

conscience and smile of God. He would have lost his life but for a miraculous rescue, and he returned to Joppa a sadder and wiser man. When anyone attempts to run away from God he is surely overtaken, and when anyone chooses a selective path of sin, he pays dearly for the folly.

I see it announced in the daily journals that a certain heart-broken young wife has been divorced from a worthless husband for "cruelty and desertion." It was all in vain that her parents besought her not to intrust her heart and her happiness to one who hid a rotten character behind a handsome face and polished manners; she took the reckless risk and has paid the fare thereof. In all my lifelong observation I have never known a marriage contracted in opposition to the wishes of loving parents that has not turned out badly. The wages of filial disobedience are apt to be death to happiness.

Not long ago I met a man whom I had known in his better days; he was reeling along under the escort of a policeman toward the stationhouse. Poor creature! He was paying the toll on the devil's turnpike. The heartless saloon-keeper who sold him the poison will be required to pay his, when he reaches the judgment bar of a righteous God. Let the young understand that every pathway of sensual indulgence—whether it leads to impure books or to salacious scenes in a theatre, or to any gratification of sensual lusts, will sooner or later encounter a toll gate of retribution. Can any young man or maiden take hot coals of fire into the bosom and not be scorched?

Roads to gross sins that pollute the body and soul are not the only perilous ones. There is a pathway to political preferment, into which bright and ambitious young men are pushing; if in name for the service of the people, yet often only for party or self advancement. The "fare" they pay, is constant worry, a temptation to trick and intrigue, a readiness to descend in character in order to ascend into high office, and a wretched demoralization of conscience.

Civil office ought to be accepted as an honorable and sacred trust, but unfortunately the atmosphere of "practical politics" in our country is so contaminating that few clean men stay in long without a smirch on their reputations. Whoever chooses that road of ambition let him count his cost.

Out in yonder city streets today are thousands of men mad to get rich. The appetite grows by what it feeds on. "He that loveth silver," shall not be satisfied with silver," and they who determine at all hazards that they will win wealth must pay the penalty. Gold is an excellent servant when held in trust for God and good men; it is a cruel monster when it owns its possessor. "How do you feel today?" was asked a millionaire who at forenoon was tottering along feebly for an airing. "I feel better," was the pitiful reply; "I feel better today; stocks are up!" The poor rich man was almost in sight of eternity, yet he was hugging his money-bags as a drowning man hugs a plank. Whoever travels the thronged road to covetousness must "pay the fare" thereof.

I could multiply illustrations; but they would all point to the one great solemn truth that sin is about the costliest thing in God's universe. However smooth its tongue and bewitching its promise, the wages it exacts is death! It always "finds us out," and Christians need to remember this as much as the most worldly-minded slave of hammon or the most impure slave of sensual appetite. It was one of God's prophets who fled from the path of duty into the path of inclination and paid the "fare thereof." Even some ministers have been overtaken on the road to Tarshish, and have been glad to get back penitently to their right field of labor in Nineveh. "The meek will be guided in his way."

Is not a life of godliness costly, too? Yes, but quite in another way. The straight road toward heaven by the redeeming love of Christ Jesus, hath a "fare thereof" also. Repentance and faith are demanded at the entrance gate. "If thou wilt enter life," says Jesus, "keep my commandments. He that would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." All the richest graces, all the noblest deeds of love for others, all the grandest achievements for the glory of our blessed Master are costly. Crosses are of unfading crowns.—Christian Intelligencer.

Prayer, Cheap but Costly.

BY WILLIAM F. PEARCE.

No subject is more discussed with tongue and pen than prayer. It is something with which most of us are acquainted, yet unacquainted; something which we often hear yet we little understand. Of all means of grace it is one of the most common, yet most uncommon. Talk with men before God is cheap, but that earnest, delightful conversation with God is frequently costly. Elaborate definitions in prose and poetry have we of prayer, but the most logical and practical definition is not every one that saith "Lord, Lord," but he that make his life a living exposition of the same.

How well the writer remembers a sainted minister of blessed memory. Being called upon in a convention to pray, he moved not. Again he was solicited. Raising his well formed body, and head of snowy white, he said: "I cannot pray for missions before I give." "After giving he prayed. O such a prayer. With deep voice, earnestness of

soul and victorious faith he poured out his petitions for the salvation of the world.

Prayer! When it merely falls from the lips how cheap. In fact, nothing cheaper. Beautiful the supplications of the liturgy, but, how cheap. Rhetorical and ritualistic prayers of secret orders, but extraordinarily cheap. Stereotyped and formal some in the prayer meeting, and grammatical and eloquent others in the pulpit, but delightfully cheap. Addressed to God in the name of Jesus, yet how few that are not intended to impress and please those who listen. They are prayers without a holy aspiration, and consequently there comes not in return a holy inspiration.

Not all prayers, however is cheap. Few things are more costly if properly offered. Will, thoughts and affections must be brought into action for "God helps those who help themselves," and sacrifices that cost, must frequently be made. "Behold he prayeth," was said of Paul, but it cost him estrangement from his friends, and finally death at the hands of his enemies. When Carey begun to pray for the conversion of the world, it cost him himself, and no little money to those who prayed with and for him. Brainerd prayed for the dark-skinned savage, and after two years of blessed work, it cost him his life.

"Eight of us students once prayed," said Dr. Clarence Barbour, "at the May anniversaries, to be scattered over the world to do God's service. A few years after found each in as many lands. Today the work of four is finished and they rest from their labors." Costly praying.

"Send any calamity into my soul, or demand any sacrifice that I might be filled with the Holy Ghost and baptized with fire," was the burden of prayer of Lawyer Spafford, of Chicago, more than twenty-five years ago. A few hours later a cablegram from his wife was given him which read, "Saved alone." A few days before his wife and four children had set sail for Germany on board the "Ville of Havre." In mid-ocean one night it collided with the "Loch Earn," and sank with nearly all her passengers. Crushed and broken hearted by the loss of his children, Spafford retired to be alone with God. While there "When Peace like a River" was composed. Costly prayer.

Few sacred songs have been sung in consecration meetings more than—

I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,
O'er mountain, or sea, or plain;

but in prayer it has been a cheap expression for the majority, while to the few—and such a few—a costly declaration.

Two young ladies in college. One goes to the foreign field and is followed by her lover. They marry and together they labor for God. A child is born and receives the name of one who makes his life a continual prayer for the salvation of heathen and in so doing paid the price with the sacrifice of his life. Coming home on a furlough they tell in no eloquent way the story of their labors. Many earnest prayers they offer for their dark-skinned converts and parishioners, with the result that they return.

The other lady goes to a foreign field. Staying long enough to learn a few sentences in the native tongue she returns. Having the gift of speech she too tells the story and prays with fervency for the conversion of the heathen. She is honored and eulogized much more than the former lady. She marries and to her first-born the name of a heathen child is given. While she is ease, surrounded by a small family and enjoying an American home, the others left their precious ones behind. What is the reason? A difference in character? This may be in part, but it looks more like a difference in prayer. O for that prayer, which; forgetful of self, clings to God; desirous to be like God, will make any sacrifice; eager to go forth for God counts the transitory things of life left behind, as mere ciphers. That kind of prayer is Spirit-taught, Spirit-inspired and Spirit-answered prayer. Very costly to the old nature, but gloriously cheap to the new, meeting the approval of God here and distinction hereafter.—The Standard.

The Source of Certitude.

BY "IAN MACLAREN."

The attitude of St. Paul was not that modern one which is understood to be a pledge of culture and charity—that Christianity has really some admirable ideas and that so had Judaism; that there was a great deal of good in paganism, and also in philosophy; and that no religion is absolutely right nor any one absolutely wrong, and the best plan for the thoughtful man is to appreciate the good point in every religion and limit himself to none. He was convinced that all the good that could be found in every religion was gathered up a thousandfold in the religion of Christ. Such a man stands in bold relief against the multitude of people nowadays who may not be willfully irreligious or skeptical, but who neither know what they believe or where they stand. This timid uncertainty is largely reaction from the strident and imperious dogmatism of our fathers.

The pendulum has swung the other way to the extreme and if it was the failing of our fathers to be certain about everything, it is our failing to be certain about nothing. The voice of unlicensed affirmation has given place to the habit of unlimited negation. What strikes one to-day is not what people believe, but what people do not believe that their attitude is not positive but negative. They are always letting you know what they do not hold about the

Bible or the church or the future life. No doubt it is a good thing in a measure, but when all this recanting is done one longs to hear some one professing.

Our religion takes for granted that every man desires to believe and in offering Christ for the satisfaction of his soul lays down three grounds of religious certitude. The first is authority, or let us say the Bible. Christianity is bound up with Christ, and to begin with we are dependent for our knowledge of Him upon the gospels and epistles, and, whatever we may gather about Christ from other sources we must return to the record to test what we have learned. When one believes, he does so in the first instance on the ground that the record is probably true, and his faith passes into assurance when he knows in his own experience that Christ is risen. And it is desirable to remind ourselves in the present day that while criticism has rendered great service in rearranging the Scripture record, it has not touched its spiritual value.

The second ground of certitude in testimony of the voice of the church, and Protestants in a rebound from ecclesiastical tyranny have been apt to depreciate this assistance. Whether one be a believer or not, it is surely very impressive and convincing that a vast body of people from the first century to the twentieth have put their trust in Christ and have followed him and have suffered for him, and have declared with one consent that he has been to them more than they ever could imagine. We believe the word of a traveler about a land he has visited, and a man of science on the work he has done; we regulate our affairs on the evidence which they have given, and are ready to take risks upon their testimony. Why should we not give the same weight to religious testimony and allow the evidence of competent persons to serve the life of our soul? Why do we make so much of evidence in every department of life except religion, why do many people believe in religion, and why do some people prefer the evidence of persons who are not religious on religion to those who are its chief witnesses? After all, however, the final ground of certitude must be experience. There are only two provinces of absolutely sure knowledge; one is pure mathematics and the other is the experience of the soul. When trustworthy men write the life of Christ, and that life bears internal signs of truthfulness, the probability that Christ is the Saviour of the world stands very high; when this Gospel is confirmed by those who have proved it in their own lives, then the probability is raised another degree; and when one takes the experiment, and finds that what the Gospel and the saints have declared is true, then highest probability passes into absolute certainty. The witness is now in the man himself, and he is as sure of Christ as of his own life.—British Weekly.

The Voice of the Tempter.

The tempter tells you to shut up your Bible and to believe no longer in revelation. We are invited to believe that, even assuming the existence of God, it is impossible to find any record of his will; he has never spoken to mankind he has set forth no outline of human duty; he has written no word of human comfort; he has shed no light on the darkest questions of life; he made us, and takes no notice of us; he fashioned us as we are, upright, above the beasts of the field in dominion as in skill, but he never opens the gates of the city wherein he dwells to bid us welcome to the hospitality of his love; he never bends down to see how his children are going on; and never, never—though He sends down the light, and the rain, and breathes across the universe the healthful winds which bring life on their wings—does he send any message to the creatures of his hands.

The man who believes that has a truly capacious and terrible faith; he must be a very monster of a believer! His soul, if he has any, must be a bottomless pit of credulity. Before I yield my hold of the Book at his bidding, I must know to whom I shall go. The Bible says to me: "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want." And the tempter says to me: "Shut up the Bible and be your own shepherd." But I am bruised and wounded and heart dead. He mocks with such advice. The Bible says: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come." The tempter says: "You have no trust that you can not slake in the muddy pools that lie at your feet." The Bible says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in the time of trouble." The tempter says: "When you are in trouble, dry your tears, and get out of your own difficulties, and snap your fingers in the face of the universe." The Bible says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The tempter says: "Lie down on the thorns; pillow your head on the stoniest rest in the wilderness; take a moment's sleep in the desert." The Bible says: "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," the tempter says: "You have never sinned; what forgiveness do you want? Go and wash your hands in the river, and you will be clean." Jesus in the holy Book, says: "In My Father's house are many mansions." The tempter says: "Your mansion is the dark, cold grave; get into it and rot."—Joseph Parker.

Consecrate the morning's strength and God will be with you in the evening's weariness.