

to them. The Israelites on entering Canaan found the land full of such groves, and lest they should be seduced by such attractive scenes for unholy rites, the command was very early given to "cut down their groves" (Ex. 34:13) We know how loth they were to obey this divine command, and now much subsequent trouble they brought upon themselves for their disregard of it. (Judges 3:7,8.)

Some travelers have thought to discover "Arz Libnan," the cedar of Lebanon, in some half dozen other places, as at Baruk, Ainzehalta, etc., but the arborist specialist maintains that the group about which we are speaking is the only original survivor of the forest of Lebanon, whence Hiram procured timber for the temple (1 Kings, 5:10), and which furnished beams for Solomon's palatial residence (1 Kings, 7:2-3) The fame of these trees is historic, and recent translators of Babylonian tablets show that draughts were made upon them for the temples and palaces in the Euphrates Valley.

Whether from time immemorial the cedar was to the people of this land what the oak was to the Druids is not easy to determine, but apparently for ages back "the trees of the Lord" (Ps. 104:10) have been regarded with devote veneration. Whether this solitary grove was ever used by the heathen as a "high place" for idolatrous worship or not the veterans of the forest do not reveal; they maintain a solemn silence about the transitory flashlights of human movement that have flickered to and fro for centuries, perhaps millenniums, under their widespread boughs, showing more indifference to them than to the sunbeams which gild the crowns of their kingly heads.

Man, however, has tried his best to make an impression upon the royal cedars, and to leave to future generations a memento of his presence, in the shape of sundry scratches, whereby posterity may know that Smith, Brown and Robinson honored the place with their ubiquitous presence and could not resist the temptation to use their jack-knives in the barbarous fashion of all their tribe.

Were we to moralize we would find that these trees are not tongueless, and they could furnish us much food for reflection, but we will not interrogate them just now.

Reasoning, however, from the known to the unknown, we cannot be far wrong in concluding, since every June an annual semi-religious service and feast, known as the "feast of the cedars," is held here, that the practice is a very ancient one, and is in all probability a relic of that worship which was celebrated in every grove and under every green tree. There is a small Maronite chapel here, which is the shrine and centre of the so-called religious part of the feast.

At the "aid" (festival) people from Besherrah, 2,000 feet below in the Kadisha Valley, begin to troop to the scene, with the narghehs (pipes), bottles of arak (whiskey), wine, sweets, cake, etc., and together with their neighbors from Ehden (three houses off on the road to Tripoli), and other villages, dispose themselves picturesquely in the grove or keep the feast with singing, dancing and music. The religious element bears a very small proportion to the secular, but the more devout pay their vows and burn incense at the shrine.

The way these modern feasts are kept forcibly reminds one of the annual gathering at Shiloh (Judges. 21:19; Sam. 1:9), where feasting and drinking prevailed. It is customary for the people to take sheep with them, slaughter them on the spot, and make their kibbee or other dishes "under the greenwood tree."

It is well for the sentimental visitor to seek the shade of this forest, "when all around is still," so that no violence is done to the impressions and associations which he likes to cherish in memory of the cedars.—The Standard.

### How to Receive God's Gift.

BY REV. O. P. GIFFORD, D. D.

The condition of receiving love is faith. When Christ came to the Jordan he surrendered himself to John and went down into the water, was buried into it. The Greek word "eis" means into. That is the word used here, as also in the statement, "Whosoever believeth into Christ shall not perish." There is a world of difference between believing on, and believing into. One may stand by the Jordan until he dies, but until he goes down into the water he is not buried in baptism; and you may stand and look at Christ and say, "I believe in him," but until you believe in him you are not saved, until you have let yourself down into that shining life you do not rise to newness of life.

We may have watched the stream of Christ's life for years, but salvation only comes when we are surrendered into the gift of Christ. You may stand on the corner for hours, but they will never bring you anywhere until you get into them. You may stand on the third floor of a great office building and watch the elevator go up and down day by day, but until you step into it and surrender yourself to it, it is of no use to you. That is the great difference between those who stand outside and gaze

and those who believe into Christ. It is by faith into and surrender to Christ that we are saved. He demands no more of me than a lawyer demands of me; he asks no more than the physician asks. If you do not tell the physician your symptoms he can do nothing for you, and if you stand outside your lawyer's office with closed lips it shows that you have some other counsel and are not willing to trust him. To stand outside the Lord Jesus and say you believe is not to surrender; it is not to receive eternal life. Believe into.

Some months ago on St. Patrick's day the alarm of fire was sounded in New York, and a great hotel was given to the flames. Down yonder come the firemen with the truck and ladder and the great implements to put out the fire. The men looked up, and there on the sixth floor, eighty feet above the street, sat a woman in the window screaming for help. Before they could lift the great ladder one of the men had raised a scaling ladder and climbed to the window above, then catching on to the projecting stones he raised himself, then drew the ladder after him, and finally reached the side of the doomed woman. There she sat holding a purse in one hand, around her wrist a bag of jewels and in her lap a pet dog, while flames shot all around her. The man took the dog and flung it back into the room and said to the woman, "Come."

She believed into him, and slipped from her refuge, threw her arms around his neck and fainted. She had surrendered herself to him. Up the long ladder, which was now raised, came another fireman and the burden was passed from one to another until she reached the bottom and was saved. The belief into that fireman and surrender to him of every power of her being saved her. She might have sat there until the house burned down had she not shown more faith in that fireman than some of you have in Christ. The faith that saves is the faith that lets go everything and settles down upon the shoulders of the ruler of the universe. That brings salvation; nothing else does. Now, my brother, assent to statements concerning Christ is not faith; consent to creed or forms is not faith. Faith is a person surrendered to a person, a life yielded to a life, the will bending to another will. That brings salvation; nothing else does.—Watchman.

### Responsibility for Belief.

To say that men are not responsible for their religious belief, is to decisively and completely reject the gospel. And yet some suppose it absurd that God should require assent to any system of truth and punish for non-assent. Others think that God does not concern himself with man's opinions, but only with their conduct. Still others imagine that if a person be sincere in what he believes he will certainly be acceptable to God.

But all this is in flat contradiction to the whole gist of Bible truth which makes men responsible for what they believe. It is intuitive with men that they are responsible for their belief. People are attractive or odious because of what they believe. We cannot help transferring to persons the disgust and abhorrence which we feel for their grossly immoral sentiments. A man without faith in a personal God, and who cannot take an oath, and who looks upon honesty, virtue and duty as mere conventionalities, does not command confidence. French philosophy taught that there is no God, and that death is an eternal sleep. When the French people came to believe this the gullotine kept time with the ticking of the clock, and human slaughter became a pastime. The French philosophers were responsible for what they believed and taught, and the French people were responsible for receiving such teaching and the terrible scenes of the Revolution.

It may be no crime to deny that the moon moves the tides, but it is to deny that there is a God, because such denial makes duty and responsibility empty sounds. If man were not responsible for what he believes he could not be held responsible for his acts, and all moral government would be out of the question. Whenever the evidences of Christianity are given a fair chance men must become believers in Christ. Man is slow to accept the evidences because of a natural dissimilarity between his own character and that of God. Men disbelieve the gospel because they dislike it. Disbelief is a great antagonist of God and undoer of man. It makes Calvary so many cartloads of dirt and annihilates the atonement. It wipes out the existence, the power and the wisdom of him who made the stars. Disbelief is rebellion based on falsehood. God has given man faculties and truth and enjoined belief upon him. A great responsibility devolves upon all to whom the gospel is made known. Belief will insure salvation, while disbelief will bring condemnation. The evidence of the truthfulness of the gospel is within the reach of men, and they have sufficient ability and culture to grasp it. God has promised to give faith to those who desire and ask it. Any one believing the gospel ought to confess it, take up arms for it, and be rejoiced, transformed and glorified by it.—Selected.

### Memorizing Scripture.

One great value of the memorizing of Scripture is that you have it ready for quick use. "The sword of the Spirit" the Apostle calls the Scripture. And sometimes, on emergency, swords must be swiftly drawn and instantly set at duty. There is no hand better for the quick grasping of the sword of the Spirit than the hand of the memory. How quick the rushing and how straight and keen the thrust of the sword of the Spirit by our Lord in his conflict with the tempter in the wilderness! How the "It is written," held in our Lord's memory, sped Satan to defeat. The law of opportunities is a great practical law for life. You are tempted to some mean thing; instantly you discomfit it by summoning to your thought some opposite and lofty thing. You will not think of the mean thing; you will think of the opposite and lofty thing. Happy he who has his memory so filled with lofty Scripture that instantly he can summon to his thought some noble truth or precept as against the suggestions and solicitations of an evil world.

Another value of memorizing Scripture is, that such memorized Scripture furnishes a beneficent gathering point for one's thoughts and life's pauses. There come such pauses. Tired relaxes; the strain of attention loosens; thoughts can go wandering. The deepest test of one's moral plight is whether one's thoughts go wandering. If spontaneously to something mean and low, it is quite certain the character is mean and low. But if the memory hold some great and gracious Scripture, the strong magnetism of it will be apt to attract the loosely lying thoughts to itself, and pure and high emotions will come to bloom, and the heart, the thoughts of which so test a man—for as a man thinketh in his heart so he is—will grow rich and a rung for righteousness.—Hoyt.

### A Vision of Glory.

A young Scotch girl, who was taken ill in this country, knowing that she must die, begged to be taken back to her native land. On the homeward voyage she kept repeating over and over the sentence, "Oh for a glimpse o' the hills o' Scotland!" Before the voyage was half over it was evident to those who were caring for her that she could not live to see her native land. One evening, just at the sunset, they brought her on deck. The west was all aglow with glory, and for a few minutes she seemed to enjoy the scene. Some one said to her, "Is it not beautiful?" She answered, "Yes, but I'd rather see the hills o' Scotland." For a little while she closed her eyes, and then opening them again, and with a look of unspeakable gladness on her face, she exclaimed, "I see them, noon, and ah, they're bonnie!" Then, with a surprised look, she added, "I never kened before that it was the hills o' Scotland where the prophet saw the horsemen and the chariots, but I see them all, and we are almost there." Then, closing her eyes, she was soon within the veil. Those beside her knew that it was not the hills of Scotland, but the hills of glory that she saw. Perhaps there are some fair hills toward which you are now looking, and for which you are now longing, and you may be thinking that life will be incomplete unless you reach them. What will it matter if, while you are eagerly looking, there shall burst upon your vision the King's country, and the King himself comes forth to meet you, and take you into that life where forever you shall walk with him in white because you are found worthy.—Watchman.

### Herod's Remorse.

When Herod heard of the fame of Jesus, a species of resurrection occurred. The night of Bacchanalian revel came back; the holy prophet's blood dripped upon the palace floor again; and the soul said, "This Jesus is the man whom I murdered!" There is, so to speak, a moral memory, as well as a memory that is merely intellectual. Conscience writes in blood. She may brood in long silence, but she cannot forget.

The revel passed, the dancing, demon-hearted daughter went back to her blood-thirsty mother, the lights were extinguished, and the palace lapsed into the accustomed order; but the prophet's blood cried with a cry not to be stifled, and angels with swords of fire watched the tetrarch night and day.

All men are watched. The sheltering wings of the unseen angels are close to every one of us. The eye sees but an infinitesimal portion of what is around—we are hemmed in with God. This great truth we forget: but exceptional circumstances transpire which for a moment rend the veil, and give us to see how public is our most secret life—how the angels hear the throb of the heart, and God counts the thoughts of the mind—Joseph Parker.

Weak faith cannot be built up on argument. Arguments are only props. To live one's faith is the only way to establish it. The highest faith is not a narrow assurance that this thing or that thing will come to pass. It is rather the supreme and all inclusive confidence that God will do for us just what is right and kind. "Thy will be done," is, therefore, the pinnacle word of trust.