behalf—this seems wholly incredible.

If, further, they believe in God at all, and even accept it as possible that he might care something for us, it can not be, to their mind, a redeeming God. Their conception of sin is at most that of violated law—a disturbance of the established order of things, which must result in suffering. The suffering is remedial and readjusts the balance of things. The only cleansing and salvation possible is the reshaping of one's character, cultivating new habits and suffering willingly undergone to make expiation for past transgressions. This is the only view philosophy can take; and, strange to say, it is the essence of Buddhism.

This is the view that has taken hold on the educated mind of today. It is the undercurrent of Emerson's teaching. It appears constantly in the press and the philosophy and the fiction of the present time—this dreary faith in a reign of law, which leaves us without God, without Father, without hope in the world.

If it may be called a religion at all, it is a religion of despair, which must cover its melancholy and still the hearts of men by a forced cheerfulness and an optimism that will not bear inquiry. In fact, at this point we are advised to close our eyes to facts and "look on the bright side of things." Hence, also, the success of the New Thought movement, which is the logical outcome, by reaction, of the Buddhism above mentioned—an endeavor of the heart to reach peace by a wild "faith" where reason leaves us disconsolate.

And at the bottom it is because the gospel seems too good to be believed. If only with simple heart, like unto little children, they could come and hear the story and learn to believe in God's love—the good story of the cross of Christ—the loving invitation to the heavy laden; if only they would accord credibility to that word that cleanses and heals and uplifts, and which will stand long

after their fragmentary knowledge and fleshly philosophy shall have been forgotten, how much better would it be!

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM."

Not to know God is to misknow him. For every man must have his idea of God; and unless he had been taught by God's own revelation, it is a false idea, for no man ever guessed what God is or reasoned him out. "The world by its wisdom knew not God." But to have a false conception of God means to be in a wrong attitude toward him. For consciously or unconsciously we assume an attitude toward every person according to our notion of his character. So to have a wrong notion of God's character means necessarily that we are wrong in our attitude toward him. But to be wrong with God is to be wrong with self and with life and with everything in the world. The harsh, bitter man is all out of joint and gearing with everybody and everything. But it will be found that he has a harsh, bitter god. The lax and frivolous man's god is not holy. The anxious, worrying man may have a Creator, a Judge, a Lawgiver, but he has no Father in heaven. Thus what we think of God affects our whole life. To know him aright means to love him, to trust him, to obey him, to find happiness, peace, and joy in his love and power and fatherly care. For "this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." Let us know —let us "follow on to know Jehovah" (Hos. 6:3).

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART.

There are hearts hardened against the word of God; some by the deceitfulness of sin; some from a professional overfamiliarity with the word itself—as a preacher

or a teacher may go over a passage so often that it ceases to make any impression on him, and from constant careless use wears slick to him like a nickel; some by being blunted in perception through disobedience; some by regarding the word only as a treasury of "points" and "arguments" to hurl at someone else—a very fatal kind of hardening; some by blind prejudice which can see only its own ideas in the word; some by mere devotional reading—considering Bible reading a pious practice, but neither knowing nor caring what it really says; some by overwhelming conceit of their own great wisdom and learning. We must take heed. "Today if ye shall hear his voice (his word), harden not your hearts." How open and tender our hearts ought to be every time we draw near to God's precious word! Let us get out of the ruts. Let us become as little children before God. Let us look at his word each time we approach it, with new, wondering eyes, and search each passage as though we had never seen it before. Let us seek for his will to obey it, for his promise to rest upon it, for his encouragements to incite us to faithful service—today when we hear his voice.

THE URGENCY OF PRESENT EFFORT.

A beloved brother sends me the following clipping: "If the Christians of this generation do not send the gospel to the nonchristian people now living, they will never hear it." This strikes home. We are accustomed to think of "the heathen" in general as a fixed quantity, like the lands in which they live; and we entertain hopes that by and by the gospel will push its way on to them, forgetting in that hopeful view that the heathen of "by and by" are not the heathen of today. The heathens now living, no matter what advance the gospel light may make in future

time, are going to live and die in heathen darkness, the whole vast multitude of them, unless we go and preach, or help someone else to go and preach, the good tidings of Jesus to them now.

THE DECAY OF IDEALS.

For good, pure ideals, a schoolboy's valedictory is usually hard to beat. Youth is full of good ideals, and the older generation smiles and confidently predicts that they will come down a notch or two by and by. All the more's the pity. Once in a while a man starts out in his youth with a noble ideal and aim which he never relinquishes through sunshine or tempest unto the end. We take off our hats to such a man as that. Many begin with true aspirations and high resolves and excellent ideals, but the pressure of circumstances is too much for them; they compromise their principles, they lower their aim. The light dies out of their hearts and out of their eyes, and a mist falls upon their vision which makes all the world and everything in it look mean. Then they smile at the hopeful youth and talk about what experience will do in a few years. God save us from such experience as that! It is every man's great task to get the right ideal and hold it fast in any case even unto the end.

GOOD WORKS AND PRETENSES.

It is convenient to have energetic workers and liberal givers in the church, and we are tempted to wink at the wrong hearts and principles and lives of such, and inclined to encourage them in the thought that simply their works make them acceptable to God. But we may not compromise on this point if we would be true to God and to them. No man can indulge himself in evil and cover

his wrong course with good works or sacrifices. Works are indeed the crowning expression of faith, hope and love; and faith does not save, hope is mere air-castle building, love is empty sentimentalism, unless embodied in deeds. But so also, on the other hand, good works and gifts of money or other things are of no value except as they come from true faith and a heart that is right toward God. Works are the expression of a true heart, but can not make the heart true. "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory. For we are *his* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." Beware lest you console yourself in a worldly, sinful life, screening yourself with your good works and gifts, and fancy that God will save you because of them! Beware lest you think God does not know the heart and search the innermost motives!

AGAINST PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS.

A man is measured, not by what he can do, but by what he can do under stress of difficulty. Before anything is deemed fit or safe for important service, it must prove itself under a more than ordinary strain. "I could have done this or that if such and such a thing had not been the matter." How often we hear that kind of plea, and how little impression it makes on us all! The man that can not do good work under difficulties is of no account. For every man's life and every man's work are beset with difficulty nine-tenths of the time. All the great achievements of the world's history were triumphs over difficulty, and they would not be worth mentioning had they not been so. How can we expect the Christian life to be free from obstacles? A certain lady tried to excuse her-

self for giving way to her temper, saying: "I never get angry unless someone provokes me." "So neither does the devil," answered a wise friend. But to resist temptation in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; to walk upright under a burden; to be in the world, yet unspotted from the world; to hold fast under stress; to stand firm when others are falling away; to smile through tears; to hope in darkness; to keep love and faith whatever may befall—this is the life that is worthy to receive the promise "to him that overcometh."

GOD'S DOINGS TODAY.

We need not suppose that God is not as much mixed up in the affairs of men today as he was in the days of Abraham, Moses, David and Daniel. He is as near as he ever was. But in those days he gave a revelation of his workings. "He *made known* his ways unto Moses, his doings unto the children of Israel." (Ps. 103:7). And such a revelation was needed. God works, unseen by human eye, untraced by human reason; so quietly and unobtrusively that he might have shaped the whole history of Israel, or the world, and no man would have even guessed that his hand was at all in it. He is a God that hideth himself (Isa. 45:15). But he revealed his presence and his doings to Israel. Often we are surprised when in connection with some seemingly quite natural event the Scripture says, "It was of Jehovah." At every turn, for good or ill, Jehovah's hand is revealed. But that record was not made to show us what God once did long ago, but to assure us that the same God, though unrevealed, works with the same power and interest among us now. The category of the men of faith is not exhausted in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews; God has his heroes now that rank with those. His proverbial deal-

ings did not end with Israel's sojourn in the wilderness or with the days of Elijah. If you think so, you have missed the very purpose of the inspired record. He is still molding and directing human affairs—hardening here, granting favor there; saving here, judging and avenging there. Only we can not see it now, for he does not reveal his every step. What he revealed then is enough; and from that we may in a general way know what he is doing now. And of this we can be sure, that without our Father not a sparrow falls to the ground, and the very hairs of our head are numbered.

PLEADING GOD'S PROMISES.

Hardly had God made a certain promise to David concerning his house and posterity than David began to pray earnestly to God to grant him that promise (2 Sam. 7). Now, that he would do that may seem strange to men, but it was just what pleased God. There is no more effectual way of praying than to plead God's promises. It is not the persuading God to give us what he was not before willing to give, or at least has said nothing about, that constitutes prayer, so much as the claiming and laying hold by faith of what he holds out to us in his promises. We have indeed a right to ask for anything which it is right to desire. But perhaps all those things are in one way or another already included in God's abundant promises. To plead God's promises—that is praying in faith, that is "praying in the Holy Spirit." And how wonderfully potent, and how much larger and higher that will make our prayers! Let a man open, say, at Ephesians, and mark the promises contained in 1:3, 4, and those implied in the two inspired prayers of Paul (1:17-19; 3:14-19), and, on the strength of the statements found in 3:12, 20, weave them all into a prayer to God—

if you have never done it before, it will be the grandest prayer you ever offered, a prayer worth while, one that will count with God and bring its sure answer.

"LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?"

That sermon Jesus preached in Capernaum the day after the feeding of the five thousand, and which stands recorded in John 6, was the hardest piece of doctrine and the severest strain on the reason and prejudices and submissive faith of his professed followers of all that had ever come from his lips. The crowds forsook him, of course. But even many of his disciples could not support the strain and "went back, and walked no more with him." It was more than they were willing or ready to receive. Jesus let them go. He always did. An ordinary man would have been distressed, worried, and flurried. He would have pleaded, explained, possibly modified. But Jesus remained calm. He had spoken God's mind and done God's will—no more, no less; and there he rested and left God to take care of results and consequences. Turning to his apostles who stood there—sorely perplexed, no doubt, and grieved, for we know how much they cared for the visible success of Jesus—he said to them: "Would ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou are the Holy One of God." In this answer there lay a note of despair, yet the kind of despair that cleaves the stronger, because desperate, to its last and only hold. How shall we, can we, leave thee, Lord? Though all seem discouraging, though thy words be strange to us and thy ways incomprehensible, we can not leave thee, for our last hope is bound up in thee. In thee have we believed, and besides thee we have no more refuge and know not

whither to turn. So they stay with him, for they can not afford to turn him loose.

Among us, too, those things repeat themselves. Men become perplexed today. Once it was written, "By faith we understand" (Heb. 11:3). But the spirit of this age wants to understand before it will have faith. The doubts that lurk secretly and the skepticism that stalks in open day; the problems of life and its strange contradictions which seemingly defy all rule and principle; the leading of God's word, so contrary to the path our own wisdom would choose—these are perplexing, and none abide the strain.

Yet to whom shall we go? To reject Jesus' claim and word means the loss of the only One worth clinging to in this darkness. Leave him and you must reject the Bible. Leave the Bible, and there is an end, as far as you are concerned, of all revealed religion; for no other word that claims to be a revelation from God is worthy of comparison with the Bible, or can at all be reasonably considered after the Bible has been rejected. And revelation being discarded, you are thrown back simply on your senses and reason. How poor a guide they are, the long, sad history of human follies and vagaries witnesses. To reject Christ is to lose all light, to be without God and without hope in the world. And to whom would you go? To Mohammed, whose teaching has blighted and cursed and paralyzed and dehumanized millions for a thousand years? To Buddha, who has thrown a pall of gloom and hopelessness upon nations until they have sunk into apathy and degradation? To Confucius, who has turned the heart and soul of the Chinese into dust? To the goddess of Reason, that loosed the reins of human passions in the Reign of Terror? To the masters of music, or literature, or art, who themselves lived and died in spiritual darkness, or even in dissolution and immorality, and whose

work has never yet redeemed a human soul? To the cynic, who infects all he sees and touches with wormwood and gall? Or the agnostic, who learnedly leaves you in darkness and doubt? Or the Epicurean, who laughs his scruples away and gives himself up to sensual pleasure after the motto: "Let us eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die?" If you leave the Christ, to whom will you go?

In Robert G. Ingersoll's lifetime there appeared a cartoon in the *Ram's Horn* which vividly set forth the real situation. A stormy ocean scene; no ship or help in sight in all the wide expanse; but in the foreground a rock surmounted by a cross, to which a shipwrecked woman was clinging; another shipwrecked person, a man, bearing the features of Ingersoll, pawing the waters and sinking. But he cries to the woman, "Turn that rock loose; it has no real foundation." Give up the rock, because Ingersoll has his misgivings about it; turn from the words of eternal life to the musical lilt of the infidel's oratory; let go that which alone can save you, to share the hopeless waters with him—forsooth!

And Christ has the words of eternal life. Peter was right. He had seen captives freed, and tears dried, and the calm of God's peace fall upon tempestuous hearts, and sinners go away with a new light in their eyes because all their guilt was forgiven. Jesus does lift up and save souls, as most of us can testify. He alone can truly help. If "down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter, feelings lie buried," Jesus can restore them. He has blessed and healed all these eighteen hundred years; he heals and redeems today; and he is the only Helper. And if reason should reel and the eyes grow dark, yet I would cleave to Jesus, for he is good; and would give him the benefit of all doubts, for he alone is worth holding to in the darkness and storms of this life.

"IF THEREFORE THINE EYE BE SINGLE."

It is often said that men know better than they do. But this is true only in a very general and theoretical sense. The fact is that our knowing what is right depends largely upon our doing what we know to be right, and nothing will blind the moral judgment so certainly as to run a few times slantwise against the light. Somehow, to run squarely against it has not the same blinding effect. But to argue with one's conscience—"to beat about the bush," as we say—soon leaves the man unable to decide what is right. To the man who tells half lies the boundary line between truth and falsehood becomes indefinite and fades away until he confuses the two entirely, and he can argue on either side of a question with equal sincerity, as circumstances may require. The man who on pretense deals unfairly and dishonestly with his fellow will soon be unable to treat him just right, for he no longer knows what is right and thinks that for this or that little technical point justice is on his side, even when he is flagrantly in the wrong. The man who, for convenience or excuse, likes to forget his promises or agreements, becomes so that he can not help forgetting them, which is bad business; and nobody will trust him or make contracts with him unless it be all down in black and white, signed and sealed and stamped, for it is tacitly understood that the man can not be depended on. And so forth—a man can become so hardened and deceived and blinded by his own obliquity that all distinction between right and wrong becomes obscured, and he can honestly fancy himself justified in almost any kind of sin or crime he commits. But to have a clear spiritual eye, to know in any given exigency just what is morally right and pleasing to God—this is a priceless faculty which belongs only to thoroughly true and obedient hearts, and which when once lost can

never be restored, except by the sincerest repentance and whole-hearted committal to do God's will.

A WRONG KIND OF COMFORT.

The word "growth" holds in itself a vast deal of comfort and excuse to the man who wants to do right, yet does not altogether want to do right. He wants nothing better than for a preacher to come along and preach on "Growth" after such a fashion that it leaves the impression: "Just go along, and keep on trying, and by and by you will get better and naturally quit sinning." That sounds extremely plausible, especially to the man who wants to hear it. But it implies that known sin can not be broken off right here and now (pleasing thought that, to the man who would rather not quit it all of a sudden); it effectively puts the conscience to sleep with a false hope; it is a cloak for self-indulgence in wrongdoing and a vicious perversion of one of God's doctrines. Now, God does not countenance sin in any way, nor, though he be ready to forgive, does he indulge us in it. There are known sins, and sins unknown to ourselves (Ps. 19:12). As to the former, they must not be tolerated on any pretext whatever, and least of all should we seek any comfort concerning them, except that which comes of true repentance with all that that implies. "Some sins," said Henry Drummond, "must be dealt with suddenly if they are to be dealt with at all." "Do you believe in sudden conversions?" one asked a preacher. "Why, bless you," he replied, "that's the only kind I do believe in." And what he meant, and how right he was about it, is evident. We must not wait to grow out of sin, but as soon as it becomes known to us turn from it wholly and quickly, uncompromisingly, with all our hearts. As for growing —we can not grow into grace, but we grow in grace; we

do not grow from shame to glory, but from glory to glory. Let us deal sincerely and resolutely, and not temporize on pretext of "growing," where actual and known transgression is involved.

AFTER THE MANNER OF MEN.

The reproach which Paul casts upon the Corinthians, that they "walk after the manner of men" (1 Cor. 3:3), means a good deal—certainly this much: that human standards of right are not good enough for the people who are partakers of the divine nature. We are not to walk as men, but like God—like Jesus who lived the life of God on earth. "What do ye more than others?" asked Jesus of his disciples. Now, really, what do we more? "Others" are benevolent and kind; are we more so? "Others" lend when they expect to receive as much again; do we go beyond that? "Others" love the lovely and lovable and hate the hateful and the disagreeable; do we do better? Sometimes it even happens that Christians do not do as well as those "others." Alas for the low, human standards by which the religion of Christ is misrepresented through its followers.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION.

Sometimes the most obvious things are farthest from us, as any man that ever in nervous haste has searched and hunted all over a room to find an article that lay right under his nose can testify. I believe it was Bishop Butler who with charming simplicity and excellent good sense laid down this rule of interpretation: "The meaning of a book is the meaning of its author." This is like Columbus' egg—a child might have thought of that. And yet learned and able men have often left this simple consid-

eration quite out of view—have torn passages from their context for the mere sound of their words; have forced meanings into words which the author not only did not intend, but which would have been repugnant to him, and ideas which were at variance with all his teaching, which procedure is manifestly unfair. The Bible has suffered such treatment more than all other books. The true meaning of a statement must be judged not only from its own words, but from the context and the scope and trend of the whole treatise. On the other hand, we must guard against getting an unwarranted notion of what the author's object or trend is, and torturing his statements into agreement with that. There is no other safeguard in Bible interpretation half so good as a clear eye, a true heart, and a fearless, honest desire to find and do God's will.

RELIGIOUS TYRANNY.

"Two things," it has been said, "are not of our business—to make people good and to punish them for being bad." Many religious people make themselves obnoxious, and all the religion of Christ odious, to men by nagging and pulling and scolding and fault-finding and prodding, whether one another, or people of other beliefs, or outsiders. The pity of it is that it is often done with a good deal of self-surrender and honest intent to do God a service; and of course it comes to nothing and worse than nothing. Observe now how Jesus worked. He was no fault-finder. With exceeding gentleness and consideration he dealt with the shortcomings of his disciples. In his addresses to sinners he used infinite tact, such as can be learned by no rule, but which only the sympathetic understanding of love can give. And he never forced or pushed, but rather even restrained when men responded too freely and from false or shallow motive. He was

respectful to the lowest sinner. He honored all men, and that especially by paying due deference to their highest right and power—that of choosing for themselves. "There is a sacred circle around every person; respect that circle." Jesus respected it to such an extent that sometimes he appeared almost indifferent—which, decidedly, he was not. He denounced only the hypocrites, the canting, censorious, pretentious Pharisees, who themselves were the greatest tyrants, trying to force others to be that which they themselves were not, binding heavy burdens and grievous to be borne on men's shoulders, which burdens they themselves did not propose to move with their finger.

"CHRIST IN YOU."

Christianity is not simply a set of rules to be followed, nor a system of ethics or morals to be adopted. It is a life—a new life, different from common human life, a life implanted and imparted to us in Christ. "He that hath the Son hath life." It is God-life, and manifests its powers and tendencies in the new tastes and ways of the Christian who has been thus born again. Christian character is not built up by mechanical rules, but grows by an inward force. For illustration, there are two possible ways of making a tree, or what would pass for a tree. One would be to examine a tree minutely and reproduce it by artificial means, body and bark and limb and twig and leaf, according to our power to imitate. That would be very hard to do, and would result in a tree which, though it may look very deceiving, would not be a real tree, after all. The other way would be to procure a seed and plant it, and let the life in the seed do the rest, the while we just care for it and tend it. Now the Christlike character is also the product of life like the tree, and pro-

ceeds from divine seed. A man who would not truly come to Christ might, as many do, admire the character of Christ and strive by rule and will to imitate it. That would be the artificial way, and also the impossible way; for never on earth can the flesh be trained and cultivated to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Another man, having heard of Christ, puts his trust in him and accepts him from the heart as Lord and Savior, according to the gospel. Now he has a new life within him, which, if it be tended and nurtured and defended as God teaches us, will culminate in the full likeness of the Son of God. For we shall be like him when he shall appear.

GOD'S APPRECIATION OF FAITH.

When a man just takes him at his word, God appreciates it wonderfully. He holds faith very high. It is because man's only clew to spiritual things, from the recognition of which he is shut off in his body of flesh, and the only possibility of his entering into any right relation with God and heaven and Jesus, lies in faith. Now, God loves us; and, therefore, he rejoices over every precious little bud of faith that shows itself. Because Abraham believed the seemingly impossible thing that to him and Sarah a son should be born, God counted it to him for righteousness. Because Joseph believed God's promise that God would bring Israel up into their own land, and was content to leave his body in a foreign land until the time of God's promise should be fulfilled when his bones would be carried to the burying place of his fathers, God gave him honorable mention. Because Moses, knowing the high calling of Israel, and assured that God would fulfill his promises toward them, preferred to cast in his lot with the oppressed race of slaves and, to be numbered among them

rather than to have all the glory of Egypt's court, God set him on high. Because Rahab believed that Jehovah, according to his word, would be with Israel and was able to give them the victory, she was saved, and her household, in the day of the downfall of Jericho. But it was not merely the believing that pleased God; for all Jericho believed very much the same thing Rahab believed, only they feared it and fought against God's decree, but Rahab submitted; they strove to overturn it if possible, but she aided in the accomplishment of God's word. Thus faith, when it puts us in harmony with God and enlists our hearts and hands in the accomplishing of his will and purposes, the trust that flies to him for refuge and takes sides with him—that is the thing God seeks as a precious jewel and that is counted to us also for righteousness. (Rom. 4:23-25.)

THE FINGER OF GOD.

Faith is a simple and natural thing. Its results, however, are supernatural and inscrutable. It is on man's part simply to trust in Him whom God hath sent to be Redeemer and Savior and Lord; to believe the word, and manifest his belief in word and action. On God's part it sets into motion all the wheelwork of the invisible universe. To endeavor to account for the results of faith by reason and logic on the human plane is little more than folly. Faith has to do with forces which eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and which have never entered into the heart of man, of which we have only a general knowledge and that only by revelation. Natural law may explain a point here and there and nature's analogies may be very suggestive; but there is no law of cause and effect that accounts for the results of faith. Faith opens the door for direct intervention on the part of God. To claim that

the heroes of faith, such as those enumerated in the eleventh of Hebrews, were extraordinary men, is, indeed, as has been said, to miss the point entirely. The only advantage they held was their faith in God, on account of which God worked for them and with them and in them and through them; so that their great works were really God's works, and the credit belonged to him; for faith excludes all boasting. Sometimes—yea, often—the men through whom God wrought so marvelously were not even of the average. God chose the weak, the foolish (of small mental powers), the poor, the despised, those "who were not," who went for nothing among men, and by them put to shame the strong, the wise, the rich, the great of this world, "that no flesh should glory in his presence." And to those little ones of God in Christ Jesus, to them Christ was made wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; so that they stand in his glories and excellencies, not in their own; that, according as it is written, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:26-31).

THINGS THAT DO NOT COUNT.

The psalmist quaintly states that God has no pleasure in the legs of a man. And in those days legs went for much. To have a fine physical frame; great, bulging muscles; uncommon physical strength; in short, to be a fine animal, was a mark of excellency which won high honor and respect. Then came the days of bulging brains, when men were rated for their mental powers and the world worshiped great minds. Those were the times when philosophy and literature and art were in the ascendency. But none of these things commend us to God. He thinks no more of a man for having a fine physique, or excellent mental powers, talents, genius, or any other

natural powers. The world can condone all Robert Burns' immorality because he was a sweet poet, and overlook the deeds of a Napoleon because he was a military genius. Not so with God. He thinks no more of Burns because he is Burns. He could make another Burns or Napoleon as easily as not. No man can approach God on any such grounds as that. Certainly a beautiful, strong body is desirable; a powerful mind is to be coveted; a naturally fine character is of great advantage; and all these things are God's gifts and can be used to great advantage when the man is in Christ. But God has no pleasure in these things, because they are of themselves insufficient even to bring a man to God; and as they are, they often become an occasion of pride and independence of spirit, and prevent men from seeing their helpless condition apart from the Savior. But this thing God loves: A soul that will humble itself before him, a man poor in spirit who trembleth at God's word, ears that will hear, and a heart that will believe and obey God. Let us lay aside, like Paul, all confidence in our own advantages and count them as loss that we may gain Christ and receive our all from him, being found in him clothed with a righteousness which is not our own, the righteousness given to us of God through faith, and which alone can make us acceptable with God. (Phil. 3:3-9.)

THE DANGER OF LOW VITALITY.

"It is dangerous for you to be in such a run-down condition," remarked an old physician to a patient. "But you have found no disease?" "No," replied the physician; "but a low vital condition such as yours lays you open to every disease in the world—typhoid fever, consumption, or what not." It is just as dangerous spiritually. The enfeebled Christian is easy game for any kind of error—

Christian Science, Mormonism, Roman Catholicism, or any other departures from the word of God—as well as for a multitude of temptations which a man of strong spiritual life could vanquish. Our only safety lies in cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

UNDOING A SIN.

No man can by any means undo his sin. He may be able more or less to undo the effects of it, and will, if truly repentant, use every opportunity to do so. But the sin can no man undo. Even if the last vestige of bad consequence were removed, that would not undo the sin nor atone for it; nor would tears, nor fastings, nor convent cells, nor self-castigations, nor doing of penances, nor charities, nor any other work of ours. This is a thing only our Redeemer can attend to, and he only because he gave up his life for us upon the cross. It is he alone that blots out our sins by his blood that they may be remembered no more. We must turn that matter over into his hands and accept his word of assurance. A Romish teacher said that a true penitent never forgives himself. Nay, but a true believer carries his sins to the cross of Jesus and leaves them there, to remember only that God picked him up scarlet and crimson and has now made him whiter than snow. "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

"By faith for my cleansing I see the blood flow;
O, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow!"

WHAT GOD IS SEEKING

God is on the lookout for men whom he can bless and lift up and use. His eyes now, as ever, walk to and fro

in the earth to discover instantly the heart that turns to him. God does not have to be persuaded. He is waiting for chances—for receptive hearts, hearts of true and honest purpose toward him, souls that would yield themselves to his purposes; for sinners that will repent and obey the gospel; for Christians that will cut away from pet sins, from the world, from the love of money, to serve him. For such he has nothing he counts too good. Turn to him now with true purpose, give him your life, and start out to please him; you will not be overlooked.

THE 51ST PSALM.

"Thou art the man!" Nathan had but just pointed his finger at the king and had made him to see the grievousness of his guilt, when David falls down before his God, crushed and overwhelmed, his heart filled to overflowing with anguish and shame; and now the Holy Spirit takes control of the pent-up floods and shapes his words into a prayer of contrition well pleasing to him who inspired it. Unto this day the Fifty-first Psalm gives expression to the deepest emotions and longings of the penitent heart. There the sinner may learn how to come and pour out his soul before God. They are good words to follow, for the fact that God himself inspired them is guaranty that God will accept and hear and answer them when they come from a sincere heart.

This prayer gains further force and significance when we remember who it was that so humbled himself before God. Some young men, and men in the full noonday of their powers, hold openly or covertly to the opinion that religion is designed for the weak, women and children, and old or infirm people. They think it unmanly to abase oneself and to be tender of heart toward God. Yet this man was truly a man among men. He was as brave as

bravery itself; he feared no odds. As a shepherd lad he had fought the bear and the lion; as a stripling he threw his life in the balance and faced the giant, Goliath, who had defied the armies of Israel. No weakness was found in this man. He was a natural leader of men—bold, fearless, quick, able, and withal a gentleman, generous, noble-hearted. There will hardly be any of those who this day esteem themselves too much men to walk humbly before God that would quite measure up to this man's standard of manhood. Yet King David did not think it beneath his dignity to go down into the dust before Jehovah and to publish his penitence to the world.

Throughout this psalm we note a doubleness of petition. Two things David wants, and neither one without the other would satisfy his heart's demand. The one is: "Blot out my transgressions." That means forgiveness. But that was not enough. If he afterwards remains the same David, what hope could he have that he would not fall into the same snare again? Plainly, his sin came out of his wrong and defiled heart; and having once fallen in such a way, the probability was stronger that he might do so again; for every sin that comes forth from a man also leaves its trace in the man and makes it easier the next time to do the same sin again. To blot out the record—that is not enough. So he joins it with a second petition: "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin"—not only the record, but the man, so that the man may be clean and may not commit the sin again. "Purge me, . . . wash me." "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine inquities"—that is the one side; "Create in me a clean heart,. . . and renew a right spirit within me"—that is the other. And so utterly does David despair of even any possible renovation of his old self that he uses a very strong term—"create"—one which is never used except only where

God is the agent, and which means the bringing into existence of something which was not before—in this case a new heart; and in this he anticipates the new covenant, with its promise of a new heart, a new nature, the "Christ in you," "the new man that after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. 4: 24). Now when God puts such petitions upon the penitent's lips, he will hear and answer them of a certainty.

David does not, as many who like to relate their experience, dote and dwell on his sin and go into details to describe the horribleness of it until it sounds almost as if the man were boasting. He touches it with extreme delicacy. He is talking to God, not to make an impression on men. Moreover—and this is striking—there is not a shadow of excuse on his lips, not the least sign of an effort to make his guilt seem smaller or more pardonable, not an attempt to adduce a mitigating circumstance, no endeavor to compromise—nothing but stern facts, self-accusation, self-judgment. And that is ever the mark of genuine repentance. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which was evil in thy sight; that thou [whatever sentence thou pronounce upon me] mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." For a sinner's excuse, in the last sifting, only clears him and condemns God. But David condemned himself and justified his God; for God does not ask for arguments or winding evasions and euphemisms; but he has desired truth, not only on the lips, but in the inward parts—straightforward, rugged, honest dealing with him who at any rate knows all things.

What David suffered during the days when he walked in the shadow of his sin, before the prophet Nathan came to him, we can only conjecture from a few expressions in Ps. 32:3, 4, and in this psalm, where he prays for the joy and gladness he had lost, and that his bones, which God

had broken, might again rejoice. But God loved him. With a heavy hand did he make David to realize the awfulness of sin; fiercely he tore it from David's life and published it on him for all time; inexorably he let the chastisement follow him through all his life and posterity, and gladly, abundantly, he pardoned all his guilt and cleansed him. Behold, thus does God deal with the man he loves when he falls into sin. It was heroic treatment, but it is just one of the aspects of God's implacable love. And David knew it. Throughout the Fifty-first Psalm his plea and hope hangs upon the undying love and mercy of Jehovah his God.

"HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE?"

Faithfulness is best tested in little things. We never make a greater mistake than when we say, "What I do can make little difference," or "What work or money I can give to the furthering of God's cause is too little to be reckoned." God does reckon it, and all the more because it is little and it is all we have. There is a vast difference in the ways men look at that. One man, because he has little to give, gives nothing; because he has little ability to do, does nothing; because he has little time, feels so pressed that he will undertake nothing. That is the unfaithful one. Another, because he has little money, and little talent, and little time, proceeds to lay it out and use it the more carefully for the greatest advantage. This is the faithful servant whom his Lord shall set over much and who shall enter into the joy of his Lord. "For he that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much." And besides all that, the Lord can take our little, and through his blessing can make it amount to very much, as once he took their five loaves and two fishes and fed a multitude with it.

THE GUARD OF THE HEART.

A guard is drawn around a place that is to be protected and defended against intruding enemies. In time of danger it is a necessity. Now there is constant danger in the spiritual sphere of conflict, and all depends on the citadel of the heart being kept from the various intrusions of the wicked one. What when the heart is left unguarded? The world does not always get hold of our hearts and thoughts by allurements of pleasure and wealth, but sometimes it uses the bitter bait of anxiety—which, strange to say, men bite as readily as any other. There is a strange fascination in worry, a hypnotic power that irresistibly compels the human soul and carries it by short route away from God, through trouble and darkness, into eternal ruin. There is just one protection against its insidious power. God's guard. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4: 6, 7.)

A RESTFUL LIFE.

The life of Jesus was well occupied, yet there is an air of leisure about it, which came of the absence of all worry and nervous tension and undue haste and flustration. His was a laborious life, but full of rest and peace throughout. He had but one thing to do at a time, and time in which to do it, and to the one thing, whatever it was, whether great or small, he gave his whole power and thought. His Father bore for him the burden of the yesterday and the tomorrow. His Father mapped out his course for him and every day he simply sought and did his Father's will

for that day. His actions and work seem to human eyes to have been rather unsystematic and haphazard; but they were perfectly regulated by the will of God, and directed by that Wisdom which to men appears foolishness, because it is so far beyond them. No one would have expected that quiet, modest, life, with only three years' public ministry, without even a complete record of the words and deeds of those, to have caused such an overturn of human affairs. But it was a life laid out and worked out on God's lines, and that means the greatest power, the highest possible efficiency. Any humble life can be filled with power and made fruitful in this way.

GOD'S AIM AND GOD'S WAY.

Men think they know so well what God wants done and what it takes to accomplish his designs that it rarely occurs to them to examine the word of God for either of these points. Catholicism, taking it for granted that a politico-spiritual kingdom was God's intent, created an organization to accomplish the subjugation of nations. A splendid success in its way, only neither the work nor the means of doing it were God's. Methodism, taking it for granted that God wanted the world taken in an ecclecias-tical dragnet, flung its admirable organization far and wide. That was nearer the truth, but not quite the truth nor God's way. Others in similar ways have devised schemes to do this supposed work of God. It is not the world, nor nations, nor cities, nor communities, that God expects to convert, but "God hath visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name," and sent forth the gospel "for obedience of faith among all nations." The people thus "called out," the church, represents his purpose in this dispensation; and, being at the same time his instrumentality, it is perfectly fitted to do all God's

work. We are not wiser than God. We need not teach him what to do nor how to do it. The best thing for us to do is not to create organizations to accomplish desirable ends, but to find out just what God wants done, how he wants it done, and stay by the simplicity of the pattern he gave us. Only in this way can come the true success.

WANTED—A MAN.

"And I sought for a man among them, that should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them" (Ezek. 22:30, 31). If it had not been for Moses, who stood in the breach that day when Israel worshiped the golden calf, the nation would have been destroyed. But at the time mentioned by Ezekiel there was no Moses, nor any man that could approach to God for them or was fitted to be used as a savior for them; and so the judgment fell on the guilty people. The mercy of God looked for a man before he let the stroke fall. He would have been glad had there been such a man. But there was not. Here we stop to reflect—not only that God is looking, and looking for men whom he can use, but how much depends on any one man's faithfulness to God, not only as far as he himself is concerned, but also as to the welfare of others; for no man is evil just for himself, and no man is good only for himself. We hear men excusing their wrong lives with the plea that they are harming only themselves. Besides being untrue, the excuse is pitifully selfish. Harming only yourself—when men are perishing around you, whom, if you had been a true man, you could have saved; when souls are overcome in darkness and despair, whose gloom you could have lightened; spending your life in selfish gratification of passions and fleshly

desires, the while the place you could have filled goes unfilled; the tasks of noble service God would have given you to do, go undone; souls perishing, hearts breaking, lives going to destruction for the lack of the helping hand which you could have extended—yet you say: "I am harming only myself!" And who can declare the disappointment of God when he "sought for man" and "found none"? Let us cleanse ourselves to be vessels sanctified, meet for the Master's use.

WHAT ARE YOU?

If you are any kind of "ist" or "ite," drop it. If you belong to anything at all that is *not* approvingly mentioned and described in the New Testament, forsake it. If you are a member of the "Christian Church," quit it. If you belong to the "church of Christ" in any restricted, sectarian sense, get out of it. Identify yourself with God, with Christ, with the Bible. Be just one of God's people, a member of Christ's church, God's church, in the sense the New Testament uses that word, and you shall be guiltless of all factionism.

FORBEAR TILL THE LORD COMES.

On the grounds of the ever near and constantly to be expected coming again of our Lord, God especially enjoins on us a loving, forbearing conduct, and great reserve in our judgment of one another. Certainly difficulties and frictions arise among us because of our imperfections; but God's counsel is, "Forbearing one another in love." This forbearance should be a striking and marked characteristic of God's people, an excellence openly seen by the world. "Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). It is faith in

the Lord's speedy coming that should make us thus forbearing. "For yet a very little while, he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry." But the servant that saith in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," he it is that also begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; upon whom the Lord will come in an hour that knoweth not and appoint his portion with the hypocrites. "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. . . . Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged; behold, the judge standeth before the doors." (James 5: 7-9.) When he comes, he will adjust all things very satisfactorily in abundant fairness. "Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsel of the hearts." (1 Cor. 4:5.)

HOW TO TREAT A "SECTARIAN."

The sectarian is like unto myself a man—a man, too, for whom the Lord died. He is plainly wrong in his course. So was I also once, before God called me out of darkness into his marvelous light. He is mistaken in many points. So am I—not in matters as vital, perhaps, yet I find every little while that I have been mistaken in this thing and that, and that God is yet lovingly and patiently leading me out of my misapprehensions. I may not condemn the sectarians; it is neither my right nor my place. I may not sit in judgment on his motives and his honesty; One only knows the heart. I must not strive with him, but be gentle, in meekness correcting him when he opposes himself, that peradventure God may give him repentance unto the knowledge of the truth. (2 Tim. 2: 24, 25.) Since he has shown a disposition to accept the name of Jesus and to serve him, however misguided his

effort, he deserves special regard on that ground. I must not talk down to him from stilts or from the superior height of a pedestal; men can not be won that way. I must not take it all out in criticizing; but let me in humble love, in secret places, plead for him before the throne of grace. This would be something like the right attitude toward the sectarian. My brethren, hold the truth whatever betide; but hold not the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ in bitterness and vindictiveness of spirit, but, speaking it in love, make it a blessing unto all men.

July 29, 1909.

TIMES OF TRIAL.

The days of affliction are days of blessing and purging, and at such a time God draws very near to his children. (Zech. 13:9.) They are also testing days, so much so that the words "affliction" and "trial" came to be used interchangeably. They are times that try men's souls, like the fierce winds try the oak, and either uproot it or make it take stronger hold. Some men grow reckless in their sufferings and plunge into sin; some become humbler, purer, more established in their submission to God. How supremely important it is in such crises to hold fast to God; to keep faith and hope and loyalty; to flee to God, not from him; to stand fast when all winds and floods would sweep you along! That, rather than sweetness of spirit, constituted the patience of Job. That is the "temptation" which if a man endures, God will give him a crown of life. (James 1:12.) That is the proving of our faith, of which Peter says that it shall turn unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Christ. (1 Pet. 1:7.) It was in great stress that the psalmist wrote: "My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope in thy word. . . . I am become like a wine-skin in the smoke; yet

do I not forget thy statutes. . . . They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts." (Ps. 119:81-87.) And afterwards, when the clouds were passed and the clear vision came, he saw that "unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in my affliction." (Verse 92.) So do all God's faithful ones live to be glad that they did not grow reckless, but stood fast in the days of adversity.

A CHRISTIAN.

"I say a man who does such and such a thing is not a Christian." But, my brother, he is a Christian, even if he has done that awful wrong you speak of. When my sheep strays into another man's pasture, is it no longer my sheep? When the prodical went away to the far country, was he no longer his father's son? "Yes, but a Christian means a follower of Christ." True. And strictly speaking, not one of us deserves that name. But God gives it to us that we may realize its import in our lives. Just so does the medical fraternity by courtesy call the medical student "Doctor" from the day he enters the school, though he lacks a good deal of being a doctor as yet. So are we in God's school, and he gives us his Son's name to wear until we have either finally shown our unfitness to pass or have graduated to wear it forever in the new Jerusalem. "He that overcometh, . . . I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, . . . and my own new name." (Rev. 3:12.)

THE DIFFERENCE.

If you have ever confessed your sins to a brother (I trust you have), even if he was a good, tender-hearted

true man, full of sympathy and helpful words toward you, did you notice how it went against the grain, how hard it was to come out with the matter and tell the whole of it just like it was and without excuses? That is because you love and regard yourself, and are covetous of the good opinion of others even to verging dangerously near to false appearance. But when you related your brother's sin to another (and you were not very particular to whom), did you notice how lightly it came from your lips, and how easy it was to tell every whit of it just as it was (if not worse) and without pleading the least excuse? That is because you do not love and regard your brother like you do yourself; you are not jealous of his good repute as you are of your own. Now the law said: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." But Jesus in a new commandment says: "Love one another, even as I have loved you." And he loved us more than he loved himself.

"WOULDEST THOU BE MADE WHOLE?"

It seems strange that Jesus would have asked such a question of a man who had been sick and helpless thirty-eight years. That was understood, it would seem. But in this again he showed himself as the Knower of men. We fall into illness and for a month or two we chafe and feel weary. Then we give up immediate hopes and settle into a state of dogged endurance. Later we become more reconciled and adjusted to the fact that we have to be helpless invalids, and (such is the adaptableness of human nature) even find a sort of satisfaction and begin to think upon a possible resumption of active life, with its burdens, duties and responsibilities only with dim feeling of dread. I have heard of an old convict who, pardoned after many years' imprisonment, came back and piteously begged to be readmitted into the prison. He had grown used to it,

and was too old to adjust himself to the conditions outside. This sick man at Bethesda, to be sure, was carried to the healing pool every day, which would indicate that he was desirous of being restored to health; but his answer to Jesus shows that he had given up all real hope in the matter, and his being there was only a habit. He did not reply to Jesus' question, but rather gave a timid excuse of his condition and lack of ambition to be whole. (John 5:1-9.) To us the Lord comes with another question, "Wouldest thou be made free?" Not every slave of sin, not even every one that chafes against its power over him and mourns and grieves over the wrongs he does, could come out and truthfully say, "Yes, Lord." They would often be really sorry if they knew that a certain accustomed sin were destined to be rooted and torn entirely out of their dife. They dread the sudden change of it, or they are afraid they will regret it and would want to go back to the sin when the opportunity for committing it is gone. They have no positive hope that they can be freed from it, anyway. Yes, they want to be, and no, they do not want to be, delivered. This is the frame of mind of many—and not only people of the world, but of church members who daily lie around the healing pool without definite expectation or determination of ever being freed from their bonds. Your first step toward freedom is to make up your mind, wholly and absolutely, that at least you want to be made free; and the rest of the road will open as you proceed.

"REACHING THE MASSES."

I fear that as long as church people talk about "reaching the masses" they will reach nobody. The very expression implies a class distinction— "we" on the one hand, "the masses" on the other, which amounts to "the

elite" on the one hand and "the common herd" on the other. If they should come to experiment with any one of us in their intent of reaching "the masses," what little sense of personal dignity we possess would rise up in defiant revolt. What self-respecting man wants to be approached and dealt with as "one of the masses?" I am not one of a lot; I am an individual. The heavens center above my head. The Almighty has attached a solemn importance to my existence. God knows me personally, cares for me personally, and loves me in particular. Jesus Christ died for me personally. And though he humbles me, he does not humiliate me, nor trample on my dignity as an individual, as a man in God's image, but rather by his love and grace heightens my self-respect while my self-abasement before him takes on a deeper tone. With what particular interest, with what tender respect, with what personal love he addresses himself to the lowest sinner! And when the sinner rose up, pardoned and healed, he also understood as never before that he was a man, even God's man. But these folks that profess to love "man," the race in general, and would not turn round for any particular one; these that would like to herd up "the masses," and have neither the love nor the humility to deal with any one of them on the common level—the redeemed sinner with the unredeemed, as in the sight of God—these have no salt in them to save others or even to save themselves. But Christ's religion is a "one-man" religion. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

BUYING OFF.

Much of the giving that is done is of the nature of buying off from the Lord. Here is a man who punctiliously contributes one-tenth of what he makes, with which sum

he thinks to have bought from God and from his own conscience the privilege of consuming the other nine-tenths upon himself. Here is another who, by the gift of five, ten, or a hundred dollars, has rolled an enormous burden of obligation from his heart—obligation which he felt to help, lift up, teach, bless others, as God did him. But now he has bought off. It is very convenient. It is easy—suspiciously easy. And it is plausible—for in doing so is he not giving his labor to the Lord? Is he not helping men in supporting those that do help? Now let me not be misunderstood. Certainly it is right to give; it is even a Christian duty; and in helping those who work for Christ we have a share in their work and reward. But there are things we can not do by proxy. I can not pay a man to speak the loving word, to touch with warm, loving, helping hand my sinning fellow who daily comes within my reach. I can not neglect my gift to teach or edify or comfort, perhaps persuade myself that I have no such gift, and turn my attention wholly to money-making, intending the while to pay some one to exercise my gift on my behalf. These things, I say, can not be done. Furthermore, when I give in a mean, slavish spirit, to release myself from obligation, to ease my conscience in my worldly way, to buy off from God—this is not a sacrifice well pleasing to him. But a gift of faith and a sacrifice of love is very precious to him. Take heed. This age tries to put everything on a money basis. But the work of God today needs consecrated hearts and hands more than gifts of money.

THE GOD OF HOPE.

Our God is a God of hope. Satan, as always taking the opposite ground, is the chief discourager. God discourages us only as to our own condition and prospects and

ability to retrieve ourselves, so that we may turn wholly to him for help and guidance. But Satan does not reveal himself as the god of discouragement until he has lured us into deserts and swamps by means of false hopes. Then he leaves us helpless and hopeless. God says: "Hear and turn: be of good courage; him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." But Satan's word is: "There is no use." God supports the weak and faint-hearted with loving encouragement, warning, and assuring promises. The devil tramples them down with gloom and pessimism and curses. He misrepresents God; he denies God's mercy and love and goodness, that men may grow reckless and desperate. To which do you listen?

TWO PROVERBS.

Two remarkable sayings, one from the German, the other English, both true, but taking opposite views of the same matter, come to warn us of a danger on either hand which we must avoid if we would do our best. The English proverb says: "The good is the enemy of the better." Which is to say that because a thing is good we grow content with it and never aspire for a greater, better thing. This is the principle of "letting well enough alone." It arrests any man's growth and holds him on a common plane when he might have excelled. The German proverb, on the other hand, declares that "the best is the enemy of the good." When, for instance, a man has an ideal of how a thing ought to be done, yet knows he can not do it in the highest and best fashion, he may, as a result, just do nothing at all. He might do good work, very good work; but because he can not realize his ideal standard he will not attempt it. Thus his ideal of the best destroys the good he might have done. This latter is a nobler sentiment than the first; but both are alike wrong and

unfaithful. To avoid both extremes, adopt Paul's principle. (Phil. 3:12-14.)

"WHAT THEN? ARE WE BETTER THAN THEY?"

"Would I be doing right," asks a brother, "to sit side by side in the worship with a man whom I know to be a sinner and a hypocrite, and take the Lord's Supper with him?" There are several things to say in answer to this. First, it is mighty hard to know a man to be a hypocrite. It is very hard to get conclusive evidence as to that. Not every sinning Christian is guilty of hypocrisy, and we can not know the hearts. Secondly, a brother who walks disorderly should, indeed, be withdrawn from by the church. But in case that is not, or can not, under the circumstances, be done, the man is responsible for himself before God. (Rom. 14:12.) But, thirdly, I know that in and of myself I am as weak as he is; and if I stand, it is by the grace of God alone. Why, then, should I become self-righteous and exalt myself? For I have nothing whereof I can boast. Israel was not stronger, but rather weaker, than the hostile nations; and they won their victories only by the grace of God. The people of Jacob who lived in Egypt were not in themselves better than the surrounding nations, but God had mercy on them and claimed them for himself. They deserved to die as well as the firstborn of the Egyptians; but God in mercy interposed the blood of the passover lamb between them and the doom that fell on that awful night. And how could they then boast, save in their God? So am I not a whit better in myself than my sinning neighbor; only that God's grace hath set my feet upon a Rock and led me in the way of victory. We were both in the flesh, and could not please God. "But," says Paul, "ye are not in the

flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." If that is my happy case, it is not because of my superior merit, but because of the exceeding kindness of God, my Savior, his unmerited grace toward me in Christ Jesus. I can but praise him, and can in no wise feel too good to sit side by side with any sinner, whether in the church house or elsewhere.

DISHONEST HONESTY.

In an exceedingly good essay on "The Love of the Truth," Archbishop Whately said: "He who does not begin by preaching what he thoroughly believes, will speedily end by believing what he preaches." That is not an imaginary danger. How many men have hypnotized themselves into a state of pseudo-sincerity only judgment day will reveal. And this is true—when a man begins to preach, preaches the representative view of his brotherhood rather than what he himself has gathered and satisfied himself about in God's work, he is entering the penumbra of his soul's eclipse. When thereupon he gains reputation and approval among his brethren, the danger increases. If by chance he must defend those views in a debate or two, he is about done for. He will probably act a part all the rest of his life, unconscious of the fact. He is not himself, he is not real. Perhaps some terrible experience that would shake his life from center to circumference might send him, bereft of all he thought he had, back to God and to God's word, empty-handed, receptive, childlike of heart, to deal with God at first-hand and sincerely. And in that case it might also happen that he would not be counted a "big preacher" any longer, for the praise of such men is not of man, but of God; but he would at any rate have power and a constant sense of God's approval. But "the heart is deceitful above all

things: . . . who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9.) "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Ps. 139:23, 24.)

A CHARGE AGAINST THE BIBLE.

One of the stock objections which infidelity urges against the Bible is its alleged "obscenity." By this is meant the plain and unornamented representations of some sins. Now, indeed, as some one pointed out, "the Bible was not intended for a book of good little moral stories." Its purpose is far deeper. Besides setting forth God, it represents man as he is, and with his good and evil possibilities. Ask the objector if his own life, if it were recorded in every detail of deed and word and thought, would make good moral reading. And if he must acknowledge it would not, why does he blame God's word for bringing man's wickedness to the light? Is it not strange, too, if the Bible is such an obscene book, that the kind of people who delight in obscenities have no use whatever for the Bible, and that the people who love the Bible are of the cleanest that can be found? These things show how slanderous the charge. Even if it were considered as a human book, in view of the age out of which it arose and its chosen themes, what could exceed the delicacy of these writings? But take the literature of the world—the fiction of the day, and the most part of the world's poetry, also, with its innuendo and "double entendre" and outright filthiness; take the "immortal Shakespeare," who without shame tells and insinuates the most immoral doings of his characters, and gives you, as it were, a knowing wink and a smirk to boot, as if to say: "You and I, we know about these things, don't we?"—how it contrasts with the word of God, which draws the

vice of men in awful colors against the dark and fearful background of God's disapproval and wrath!

A MAN IN THE FLESH.

We differ in conduct; in quality we are all alike. From Adam to the latest soul we are all of human nature. The same weaknesses, tendencies, good and bad possibilities, are our common lot and heritage. Considered as human beings, without God's special interference, we are simply men in the flesh. And the flesh does its works, which are described in Gal. 5:19 ff. The times, circumstances, and amount of pressure determines, humanly speaking, which wrongs we do, how gravely and how often we sin. If providentially (barring the special influence of the gospel) by early training, by good surroundings, by restraint of civil law and public opinion, we are kept from the grossest sins, we may well be thankful, for this is a great advantage. But to have been so restrained and prevented does not make us intrinsically better. The evil is there. The outward barriers removed, it will manifest itself. The flesh is the flesh for evermore. The mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. And they that are in the flesh can not please God.

CLOSING THE MOUTHS OF THE PROPHETS.

My brother or sister, there are many things in the Bible that will not touch you pleasantly, that call for the surrender of self-will and prejudice. It may be such a question, for example, as that of a Christian's right to belong to secret fraternities; or about colored Christians worshiping in white congregations; or, say, of woman's head covering, or of woman's position and sphere in general. These and many like subjects may irritate you extremely.

Now let me tell you, if you have a man with you, a preacher of the word who, as time and circumstances may demand, comes out boldly and fearlessly on these topics, whatever you do, do not close his mouth. Such a man is a treasure, and his like is not found everywhere and every day. And what do you want, anyway? A man that will talk to please you? You can get him for the money. But what do you want with him after you get him? The man against whom you turned may be blunt, he may even be mistaken (let us assume), but he is straightforward and true, and can be depended on a hundred times more as a safe teacher than the other kind. And where he is wrong he is honest enough to be convinced of his error; but if he is right, you will do better to hear and obey and yield to God's will than to oppose the poor instrument through which God's word comes to you. The principle of closing the true preacher's mouth and selecting preachers according to taste and personal preference will bring about the apostasy of the last days. (2 Tim. 4:3.) God's people once stopped the mouths of the prophets, and said, "Prophesy unto us smooth things;" and by God's judgment there followed a famine, not of bread, nor of water, but of the words of God. (Isa. 30:10; Amos 2:12; 5:10; 8:11, 12.) So will it be again. So is it now already in many communities and in many individual hearts. The Lord save us!

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

The fact that "each one of us shall give account of himself to God" ought to induce you first, not to influence others unduly, or try to be their conscience for them, for they have to answer for themselves and you can not answer for them; second, not to endeavor to blame your guilt on any one else, since that can by no means clear

you; and, third, not to put your confidence in the goodness of the family or congregation to which you belong, since that can not help you if you individually have not truly served God. When that day comes, God will single us out.

THE BEST-PAYING KNOWLEDGE.

There is no knowledge whose pursuit brings such rich returns as the "knowledge of God." "Let us know, let us follow on to know Jehovah," said the prophet of God to a sinful, distracted people; and he added the promise: "He will come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth"—cooling, refreshing, abounding in fertility. (Hos. 6:3.) "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:13.) "He is the rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11:6.) And what is the reward of this search? Here is some of it: "Grace and peace multiplied;" "all things that pertain unto life and godliness;" "his precious and exceeding great promises;" and through these we are made partakers of the divine nature;" and in sum, "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:1-4; John 17:3.) Come now, and hear and learn and obey, and "taste and see that Jehovah is good." Find him the God of peace, and peace like a river shall be your lot; find him the God of hope, and it will drive all the dark clouds from your skies; find him "the God of all comfort," and you will rejoice in tribulations also; find him a Father, and he will lift your cares and make you a happy, confident, light-hearted child again. Go and find that he is a Rock and a Sun and a Shield, a Refuge in time of storm, a Shelter from the withering heat. Go taste and see that God is love. Then you will be

helped and made able to help others. There is much in God for us that we have never received or known. He is like a precious mine of which we have but barely touched the surface.

GRADATIM.

Slowly, silently, imperceptibly, as the dusk of twilight steals upon the world and no man can draw the line and tell where day ceased and where night commences, so does darkness fall upon a human soul. A heart is not hardened in one moment. A Christian does not at once plunge from faith into unbelief or from purity into sin. Evil rarely or never swallows up a man at once, but it engulfs him gradually like the quicksand. "Drifting," "slipping," "sliding"—these are the words that describe the Christian's departure from his Lord. And he drifts scarcely aware, until some day he awakes, perhaps when it is too late, and wonders how he ever got so very far away. So watch. Do not get careless in your prayers. Do not suffer your Bible to grow dusty. Do not forsake the assembly of the saints. Cleave to the Lord, for beyond is danger and death. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God."

LOSING YOUR LIFE.

"For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what should a man give in exchange for his life?" Formerly it read "soul" instead of "life;" and in the end it comes to the same: the man who loses his life finally loses his soul. Yet it is the life of which the Savior is here speaking. It is a question of the present as well as of the future. As a

man gains the world, he loses his life. In proportion as he obtains the world, whatever it has to offer, he ceases to live. His finest nature is smothered. His better self retreats. His feelings and tastes are degraded. His noblest thoughts and impulses are lost, and he feels, in the first stages at least, the dull vacancy left by the departure of those priceless things. Joy goes, and the world's gayety is a poor substitute for it. Peace leaves, and the forced indifference and hardness of heart can not quite take its place. Over all the dearly bought acquisitions of honor, pleasure, riches, "Ichabod" is written; for the glory is departed and the world is now a dreary treadmill. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." So does many a man also go about with eyes and heart out of which the light has died, himself dead on foot; for he has gained the world and lost his life. And what is the world, even if he had it all, worth to him after that? Vain pursuit in which both those who lose and those who succeed are failures!

LOVE UNDER STRAIN.

If one imagines that just because men are bound together by ties of fellowship and mutual obligation they will naturally get along better with one another, he knows little of the perverseness of human nature. It is quite the reverse; to be true to such ties and obligations becomes a real test of the heart. When a woman asked her husband, "Why can't we get along peaceably like that cat and dog under the stove?" he replied: "That is nothing. Tie them together and see what they'll do." We have also heard of the "angel abroad, devil at home." It is easier, somehow, is it not, to be kind and sweet and considerate where we are not especially obligated to such conduct? On the same principle the mutual obligation of the members of God's church and the tie wherewith

God bound them together may tend to chafe us. We do not take from the brethren what, when it comes from the world, we take with little complaint and patiently pass over. There have been church troubles over matters which, if they had occurred in worldly intercourse, would have caused no disturbance. We are more irritable toward one another; we expect more and endure less of one another than we do of men of the world. And God knew "the tie that binds" would not be without its friction when so many differing dispositions would be brought together. Hence, the constant admonition to keep peace, to forbear, to walk in love, to humble ourselves one to another; to put away anger, wrath, malice; to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also forgave us.

A QUESTION ON LOVE.

A sister who is troubled on the matter of love, as we all are sometimes, writes: "What is love? If one man can not get along with another, how can he love him? The only way I can see is just to do him no harm and leave him alone, for you know deep down in your heart you do not love him. Though you can treat him right, yet it is not love. You can even help him in trouble, yet it is not love. And God says we must love one another. We can also not wish him any harm, and yet not love him."

1. As to the first question, "What is love?" it is exceedingly hard to answer. Some one has said that nothing really worth defining can be defined. It is almost that way; and good it is so, lest we might memorize the definition and think we know what a thing is, when really we know nothing yet about it. Most of our definitions and stock phrases are, anyway, only big, empty terms

covering up our great ignorance. What is love? It is known by its actions more than any other way. The Lord Jesus left us in no doubt as to whether he loved us—it stands out all over his life; and people knew the thing when they saw it, even if they had no name for it. Love is that which makes one think of and care for others rather than for self; continually gives up self—gives up honor, pleasure, comfort, strength, even life, that another or others may be helped. Instead of (as does the world's ambition) making stepping-stones of other men, it makes itself a stepping-stone to others. It fires men with an ambition to be servants to one another, rather than lords. It prevents us from being resentful, and gives us the blessed faculty of overlooking and quite forgetting the wrongs that have been done to us in the past and are being done to us every day. It makes us humble; cures us of sensitiveness and touchiness; delivers us from self-conceit, from vindictiveness, from bitterness. In short, it eliminates self, that great curse and source of ills. It makes us like God, for God is love.

2. You are right, my sister; to "do him no harm and leave him alone" is not loving your brother; nor even to "treat him right," nor "to help him in trouble," nor to refrain from wishing him harm. The first and last items are negative; but love is positive. It does not only do no harm; it studies to do good. It will leave the other man alone only when it sees that no good can be accomplished by going to him or talking to him, or by doing him good where he can see and know it, as is sometimes the case. But all the while it will be on the alert for that person's welfare, and seeking for a chance, not to force or drive him, but to win him back into the right way. To "treat him right," to "help him in trouble" may not at all fill the bill; for these things can be done as outward performances without true love behind them. A goody-goody

fellow can "treat you right" and "help you in trouble" in such a fashion as to irritate you to the last degree. Love is a thing of the heart, but it is not emotion. The chase after emotions is futile and vain. They are pendant, and will come of themselves in their own time and place. Do not try to force emotions. But love is a whole-hearted, whole-souled, sincere concern for another's welfare. And it is not concerned about its own honor, right, recognition, satisfaction. It does not study about self at all. It ignores, it sacrifices, it throws away self, and that naturally without a thought that it is doing anything grand or extraordinary. Yet when it thus loses its own life it really finds it.

Is this too high a standard? Not a whit. It is the standard God set. It is not "human nature," I will grant; it is a characteristic of the divine. It is not from beneath, but from above. It is not of man, but "love is of God." It is the fruit of God's Spirit. It comes not out of ourselves, but out of Christ, the true Vine, that furnishes every grace to the branch that abides in it. It can be had by all Christians of Him who alone can give it. Wherefore "follow after love," determined to practice it from this very moment.

GLORYING IN THE LORD.

Helen Keller, the blind deaf-mute, said in her address at the St. Louis World's Fair that she was there "not for anything I have done, but for what has been done for me." She was the living monument of the kindness and patience and skill of her teachers. So is the great and Christ-like Christian remarkable, not for aught he does or did, but for what God did for him. He glories in the Lord. (1 Cor. 1:30, 31.) If he draws the attention of men, he replies: "By the grace of God I am what I am.

Go to God, and he will be gracious to thee likewise." If he bears good fruit, he knows it is due to the Vine. The grace of God through faith has made all boast impossible. Well may the marble statue glory in the master hand that fashioned it; and men know that to admire the statue is but to admire the artist who conceived and made it. But we are God's workmanship, created again in Christ Jesus.

CAIN'S EXPEDIENT.

When Cain "went out from the presence of Jehovah," he faced the world and life alone and without God. It was not the same world as before. The glory was gone, the beauty and sweetness of it was vanished, the halo had dissolved and left all things bare and cold and naked. For a man's world is largely the reflection of his heart. Now fell that deadly dullness upon him, the "shades of the prison house" closed upon his soul, and all things became full of weariness. He was alone. His own heart gave him no comfort. To God he could not turn: he had gone out from the presence of Jehovah. He had but one recourse left to him—to bestir himself to get all there was out of this world, and to beguile the emptiness of his soul with what he could get of pleasure and comfort and greatness. And thus he became the type of all those earth dwellers, the "men of the world, whose portion is in this life." (Ps. 17:14.) He and his descendants to the seventh generation left a remarkable record. A godless, energetic, enterprising, ambitious race were they. They built the first city; they were the first polygamists; the father of the cattle industry is found there; the father of musical instruments and instrumental music; there arose the metal workers, the artificers in brass and iron; and there we find the first poetry—Lamech's

famous "sword song," in which he, the worthy offspring of the line, celebrated in beautiful meter the slaying of a young man; city building, stock raising, metallurgy and craftsmanship, art, poetry, music, polygamy, murder. This is also the picture of the world to-day in its worldly ambition, its endeavors to make life tolerable, to cover the aching void with earthly things, and clothe their disenchanted world in a new halo of romance and beauty—in one word, to find satisfaction and happiness without God. The line of Seth could make no such showing. They were humble, quiet, unambitious, unprogressive men of whom little is to be said except in reference to their relation to God. So is it now. The arts, sciences, and enterprises of the world are not at all wrong in themselves; but now, as then, they represent the world's effort at gaining satisfaction apart from God; and there is in these things no true help or happiness.

WHY PRAYER GROWS TIRESOME.

One thing that has made prayer irksome to many of us is the strained, unnatural attitude into which we place ourselves when praying. I am not speaking of bodily attitude, but of the spirit. I feel most comfortable in the presence of the friend who understands me; before whom I can be simply myself without fear of being unkindly critized or misunderstood; who appreciates, sympathizes, thinks, and feels with me; and I call him "congenial." There are others in whose company I feel more or less constrained and cramped. I am, in fact, not quite myself when I am in their company, but assume, unintentionally, a more or less artificial attitude. This latter kind of association soon grows wearisome. The fault, indeed, lies with us in such a case, but the fact remains that we are burdened and bored. Now here is the

strange thing. Most of us, when we go to God in prayer, try to force ourselves into an artificial attitude of heart, and are, consequently, very glad to get through and done with it. We have an idea that we must be awfully good when speaking to God; and we "put on," forgetting the while that God knows us anyhow, and we can't "make impressions" on him anyway. If he does not receive me "just as I am," he would of a certainty not accept me when I am in a false attitude before him. So it is a great thing for us to take this lesson: You can be just yourself with God, without being in the least cramped or constrained. What were the use of being otherwise? And God appreciates it. He would have us lay our hearts open before him and show him our unworthiest thought and tendency, that he may heal us. Go to him and say: "Lord, I have no claims to make. I am this and that. In my self-deceit I hardly know when I am sincere. I do not know even now as I pray whether I am wholly sincere; but here is my heart with all its failings, and my help is in thee alone." Such a plea, when based on the blood of Jesus, is effectual—infinitely more so than empty profession and vain praise of God that is not from the heart.

THE WORLD'S OBJECTION TO THE CROSS.

The world always has had and has to-day a special dislike for the cross of Christ, which represents the sacrifice and atonement for our sins. "The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." (1 Cor. 1:18.) To-day the severest attacks on Christianity are directed against the blood atonement. "It is barbarous," says one; "It is unjust," says another; a third declares that he "would worship no such God as would punish an innocent Jesus for sins committed by other men." And

so forth. It has had its effect, too. Many preachers, if not most preachers, have so let themselves be browbeaten by the world's clamor that they have lost all heart to preach this doctrine, and numerous theories have been invented to account for the Scripture statements of it in such a way as to avoid giving offense to the world. The world's religion is like that of its prototype, Cain—bloodless. It scouts the teaching of such passages as Isa. 53:4-10; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 1:7. And so do all the worldly religions which parade as some sort of Christianity—Unitarianism, Universalism, "Christian Science," and the like.

WHY THE WORLD DISLIKES THE CROSS.

Behind all the avowed distaste for, and alleged unreasonableness of, this doctrine of the cross, there is a truer reason why the world and worldly Christians hate it. It is uncomplimentary and uncomfortable. Uncomplimentary it is, because if Jesus must perish so cruelly for their sake, the implication is very unfavorable to our pride and self-righteousness: men must have been, and apart from the blood of Christ must yet be, in very bad case, if such an extreme thing is needed to save them. But this they are far from willing to admit. They are "not so bad;" they are, in fact, very good, and have great faith in the goodness of human nature. But the cross implies exactly the opposite. It is also an uncomfortable doctrine; for if God did so insist upon righteousness, if a satisfaction must be provided to fulfill the demands of his righteous law even at the expense of his Son's life before we could be saved, it shows no such slushy sentimentality in God's love as the world had dared to hope, but that his love and his holiness walk hand in hand, and that his very mercy affirms his wrath against

sin; that God is faithful to fulfill, not only his promise, but also every threat of penalty. And that kind of belief to an ease-loving, fleshly-minded generation is entirely too uncomfortable. So they vent their irritation at it by saying it represents God as a tyrant and a monster. But nowhere does God's exceeding love and mercy so stand out as in this blood doctrine—love infinite and whole-souled, yet in terrible earnestness and unswerving righteousness.

COME BACK TO THE LORD.

There are backsliders and backsliders. The one class are wholly out and do not come to the meetings any more; the other class still attend. My brother, if you are not toward God what you once were; if there is not the same light and life and joy and zeal and earnestness in your life that you once had, then you have backslidden. Haste, stay not; return unto God, and he will have mercy upon you and will abundantly pardon. "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith Jehovah: I will not look in anger upon you; for I am merciful." (Jer. 3:12.)

THE TENDENCY.

More and more comes the demand for "tact" and policy in preachers; smaller and smaller grow the opportunities to speak the whole truth unvarnished, even in love. "A man must know how to get at people," we are told in these days. It will not do to talk plainly on baptism, for this one or that one may be offended who might by proper maneuvering be "won." It is bad policy to say anything outright against denominationalism, still less about the organ and societies. We must manage to instruct people by principles which they can apply for

themselves (but they never do) or by innuendo and suggestion. Now as far as the sentiment is against the braggart, big-mouthed, self-conceited, contemptible dogmatism of which many preachers have been guilty, it is very good. But it goes much further. I am afraid that neither Paul nor Jesus would be politic enough to receive a good financial support from some established, easy-going congregations. The favor of the denominations and the spirit of unscriptural progressiveness is constantly growing on all hands, and less and less is being said against it. A blind man can see what the end of that will be. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. Many good preachers have so felt the force of the popular current that they were tempted to ignore such congregations and begin somewhere on their own hook, that they might speak their whole heart and preach the whole counsel of God, no man forbidding; yea, they would do it if they dared to trust God for their financial sustenance rather than to look to such churches for it. Thus the spirit of hirelingism comes slowly creeping in. True preachers should exercise themselves in these two things: to preach the whole word in love, and trust God in the consequences that will follow.

THE MONEY IN THE FISH'S MOUTH.

This is, in some respects, a most puzzling incident. It seemed out of keeping and congruity with the spirit of the gospel. On what other occasion did Jesus work a miracle merely for his own benefit? He who would not turn the stones into bread, does he now use his divine power to get a paltry piece of silver? We remember, besides, that Jesus and his disciples usually or always

had a sum of money on hand. Judas carried the bag of the little company. That the funds were wholly out at that time is not to be supposed. The reason for this peculiar miracle lies deeper, and, when it is seen, not only relieves the strangeness of the situation, but also holds a good lesson.

They that gathered up the half shekel came to Peter and asked: "Does your Master pay the tax?" Peter, knowing well that Jesus would do all that was right, answered at once in the affirmative. So he came to Jesus about it.

It is necessary now to consider what kind of tax this was. It was not a tax paid to a civil government—neither to Cæsar, nor to Herod, nor to any other civil authority. It was the poll tax of the Jew which God had commanded in the law—"the atonement money" for their souls. And since all souls were alike before God, none more valuable in itself than another (for he is no respecter of persons), he ordered that "the rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls." (Ex. 30:11-16.) It was God's tax, then, which he levied "as a ransom" from Israel, just as the kings of the earth on pain of war and death required tribute from the nations they had subdued unto themselves.

The sequel is easy. Jesus spoke to Peter first, saying, "What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are

free. But, lest we cause them to stumble, . . . give unto them for me and thee." God, so Jesus argued, acted in this matter just as earthly kings do. He takes tribute, not of his own sons, but of strangers. The fact that he required such a tax from Israel shows that they are not sons of his kingdom in the real sense (for except one be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God), but strangers. Of the strangers God required the tax. But the sons were free. Now Jesus was a Son, and through him his disciples also were sons. They were exempt from that toll and tribute. Jesus was in no wise obligated to pay it. Nevertheless, to avoid giving them an occasion of stumbling, lest he might seem to them to hold the laws of God lightly, he bade Peter go pay them. But in a peculiar way—with the money found in the fish's mouth. The hand of God was made manifest here. It was really not Jesus paying the tax, but God paying it for him in a miracle, to vindicate Christ's sonship and consequent exemption from the duty of paying the tribute, the "atonement money for his soul."

GOD.

What a God some Christians have! A God who does not know them or care for them in particular; a God who can not or does not interfere on their behalf; a God who can do no good or harm, except as the laws of nature bring it about in the course of cause and effect; a God not to be reckoned with—a dummy, a figurehead; a God named "Father" who leaves them mere orphans; a God who can not fulfill his promises, whose love we have to buy with good works and service; a God who bids us go through the motion and mock performance of prayer, when it is understood that it can have no vestige of effect anywhere, except on the one who offers it; a God unfaithful, untrustworthy, malicious; a God who, if he

were a man, would not pass for a gentleman! No wonder they do no more for him! The wonder is they do as much as they do. How densely, deeply ignorant we are of him, because we "know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God;" no, nor yet his goodness, love, faithfulness; his dread holiness, on the one hand, and his tender compassion and grace, on the other. For to know him aright is eternal life: to know him is to love him, and to love him is to serve him, and to serve him is peace past all understanding and joy unspeakable and full of glory. "O, taste and see that Jehovah is good; blessed is the man that taketh refuge in him."

TRUTH.

"What we want are accurate statements of facts, even if they seem to contradict one another." Thus, says Theodore Roosevelt. But there is a grievous tendency to suppress or alter the statements of facts in order to make them harmonize with one another or with some theory; and when this is done, the cause of truth and growth in true knowledge is not served, but hindered. Likewise in regard to the word of God—what we want are the full, fair statements of the word itself, even if they seem to conflict, and if we can in no wise combine them into a coherent theory, or a system. And no truth has met such unfair treatment at the hands of theory spinners and system builders as Bible truth. Somehow the word of God refuses to fit into those human frameworks. When you think you have the whole consistently arranged and all points accounted for, at your next reading there pops up a passage that will not fit. Then comes the temptation to "explain" that passage until it means just what you want it to mean and is forced into compliance with your system. But the way to

be loyal to truth and to God is to submit to that discording passage, believe and teach it, whether or not that higher harmony that reconciles it with all other truth will appear.

MOTHERHOOD.

In an article entitled "Mothers are the True Builders of Nations," Madison C. Peters says:

"Our homes have made America peerless among the nations. Any encyclopedia of American biography will prove that our most illustrious statesmen, our most distinguished scientists, our most eloquent preachers, our merchant princes, and our great benefactors came from the humble families where the mothers ruled not as queens of fashion, but where the nursery for the family was a nursery for the church, where the first lispings of childhood were the accents of prayer and the first thoughts of the heart were the thoughts of God.

"The Jews are universally admired for the affections which adorn their domestic life. The foundation of the Jewish faith was laid in the sancity of domestic affection and purity. The Bible Jew never made the mistake of separating the church and the home. His piety nestled 'neath the shelter of two truths—one was the dwelling where he lived with his wife and children in some corner of the Holy Land and in the fear of his father's God.

"According to the Jewish imagination the divine presence was the atmosphere of that house and gave it an indescribable beauty. His wife was a vine that God's hand had planted and his children as olive trees around the table. We need not wonder that this race has given to the world a greater number of great men than any other race in proportion to their numbers.

"The German Empire is great because German homes

are good, because the German mothers are industrious, economical, honest, and virtuous.

"Great Britain is great because it has model homes, because British mothers are intelligent and pious. In the special display of the Victorian jubilee nothing was so beautiful or so glorious as the Queen kneeling at the altar, taking communion, throwing her arms around her children and grandchildren as they came one after another to kneel at her side, kissing and crying over them like a child.

"She never rose so high in her royalty as when she knelt, a simple mother, crying over her children at the altar of God."

There is in all the possible range of human positions none so great, so reverend, so high, so responsible, so calculated to call forth the best and truest the human heart affords, as the state of motherhood. If, as some pessimistically claim, reality is seldom found in the world of human relationships and affections, it is surely found there, in the pure truth and faithfulness of the mother's love. If "all the world loves a lover," it is yet more certain that every man who is worthy of the name bows to do honor to motherhood and to give tribute to the woman that faithfully fills such holy place. And well may he. It is a life of labor and suffering and heavy responsibility and sacrifice and self-forgetful toil. Most men owe their best to their mothers, and some owe her everything. And none will disagree when we say that the grandest thing God has left us in this poor world, the one nearest to perfection, the one that best affords an example of God's perfect love and tenderness, is bound up in the word "mother."

On the other hand, the perverting of this highest of all callings is correspondingly evil and abhorrent. "The corruption of the best is the worst corruption." The

selfish, damnable efforts on the part of some to avoid the sufferings and toil and responsibilities of motherhood; the infamous means resorted to, to avoid the God-decreed issue of marital relationship; the unknown murders—whose retribution is all the more fearful and certain because they escape the jurisdiction of human courts of justice; murders all the more selfish because practiced upon lives just budding into existence, entirely helpless and defenseless, committed to the tenderest care of the human beings to whom they were intrusted of the Almighty God; none the less condemnable because sometimes effected by the secret aid of some physician (not all, thank God, nor the majority, will prostitute their skill thus)—this must be a spectacle to make hell shudder. And it is fearfully prevalent, and not in the "world" alone, either. What will the great Judge say? Custom may harden the minds of people until they have no conscience in such matters. But the question is not, "What do men think of such things?" but, "What will God say to that?"

This is a matter where every man and every woman is left peculiarly alone with his own conscience and his God. But their happiness here and their eternal welfare, the life and well-being of the community and the nation and the race, depend greatly on this very point. It is a delicate matter; yet parents should instill right principles concerning it into their children, teachers should endeavor to impress it upon pupils, and preachers must condemn the secret crimes and hold forth God's will, and the ideal of true, pure, faithful motherhood, and of homes that are blessed of God.

THE SEVEREST TEST.

It has been said that every reformation passes through three stages: the first, when it meets with sneer and silent

contempt; the second, when it has made such headway that the contempt turns into alarm and consequent bitter opposition, controversy and persecution; the third, when the movement has in measure succeeded and the opponents say, "That's nothing new at all—we have been teaching this all the time," on which follow recognition and overtures of peace and alliance. The last of these three stages is by far the most dangerous. When the evil genius saw he had failed to stop the mountain brook with great stones and obstacles, he prepared a smooth, wide sand plain, which, when the river struck it, spread out its flood at its ease in every direction and was swallowed up and lost. So shall it turn out to some in this foolish generation. The fathers fought hard for pure, primitive Christianity; and the sons, some have stagnated over the victory, and others have suffered themselves to be wheeled into alliance and compact with their former foes. And such alliance is nothing but surrender.

CONSIDER THEIR WAYS AND BE WISE.

The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. In their line they manifest more good sense in every way and more earnest determination and purpose. It is not to be advocated that the schemes and methods of the business world should be introduced into the work of God. His plans are not to be improved upon. What some call "sanctified common sense" has corrupted and ruined the religion of Christ from of old. It is not in this respect that the children of this age are to be emulated. But given the will of God, his word and plans inviolate, then see how lax in comparison, how careless, with how little thought, and with what half-hearted, scattered effort the children of God conduct the Lord's business. If any earthly busi-

ness were conducted after such fashion, it could end only in failure. Either they do not know how, or they do not care, or they have lost faith in their religion, or are ashamed of it, or—well, something is the matter with the children of light. Would they work better if they received twenty-five dollars cash for every soul truly brought in?

WHERE THE LACK IS.

It is not that the world can not suffer: a myriad of instances could be cited of men who gamely endured cruelest agonies that they might gain some worldly end. It is not that they can not sacrifice: fifty thousand Abrahams cheerfully left their homes and their kindred a few years ago to go in search of the Alaskan gold fields; and they went out, as it were, not knowing whither they went. It is not that it is too much for human nature to see a child or a loved one go to foreign shores, for they send their boys as soldiers to fever-stricken lands and among the murderous tribes, and are proud of it; they give their daughters in marriage to army and navy officers, and to travelers, and to foreign nobles, rarely or never to see them again, and think it is a good match. But to do these things for God, to do them by faith—that is what they will not and can not do; and when they see another do it, it seems exceeding great folly and total loss to them. To suffer loss of money, comforts, friends, and good name for Christ's sake; to see their children and loved ones go to the far fields to tell the glad tidings of a Savior—that is the bitter cup. And why? They have no faith. "Now, faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen;" and the unseen things (I will not speak of the world, but of us, even of us Christians) do not appeal to us, do not so vividly im-

press us, are not as real to us, as the things that are seen. Yet, on our faith depends everything—our knowledge of God, our approach to God, our work, our present and final salvation. Faith is what makes the man excellent above the animal and lifts him out of his fleshly life. Who will have faith—will let the things of God's word be as real to him as the world of the senses? Him will God meet and distinguish and save. We see souls going to spiritual perdition; let us be as earnest in trying to save them as if their terrible lot were physical. We hear of God's salvation, and also of his high rewards to servants and workers; let us esteem these things as high as we would dollars and cents. Let us hold God's warnings and promises at face value; it is the safest, best, worthiest life we can live, and God will not ignore it or fail us.

WHEN SIMON TURNED AGAIN.

When Jesus prayed for Simon (he did not call him "Peter" that time) concerning the awful trial and failure that lay ahead of that impulsive man, that his faith fail not, he had in view the benefit Simon could do afterwards to those who had sinned and lost courage, for he added: "When thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren." So Peter learned the futility of self-confidence and the value of faith. He came out very much humbler, and with his hope set on God rather than on the strength of his own character; and when a man learns that lesson, he finds peace and joy. Peter, therefore, sets about to "strengthen his brethren;" and the first epistle of his breathes faith, hope, humility, joy and peace. He has tasted the power of faith, and now he assures the Christians that "by the power of God" they "are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:5.) He has a wholesome fear

of the power of the devil, our adversary, who "as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour;" and he points out the only effective resistance—not self-confidence, in which he fell and failed, but "whom resist steadfastly in your faith." (1 Pet. 5:8, 9.) He places all the weight now on what God can do, not any longer on his own ability; and trusting in the power of Him that called him, he walks the waters of a tempting, sin-cursed world, as once at the Savior's call he walked upon the waves of the Sea of Galilee. The trials that befall now are just the proof, the test, of that precious faith in God (1 Pet. 1:7), and the salvation with all it means is "the end of your faith" (verse 9). So believing, he finds "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Would that all of Peter's faltering brethren would see and get their feet on this rock! For this he wrote it—that he, having turned again, and standing by faith, might establish his brethren. (Luke 22:32.)

WORD-ALONE DOCTRINE.

There is a well-defined tendency among Christians to dissociate God from his word. It comes to the point that God himself is not needed or directly involved in the matter of our salvation. The word is all. As a writer in a certain paper some years ago illustrated it: "The only way the governor does a condemned criminal any good is by means of a writ of pardon." And then with rather a coarse comparison: "The presence of the governor himself would do the prisoner no more good than the presence of a mule." This principle leaves us, indeed, with a scheme of salvation, a law, a set of precepts, but God is no longer in it. The word will do good as the intelligence conveyed in my letter will do my friend good the while I am absent and otherwise occupied, or

like a prescription helps the patient the while the doctor is gone. The final outcome of such a position is a sight of intellectual study, dry discussions, argumentations, hairsplittings, formalism, hypocrisy, and spiritual death. The word is good, and nothing too great and lofty can be said about it; but the word is not honored by putting it in a false place, making a false claim for it, and attributing virtue to it apart from God. For whether is greater—the word, or he that backs it and gives it power? Have ye never yet understood that the word is not an end in itself, but a means to an end—even the means of bringing us into, and keeping us in contact and union with God himself and with Christ, that so we may be in him and he in us?

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS.

A man is as good as his word, and not a whit better. How God insisted that his people faithfully keep promises; how he condemned breaking faith and oath and vow and covenant! Among the vilest things on earth he mentions "covenant breaking;" and in his description of the acceptable character is the man who "sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." From God's requirements of us we may easily judge what he himself is. God is faithful. He will fulfill what he promised or threatened, and we may with all confidence bank on it. When he sent forth Jeremiah, the tender, shrinking, almost timid man, yet so brave through faith, that was the assurance given to him: "I watch over my word to perform it." (Jer. 1:12.) When God sent Isaiah with a message of hope to a hopeless people, and the prophet seemed to hesitate, a voice said: "Cry." "What shall I cry?" came the despondent answer. "All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field. The

grass whithereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass." It is of no use—Jehovah has set himself against us, and we are but grass and are withering away. Then the response from above: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40:6-8.) Generations come, generations go; times change; but through it all God holds his purpose and stands by his word. "Forever, O Jehovah, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They abide this day according to thine ordinances (Gen. 8:22); for all things are thy servants." (Ps. 119:89-91.) So do the laws of nature in their uniform continuance, the recurrence of day and night and the seasons in their cycles, betoken the steadfastness and faithfulness of our God, and give us assurance that he will so perform all his word. Build, then, on this word, and rest upon it, and you shall abide with it—forever. (1 John 2:17.)

REPENTANCE AND HUMILITY.

It is pride that more than anything else stands in the way of repentance. For the acknowledging of wrong and error, the confession of one's own inability, folly, weakness, the bowing to a higher Rule—this calls for humility. "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?" said God when Ahab became penitent. With some it is the hardest thing in the world to "give in," for it means a death-blow to that which is strongest in them—pride. Stroke after stroke fell upon the prodigal before his pride gave way and he resolved to turn back to his father's home and plead for forgiveness and a servant's place. But pride must yield, be it by affliction or judgment or by God's goodness (for grace humbles

a man as much the thunders of Sinai)—it must break; and if it does not break in this world, then it will in the next. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess."

REPENTANCE NOT HALFWAY.

Look but at the expressions the Holy Spirit used to describe repentance, you sinner of the world, you Christian who are serving God and Baal, and see that your playing at fast and loose, your dallying with sin, your friendship with the world, your partnership with the flesh and the devil, do not meet the requirement of God. When he told men to repent, these are the terms he used: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes (not simply hide them from the eyes of men): cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Or, again: "Cast away from you your transgressions wherewith ye have transgressed;" or, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." It is clear, clean-cut language that fairly breathes uncompromising decision for God and against sin. "Put away," "cast away," "forsake," your sins and your transgressions. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And God will have nothing less than that. We *must* take that step, make that turn. Whether we can hold out so—this is another consideration which does not come in now. The first thing is the decision for God and righteousness, the merciless killing of the

evil lust and desire. Then afterwards, when God has forgiven you and set your feet on the Rock, you may trust his grace to keep you and enable you each day to meet its temptation. But if you are wrong now, get right; get right with God!

OBEDIENCE USING ANOTHER'S WISDOM.

If Methuselah were living among us, granted he was a man of good sense who in his long lfietime improved his opportunities, he would be much sought after for his counsel and wisdom. A man a thousand years old should know a good deal, and blessed were the youth that could get the benefit of that long, dearly bought wisdom of experience, and thus stand upon that old man's shoulders. But God has been here longer than a thousand years, and knows more than even Adam would know were he still here. The man who listens to God's counsel and obeys it has the wisdom of the ages, the benefit of all time and eternity. Everywhere obedience avails itself of the knowledge and experience of others. Says Ernest Seton Thompson concerning the Bighorn sheep: "For a young animal, there is no better gift than obedience. It is obedience to the mother that gives him all the benefit of the mother's experience without the risk of getting it. Courage is good; speed and strength are good; but his best courage, speed and strength are far below those of his mother; and they are at his service to the uttermost, if only he will obey. Brains are all-powerful; but among very young Bighorn sheep, at least, an obedient fool is far better off than the wisest headstrong lamb that ever drew the breath of life." Just so it stands in regard to our obedience with God. The fathomless knowledge of the Almighty, so far beyond all the knowledge of man, his infinite wisdom

and power are ours when we obey him. His word makes wise the simple. His way which he commands us; his plan of conduct, work, worship; his warnings and his restraints are based on his limitless understanding; and obeying, we, though fools, act infinitely wisely. "I understand more than the aged, because I have kept thy precepts." (Ps. 119:100.)

THE GREATNESS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

It is not easy to see the fairness of the verdict Jesus pronounced on John the Baptist: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." (Matt. 11:11.) It looks as if Moses was greater; and even such men as Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, might appear to surpass him. What great thing did John do that would even equal the feats of some of those others? But Jesus knew the man. Great deeds require great opportunities. They came to Moses and to David; but John did little, for in the sphere where God had put him it was not a time nor a place for "great deeds." It was not what the man did; it was what he was. If he had been put in the front rank of the battle, he would have done more valiantly than all the rest, and God knew it. But he was left behind to do his work in the camp, and he did it faithfully and well. His was a life of self-denial, of hardness, of suffering, and ended in deep gloom and pathos; and it was fitting in the eyes of Jesus that he should receive that tribute from the lips of his Messiah, and that the people should know the real greatness of the man who had been among them, whom they had passed lightly by.

It has been well said that the world does not know its greatest men. According to the oft-quoted words in Gray's "Elegy:"

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

But God knows them. He does not need any dazzling manifestation to know the character. He does not measure deeds with our yardstick. Every work of faith, every act of love, is great in his eyes, and sometimes the smaller and the more unconsciously done, the greater it is by God's standard and verdict, for it shows more absolutely the true, golden quality of the heart behind it. He marks the beauty of the pure-rayed gem in the dark caves of ocean; and the flowers that bloom in the lonely place where no human eye will ever behold their loveliness are not hid to him, nor yet is their fragrance which they faithfully send forth into the ungrateful air of the desert unknown to him. It will be a day of surprises when God announces his verdict of who was greatest here in the world. The first will be last then, and the last first. Who was the greatest, Lord? The great reformer? The preacher that led the thousands to the cross? The man who by faith built the great orphanage and brought up many, many children in the fear of the Lord? And the Lord God will reply: "These were good and great, my child; but there was an old woman, poor and frail, who made her living at the tub, and she was greatest of all." How surprised we shall be at the unexpected verdict! And that old woman will be more surprised than all the rest of us. She was quite unconscious of any extraordinary thing in her. All her life she but served and toiled and did her part, and never thought much about herself, and she was little in her own sight, and her Lord was great to her; and so she worked, and so she lived, and so she folded her hands and went

to her rest. Lord, that we but might be great in thy sight! It would be sweet recompense for a life of obscurity and labor. And we do not know who will carry off the honors; but let us not dream that because men applaud us we are more likely to win them; nor because our place is lowly and our sphere humble shall we have less hope of being magnified by the Lord.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

The attitude of scientific men in the matter of seeking for the truths of the physical world may well serve as a model to those who are seeking the truth of God's word. With what eagerness and patience they search and study; with what submission of private opinion and judgment do they listen to the voice of Nature; how gladly they hail any new discovery of fact or law; how unselfishly some devote their lives to this pursuit, enduring poverty and privation, that only they may read and learn from that book of God! If just as much loving, earnest work were spent upon that other and greater Book of God; if with as open mind and as selfless spirit it were studied and searched—what blessing and glory would result! Some of the new discoveries have threatened to overthrow old, accepted ideas in physics and chemistry. But I have not heard that a single man of science became factious and partisan about it, and cast slurs upon the men who made the discoveries or impugned their motives, or vowed and declared that he was taught so and so and would stand by it and die by the old flag, and never be a turncoat. Such things are reserved for religious people to do and say. It has been said that men worship and adore the reformer who led them a step into the light and bitterly hate and persecute him who would lead them another step. "Blessed are the poor in spirit!"

And that does not mean the credulous; for because a man is poor, he is not a fool. He does not eat everything handed to him because he is hungry, nor accept counterfeit money because he is needy. But the poor in spirit goes to God in self-abandonment to get true food, true riches, and nothing less; he knows nothing in himself, but seeks all from God, and from God only. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

THE STUDY OF THE PROPHECIES.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and it takes all of God's word to round out the character and supply every need and hunger of the soul. Whether it is the Old Testament now or the New, does not matter; for with the Christian's understanding of God through Christ, every word becomes significant and able to make him "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:15.) The things that were "written aforetime"—for our learning are they written, "that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4); and the stories of God's ancient people stand recorded as ensamples for us, and are for admonition to us upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Cor. 10:11). If these things be true, the more completely we compass the entire revelation of God, the closer it will bring us to him, the wiser and stronger shall we be in the Lord. Judge ye, then, can we waive the consideration of the prophecies, which altogether constitute about one-third of the Bible, and not suffer great loss? This alone is an unanswerable argument for the earnest study of that part of God's word which has been so systematically skipped and misinterpreted until the very masters in Israel are confessedly ignorant of it, and call it "dark,"

and regard a fair understanding of it as impossible. It is a strange attitude for those who have reproved the sects for claiming that the ordinary man can not understand the word, and who have contended that God knows how to address the minds he made, and that his revelation is a revelation indeed, and not a mystery.

But let us not call this an argument; and we will present a real definite reason why we have.

NEED OF THE STUDY OF PROPHECY.

God, as if anticipating the tendency to neglect that portion of his word, specially commended the study of the prophets to us, the Christians. The things foretold by the prophets of old, God tells us, were not for them, nor for their generation, but chiefly for us (1 Pet. 10:1-12); for which cause "ye do well that ye take heed [to the word of prophecy], as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19, 20). Here, then, is direct instruction from the Father in heaven to take heed to the prophetic word. "I stir up your sincere mind," writes Peter in the same epistle (3:1, 2), " . . . that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles."

UNFULFILLED PROPHECY.

The last-quoted passage has evident reference to unfulfilled prophecy. There is, in addition to God's special admonition to study and remember, another reason why we should have much interest in unfulfilled prophecy; it is one of our greatest privileges as God's own people to learn the future things from him. God treats us as his

confidential friends in this matter. "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:15.) If, then, they are his friends, they shall know his plans and intentions for the future. For when he walked with "Abraham, the friend of God," he said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" (Gen. 18:17, 18) and revealed to him his purpose concerning Sodom and Gomorrah, as on a previous occasion he had foretold him the bondage of his descendants in Egypt and their great deliverance. Now we also are God's friends by faith as was Abraham, and to us also does he make known "what he is about to do." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; . . . and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." (John 16:13.)

When God has so lovingly condescended to let us into the hidden purposes of his heart, then we show our great appreciation by suddenly becoming intensely "practical," and saying: "All I care for, and all I need to know, is my duty for today; and when I know that and do it, I am all right, no matter what happens in the future." Which is to say the word of God's prophecy is to no special purpose, with a possible suggestion that the man who studies is wasting precious time which could be put to better use. Is not that our attitude? And how short-sighted and blind, as well as ungrateful, it is! Doing one's duty is a first necessity, to be sure; but who can work and keep on working without constant motive and inspiration, without assurance that it will count in God's plans, and that our labor is not in vain in the Lord? It is for that cause that many churches, like sheep forever kept on the same little

patch of pasture, are suffering from the "dry rot." These hard-headed, sensible duty-doers get insufferably dry and mechanical in their performances as the days pass, and their religion becomes a dead thing and repulsive to others. There is, furthermore, a world of warning and encouragement in these unfulfilled prophecies, which enable us to meet the changes and vicissitudes of the times; to discern the Protean shapes of the deadly errors that rise up from the abysses in the guise of angels of light; to stand unawed and undiscouraged at the apparent success of falsehood and evil, knowing that God has so foretold it, and expects us to stand fast through it with undiminished faith and hope. Be assured there is no scripture inspired of God but it is profitable to the man of God, furnishing him perfectly unto every good work.

But the main cause of the neglect of prophetical study is the abuse it has met with in many hands, the

IDLE SPECULATIONS AND VAIN THEORIES

which have been spun all around and over the prophecies like cobwebs and have brought the subject into disrepute. We lack, in fact, the courage to undertake that in which so many have failed. We are afraid of going astray ourselves, or perhaps of making ourselves ridiculous in the eyes of the "wise ones." So we let it go. Nay, we can not let it go altogether—we are bound to have some sort of idea concerning those things; and being too faint-hearted or indifferent to explore for ourselves, we have naturally, almost unconsciously, adopted general views, traditional interpretations. I protest that the brotherhood in general holds the most absurd, grotesque, and crude kinds of notions concerning prophecy. The existing comments and commentaries of otherwise able and well-posted men on this subject are marvels of inconsequentiality and

eccentrical interpretations. So, afraid of the idle fancies of some, we have fallen into the equally false current notions of the majority of denominations, and are at fault even to being perplexed to find an essential place in our belief and teaching for such an important item as the coming again of Jesus Christ. And this not because we love error, or are, as some, bound to human creed and theory, but on account of pure neglect and timidity. We have not acted thus in other lines. Regardless of the many false teachings set forth on other subjects, we have not trembled to seek and proclaim the word of truth concerning them. And if with fair, sane, simple principles of interpretation we should undertake the task of understanding God's prophecies, we would find it far from impossible to obtain a true conception of them, in outline at least. (In the next issue I propose to submit such a set of principles to the consideration of the readers.) That the subject has its difficulties goes without saying; but that it is necessary to "speculate" in order to get a definite view of it is certainly untrue.

THE LAST REASON.

It is because of our great ignorance of things prophetical that often simple Christians (and, strange to say, Christians as often as or oftener than any sect or denomination) are fascinated and taken in by Mormons, Adventists, Russellites, and other isms that make great stock of prophecy. It is to many, when they first begin to see into those teachings, as if they were entering a new world. The prophecies which had lain there for years in their Bibles as a meaningless dead letter, now become alive and instinct with glorious meaning. If only the meaning were never perverted for them! But bewildered and enthused by the discovery of things they had never before dreamed,

they fall easy prey to the false teacher, who uses not so much the word of God as the victim's ignorance of it to foist upon him a human theory.

Now, I say the Christian is free to hold all the truth in God's word, and he does not have to turn to any sect to get any truth. But we see the necessity of study and research along the lines of prophecy—honest study at that, which goes not toward fortifying oneself in previously held notions, but to seek and find the truth as it stands. Only thus, and not by shirking, can we meet the false teachings and specious perversions of prophecy that are abroad in the land. Yea, the time has come that we absolutely must study the prophetic word of God, fulfilled and unfilled.

October 21, 1909.

THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY.

It has been said that that government is most perfect which, while indeed governing, is least seen and felt; and when a government becomes obtrusive, the country is over-governed. Be that as it may, the idea certainly applies to Bible interpretation. The less "interpreting" one can do, and the simpler and less obtrusive his principles of interpretation are, the nearer truth he is likely to come. And no part of God's word has been so cruelly over-interpreted as the prophecies. Teachers who in every other portion of the word are clear, simple, consistent, become wildly erratic here; abandon all chart and compass; interpret by the jingle of the words rather than by sense and context; fix arbitrary meanings on terms, and make of the text often only a pretext for their own theories and notions. This, more than aught else, has brought the prophecies of God's word into disrepute. If the greater part of the commentaries and works on prophetic subjects and books (even including some fa-

miliar writings on the book of Revelation) were burned, it would be a gain, for there would be less confusion and preconception.

The mischief of those books lies in their positive tone more than their teaching. It is not wrong, if a man think he sees something in the word, to set it forth for the consideration of the brethren, provided he sets it forth for what it is worth. But the disgusting habit of speaking very positively and dogmatically and knowingly where perhaps the writer is himself most uncertain, those rhetorical tricks and claptrap—that ingenious employing of such terms as "no doubt," when there is all manner of doubt; "certainly," when there is no certainty; "evidently," when all evidence is lacking; or putting into the shape of a rhetorical question some statement which he would not dare to make outright—this is too near falsehood to be countenanced. If a man has a dream, let him tell a dream. If he is guessing, let him say so. If he is giving his opinion, let him do as Paul, and draw a sharp line between that and what God really says. The world is full of works on prophecy which leave the impression that the authors knew all about it, and which are for this reason of less than no value. For if they had written modestly and pointed out their own ignorance here and there, the difficulty they saw in this and that idea, the books might have served as stepping-stones to juster conceptions; as it is, it only tends to mislead guileless readers.

It is not now my purpose to lend support to any of the schemes, theories, or schools of interpretation of prophecy, much less to set up any of my own; but to get at certain principles which may lead us to a right understanding of this difficult, but very precious part of God's word.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The first necessity is the study of the text. It does not matter at first whether or not you understand the bearing of one sentence of it. In fact, it is best to brush out of the mind all previous notions of what these things might mean, for a false idea can lightly defraud you of the true. Get the text. Get the statements the prophet makes into your head. See what he really does say. Never mind the application of it; just see that you get first the obvious import of the language, or even simply the words. They are God's words and will presently become a blessing to you. So did the eunuch (Acts 8) study Isaiah, not knowing of whom the prophet spake and not understanding. But when through Philip he got light, the light broke in all at once, and his previous study of Isaiah became a blessing to him. Note how, in the introduction of the Apocalypse, God pronounces a blessing on them that read, hear, and keep (not in the first place on those who comprehend) the words of the prophecy. The understanding of it comes in due time. Read, hear and keep now.

2. Do not take it for granted, on the other hand, that you can not understand; for that paralyzes the mind. God intended that we should understand, or else he would not have urged the prophetic word on our attention as he did. There are, indeed, prophecies hidden here and there, involved and inexplicably entangled in an irrelevant context, and which could not have been understood until after their fulfillment they were pointed out. (For example, Hos. 11:1, and Matt. 2:15; 2 Sam. 7:13, 14, and Heb. 1:5, with Matt. 16:18.) But these need not trouble us. There were outright prophecies which men were expected to understand, which they could and did understand, and for the belief of which they were held respon-

sible. (Matt. 2:4-6; John 5:46; Luke 24:25.) There are such prophecies now also, and they alone need engage our attention. Do not be deterred by the failures others have made in dealing with prophecy. It is no sign that you will fail. It were better even to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all. But with faithful study and adherence to true principles, we shall not fail.

SOME SIMPLE PRINCIPLES.

1. The first presumption, always, is that God said what he meant and meant what he said, literally, just as it stands. So, except for some definite and compelling reason to the contrary, the literal meaning of a prophetic passage must ever have precedence.

This is a fundamental principle in all Bible interpretation; and when it comes to the interpretation of prophecy we can not lay too much stress on it. The prophecies that have been fulfilled, for example, of the bondage of Israel in Egypt (Gen. 15:13-16) or of their dispersion and tribulations, as also the prophecies of Christ's first advent and passion, have been fulfilled with literal exactness. This is the key to the whole situation. True, we meet here and there in the New Testament what seems a spiritual application (for all the Bible is open to spiritual application or allusive quotation); but that does not invalidate the real, literal meaning of the prophecy any more than, for instance, Paul's allegory of Hagar and Sarah (Gal. 4) destroys the literal historical truth of that narrative. Adhere to this fundamental principle and you have the clue that will lead you into the meaning of the Scriptures. But if, for instance, every time you see the word "Zion" or "Jerusalem" in the prophets you read "church" instead; if every time you see "Jacob" or "Israel" you call it "the Christians," then there is an end to all sane interpretation;

everything then must be spiritualized to match; and when men start to spiritualizing there is no end of vagaries. I do not blame those who have dropped into that view of it for thinking the prophecies very dark and impossible to get at. No wonder! But if the plain, literal interpretation (as will probably be the case) overthrows our views and theories, or contravenes what we suppose to be the purport of some other scriptures, do not regard that as sufficient reason for rejecting it. Let us hold our own ideas subject to God's word, not vice versa.

2. Prophecy, as other parts of God's word, and all language, may contain figurative speech. We are not at liberty to call this or that "figurative," except for evident reason. The text and context must prove the figurativeness of the speech.

3. Symbols occur in prophecy, especially in Daniel, Ezekiah, Zechariah, and Revelation, oftener than in other parts of the word, and can not be interpreted except as God himself gives us the meaning. All guesswork is vain. It is vain also to resort, as some have done, to the symbolism of ancient heathen peoples and cults for interpretation of Bible symbols. To most, if not all, his symbols God has given us the key; but if you can not find God's key, let the matter stand as it is.

4. Many prophecies have double, triple, or even manifold and recurrent fulfillments, the first being usually typical and incomplete. If any prophecy has been fulfilled, but not wholly and completely as the word demands, then rest assured God will yet completely fulfill it and redeem every word of his, however strange it may seem.

One item more deserves attention. Prophecy has often been conditional. (See Jer. 18:7-10.) Jonah cried: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." But Nineveh was not destroyed—not then. It is worthy of notice, however, that ultimately every such prophecy was ful-

filled, though the mercy of God and man's repentance delayed the matter for a time; and that these fluctuations do not affect the validity of the predictions and plans of God in the end.

Let us now carefully examine these principles; and if they are true and unquestionable, let us adhere to them throughout. I do not now advocate any particular idea of what the prophecies teach, but would suggest that the truth can be found in the way indicated here. May God open this wonderful treasure house to us to our greater blessing and efficiency in his work.

October 28, 1909.

GETTING THE GOOD OF GOD'S WORD.

If the study of God's word just fills you with points and arguments and speeches and sermons and theories, you are not getting the benefit of it yourself, nor is God getting the results he wants. A sheep eats grass, and we do not expect him to produce the like in kind; we do not want grass to grow out of his back, but wool; or grass to accumulate under his skin, but fat and meat. So does God want his word to be transformed in the laboratory of our hearts, and come forth in the form of divine action and conduct of life. Then he is pleased, and then only has God's word become, indeed, meat and drink to us. (John 4:34.)

GOD OUR ALL.

We are weak, but our strength is in God. We are guilty and condemned, but our righteousness is in him. We sit in darkness, but Jehovah is our light. We are dead, but our life is hid with Christ in God. What a release and joy and new hope it is to a man when he be-

gins to realize that! Then he learns to look unto God with steadfast gaze. He trembles in his flesh, but, looking away from himself to the Fountain of all help and grace, he stands and endures "as seeing him who is invisible." His confidence in himself is gone, but confidence in God takes the place of it more abundantly. He has no hope in himself that he will live better the coming days than he did the days past; but he knows now that his power to be pure, true, upright, humble, lies not in himself, but in God; and to God he looks, and is not disappointed. God is my great treasure house, and I learn to cast my spiritual cares on him as well as my material. So comest rest and peace and victory and new hope.

UNBELIEF OF THE WISE.

"Why is it," asks a correspondent, "that some doubt the divinity of Christ? It is not the ignorant class that doubt, but the educated." That is the way it always has been. It was so in Christ's day: those things were hidden from the wise and the prudent and were revealed to the babes; and so was it well pleasing in God's sight. (Matt. 11:25, 26.) So was it in the apostles' day (1 Cor. 1: 26-31.) It is not necessarily so. If a rich man or a learned man is poor in spirit enough to receive the kingdom of God as a child—as some rich and learned have been—they, too, will believe. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know." (John 7:17.)

CAN THE LORD TRUST YOU?

In prosperity it is not hard to make and to have friends; and the rising clouds of adversity see them depart from you as readily as in the sunny day they came. But the friend whom you can trust in any sort of weather—who

will share your joys and be your stay in trouble—he is a treasure. The Lord is such a friend as that, and you can not miss it if you trust him. But friendship is two-sided. God was Abraham's friend; Abraham was the friend of God. You trust the Lord—can the Lord trust you? Will you stand for him in difficulties, in sufferings, in darkness, against public opinion, against father and mother and loved ones and earthly friends if need be? Or does the first loss or disappointment set you to murmuring against him? Can the flatteries and wheedlings of certain associates draw you away from his ways and word? Think about it, and make sure that you be true to your Lord. "Many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did. But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men." (John 2:23, 24.) He knows us.

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING.

"Then beware lest thou forget." How much depends on remembering the right thing at the right time! A certain sister said once: "If I could always be as good as I am during a protracted meeting and a thunderstorm, I should certainly be saved." No doubt she would. But why so good at such times? Because then God and his word are being impressed upon the mind or brought vividly to remembrance. If we could remember so well always! But we forget—at the very time, too, when we most need to remember. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart; that I might not sin against thee." (Ps. 119:11.)

Speaking of memory, E. E. Hale writes: "Mr. Ruskin goes so far as to say that all which we call genius for fine art is simply an admirable memory. He constantly recurs to this. Claude Lorraine and Turner paint the sky well, for they well remember what they have seen. . . . Here is the supreme reason (for training the memory) that one

must keep ready at every instant of trial the determinations made in moments of reflection. Wordsworth defines the hero as he

> 'Who in the heat of conflict keeps
> The law in calmness made.'

The little child untrained comes to his mother in grief because he has done wrong, and makes probably the true excuse as he sobs out that he did not remember. Charlotte Bronte refers to this necessity where she describes her heroine's conquest of immediate temptation. 'Laws and principles are not for times when there is no temptation; they are for such moments as this when body and soul rise up in meeting against their rigor. If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth?' "

So all-important is it to remember. "These words, which I command thee this day," said God to his ancient people, "shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates." (Deut. 6:6-9.) And to us: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;" and, "This do in remembrance of me;" for as often as ye do this, "ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." Lest we forget, lest we forget!

A PRICELESS GIFT.

What a wonderful gift of God is a day!—a day with all its opportunities to live and to do; to affect, to completely

change, destiny; to reverse the judgment and sentence upon all the past; to make up lacks and pay debts and to tear down the false and to lay the foundation of the true, or go on building if the foundation be already laid. To the sinner, a space in which judgment is deferred and full mercy offered—a privilege and opportunity which in the hour of supreme need makes all the world look paltry in comparison. To the saint, a new lease to express in word and godly deed his love to the Father in heaven and his devotion to the Savior; a chance to help another; to bless, to heal, to comfort, to save; to fulfill his ministry and run his course; to lay up treasure in heaven; to draw nearer to God. Such is the priceless gift of a day. This is that which you have wasted and despised and misused against your own soul. O ye who read this today, be glad you are alive and that God's long-suffering has given you this day—and use it, use it to the full!

THE GREATEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE.

Of all the days that ever have been or ever will be, the one called "Today," this one now, which looks most common and prosaic and seems to have no particular excellence or value, is greatest. Your thoughts stray back to the past, and you can think of great days, important days, days you would give the world to recall. Those were times! Then you had chances; doors stood open; fate hung in the balance; life awaited but your signal to frown or smile forever. There are no more such days now. O, if you could, with your present experience and wisdom, go back and make your decisions over! Thus memory throws its sad regret, and withal a romantic halo, over the past and gilds it with a glory it never possessed when it was called the present. Or perhaps the future will bring something great again—a crisis, an unexpected for-

tune, an opportunity for great deeds, a chance to retrieve yourself. And you dream of some royal hour, yet unborn in the womb of Time, that shall offer you the prizes of earth and heaven. Meanwhile there slips away from you the day of all days, *the* royal day that is yours; traveling incognito, in modest garb, but of all days most precious, the one God gives you now, and which holds in itself all the possibilities of time and eternity. Be not deceived—this, this alone is your day, your great, precious day. If you need to repent; if a wrong needs to be righted; if a new turn is to be taken; if a great deed is to be done; if God is to be glorified; if your work is to be accomplished—why shall not today witness it? Why let the weight and the gloom of yesterdays paralyze you? Be of good cheer; arise, come, He calleth thee. Why delude your soul in dreaming of tomorrow? Tomorrow, when it comes, nay, if it ever comes to you, will be just a quiet, unpretentious, commonplace "today." And by looking back and peering ahead you lose the most precious thing God gives you—today. "Today if ye shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 3:7.) "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2.)

THE SYMPTOM OF AN EVIL DOOM.

"Whom the gods want to destroy," says an old heathen aphorism, "they first deprive of wisdom." And if instead of "gods" we say "God," it is nothing but plain truth. The first evidence of a man's doom is "hardness of heart," which means unwillingness to hear or seriously to consider God's counsel. Thus was Pharaoh's heart hardened. Thus did Sihon, the king of Heshbon, refuse to hearken to the reasonable and peaceable offer of Israel; for "Jehovah thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart ob-

stinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand." (Deut. 2:30.) Sihon had fully deserved the doom; his judgment was just; and God took that way to bring sentence upon him. "Thou wilt give them hardness of heart, thy curse unto them." (Lam. 3:65.) When Amaziah, king of Judah, refused to listen to God's prophet and threatened the prophet's life, the prophet said to the king: "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel." Not long after he refused to heed the warning of Israel and plunged into a disastrous war with them. "Amaziah would not hear; for it was of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies." (2 Chron. 25: 15-20.) So, when a man begins to turn a deaf ear to the word of God, it is not only evidence of a wrong heart, but it may be the symptom of a doom and sentence already pronounced and begun. Then, if you, whoever you are that read this, realize that you are growing lax toward God's word, that you are playing at fast and loose with his commandments, let not an hour escape before you repent and turn to him. The decree is not unchangeable, and God always honors sincere repentance.

A NEEDED PANG OF CONSCIENCE.

There sat four leprous men at the entering of the gate of Samaria. Round about lay the cordon of the Syrian army beseiging the city, having shut off from it all supplies. The famine was terrible and maddening, so that some mothers were turned into tigresses and devoured their own offspring. At the entrance of the gate sat the lepers. "What shall we do?" they said to one another. "If we sit here, we shall perish. In the city also there is no hope. So let us go over to the host of the Syrians. Perhaps they will kill us, in which case we have nothing

to lose, for we shall certainly die here. But there is a chance (a small one, perhaps, but nevertheless a chance) that they may save us alive." So they rose and went to the host of the Syrians. The tents came into view. Here were horses tied; there, fires smoldering. But no voice of sentinel, no sight of soldiers. Timidly they crept nearer. They came to the first tent—no soul there; to the second —no man within or around. The third, the fourth—the camp was deserted. The Syrians must have left in great haste, for there was everything left behind, food and garments and vessels and silver and gold, especially food. The four lepers fell to and ate and ate. Then they began to carry away treasures and garments and hiding them; when all at once one of them (and here is the point of my story) felt a twinge of concience. "What monstrous selfishness is this! Here we have gorged ourselves, here we are hiding away wealth, and all this while our whole city lies in the throes of famine! It is a day of good tidings, and we have held our peace! Such doings avenge themselves. If we do not repent at once, some evil will befall us." So they carried the good news to the city, and the population, after some precaution, turned out, swarmed into the hostile camp, and the famine was over, for there was food for all. (2 Kings 7.) And you, my brother you are living well, and enjoying the word of life, and basking in God's love and the light of Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of eternal life, and in joy and peace of the Holy Spirit. I do not begrudge it you. But it is a day of good tidings, and you are holding your peace. You are saved, but the millions of the earth are in the death grasp of spiritual famine, under bondage of darkness and sin and despair. Yet you are well off. What have you done for the starving ones? Have you handed on the bread of life? You have found something good—are you keeping it to your-

self? It will not prosper. Selfishness of any kind, even spiritual selfishness, defeats itself. All the forces of the universe are in league against it. Your manna you are hoarding breeds worms and stinks. Your light under the bushel will go out. Your religion will end in dry formalism or in bitter controversies in which men will bite and devour and consume one another. The punishment will overtake you if you do not pass on your blessing. Perhaps you could go yourself and tell the good news. In fact, within your range and sphere you are the Lord's messenger under any and all circumstances to hold forth the word of life. And if you cannot carry it farther, you can encourage another to go, and support or help to support others in the preaching of the gospel at home and abroad. May your conscience trouble you when you are getting the wealth and sweetness of the word of God, and may you be constrained by the love of Christ to hand it on, to spread it abroad.

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO ONE ANOTHER.

The one to whom to confess our sins, fully and without excuse, and who alone can forgive sin, is Jehovah. (Ps. 32: 3-6.) Let this be understood. Yet sometimes common honesty requires a confession to man,and our repentance would certainly be incomplete and insufficient if we refused to confess in such cases. A man may realize that he is living a double life, as as it were, unless he reveal his shortcomings. There is, besides, something in the awakened soul that demands a self-revelation, not only to God, but to men. And if pride or desire to pose as righteous men prevent us, it proves that our hearts are not right in the sight of God. The saved sinner is ashamed indeed of having sinned, but not ashamed to confess at the proper time, and that only in general

terms so as perhaps to be praised for his self-abasement, but in specific terms to set forth the shame of his transgression.

A TRUST TO BE CONVERTED

When a brother confesses his sins to you, it is a sacred trust in the sight of God. He does it to ease his heart, for, even though assured of God's forgiveness, he seems to himself like a hypocrite if he would hide his guilt from man; and he does it to get your help and prayers and care for himself. The fact that he has gone to you shows he has confidence in you; and you must honor that confidence. Never a word of that confession must pass your lips, and you must be unto him as an angel of God thenceforth. There is by far too little confessing of sins done among us. There can be but two reasons. One is pride, which makes us unwilling to endure the humiliation of guilt in the eyes of others, and, therefore, makes us secretive of our faults, but ready exhibitors of our virtues and excellencies; the other is lack ot confidence in brethren. For if I have reasons to believe a man would meet me with cold criticism and with condemnation, or that he would make light of my confession, or might use the information gained by my trust to my disadvantage later, I would indeed be loath to break my reticence to him. Let us, therefore, be such loving, upright men and women that our brethern in the Lord may feel emboldened to open their hearts and confess their worst sins to us, and go away not disappointed and abased, but strengthened and lifted up, determined never to sin again.

CAUGHT THEM WITH GUILE.

"When Paul 'caught them with guile,' was he obeying

the commandment to be 'wise as serpents?'" asks a correspondent. No. Paul did not use guile or deceit. He caught nobody with guile. Read that passage over in its connection (2 Cor. 12:14-18), and you will see he is but repeating or referring to an accusation brought against him at Corinth to the effect that he shrewdly refused remuneration in order that he might get the more; and that while he personally would take nothing, he perhaps sent his helpers around afterwards to gather the harvest for him. Paul's defense against those charges is a model of love combined with powerful refutation.

THE BIBLE STANDING FOR ITSELF.

Some one writes inquiring how, apart from the Bible itself, evidence could be found for the Bible. Were I permitted to make an inference, it would be that the writer had perhaps been told by some unbeliever that "you can't prove the Bible by the Bible." Well, if it is outside information a man wants, I would advise him not to go to Thomas Paine or Robert G. Ingersoll to get it, as many do; but if, unfortunately, a man has already read such literature, then, to be fair to the Bible and to himself, he ought also to read Watson's "Reply to Paine" and Lambert's "Notes on Ingersoll," which, in the way of thorough, neat refutation, leave nothing to be desired. Among books on "Evidences," there is none better than the clear, fair, convincing work of Brother McGarvey; and for a small, lucid, strong, readable book for the average man, get Torrey's "The Bible and Its Christ," published by F. H. Revell, Chicago, Ill., obtainable at or through any bookstore. But now about the idea that the Bible cannot be proved by the Bible—is that so certainly the case? Is there no such thing as internal evidence? Has it never happened that a piece of testimony has re-

futed itself? And if so, has it ever been so that, on the other hand, a testimony has been its own strongest evidence? Ask the next lawyer you see, and mark his answer. Now the Bible asks but a fair hearing. It claims for itself that thus comes faith. (Rom. 10: 17.) It appeals to reason. It appeals also to conscience for corroboration. (2 Cor. 4: 2.) The gospel of John was written with the avowed object of producing life-giving faith (John 20: 30, 31), and, therefore, in itself alone contains sufficient evidence to accomplish that end. Has my infidel friend tested that claim? O, but he has read the Bible a great deal, he says! And how did he read it? With what attitude of heart and mind? There were people in the very presence of Jesus and saw him and his works and heard his words, and believed not, but became more hardened. "The sower went forth to sow; and he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside." "The seed is the word of God." Will you hear the word with the right kind of heart? "But," he objects, "do you mean that I shall read with my mind made up to swallow it all?" By no means. God is not unreasonable. The proper frame of mind is indicated in John 7: 17. It is that of a man who, seeking after God, is minded to find and do God's will. And that is but fair. For, granted there is a God, it stands to reason that we should seek to know his will and ought to obey him. If Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Savior, it is vastly to every man's interest to know it and to follow him. And the only direct evidence on these points is in the Bible.

GOD'S WORK.

The work of God is not finished—no, not half. Beware, lest you do such a foolish thing as to judge the Architect by his unfinished building. With majestic pa-

tience, slowly (for with him a thousand years are but as a day, and, when the occasion comes, a day as good as a thousand years) he works out his designs and doeth all his pleasure. One generation cometh, another goeth; but God abides and quietly, obscurely, but none the less effectively, works on. His people know it. When they seem to lose a waging battle, they look ahead with eye of faith, and they know that success and victory are on God's side, and that it pays well to stick to him in even this wicked and adulterous generation. They look upon the evil, the sorrow, the curses of this day; but God will bring order and harmony again. He is working at it now; yea, we are helping in the work by his grace. But, Lord, how long? And with Moses of old they pray: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants"—that we may see it and be satisfied forever. (Ps. 90: 13-16.)

RELIGION IN PROSPERITY AND DISTRESS.

Religion goes at a discount until man's extremity comes to him. How condescendingly, affably, patronizingly, some men of the world can look upon Christianity, putting up with it so good-naturedly, even nodding a kind of approval, as one would to children who are having a good time playing in the sand! It is all understood with them that the whole thing is an amiable sort of bosh, and they really think that by good-humoredly giving in and perhaps helping the hobby along a little they have done a sufficiency and are due some commendation. Then comes a catastrophe, a danger of some kind, or a terrible fear rises up—and O, how different religion looks in one little moment! He who once allowed it to be a good thing for old folks and women and children is now on his knees, great strong man as he is, and his soul crying for mercy and help. Probably the miners of the

Cherry mine had smiled many a time upon that cheerful crank who had made such stock of religion; but when the disaster came, those who were fortunate enough to be entombed with him clung to him as a rock, and hung all their hope on him. Twice a day he held religious services with them, and kept up their spirits, and courage, and hope, by making them to rest on God all the weary, fearful time through until the voices of the rescuers were heard in the dismal gloom and they were saved. I see the man whose soul has not been so tried sneering, and hear him grumbling something about ignoble fear and cowardice. Well, it is not exactly the noblest thing in the world a man can do to look down on religion when all goes smoothly and cringe before God when evil comes upon him; but it is the best he can do then, and thank God for even that chance—not every man gets it. But if you want a nobler thing, serve God in your good days, in your youth, in your vigor, with earnest faith, and then, come what will, you shall have an everlasting refuge and confidence.

A BOX FULL OF LIGHT

"What do you carry so carefully in that box, little man?"

"Sunshine," replied the bright-eyed boy. "Let me see it." He opened the box, and—yes, there was the sunshine in it, for the sun shone straight down into the box. And he quickly slapped the lid on and went his way with his "box of sunshine." I fear, little fellow, you will be disappointed when you open the box in the comfortable dusk of your mother's room. But let us grown-ups learn a lesson—you can not shut up light in a box; you can not selfishly keep it; you can get no private possession of any part of it. You can have no light apart from the Sun from which it springs; and that Sun is Christ.

WHAT OUR YOUTH ARE LEARNING.

If any man doubted that most of our colleges and universities are hotbeds of infidelity, he would only have to read the articles by Harold Bolce in recent issues of the *Cosmopolitan*. In the article entitled "Christianity in the Crucible," Mr. Bolce sums up the teachings of our prominent schoolmen and collates the actual utterances of some of them. It would open your eyes. The future of the country depends on its youth, its educated youth especially; and if the devil succeds in poisoning the spring of national and social life by corrupting the faith of the youth, he is making a master stroke.

"They assert," says Mr. Bolce, "that the last slavery from which a man must be freed is the slavery to sacred myth"—by which, of course, among other things, they mean the Bible. "The college men say that they criticize the God of the Christian's conception, because such a God is not big enough for the demands of this enlightened century." He is, indeed, not big enough for them. He is holy. He is the God of the Narrow Way. He will not put up with selfishness and lust, the indulgence of which seems to be some men's idea of liberty. They have no use for God "terrible in anger, though moved at times to compassion." They got that latter item wrong; for the Christian's God is slow to anger, full of compassion, long-suffering, abundant in loving-kindness; but when judging sin in the time of his anger, terrible indeed. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10: 31.)

Whither this spirit tends, how it militates against common morality and undermines the foundations of society, may be seen from the following:

"To pave the way for an understanding of the philosophy of spiritual liberty, the professors take up its pre-

liminary phases. Thus, some say that marriage is not a sacrament; that there are and can be holier alliances outside the marriage bond than within it; and even that it is contrary to the higher laws of the spirit to set up a legal relationship as superior to the spontaneous preference of a man and woman who find in their love a security more sacred than anything the church can create.

"If marriage is a sacrament, the professors do not hesitate to say, divorce is similarly sacred. In fact, divorce is one of the conveniences through which the spirit is finding liberty."

This is only "preliminary phases," remember. What is going to come later the Lord only knows.

The occurrences in the case of Howard Chandler Christie, who, being "enlightened" by a Christian Science healer, as the papers stated it, that marriage is not binding, left his faithful wife, is yet fresh in the public mind. It is enough to make the whole nation rise up in righteous wrath against that vicious cult. But Mr. Bolce (continuing without a break from above quotation) calls attention to the affinity that thing has with our college infidelity:

"It is interesting in this connection to note that the Christian Science Church makes no provisions for marriage. It, like the breaking of bonds, is in keeping with the spiritual prophecy that in God's Arcady, there will be no marrying. Such is the most advanced and daring university thought. It is, therefore, easy to understand why Prof. George Elliott Howard, of the University of Nebraska, teaches that the temporary increase of divorce is a 'mighty process of spiritual liberation.'"

"Liberty," "liberation"—yes, it is the specious promise of the false teachers and prophets of which God forewarned us, who, uttering great swelling words of vanity, entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those

who are just escaping from them that live in error; promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond servants of corruption." (2 Pet. 2: 18, 19.)

But let us hear a little more:

"Religion, in its assumption of a right over marriage, is regarded by many professors as a form of superstitious ritual. As it is taught in Yale, religion 'blesses' marriage, or secures the favor of the higher powers who distribute good and bad fortune. As there is no way to guarantee the happiness of either party, save in reliance on the character of the other, marriage is a most uncertain lottery, and, therefore, Professor Sumner teaches that at all stages of civilization devices to determine luck have been connected with weddings. Divination has frequently been employed. But, he says, the notion that a religious ceremony makes a marriage and defines it had no currency until the sixteenth Christian century. It is held that marriage in the church to-day is purely a matter of taste, sentiment, and popular judgment, and that the tendency to march in the bridal procession away from the magistrate's court to the religious altar has been somewhat due to the ideas of women in regard to suitable pomp and glory.

"On this important question of marriage I recently talked with Prof. Franklin H. Giddings, the celebrated sociologist of Columbia University. Professor Giddings has taught that it is not right to set up a technical legal relationship, an economic convenience, or a circumstance of social conventionality as morally superior to the spontaneous preference of a man and a woman who know, and whose friends know, that they love each other.

"It may surprise many people to learn that I believe in marriage; but as I am not an ecclesiastic, I do not believe in sacramental marriage, he said. Marriage is not a religious rite, but purely a civil contract.

"Thus the execution of a deed or a will or a legal contract drawn up between two copartners for the purpose of carrying on a sale in dry goods or groceries is just as sacred, from a sociological sense, as a marriage. Marriage is not divine. Men and women are not joined together by the decrees of any God. . . .

"The consensus of college teaching is that marriage is purely a civil contract which should be terminable at the will of either party, and that the church should have no more to do with it than with the conveyance of real estate; that religion should be no more permitted to intervene against divorce than to say that a man should not have the right to withdraw money deposited in a bank; and that when humanity realizes the true meaning of marriage the home will cease to be the domain of tyranny and fear. Therefore, they teach to American young men and women that marriage is not decreed by God and that no commandments against divorce are divine."

Here, then, is the unmistakable print of the cloven foot. Now if a crank of some sort, or a set of them would fulminate such sentiments around in the world, it would be tolerable in comparison to the thought of the systematic instilling of them into the minds and hearts of our children in the institutions of learning.

Now hear what they say of the word of God. Says Jacob Gould Schurman, president of Cornell University:

"Astronomy has set the earth spinning, dislocated heaven and hell, and whirled man from the center of the spatial universe. Biology and geology have revolutionized our views of the origin of our race and of the cosmos. History and criticism have made the Bible a new book, or rather a new collection of books, written, for the most part, we know not by what authors or at what dates, and put together, as a Bible, we know not on what principle. All the old landmarks—Moses, Solomon, Job—are

gone, and a restless sea of criticism threatens to engulf religion with the records it adored. This is the so-called warfare of science and religion. For him who has eyes to see, the religion of dogma lies exhausted on the field!"

Mr. Bolce continues:

"The Bible, many of the professors say, has outlived its usefulness as an infallible authority. The world to-day does not need, nor will it much longer tolerate, the belief that any book on earth was written by God."

And so forth unto utter weariness. Among the men quoted are President Hadley, of Yale; Ex-President Eliot, of Harvard; Frank S. Hoffman, of Union College; Borden B. Bowne, president Boston University; W. H. Lough, of New York University. The array is formidable; not for the Bible, for it has nothing to fear—such talk as the above has been carried on from the days of Porphyry and Celsus; but for us, for our children, for it shows how far things have gone, how terrible is the pestilence of unbelief in the seats of learning, so that few who go there fail to be infected by it. And these large colleges and universities strike the note in most instances for the preparatory schools, high schools, and even public schools. Let Christ be taken from our children, let them be defrauded of the Bible, then woe to them, to the next generation, to the world! They will have "liberty" then, such as will make the blood run cold when we contemplate it—a carnival of unbridled passions, a reign of terror, with the thundercloud of the wrath and righteous retribution of God rising in the background. Rather let my child go ignorant of all this "education" in heathen lore and all branches of academic knowledge, than return to me full of the incurable leprosy of such unbelief.

And let us have schools taught by Christians where the word of God will be honored and upheld. In the line of good works, nothing will be more important now than the

support and upbuilding of Bible schools, and everywhere, at home and in school, the endeavor to keep the young in the fear and the knowledge of the word of God.

Dec. 16, 1909.

SHALL THE RICH ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

I.

A sister requests an explanation, through the *Gospel Advocate*, of Matt. 19: 17:25, the answer of Jesus to the ruler who came asking Jesus the conditions of eternal life, and the general statements Jesus made concerning the rich in this connection. "Does it mean for that young man to give up all of his possessions in order to go to heaven?" There is much harm done by making the way broader than God made it; but to make it narrower is also wrong and harmful. If God made it a condition of being saved that a man sell and give away all he has, it ought to be preached that way without a shadow of compromise, whether men will receive it or not. But if God did not so stipulate, it would manifestly be wrong to bind such conditions upon the sinner who is seeking God. Now did God require this, or did he not? In the first place, we go for conditions of salvation to the other side of Pentecost, not to this; and in none of the preaching of the apostles to sinners were such requirements laid down. We are not surprised, therefore, to find mention of some rich people in the church—not many, very likely, as intimated in 1 Cor. 1: 26-30, yet some. (James 1: 9, 10; 1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) Then, we have positive evidence that while God was always well pleased at the faith and love which prompted a man to give up all his earthly possessions, he did not demand it of the Christians. Several times it is mentioned that the first members of the church

held their goods in common, "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need;" that "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet." But when the apostles reproved the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, it was pointed out that their sin was wanton and uncalled for, inasmuch as they were not at all obliged to sell out, or, after having sold, to give up the money. They were free in this thing, and, had they so chosen, could have kept their property or money. (Acts 5: 4.) This, then, shows that God has laid down no such condition of salvation, and that a man can be a faithful child of God while yet possessor of houses, lands, and riches.

II.

Now as for the rich ruler—it seems, indeed, that when he asked Jesus concerning the way of life, he had come not so much for information as for approbation. He was a fine specimen of manhood, and, likely, he knew it. He was of a first-class family, for he was a ruler. He was wealthy. He had been well brought up. Like Paul, he was, "as touching the righteousness which is in the law, . . blameless." He even recognized the moral greatness of Jesus, and longed, perhaps, to get a word of attestation to his own goodness from such a source as that. He was confident in his own character that Jesus would approve of him. And when he came and knelt to Jesus and the flush of self-conscious virtue mantled his cheek, and, naive as a child, he asked, as it were, "Lord, now what is the matter with *me?* Am not I about all right?"—Jesus looked on him and loved him. Jesus loved them all, all sinners, and all men. But being man himself, he was not beyond that peculiar human attraction that we feel to-

ward certain persons. I do not know why we commonly call this man the rich "young" ruler, unless it be that we, too, feel the freshness and simplicity and frankness of his nature, such as is rarely found except in youth; that cocksure self-confidence; that frank, lovable self-conceit. Jesus loved him. That he took him in at the first glance goes without saying. His first word of answer shows that. But with all his charming, childlike manner, the man was in a bad condition, if for nothing more than his self-complacency, which thing is death to all growth, aspiration, or further hope. He must be got out of this. "Good Master" —"Why do you call me good? Only one is good and that is God." An awful shock at the very outset! Now I have all this while considered myself good, and was content to be called so; and here is this wonderful Jesus himself, who, although no one could convict him of any sin, is unwilling to be called good! "Thou knowest the commandments," continues Jesus. He feels better now. These he has kept from his youth. Ah, blind man, who but the Son of God has ever kept them? You kept them—yes, as men judge; outwardly, in overt act and deed. But what of the heart? Was it perfect toward God? Or, if not, can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? What of the first and greatest commandment of all—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength?" O, the law! What can it do but to show us how far we fall short of the glory of God, to condemn us and prove us sinners and bring us under the curse? Paul did well to cast away, among other things, that righteousness of his which was of the law, in which he was "blameless," so that he might gain Christ and be clothed with that righteousness which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ! (Phil. 3: 6-9.) But this man said he kept it all! Jesus did not dispute it. If we could read be-

tween the lines now, it would be something like this: "If you have kept it all, why are you here asking me for the way of life? Are you dissatisfied? Do you realize a lack? Well, if you sincerely would be perfect, if it really is your supreme desire to be all God wants you to be, you can attain it—through me. But your money is in the way. Your heart cleaves to it. It is, in fact, the source of your pride and complacency As a good man, you would not stand back on any expense of earthly things when it is a question of coming to God. So go, sell what you have and give it to the poor; and then, with hands free to take God's work, and a heart disentangled from the world, come follow me." But he—went away—very sorrowful. Jesus had unerringly laid his finger on the diseased spot. It was the great Physician's diagnosis. But the patient would not abide the treatment. He went away—not healed, not joyful, as he might have gone. Ah, yes—the sorrow of our lives comes from refusing the loving demands of Jesus; for what man was ever glad to have said him, Nay? And let us never have the presumption of praying a prayer like that in Ps. 139: 23, 24, unless we be willing to do according as we have prayed. For his eyes are as flaming fire, and they search the reins and the hearts.

III.

But what was it that Jesus said here about the rich in general? It sounds hard—so hard, in fact, that in order to soften the impact of the thunderbolt; somebody has gone to work and padded it, and invented the well-known myth of the needle's eye being a little narrow gate that a camel *might* crawl through on its knees—all of which has not the remotest foundation in fact, and was gotten up for the obvious purpose of mitigating things. It was not a difficulty Jesus sets forth in Matt. 19: 24,

but a human impossibility; and the "explanation" of it, if any be needed, is not found in making allowances and fabricating stories about little gates called "needle's eyes," but rather in the words of Jesus themselves, where he says later: "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19: 26.) For the grace of God through the loving power of the message of Christ can accomplish that which by the law and humanly speaking had been otherwise impossible—to turn a rich man's heart away from his riches unto God and to make him act according to the teachings in 1 Tim. 6: 17-19. It has occurred often, and will probably occur again. But every time it is a marvel.

Jerome K. Jerome divides the human family into two classes—those who are rich and those who want to be. If there be any third class, he thinks, they are not worth considering. That sets forth the condition and the sentiment of the world splendidly. But God's classification is otherwise. There are the rich, hardly worth considering from the view point of the kingdom of God; and those who are "minded to be rich," of whom he says that they "fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition," and that by this means some "have been led astray from the faith and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10.) But the third class, of which the world indeed takes little account, are they who have treasure in heaven, to whom God is an exceeding great reward; who, loving neither the world nor the things that are therein, are taught to avoid even the anxiety for daily bread and clothing and shelter, by casting such care on the Father, lest out of it spring covetousness and the service of mammon, which is the world's great idolatry.

Money is a dangerous thing. Not just the love of it, for the love of it almost regularly comes with the money

itself. The widow who of her penury cast in all the living she had was freer to do such service and make that sacrifice than the wealthy Pharisee. Money generally binds your hands. It gives you less power instead of more. It diminishes your love; it reduces your benevolence and your will to do and to give. The richer you get, the poorer you become; not only spiritually, toward God, but often in actual fact here and now. When you had but one dollar in the world, how readily you gave half of it or all of it to some work of love, some brother in need! When you had ten dollars you could still part with two or three gladly. But you got a hundred, and thought you were wonderfully liberal when you handed out ten; and when it was a thousand, you considered fifty a great amount to give; and when you had ten thousand you gave a hundred and felt like a saint over it. So as money increased your gifts decreased; from a hundred per cent and fifty per cent you dropped down to twenty, from twenty to ten, then to five, then to one per cent. Tell me, why does a man do that? Is it not that money appeals to the accumulative instinct and possession stimulates the desire to possess? And this becomes a parasite vine that twines around the tree and sucks its sap and smothers its life until some spring, when all the trees are budding, the vine clad victim's branches remain dry and bare. So is the heart that is accursed with the love of money.

How hardly shall the rich enter! They have grown so independent of God, they do not need him; so bored with every excitement and pleasure that they long not for the peace and joy which are not of this world; so surfeited with every entertainment that the gospel is too insufferably dry and wearisome; so conceited and proud as to preclude all submission and repentance; so avaricious that their money becomes not a blessing to their fellows,

as it ought to be, but a weight about their own necks to sink them forever. To most of us, no matter how different it seems to us, a considerable sum of money would become a most effective curse. And the fact that there are among us some rich who live unto God and serve him with their lives and belongings is one of the marvels of God's grace.

TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD.

Fear not, you who love God, who are "the called according to his purpose." For you are in league with the stones of the field. All things are the servants of Him whom you call Father, and he has always done whatsoever hath pleased him. Fear not; for God has commanded the winds to waft you a benefit and the clouds to rain a blessing for you; the lightnings that they shall strike to your favor and the thunders to roll a benediction upon your head; that the waters shall roar and foam for you and the fires shall glow and burn in your behalf; yea, Death shall be your minister, and Satan shall serve you, and hell shall help you, and every shadow of darkness and every pain and woe that comes shall come to you fraught with precious blessing. Sing and be glad, for God hath done it: he has given orders to all his universe that all things seen or unseen shall work together for good to you, even to you. (Rom. 8: 28.)

The "If" and "But" of the Promise.

But if you now say, "That promise is not for me," let me ask, Why not? If it is you do not love God, then turn to him right here and now, and from this moment it shall be to you accordng to his word. Or have you reasoned it out that your difficulties have arisen from former dis-

obediences and sins? Do not let that put you off. Many of our burdens and sufferings come as direct consequences of past transgression. God has taken account of that. This circumstance does not make his promise void. But if right here and now, in the midst of guilty, self-caused distresses you would come to God with all your heart, then he will not forget his word; every further trial, pain, burden, from that instant, shall be sanctified of God for your good, your blessing and help. He has spoken it, he will also perform it.

WHEN THE WORLD APPLAUDS.

"What have I done," said Phocion, "what blunder have I committed, that all this rabble is applauding me?" The great Greek knew so well the low, perverted tastes and false standards of his countrymen that to be applauded by them made him suspicious of his own acts. And, my brother preacher, public or private, when the world praises you, you may be all right, but the matter looks suspicious. Scrutinize your work carefully. Say, "What now have I done that was un-Christlike and pleasing to the flesh? Have I been faithful? Have I been bold? Have I, while being kind and gentle as I ought to have been, also been aggressive enough? Have I held up the standard of Christ, or have I compromised? Have I made the sinners feel comfortable in their sins?" Do you hold with Christ in his unworldly, "impracticable" ideals and sentiments, or do you think and speak as the world, that so the world may hear you? (1 John 4: 5.) These are the things to think on. A preacher who is popular, and remains popular for any length of time, is certainly wrong with God. (James 4: 4; 2 Tim. 3: 12; Luke 6: 26.) The world loves but its own. If they go wild over the president's sermon on the "Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal

Brotherhood of Man," it is natural. That sounds well to their ears, because it is one of Satan's sugary falsehoods, comforting and flattering to those whom Christ designates as lost, and "children of the devil." (John 8: 44.) But if you are walking that unworldly path of Jesus that brought the world's hatred on him, how is it the world loves you? Now you need not go looking for trouble, but set out to be really earnest and faithful to the Lord, and trouble will come. (2 Tim. 3: 12.)

LET US ALONE.

How lightly a sinner esteems the efforts of God and God's people to save him, and how the rich provisions of mercy and grace and the invitation of God to accept them may at first seem even a nuisance to him is well illustrated in the case of Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. Their own admission was, later, that they had met God's offer of deliverance with the request to be let alone. "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians." (Ex. 14:12.) This is lack of appreciation; but not only that: it shows hopelessness, paralysis of will, degradation. It is the tendency answering to that of physical bodies to continue in the same line, once they are set in motion. It is the conservative tendency, the power of habit, the fear of change, the disinclination to get out of the rut. "Wouldest thou be made whole?" asked Jesus of the invalid who had lain helpless thirty-eight years; and he seemed hardly to know whether he would or not. A convict set free after many years' imprisonment, came back to the prison and piteously begged to be readmitted. He was old, he said, and did not know what to do with himself, and the responsibility of freedom, making a living, finding his place among men, was too much for him; and, anyhow, he was homesick for his cell. This is an extreme

case, but not out of reason by any means. "Let us alone" —let us remain the slaves of Egypt—don't trouble us, we are doing well enough. Let us live in peace, and do our daily drudgery and get our daily rations as heretofore. We prefer the troubles we have to others we know not of. Thus spoke the dispirited nation. It sounds familiar. Most sinners want to be let alone. The new life offered by Christ is like a steep mountain, too difficult of ascent—a fellow might even try and never reach the summit. What is the use? It is too much effort and too great a change. It cuts into my comfort to even think about it. It is like getting out of a warm bed on an icy morning—and that, too, when there is no special need or pressure, or particular reason why it should be done just exactly now. Some other time I may consider it, but not now. Let me alone. "Let me alone," says the man who is freezing to death, who is sinking into that uncontrollable slumber from which there is no awakening. "Let me alone," says the morphine-poisoned child, when all the family are in anxious distress seeking to maintain the spark of life. So spoke Israel in Egypt; but, praise God, he did not leave them alone. So neither were we left alone when we would rather have gone to sleep in our sins. Neither has he let you alone, my sinner friend. See you refuse him no longer. "Today, if thou shalt hear his voice, harden not your heart." To be at last let alone of God is the most terrible doom that can befall a man.

WHEN TO TEACH A CHILD.

"I will not teach my child anything about religion yet," remarked a man walking with S. T. Coleridge. "I will let him grow up; and when he is old enough to judge, he can see and choose for himself." They stopped at Coleridge's garden plot. "I thought I wanted to set out

strawberry slips here this spring," said Coleridge, standing there, thoughtfully; "but you have given me a new idea. I will wait till August, and then I will see whether this garden really prefers strawberry plants or whether it would rather have weeds in it." My brother, the weeds will grow in your child's heart unbidden. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child," says Solomon. It is never to soon to begin to root them out, and to plant good seeds instead, and to cultivate the good growth. When the weeds get the start, it is often too late to do anything. Clean and sow early. And the good seed is the word of God. (Deut. 6:7.)

FAITH COMETH BY HEARING.

In a rare old book published by the Bagsters, "The Bible of Every Land," is an interesting account which shows the power of the gospel over the mind of the Jew. "The learned rabbi who translated the Travancore New Testament engaged in the work solely with the design of confuting Christianity. That his triumph might be more complete, he endeavored in his translation to keep as near to the original as possible, for he never doubted but that with his scholarship and logical abilities he would find it easy to refute the statements of the text. By the time, however, he had gone through the life of Jesus, his confidence was shaken, and, as if afraid, says Dr. Buchanan, of the converting power of his own translation, he inserted a paragraph at the close of the Gospels, in which he took heaven and earth to witness that he had uudertaken the work with the express design of opposing the 'Epicureans,' as he termed the Christians. A cloud hangs over his subsequent history; but there are abundant reasons for believing that he fell a martyr to the bigotry of

his people, and that after embracing the religion of Jesus he sealed his testimony with his blood." This reminds us of the cases of Lord Lyttleton and Gilbert West, two brilliant unbelievers, who set out to demonstrate the absurdity of the Christian faith: the one intending to show up the weakness and ridiculousness of the account of the resurrection of Jesus; the other, likewise, of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. The final issue of their work and study was that they both became believers, and each wrote on his previously chosen theme a strong treatise proving the divine claims of Jesus and of the New Testament. Those books are yet extant—"Lyttleton on the Conversion of St. Paul" and "West on the Resurrection of Christ;" and they stand as monuments of the faith-producing power of God's word, when given an even tolerably fair hearing. For "these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name."

THE DECAY OF FOUNDATIONS.

Among the circumstances that mark the downfall of the nation, God mentions these: "And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the old man, and the base against the honorable." (Isa. 3: 5.) Mutual oppression and decline of respect and reverence—these are symtoms of national decay, monitors of an impending crisis and catastrophe. They both are ominously prevalent, and on the increase in this land. In some other countries the former is more accentuated; in this country the latter is more in evidence, and that to an alarming extent. Middle-aged men, even, remember the days when children were more respectful toward their elders and obedient to their parents; when age, position, ac-

quirements, office, were held in more honor than to-day. The doctrine of equal rights has been perverted and misunderstood and mistakenly taught until every low wretch deems himself every whit as good as any man alive, and demonstrates his equality in contemptfully familiar manner to or speech about men who in work or station are due honor and esteem. In their self-importance they clamor for "rights" which are not due to them by any statute of man or God. The youth also are catching the same spirit. The good days when children were "seen, but not heard," are pretty well past. Children come out of their schools fired with ambition—not to fill a humble place in life, and fill it well, but to do something big, that will bring them into the lime light before the public. They revel in the thought of being "great men" in the making, with a false sense of what constitutes greatness. They feed their minds with glowing fiction which can be had in any quantity from free public libraries, or for a pittance at bookstores, and live on impossible tales about Brave Tom and Plucky Jack and other boy heroes, fifteen years old, who stepped into the arena and before whose superior powers all the strength and skill and exprience of older men paled into insignificance. They feel themselves the match of any man and masters of any situation. The "old man" at home is grouchy. He is an old-timer, and not up to date at all. He knows nothing. The preacher —the very mention of him provokes hilarity. Mother is all right; but, then, she is a woman. But the loafers on the street—they are fine fellows, every one. He copies their impudence and contempt of authority. We still remember the case of the boy in Nashville who shouted, "Hello, Teddy!" to President Roosevelt as he passed; and that was not just one instance, but the breaking out of a spirit that is characteristic of the times. Thus the distinctions between youth and age, and the base and the

honorable, are wiped out, and once again we find ourselves face to face with conditions that betoken a nation's downfall.

"BE GOOD TO YOURSELF"

There is nothing new under the sun because there is nothing new in human nature. There is not a trait, not a tendency, but it has been from Adam's day. And the Bible has all the devious ways of man mapped and charted. In Ps. 49: 18 is an observation that might, as far as its truth and applicableness is concerned, have come from the pen of an American writer of the twentieth century: "And men praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself." Now don't they? Our papers are full of it, even our schoolbooks. James was a sober, industrious, ambitious boy. He went to the city and began to work as office boy, and advanced rapidly to chief clerk and manager, and then became partner in the concern: and being an able organizer, he reached out and combined the interests in the line of his business, and prospered wonderfully. He owns vast property and is one of the foremost citizens of the State. See what a poor boy can do! And so forth. But John was born of wealthy parents and was well educated, and developed musical genius. But when he had fame, riches and everything, he joined a poor, unpretentious body of religionists, gave his wealth away; forsook the gay circles of society in which he was wont to shine, and bade the stage farewell forever; went into obscurity, and is to-day wasting his sweetness on the desert air as missionary in some far-away heathen land, making a bare subsistence. We bitterly regret the loss of such a gifted man, and the fact that he became the victim of a religious fanaticism which brought about his ruin. "Take care of yourself," and you shall have the praise of men. But

deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ, and your praise will no longer be of men, but of God.

Jan. 13, 1910.

THE STANDARD OF SUCCESS

How thoroughly everything is reckoned from a money basis is evident from the very expressions we have unconsciously adopted. "Is so and so doing any good?" "O, yes; he is making two hundred a month," or, "No, not much; he gets about a dollar a day where he works." "How much is Mr. B worth?" "Fifty thousand;" or, perhaps, "He is worth nothing at all." Now I say that these unconscious idioms betray subconscious thoughts. We must watch that. A man's worth is not measured by the money we may have, and his doing good is not to be gauged by his cash receipts. According to such talk, Jesus was "not worth anything" and "doing no good."

"Twenty years ago," says a little clipping from a good paper, "a discouraged young doctor in one of our large cities was visited by his father, who came up from a rural district to look after his boy.

" 'Well, son,' he said, 'how are you getting along?'

" 'I'm not getting along at all,' was the disheartened answer; 'I'm not doing a thing.'

"The old man's countenance fell, but he spoke of courage and patience and perseverance. Later in the day he went with his son to the free dispensary, where the young doctor had an unsalaried position.

"The father sat by, a silent but intensely interested spectator, while twenty-five poor unfortunates received help. The doctor forgot his visitor while he bent his skilled energies to this task; but hardly had the door closed on the last patient when the old man burst forth:

" 'I thought you told me you were not doing anything!'

he thundered. 'Not doing anything! Why, if I had helped twenty-five people in a month as you have in one morning, I would thank God that my life counted for something.'

"'There isn't any money in it though,' exclaimed the son, somewhat abashed.

"'Money!' the old man shouted, still scornfully. 'What is money in comparison with being of use to your fellowmen? Never mind about the money; you go right along at this work every day. I'll go back to the farm and gladly earn enough money to support you as long as I live.'

"'That speech,' I said to a friend of mine—one who has spent many years as a conspicuously successful teacher—'went into the bones of the young doctor's life, and strengthened him for a life of unselfish usefulness.'

"'Ah,' said the professor, 'that one speech was worth years of text-book reading. And yet it was made without an instant's preparation. Is that not so?'

"'Far from it,' I answered quickly. 'It had taken sixty years of noble living, struggling against sin and self, pressing forward in the paths of righteousness, bearing the cross, following hard after the perfect man, to prepare that old Christian to make that speech. Then the moment came, and he was ready to teach the glorious lesson.'"

THE WHOLE GREATER THAN ITS PARTS

It has been told of Isaac Newton that he was very fond of cats, and cut two holes in the bottom of his door for his two pets—a big hole for the big cat and a little hole for the little cat. We laugh at the idea. Yet what do men do religiously? They have the Bible, containing all of God's truth; yet they must needs have a human creed besides.

They belong to the church of God, and are, therefore, heirs of all truth; but some must join Russell, or the Mormons, or the Adventists, human sects, because, forsooth, these hold some real or supposed bit of truth. They have a right to the Fountain whence come all the living waters, but they feel compelled to make miserable cisterns which cannot even hold what little they contain. A member of God's church has a right to all truth. He is not hedged in by man's creed, written or unwritten. For the church of the Lord teaches nothing officially, only she proclaims Jesus as Lord and Christ, and induces men to give him faith and obedience. And we are complete in him. As we received him, so we walk in him, so do we grow up into him, in whim are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden, and in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The fight of the present day is to make Christians see their freedom, limited only by true love, and to keep that which should be the church of Christ from degenerating into a mean little sect. Let us press on. The only remedy for the failures and errors of the day is a fuller knowledge, a truer understanding, of God's holy word and a deeper revelation to our own hearts of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"BONNIE BRIERBUSH"

"Ian Maclaren's" little ideal sketches of the simple Scotch people about "Drumtochty," entitled "Beside the Bonnie Brierbush," is among the books that touch the hidden springs of pathos and make the heart a fountain of sweet tears. Its secret, tender charm never fails. It is one of the few books that can be read a hundred times, and the last time the eye will not be dry. Nevertheless, "Ian Maclaren" errs gravely, and just such a book as his will go far to mislead hundreds of thousands by confirm-

ing them in a sentiment toward which they are already inclined. With him love is the greatest thing in the world, and does indeed cover a multitude of faults. And by love he does not mean the love described in God's word, but the fleshly, human affection, parental, conjugal, brotherly, or friendly, and the generous impulse of a man's heart for his fellow. This he puts in the first place. By this he interprets the Bible. Because this "love" of his regards the hell of the Bible as wholly too cruel, the belief in such a place is discarded. This "love" is to him more than all the doctrines of God's word, and what a man believes or is matters little as long as he excels in this thing. The great gulf between thoroughgoing faith in the Bible and the blighting infidelity of destructive criticism is bridged over by this love, and the difference becomes unimportant. I do not say that the tender and magnanimous traits of human character are wrong or to be despised; but they belong to a much lower shelf. "Maclaren" mistakes the meaning of love. His God is good-natured rather than good; easy-going rather than holy; not loving in truth, but weakly, sentimental, and gushing. And this is the sentiment of the age. It is counted all but a virtue to set aside God's will and word to save the tender feelings and give way to the affections of the heart, and the milk of human kindness is as good as the blood of Christ to wash away sins. But God holds a different judgment, and his estimate alone will count "in that day." His wisdom is pure before it is peaceable. With him truth is first, and must be maintained though every friend or dear one perish. He wants loving submission to himself first of all, and approves of the uncompromising faith that laid the beloved only son Isaac upon the altar. Whatever threatens the knowledge of the only God is to be sacrificed. The loss of the truth of God is with him the direst of all calamities that can befall

the race, and against the true interests of every man, and love will be incredibly cruel before she will consent to anything like that. See the fearful injunction given to Israel in Deut. 13:6-18. That was nothing but God's love working for the good of mankind. Nor even when he forgives sin is God weakly sentimental. Not by making excuse for our transgression; not by palliating the offense; not by minimizing its awfulness; not by considering the man's good points and ignoring his evil, does God save him. That were a miserable salvation indeed, and could not command our own respect. No, but the guilt must be settled for. One came in wonderful love and bore our iniquities and was wounded for our transgression, and squared the account, and by his stripes we are healed. Love is indeed kind and tender; but above all, just and righteous, rejoicing in the truth. And the love of man, where it is genuine, is subordinated to—nay, springs from—the love of God. But the love of God consists in setting him above everything else in the world.

COMPROMISE

The saddest mistake a good man can make is to follow the allurements of evil under the impression that he will be able to straighten it all out and lose nothing by it in the end; thinking he can follow his carnal desire and yet not surrender his highest aims and hopes. At the parting of the ways he stands, not quite willing to deny the sweet enticement of the flesh or the world, not at all willing to give up God and his own high ideals and plans. Then very softly the tempter suggests, "Take both." So, glad of this solution, he takes the wrong road, but with his eye fixed on the goal of the right and his face yet turned toward the light. Ah, but you can not have both. In choosing the one you surely renounce the other. Do you

think, deluded one, that you can ever repent and return and be reinstated without having lost something irrevocably and permanently? Little do you know the awful forces with which you have trifled, and bitter experience will teach you what before you had not realized. Yes, God is merciful; he meets the prodigal afar off and presses him to a Father's heart, and forgives, and puts new robes on him. Yet the wayward son has lost something irreparably—his years, his strength, his squandered portion of the Father's substance; and his higher nature has been irremediably thwarted. He has gained nothing; he has lost much; and if now he is safely back in the Father's home and love, it is because of God's exceeding grace. And not every wanderer gets even such a chance to come back; be it for one cause or another, because of outward hindrance, or inward disinclination, many a prodigal son perishes among the pigsties in the far country. My brother, if you have made that awful mistake, return to God today. There will never be a better time. And if you come, there is no telling what great things God will do for you today which he could not do tomorrow.

COMING OF THE LORD.

When the Jewish nation was looking for the Messiah, about the time that Daniel the prophet pointed to, there appeared in Jerusalem some strangers from the East, Magi, who made no secret of the object of their visit. Led by a star, which they had understood signified the birth of the long-looked-for King of the Jews, they came to the city loudly inquiring for the place where they might find the newborn King. When this came to the ears of Herod, he was troubled—naturally so. It might be his knell of doom. If this expected King had indeed come, he would shortly put an end to Herod's iniquitous

power and overthrow his menial throne. That, I say, was natural. But when we read that all Jerusalem was troubled with him, we stop to wonder. Had it come to that? Had the hope of their fathers and the desire of the generations past become a dread unto them? Surely the gold had become dim! And where were their scribes, those well-versed Bible scholars, the expounders of the law; the scrupulous, hair-splitting Pharisees, sticklers for the minutest points of the law and for the tradition of the elders? Surely *they* are glad—they have nothing to fear. But they also are troubled. Can it be that they feel instinctively that their gold, too, is but tinsel; that their "loyalty" to the law is more a matter of human dogmatism and conformity to accepted teachings than love for God; that they have but used the name of their God and have taken his word upon their lips for selfish ends, to gain honor and office and position and recognition among men? Then no wonder that they were troubled. But when among us the midnight cry of the Lord's coming again is sounded out, how will it be? Shall we be glad? Are the men of the world going to rejoice? Is the church going to sing happy songs? Are the preachers going to leap high for joy? Or are they going to be troubled, all together, as Jerusalem was when she heard of the birth of her King? Alas, could it be possible that it has come to that? Has the hope and the joy of the early church become our dread and dismay? How deep must be our ignorance; how conscious we must be of unfaithfulness, of ease-loving, narrow selfishness; how aware that it is not loyalty to Christ and the love of God that inspires even our religious work, worship, teaching, and contention; and how convinced that we are unfit for the coming of Christ! "He cometh"—and instead of a cry of glad relief, like John's "Even so come, Lord Jesus"—behold, consternation, terror, trembling, and cries of distress!

Let us hope this picture is overdrawn. But I say unto you, watch, take heed, that ye may be found in peace, and be found among them that "love his appearing," ready to hail it with glad delight.

THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING.

It was when Jesus was leaving the earth and his ascending figure was veiled with a cloud from the eyes of his disciples as they stood and gazed after him, there came a reassuring message from God: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." Then returned the apostles to Jerusalem "with great joy," as the gospel of Luke tells us—joy, not because Jesus had left them, but because this very same Jesus should come again just as they had beheld him leaving. And was it not a cause for joy? Had they not walked with him through his earthly ministry and learned to love him with an unbounded devotion? Had they not hung their faith on him and borne the shame of his seeming failure, and mourned for him the days he lay in the tomb as one mourneth for an only son? And when he had risen and the fact which seemed too good to believe was overwhelmingly demonstrated to their senses, how the fires of faith and love and hope blazed up anew, this time unquenchably! And now he had left them again. He had not restored the kingdom to Israel as they had hoped, but had met their anxious question with the answer that the times and seasons of that event were among the secret things that belong to the Lord our God; at the same time making them the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of consequent power and privilege to be his witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth. Then he

spread out his hands and blessed them, and the while he blessed them he was taken up from among them. So he left them again, but this time not in clouds of gloom and disappointment, as before, but as when the sun sets in a sky of clear gold with the promise of a fair morning. He left an appointment with his disciples, that they should wait for him. He said he was coming again. When? He did not tell them. But assuredly he would sooner or later; and every day that rolled round made his coming more likely and by one day more imminent. They were anxious for his return; they knew him and loved him, and no sweeter hope existed for them than just this, that their beloved Master would surely return. They could not but believe him, and were assured that as he was the author of their faith, he would also be the finisher of it.

A MARK OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

One of the marks of the apostolic churches, in every way as essential as any other characteristic of worship or doctrine, was their constant expectation of the Lord's return. Corinth was waiting for it, and taught to look forward to the event with hope, despite the defects that were then attaching to them. (1 Cor. 1:7, 8.) Thessalonica had turned to God to serve him and to wait for his Son from heaven (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). Philippi had their citizenship in heaven, whence also they waited for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil. 3:20.) The brethren at Colosse were admonished to be unworldly and to wait for their glorious reward at the manifestation of the Lord. (Col. 3:1-3.) The doctrine of grace which Titus must proclaim gives the return of the Lord prominent place. Tit. 2:11-13.) To the Hebrew brethren it is declared that Jesus would come a second time to them that wait for him unto revelation. (Heb. 9:28.) James makes

it the ground of the Christian's patience under trial and suffering. (James 5:7-11.) Peter does the same. (1 Pet. 1:7; 4:12, 13), and makes Christ's coming a motive for elders of the church to do their work, and do it well (5: 1-4). In his second epistle, some of his last words to us are: "Give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight." And we might continue. This much is evident: that much mention is made of the coming again of our Lord; that great weight was placed on it; that it furnished the basis and motive of all faithful Christian life and unworldliness; and that all the churches of apostolic time were in an attitude of constant expectation of the Savior from heaven. No church or Christian that has lost view of, or ignores, this doctrine, fills the true pattern left to us in the New Testament. Let us make up this deficiency. It is high time to study and preach and teach this wonderfully great and wonderfully neglected portion of God's holy truth.

THE STUDY OF THE SECOND COMING.

In studying the teaching of the Lord's coming it is quite as essential to lay aside "preconceived notions" (and little as we know and say about this subject, there is no lack of preconceived, superficial notions) as in the study of baptism or anything else. There is difficulty connected with it. We may not be able to combine all the statements concerning this vast matter into one harmonious, coherent, systematic arrangement—likely not. But we are not obliged to. Two things only are absolutely needful: first, to believe just what God has told us, without twisting or quibbling; and, second, to seize upon the practical import of this teaching and carry it out in the power of a living faith. Nothing will so change our conduct and life; nothing will so turn us away from the earth

and make us work, and inspire us to keep unspotted and to witness for our Lord in the midst of a crooked, perishing generation.

THEORIES OF CHRIST'S COMING.

As for a connected theory of the things pertaining to the coming, I may have one, but I place no weight on it; and I will not quarrel with my brother for having a different idea of the sequence of events. What we want is the great truth, and the truths connected with it, and the practical lesson of the doctrine is what we need. But any theory which would do violence to the word, or, especially, frustrate the practical end God had in view, ought to be abolished. If there is one such practical aim in this doctrine, it is to put us on guard to be constantly ready, constantly waiting, watching, since we know not the day nor the hour—at a time when even we think not the Lord cometh. I would thank no man to rob me of that with his subtle and ingenious theories. I would thank no man for putting the coming to the other side of a millennium, so that in any case one thousand years must intervene before the Lord comes. For this takes the point out of the doctrine. Who could wait for a thing so far off as that? Who would prepare and look daily for such a distant event?

POSTMILLENARIAN DOCTRINE.

Probably nothing could have put a more effective quietus on all zealous ado about the Lord's return than the doctrine that not until after the thousand years' reign mentioned in Rev. 20 would Jesus come. That was a damper! Who, believing that, will trouble himself for such a dimly distant incident? They inevitably cease to

look for him, for they are not so constituted as to momentarily expect what they know can not occur for at least a thousand years. Now they prepare for death—a thing which the Lord did not tell them to do at all; and death becomes the cynosure of all hearts. The mention of the Lord's coming dies out of their mouths. The doctrine of it has become unpractical, dreamy. There is no more need of it, no essential place for it. This describes only too well the state of affairs now, and it is largely due to the "postmillenarian" theory which came into prominence during the eighteenth century, a man named Whitby being chief apostle of it. And today this theory holds most of Christendom (members of the church of Christ not excepted) in its grasp. Even those who do not consciously profess it are indirectly affected by its teaching and spirit and attitude. We have shaken off human yokes on other lines, but in this matter we are still held in bonds—partly by the difficulty of readjusting old ideas, and partly, perhaps, because in fighting Adventists and their ilk we have suffered prejudice and the convenient speciousness of the position to confirm us in it. Now against the postmillenarian theory I hold just this, that it robs every Christian, in effect, of the whole import and benefit of the doctrine of Christ's coming. We must look for Jesus now, today, as, indeed, today he is likely to come. We have no centuries to convert the world in, but must hasten to the distant lands to witness the gospel to all, and that quickly. Yes, if the church had to absorb the world first, we might go to sleep on this matter, for no such prospect is at hand. But the Book shows that Jesus on his return will not meet a converted world, but a handful of persecuted disciples that look for him anxious as the watchmen for the morning; that conditions in world and church will be fearful at the end, and that the Lord will, at his coming, personally clash with the

Antichrist. The millennium? If human civilization and progress and even the advance of truth must bring it about, then there is no room for aught but discouragement and despair. Save your statistics. There are no Christian nations. There are even today only a few whom Christ can call his own; and the population of the world is increasing out of all proportion with the number of conversions even in this country, to say nothing of heathen lands. But God says Christ is coming, coming soon. God wants us to see that these multitudes and nations shall have a chance to hear the gospel. But how leisurely we are at this our task! "The millennium is on now," said a certain brother. "But how about Satan's being bound?" "He may be bound now," replied he. "Then," I said, "I should not like to see him turned loose." Another, feeling the force of this point, ventured the idea that while Satan was bound his angels were still abroad! As if that would make any difference!

THE CHIEF POINT.

But it is no object of ours to engage in controversy on this point. What we now need is faith in what God said, a living faith that will live in full view of Christ's imminent coming and forgets the earth and self in this onward, upward look, this daily glorious hope, and striving to be found of him in joy and peace. The time is at hand, much nearer than when Paul and Peter wrote. The passing days have only made the event more certainly near, and it can not be far now. It may be that one of these Lord's days we shall take the loaf and cup to show forth the Lord's death "till he come" for the very last time. It may be that one of these evenings you may close your eyes in sleep and open them suddenly in his presence. One of these mornings we shall see the rising sun,

and before the evening falls we shall be forever with the Lord. May his grace keep us and make us fit for that moment, as surely it will if we live in faith of our Lord's imminent return. "For yet a very little while, he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrink back, my soul hath no pleasure in him."

January 20, 1910.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

A week usually holds much of difficulty and trial and temptation, and some of the dust of the world will settle on even a soul that has acquitted itself creditably during that space. In a week a man can become proud and independent. In a week a man can get discouraged even unto death. In a week a man may lose faith, hope, and love. It was the Lord's special object in giving us the bread and cup for a keepsake, that each time we partake of it we might remember him—his gentle forbearance; the unfailing care; the deep, true affection; and, above all, the fact that he gave his all for us and to us. Therein lies not only grateful remembrance of his deed; but it is, when rightly observed, the antidote for the world's poison, and all our sin, grief, and discouragement. It reassures us of that unchanging love that shrank from no extent of sacrifice. It bears to our souls the inevitable conclusion that having done us such supreme kindness at such tremendous cost when we were yet in sin and rebellion, he will much more now care and work for us and do all a true Savior can do, that he may save us from the wrath to come. We are prone to forget it. We are always ready to measure God's love and good will by our own—than which man never did a poorer thing. But before this memorial feast the false doubts and fears and dis-

trusts that trouble and ruin our souls must flee as the returning sunlight chases the evil birds of the night.

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH."

Our comforts and hope and assurances God gives us make us wellsprings of blessing to others. There seems to be a law in the spiritual world that whatever good thing is done to a man, he must go and do that same thing to others. Carnegie builds libraries; but the secret of it is that when Carnegie was a poor boy he derived much pleasure and help from being permitted the use of a library. So forevermore, if he follows out the true impulse of his heart, he must give libraries and make access to libraries possible to young and old. A certain man relates that when he was little more than a boy, and alone, penniless, not knowing whither to turn next, a gentleman unasked and generously gave him a dollar to meet his immediate need. "How many dollars I have handed out on the strength of that one, I could not begin to tell." There is a real force in this, and many a man has felt the tugging of this principle at his heartstrings. Now a realization of God's great gift and sacrifice for us results similarly; and so certainly does this law operate that if a Christian fails to show compassion and self-sacrifice for his fellow-men, there are but two possible explanations: either he has never had due realization of what he was and what God did for him (for he "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little"), or else he has simply forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore the Lord's "Do this in remembrance of me" makes us on the first day of the week again sensible of what creatures of God's grace we are; how Jesus' unbounded mercy redeemed us from an awful state and fate, at the expense of his lifeblood; and not only does it so remind us and

comfort and assure us, but it ends in our being constrained by the love of Christ to live henceforth no longer unto self, but unto God and for the blessing of the perishing souls, even as Jesus gave himself up for us, a sacrifice unto God.

"TILL HE COME."

We have just begun to see the depth of meaning and power hidden in this simple memorial appointment of the Lord, and the manifold riches of it grow more wonderful as we proceed. Beyond the things referred to above, it has another quite distinct meaning: it keeps alive the church's expectation of the Lord's return. It looks forward as well as backward. It reaches across the interval between his first and second coming. No less than a marble monument commemorating some historic event does this memorial bear its silent testimony to the occasion of its institution—that awful night when Jesus, already in the shadow of the approaching Gethsemane and cross, cheered the hearts of his own (for he loved them unto the end) over his impending departure and promised to return to receive them unto himself. (John 14:1-3.) And this Supper is the bridge whose beginning, resting upon that night and the events immediately succeeding it, spans the gulf of the years of his absence; and the further extremity shall surely rest upon the glorious event of his "coming again." For thereby do we show forth the Lord's death until he come. Thus does the church bear witness to its faith and its hope. And as Israel still chants in their passovers in the countries of their dispersion, mindful of a promise of God that yet awaits its fulfillment, "This year we eat it here; the next, in our own land"—so may we say, "Today we eat it here, in the assembly of the saints, in dim discernment and in

hope; next Lord's day, if God will, anew with him in the Father's kingdom, in the clear vision of his glory and in hope's glad fruition."

THE COMMUNION OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD.

The import of the Lord's Supper is not exhausted in the word "memorial" and the command, "This do in remembrance of me." It has a further power. The Roman superstition of "transubstantiation—that is, the miraculous turning of the wine and bread into the real, actual body and blood of the Lord—a superstition which has resulted directly in idolatry (the adoration of the consecrated wafer) and in the performance called "mass," which is supposed to be a resacrificing of the body and blood of Christ with symbolic ceremonies—is refuted by the words of the Savior himself, who, after having blessed the cup, speaks of it as "this fruit of the vine." It would be a pity, however, did we allow our opposition to the perversions of Romanism to blind our eyes to a single point of truth. We partake of the loaf and cup in remembrance of the Lord. But, as the wines and meats of idol sacrifices established a communion between the participants of them and the demons (which under the cover of idols were really the objects of the heathen worship); so, Paul shows us, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper puts us in real communion with the body and blood of the Lord; and he declares that we can not drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, nor partake of the table of the Lord and of demons. This language is rather remarkable. But the one point we would gain from the passage is that the partaking of the Lord's Supper is not simply a reminder of the Lord's death, but a real participation in the body and blood of Christ. This not because of any miraculous change in the bread and wine, but by

reason of the peculiar meaning of the institution and the renewal of faith it involves. In John 6, where Jesus indeed makes no reference whatever to the Lord's Supper, we find the principle on which the teaching of 1 Cor. 10:16 is based. The expressions, "Eateth my flesh," and "drinketh my blood," used by Jesus in John 6, are explained to be equivalent to "coming to him" and "believing on him." (John 6:35.) That is, the eating—that which satisfies hunger—is to come to Jesus; the drinking —that which satisfies thirst—is to believe in him. Now these things are done again in the faithful partaking of the Lord's Supper. We have in it the approval and the obedient faith that feasts on the Lord's sacrifice. And in this manner we receive again the benefit of his sacrificed body and shed blood; we eat and drink it spiritually, the while we physically eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine.

WHO IS WORTHY?

It is hard for men to shake off old, inherited notions. In some points the thought of Protestant Christendom is still tinged with Roman teaching; and in this case we hold the idea that the "communicant" must be in a state of perfect spotlessness, or else he commits a grievous sacrilege in taking the Lord's Supper. Now, strange to say, the word of God has nothing whatever to say of any moral qualification necessary to a valid coming to the Lord's table. There is no point, I think, in Christian worship, more thoroughly misunderstood than this. The eating and drinking referred to in John 6 is not at all for the saved, but to the unsaved a means of salvation. The Lord's Supper is for Christians, a memorial of the sacrifice that has saved them, and incidentally, by exercise of faith, a renewed communion with the body and blood of Christ for further salvation and supplying of our need.

No wonder, then, the Book makes no stipulation as to the character or state of the partaker. Granted he comes sincerely, the very partaking itself would, through the humble, obedient faith involved in the act, cleanse the man from sin by faith in the blood. We infer, to be sure, that in this, as in every other part of worship and service toward God, the worshiper is not false or hypocritical in his motive. But aside from that, God made no conditions as to the man's fitness to partake of the Lord's Supper acceptably.

EATING AND DRINKING JUDGMENT.

The condition God does lay down, and concerning which Paul warns us, is that we distinguish between this meal and common meals; that we discern the Lord's body in this, and eat and drink in remembrance of him, and not like the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:17-34), forgetting the difference between the holy and the secular, turn the Lord's Supper into a selfish and drunken feast. It is that point we must watch. It is in that respect that he wants us to solemnly discern and examine ourselves—not regarding the point of our own fitness (except as far as that should be in consideration in every other act of worship), but in regard to the manner in which we partake of this feast. For "whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." Fearful as such guilt would be, even that does not involve such final, utter condemnation as many think. For these Corinthians had done that very thing and incurred that guilt. Yet Paul does not speak of them or to them as hopeless cases; but all his exhortation proves that the Lord would not refuse his mercy to them. But this he says: "He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto

himself, if he discern not the body." And yet—what does he mean by "judgment?" Final rejection? Eternal damnation? No. He proceeds at once to explain that this "judgment" is not at all condemnation, but the Lord's discipline that we may be saved from utter condemnation. "But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. 11:31, 32.) It is a question of chastening, then—very severe, perhaps, yet salutary and kindly, with a view to our salvation, even at the very worst. Let us abandon, then, our false and foolish fears, and come with boldness to the throne of grace, and with true intent to the Lord's table, that there we may find mercy, grace, new hope and strength, and taste again the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge, that we may be filled unto all the fullness of God. January 27, 1910.

IMPULSE OR SYSTEM.

How easily and resignedly we take up our tasks when they are regular and fixed! There is restfulness and order, and even leisure, in a laborious life that is conducted on steadfast principles of regularity. But the man who is spasmodic, who waits for inclinations and feelings, and does one thing and another as it happens to attract his attention, accomplishes little, and that little is hard on him. "The lazy man," says Spurgeon, "is always in a hurry and always in a mess. He does not do what he ought to do at the time he ought to do it; and so he always has a debt of past duties to settle and is in no position to face the requirements of the present. Such a man does not know what leisure is." By a strange vengeance of law, he loses exactly what he desires to gain by his procras-

tination and neglect and whimsical, spasmodic methods of work; instead of leisure, he "can find no time to do anything;" instead of peace and restfulness, he gets distraction and a heavier burden than God ever intended he should bear. What I say here applies with special force to spiritual life. The converts of Pentecost continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Theirs was a regular life. Emotion and enthusiasm they had (who could help it in those wonderful days?), but it issued in steadfast continuance in certain homely duties rather than in great spurts and excited spells of activity. So should the fires of enthusiasm be chained and conserved to furnish power for a steady pull, and not be puffed into one grand display of pyrotechnics. You gave a lump little sum of money in a burst of generosity? It was good, my brother, and God appreciates it, and he knows the love that prompted it. But better is a little given steadfastly in cool purpose and of principle than big sums given in occasional impulse. To give, to study, to pray, to work, in steadfast continuance will make you happier and more useful in the Lord's house.

"MORITURI SALUTAMUS"

As the gladiators of ancient Rome entered the arena on which they were to contend unto to death in bloody combat for the amusement of the heartless throng, they must pause before Caeser's seat in the amphitheater and bow to him, saying, "Morituri salutamus," which means, "We who are about to die salute thee." But the Christians who enter the spiritual arena to battle against an adversary incomparably greater and stronger than themselves bow before their Lord and

Redeemer and say joyously, "We who are about to live salute thee;" and they go forth to win the victory through his grace unto life eternal.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

The nightmare of many earnest children of God is "the unpardonable sin;" and there are few conscientious Christians that do not at one time or another allow the fear that perhaps they have committed it to torment them, while those who really have committed it go light-heartedly (hard-heartedy, rather) on their way and care nothing about it. As some one said, "The fact that a man is afraid he is a hypocrite is a good indication that he is not one"—so might it be put that a Christian's being troubled with the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin is a good indication that his fear is groundless. I have a request to explain (Heb. 10: 25-28.) If the willful sin mentioned in verse 26 is simply any wrong done against light and conscience, and if that is unpardonable, then there is hardly a man in the world, or ever has been, that will be saved. But verse 29 describes that willful sin as consisting (1) of treading under foot the Son of God, (2) counting the blood of the covenant with which he has sanctified an unholy thing, and (3) doing despite unto the Spirit of grace. Now, to disobey the Spirit is not the same as "doing despite" unto him; to be unfaithful to Christ is not the same as treading him under foot. Sinners who have wandered from God often hold the very thought of Jesus in high honor and hang their heads in shame at the mention of his name; they realize that if they are ever forgiven and washed, it will be through this very "blood of the covenant," and that they have grieved the Holy Spirit without at

all setting out to do despite to him. This is commonly the case with backsliders. Unless a man can be proved squarely guilty of the three offenses described, he has not committed the unpardonable sin. Furthermore, any man who has sinned and returns to God penitently has not committed that sin, for God pledged himself to forgive and receive such, but for the unpardonable sin is no forgiveness. (Ps. 51 : 17; John 6 : 37.) Therefore, they who are guilty of it never repent and return to God.

THE DANGER OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

Immediately preceding the paragraph that speaks of the "willful sin" is the exhortation not to forsake our own assembling together; and since the next paragraph (according to the arrangement of the American Revised Version) begins with "for"—"For if we sin willfully," etc.—it has been taken by some that to forsake the assembling is the willful sin for which there is no more a sacrifice. That, however, from the following context and in the nature of things, cannot be the case. "What, then, is the force of the word "for" in verse 26? It takes the entire preceding paragraph (Heb. 10: 19-25), and is warning to Christians to hold fast their holy religion by every means, showing what will result from the renouncing of it. And here is the great lesson of it to us. No man, once a true Christian, would renounce Christianity at one leap. Before a man can bring himself to that, he must go through a process of hardening—of carelessness, backsliding, neglect. But such a course, dangerous in itself, is seen to be terribly hazardous when it appears that by this process a man becomes ripe for that last awful step that cuts him off from mercy forever—the

sin unto death, concerning which it is of no use to pray for a brother. If those Hebrews grow neglectful of their salvation, the chances multiply rapidly that they will be swallowed up by, and go back to, Judaism; join with their former brethren in denouncing Jesus as the impostor who well deserved his death (thus crucifying him to themselves afresh and putting him to open shame); and by their apostasty they confess that his blood was no better than that of any other malefactor, and that the Spirit who has worked among them was of Beelzebub, not of God. This was their awful danger, and they must cleave close to Jesus, to his word, to one another, and avail themselves of their privileges in Christ, that they may avoid that fatal undertow. A similiar danger threatens to-day those who have grown lax and drifted from God and the means of his salvation. Let such turn and return to him before it is too late.

THE POWER OF THE WORD

Perhaps no one since the days of the apostles and early martyrs fought such a fight as Martin Luther —a fight against principalities and powers, civil, ecclesiastical, and Satanic; against a religion rooted and established in all the so-called Christian world, and intertwined with every civil government and supported by the kings and rulers of the earth, having unlimited power to prosecute, persecute, imprison, torture, crush, and kill any persons offensive to its rule. Luther stood alone, practically without defense or protection, and had no forces of men and arms wherewith to attack a power whose strength stood in men and arms in every country. Neither did he care for carnal help. For evermore will his work be an irrefutable testimony to the

terrible power of the word of God. When some of his followers used some of the Romish tactics and tried to put down the mass by carnal means within the circle of their power, Luther straitly rebuked them. "The mass," he said, "is a bad thing. God is inimical to it. It must be abolished, and I could wish that over the whole world it were supplanted by the Supper of the gospel. But let nobody be driven from it by violence. The affair must be committed to God. His word must act, not we. 'And why?' you will say. Because I do not hold the hearts of men in my hands, as the potter does the clay. We have a right to speak, but not to act [that is, to enforce the observance of our doctrine by others]. Let us preach—the rest belongs to God. If I employ force, what shall I obtain? Grimace, appearances, apishness, human ordinances, hypocrisy. But there will be no sincerity of heart, no faith, no charity. Any work in which these three things are wanting wants everything, and I would not give a pin for it."

"I am willing to speak, to preach, to write; but I would not constrain any one, for faith is a voluntary matter. See what I have done! I have withstood the pope, indulgences, and the papists, but without tumult and violence. I have put forward the word of God, have preached, have written; but this is all I have done. And while I slept . . . the Word which I had preached overthrew the papacy, assailing it more effectually than was ever done by prince or emperor. I have done nothing—the Word has done all. Had I chosen to appeal to force, perhaps Germany might have been bathed in blood. But what would have been the consequences? Ruin and desolation, both to soul and body. I therefore remained quiet and allowed the Word to have free course in the world. When he sees recourse had to force to spread the gospel among men, . . . Satan with malignant leer says:

'Ah, how sagely these fools are playing my game!' But when he sees the Word running and wrestling alone on the field of battle, he feels uneasy and his knees tremble."

In another place he says: "It is by the Word that we must fight; by the Word overturn and destroy what has been established by violence. I am unwilling to employ force against the ignorant or the unbelieving. Let him who believes approach; let him who believes not stand aloof. None ought to be constrained. Liberty is of the essence of faith."

And these things hold their lesson for us, lest we by some kind of carnal force, such as browbeating, ostracism, boycott, ridicule, or other forms of oppression, should attempt to coerce men and women into obedience to God.

A SCHOLAR'S ESTIMATE OF DEUTERONOMY

Richard G. Moulton, professor of Literary Theory and Interpretation in the University of Chicago and the apostle of the literary study of the Bible, author of a valuable work bearing that title, and also of the Modern Reader's Bible, which is the Revised Version, "presented in modern literary form," said in a literary lecture on Deuteronomy, recently delivered in Louisville (in substance): "Considered merely as oratory, the book of Deuteronomy surpasses everything of its kind. About twenty years ago, when I was yet young in this particular work [of literary Bible study], I devoted three successive evenings to a test of this. The first evening I took Demosthenes' famous oration on 'The Crown,' the masterpiece of Greek oratory, and read it through at one sitting; the second evening, Burke's speech on 'American Taxation,' the masterpiece of English oratory; and the third evening I read through the book of Deuteronomy.

The effect produced by the latter was incomparably greater than that of either of the others. There was but one passage in Demosthenes that came at all up to the standard and power of Moses' farewell orations." Thus testifies a man who handles the Bible simply as literature, apart from any questions of inspiration or historicity or religious faith; who is peer in his chosen line of scholarship, thoroughly competent to judge in matters of style, literary power and value. In the course of the lecture he simply recited with feeling and expression a goodly portion of the book of Deuteronomy, and, upon myself, at least, the effect was very great. It also revealed to me what power the word of God can have when impressively recited without any comment whatever.

THE PHARISEE'S FAILURE

The key text of the Sermon on the Mount is Matt. 5:20: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." The rest of the chapter is then taken up in showing that the intent of the law was not the regulation of outward actions, but to control the source of all things—the heart; which point the Pharisees had ignored or overlooked. Not only murder, but anger, contemptful speech, and railing, fell under the bane of the law as Jesus interpreted it; not only adultery, but lustful thoughts and glances. And the good man does not stop at the literal requirement of the law, but puts his whole soul into conformity to God, going so far beyond the safe limits as to avoid all chances of overstepping them. Then, again, even righteous acts must be offered with pure and single motive; not for show, not for praise, not for men, not for earthly reward, but unto God alone. This he declares in Matt. 6. Finally in Matt.

7 he shows the most disgusting trait of the false piety of the Pharisees—their fault-findings and judgings. This was nothing else than the result of their effort to exert a good influence without being good themselves. That makes a hypocrite. He is sincere in the point of wanting to make others good. But in order to exert a good influence, not being good himself, he must "put on" airs of piety and holiness; good words that do not come from the soul; advice he himself never follows; heavy burdens he himself would not touch with his finger. He must parade his "good" works so as to duly impress the beholders. And inevitably he becomes a fault-finder, who sees many motes in many eyes without seeing the beam in his own. There are—alas!—many such men. How important it is to become good, to get right with God, first of all! In purpose to be surrendered unto him; with true heart to love him; to have our hearts purified by a real faith; to be full of the Spirit, that we may walk by, live by, pray by, worship by, the Spirit of God. For of the flesh springs nothing good. Nobody ever tried harder to make a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit than those Pharisees. Being something comes before doing something, and the first intent of the gospel is to make us new, good men after the likeness of Christ.

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