

life of sin to repentance and a godly life. It was by "a vision of the night," account for it as we may, that a godless soldier became a monument of the sovereign grace of God. In the solitude of a chamber, Colonel Gardiner saw a blaze of light fall on a book which his pious mother had slipped into his portmanteau on his departure from home. To beguile the tedious hour of waiting for the tempter he was dipping into the book for amusement, and waited for twelve o'clock. Looking up, he saw, with amazement, or imagined that he saw, in the halo of brightness, the form of the Saviour on the cross, thus addressing him: "O sinner did I suffer this for thee, and is this the return?" Colonel Gardiner awoke in unutterable agony, charging himself with the base crime of "crucifying the Son of God afresh" by his sins. His repentance was genuine. The reality of his conversion was fully testified by his subsequent life of singular devotedness and love to Christ and heavenly-mindedness, such as that of Henry Havelock and Headley Vicars.

There is, however need of caution, lest we substitute fancy for fact, and a dream for reality. There is a class of persons, who attend religious meetings and special services for the advancement of religion, who are exceedingly apt to see visions always on the look out for some "great light," or some "bright witness"—and, filled with this expectation, the mind is called away from the truth, and bewildered by superstition. Thus they look to visions instead of looking to Christ for comfort and salvation. These "great lights" and "bright witnesses" exist in the imagination. The sights they see and the voices they hear whispering some words of Scripture, are not facts; and if they were facts, they would be no evidence at all, of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The wisest use we can make of visions and dreams is, to let them serve to lead us to the Word of God. To expect mere information regarding the way of acceptance with God, of holiness, and of peace, through the private whisper of any spirit to our spirit, aside from "what is written" is to be carried away with the spirit of error and delusion. The Holy Spirit makes no new discoveries of the love of God, of the atonement of Christ, of the beauties of holiness, of the glory and happiness of heaven, but invests the exhibitions already given us, in the Scriptures of truth, with attractions in which they were never previously beheld, increases the clearness and the force with which their importance is perceived, and, by the removal of our unbelief, is sufficient to convert and save the soul. Jesus says of himself, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And Jesus says of His spirit: "He shall take of Mine and shall shew it unto you," "He shall lead you into all truth." He does not create a new sun, but gives sight to behold that which already irradiates the firmament.

A candidate for admission into the Church, under the ministry of the late Rev. Rowland Hill, was required to give some account of his first impressions as to the evil of sin, and the need of the Gospel, and he related a dream by which he had been impressed, and led to serious inquiry, to the hearing of sermons, and so forth. When he had ended, Mr. Hill said: "We do not wish to despise a good man's dreams by any means, but we will tell you what we think of the dream after we have seen how you go on when you are awake."

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Apart from it, the sublimest truths make no impression; possessing it, the simplest truths are invested with omnipotence. We invade not the rich and magnificent province of prophetic inspiration, when we affirm that miraculous voices and mysterious visions seem now to be forever closed, and that we travel along the old "broad and beaten way" of Christian experience, and take the lively oracles in our hand as our all-sufficient guide.

Toronto.

S. T. G.

In times of affliction we commonly meet with the sweetest experiences of the love of God.—*Bunyan*.

## SUNSET IN THE NORTH-WEST.

A young friend from Winnipeg sends this description of their sunsets:

"I think the sunsets here must be like those at sea. From my window there is nothing but the boundless stretch of snow-covered prairie, reaching, a white unbroken plain, to where it meets the clear blue of the sky. And the sunsets are grand. I wish for an artist's brush to preserve them for all eyes. Sometimes there is no cloud, and the sun, like a ball of fire, sinks down, and just before it touches the horizon the white earth seems to open and imprison the glowing ball in a pure white tomb. I see it shining brightly still, yet surrounded by a rim of white, when suddenly a beam shoots up to the zenith, and the sun, the orb of day, has gone, nor left sign nor reminder behind. The blue sky assumes a deeper hue, the earth looks more grey, and day has gone. Sometimes there is a bank of clouds low in the west, and then the scene is still more grand. The clouds receive and for a while hide the sun, but now a ray shoots forth, and another, and another, till the grey clouds have gone and there are two great gates left—one deep crimson shot with gold, the other violet and green. They open slowly, and behind them is the sun, which, with a burst of gladness seems to spring forth and plough the snow into furrows of brightness, then slowly retires, and the gates close, but now they are studded with diamonds, and far into the blue ether reach out bright bands till the whole dome of heaven is one mass of bright glory. Then, as if weary, the glory passes and once more there is but the belt of grey. I cannot tell of it. It passes description."

## NO HUMILITY IN DOUBTING.

The habitual, or even the occasional, doubtful apprehension indulged in of his interest in Christ, will tend materially to the enfeebling and decay of a believer's faith. No cause can be more certain in its effects than this. If it be true that the exercise of faith develops its strength, it is equally true that the perpetual indulgence of doubtful apprehensions of pardon and acceptance must necessarily eat as a canker-worm at the root of faith. Every misgiving felt, every doubt cherished, every fear yielded to, every dark providence brooded over, tends to unhinge the soul from God, and dims its near and loving view of Jesus. To doubt the love, the wisdom, and the faithfulness of God; to doubt the perfection of the work of Christ; to doubt the operation of the Spirit on the heart, what can tend more to the weakening and decay of this precious and costly grace? Every time the soul sinks under the pressure of a doubt of its interest in Christ, the effect must be a weakening of the soul's view of the glory, perfection, and all-sufficiency of Christ's work. But imperfectly may the doubting Christian be aware what dishonour is done to Jesus, what reflection is cast upon His great work, by every unbelieving fear he cherishes. It is a secret wounding of Jesus, however the soul might shrink from such an inference; it is a lowering, an undervaluing of Christ's obedience and death—that glorious work of salvation with which the Father has declared Himself well pleased—that work with which divine justice has confessed itself satisfied—that work, we say, is dishonoured, undervalued, and slighted by every doubt and fear secretly harboured or openly expressed by a child of God. The moment a believer looks at his unworthiness more than at the righteousness of Christ, supposes that there is not a sufficiency of merit in Jesus to supply the absence of all merit in himself before God, what is it but a setting up his sinfulness and unworthiness above the infinite worth, fulness, and sufficiency of Christ's atonement and righteousness? There is much spurious humility among many of the dear saints of God. It is thought by some, that to be always doubting one's pardon and acceptance is the evidence of a lowly spirit. It is, allow us to say, the mark of the very opposite of a lowly and humble mind. That is true humility that credits the testimony of God,—that believes because He has spoken it,—that rests in the blood and righteousness and all-sufficiency of Jesus, because He has

declared that "Who-soever believeth in Him shall be saved." This is genuine lowliness, the blessed product of the Eternal Spirit: to go to Jesus just as I am, a poor, lost, helpless sinner—to go without previous preparation—to go glorying in my weakness, infirmity, and poverty, that the free grace, and sovereign pleasure, and infinite merit of Christ might be seen in my full pardon, justification, and eternal glory. There is more of unmortified pride, of self-righteousness, of that principle that would make God a debtor to the creature, in the refusal of a soul fully to accept of Jesus, than is suspected. There is more real, profound humility in a simple, believing venture upon Christ, as a ruined creature, taking Him as all its righteousness, all its pardon, all its glory, than it is possible for any mortal mind to fathom. Doubt is ever the offspring of pride; humility is ever the handmaid of faith.—*Winstow*.

## TIME TO THINK.

"One of the most common defects in the training of girls," writes a mother who has proved her right to be a counsellor in this important work, "is that they are not brought up to live alone, 'to stay at home in their own minds.' From babyhood they are watched, tended, noticed, guarded, never let alone. Even young infants are not so much as permitted to think out the mysteries of a door knob; but are tossed up, their little trains of thought interrupted, their solitude continually invaded. Let a little girl be left to herself hours of every day, near to loving friends who have some other occupation than watching and advising her, and she will invent boundless resources and be never so happy. Solitude is a necessity to the formation of character."

There is food for reflection in these words for all who have the care of children. The privilege of solitude is not enjoyed by many children of either sex in our towns and cities. If they are not mingling in the exciting labours or sports of the crowded schools, they are playing in the streets, or with their mates in their own homes; some social diversion fills up nearly all the leisure hours of every day; and when there are no playmates at hand, the mother must give up her time to their amusement. Too much company, too much watching, too much effort to direct every thought and action of the child, too little opportunity for the development of its own individuality—doubtless these are the reasons for the feebleness of many characters.

Indeed, most of the young people of our larger towns become wholly incapable of spending any time by themselves. The moment their companions are out of sight and the efforts to direct them have ceased, they are restless and miserable. Nothing but an exciting novel will reconcile them to existence. This is largely due, no doubt, to the attractions of social sport which take hold so strongly on the nature of active young people, but it is also the result in part of the too persistent watchfulness of parents in the child's earliest years, by which the child is never left to itself or taught to prize the sweet delights of solitude.

This is one of the disadvantages which the children of the cities are bound to undergo. The country boys and girls have much time to themselves; and while their minds often lack the alertness that is produced by the brisk social commerce of the cities, it is possible that they sometimes gain in vigour and power of concentration more than they lose in nimbleness and wit. The fact is that the majority of the men and women who are at the head of affairs in the nation were trained in the country, and while their success is due to the fact that they learned to work in their youth, it is due in part, no doubt, to the fact that they had in their younger days a good deal of time to think.—*Good Company*.

TRANSLATE the sense of Scripture into your lives, and expound the Word of God by your works. Interpret it by your feet, and teach it by your fingers. That is, let your workings and your walkings be Scripture exposition, as living epistles read and known of all men.