

## TALKING ABOUT RELIGION.

Dr. Grenfell, in his little book, "A Man's Faith," brings out very forcibly the reticence and bashfulness which seem to overcome the ordinary Christian whenever the chance is offered him of saying a word in favor of his faith. Perhaps it is something a little more serious than diffidence, as the doctor intimates. He says: "It is hard not to tell news. It is harder yet not to tell good news. But it is worse again when you have a truth that you know to be a truth, a truth of infinite, practical, daily value forever to those you love best, and yet you can not tell it. You can sing it. You can quarantine it. You can monotone it. You can say it in a black coat. But still you have not conveyed your truth to your dearest friend, the man who shared your rooms, and studied and competed with you, who played on the team with you. Where is the fault? Is the faith in Christ really not of value? Or is it that your use of the faith fails to commend it? If you are really eager to give that inestimable gift to your friend, your husband, your darling boy, and fail, is there not something wrong in your use of it, your method of commending it? Does it not make a man's heart cry out, 'My God, is my conventional use of faith the cause of preventing others from accepting it?' This is a serious and searching putting of the case, and we surmise it applies to most of us, and that it will be well for us to lay the admonition to heart and seek to discover some means of reformation.

## HEAVEN NEAR.

By Anna D. Walker.

Heaven is near us when we do  
The thing that's good and right—  
With honest heart and purpose true,  
It brings it near us quite.

Heaven is near us when we pray,  
When we lift up our eye,  
It makes it but a little way  
To that blest home on high.

Heaven is near us when we stand  
Beside a dying friend—  
We a most see the golden strand  
T'wards which their feet do tend.

Heaven is near us when our heart  
Goes out toward the poor—  
When tears of sweet compassion start  
It opens Heaven's door.

If you would shorter make the road,  
And bring kind Heaven near—  
Live close, dear friend, oh, close to  
God,  
And you will taste it here.

## JOIN HANDS WITH GOD.

Could we see what is behind the curtains of the invisible world we should be able to trace living streams of spiritual influence passing from the heavens at the very instant that the prayer of faith is ascending from some lonely closet, and terminating upon the very persons at that very instant whose names are being held up before the throne. Faith is a force as mighty as that which we control when we touch the electric button or open the valve of the engine or pull the little cord that explodes the mighty subterranean battery which upheaves the mountain of rock or discharges the sunken torpedo. In requiring us, therefore, to pray in faith, God simply asks us to join hands with Himself in the exercise of His own almighty power and be partakers of His mighty working.—A. E. Simpson.

A candle that won't shine in one room is very unlikely to shine in another. If you do not shine at home, if your mother and father, your sister and brother, if the very cat and dog in the house are not better and happier for your being a Christian, it is a question whether you really are one.—J. Hudson Taylor.

## THE BLESSING OF A THANKFUL HEART.

A devout old Christian, was accustomed to thank God gratefully for unimpaired reason, for intelligence and understanding, that light, and not confused and flickering shadows, lay across the pathway of life. To be without understanding is the greatest loss of life. Even when we have reason we may be shut in with it and deprived of any means of adequate communication. A prominent minister sometimes tells of an experience in his early years, when he was left on an island in the Mediterranean Sea unable to speak the language of the people. Day by day he went down to the seashore and sat down and wondered how soon he would go mad. He understood no one. No one understood him. We have so much to be thankful for in this single gift of intelligence and reason and speech. Are we ever openly grateful for it?

And our gratitude ought to grow as the fields opened to us enlarge and the nobility of fellowship offered to us ascends. The people in Nebuchadnezzar rejoiced with mirth and thankfulness because they understood the words of God. No more would their life be poor with only the will and wisdom of men. The very word of God was theirs now, and theirs for understanding. Some such joy the people had in Germany when Martin Luther gave them his translation of the Bible, and in England as they pored over Wycliff's translation. Each time the Bible is given to a race in its own tongue there is the same occasion for grateful praise. Men hear and understand the things in all this world best worth hearing and understanding.

The whole world is full of occasions of praise which are similar in principle to this gift of understanding. The world itself is full of meaning to us. Wherever we look in it we find reason, the order and purpose of intelligence. It is not a blank to us. Its sweetness is not hidden from us. As we look upon it we see it to be the garment and workmanship of God. For this we ought to rejoice. We do not move in a prison whose walls rise up irrationally, unanswerably all about us.

"I will number thy mercies to me." Let the soul say this, and then sit down quietly and count all the unmistakable goodness and blessings of the year. These are all the obvious blessings, but there are others not so clear. Think out these hidden goodnesses of God. Some of them were buried in what seemed hardships or sorrows. Perhaps one has lost his sight, but found a deeper insight of soul. One has missed a coveted ambition, but found a truer heart. Each thwarting of our purposes, we may be sure, unless the thwarting was by sin, has in it a nobler promise for us.

The fine old hymn of Joachim Neander, written in 1679, should be the utterance of our hearts:

"Praise to the Lord! the Almighty  
King of Creation!  
O my soul praise Him for He is thy  
health and salvation!

All ye who hear  
Now to His temple draw near!  
Join me in glad adoration!

"Praise to the Lord! Who o'er all  
things so wondrously reigneth,  
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so  
gently sustaineth;  
Hast thou not seen  
How thy desires o'er have been  
Granted in what He ordaineth?"

"Praise to the Lord! Who doth prosper  
thy work and defend thee.  
Surely his goodness and mercy here  
daily attend thee.

Ponder a few  
What the Almighty can do  
If with His love He befriend thee.

\*Y. P. Tople for Nov. 21st, by Rev.  
Robt. E. Speer.

"Praise to the Lord! O let all that is  
in me adore Him!  
All that hath breath and life, come now  
with praises before Him!  
Let the Amen  
Sound from His people again—  
Gladly for aye we adore him."

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

Mon.—Altars of thankfulness (Gen. 35:1-8).  
Tues.—Cause for thankfulness (Deut. 8:2-10).  
Wed.—A psalm of praise (Psa. 103:1-22).  
Thurs.—Thanksgiving in all things (Col. 3:12-17).  
Fri.—Thanksgiving in trouble (Acts 16:22-34).  
Sat.—The eternal praise service (Rev. 5:8-14).

## AN ANGEL IN THE SUN.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun," said the seer of Patmos. And so may you see and I and everyone. In every beam of light there is an angel's smile and it falls upon the earth and the earth returns its greeting in many a joyous song. It is the angel up there that starts a thousand angels on the wing down here. The spirit of the frost folds its crystal pinions and leaves its frigid habitation to be adorned with garlands which happier angel hands have woven. From every nook and cranny of God's great universe innumerable wings are set in motion which a few weeks ago were folded and hidden. Things that fly up and things that crawl and creep and jump, strange, wee creatures of grass and leaf and rivulet, with beady eyes and hurrying feet and filmy diaphanous wings have felt the glow and smile of the angel in the sun. It is a new world. The ice-caps melt, crystalline shackles are broken and flung away. The morning wakes all redolent with opening bud and blooming flower. There is a livelier step in the street and on the farm. A new song is in the grove and orchard and pink blooms tint the palpitant air. There is a flutter of living things in the vines about the door. The heart of man is kinder, his busy life is happier, his sympathies are tenderer for the angel in the sun. Invisible lines are in the angel's hands that go out through measureless space to star and moon and asteroid which jewel the mighty solar universe in the centre of which the angel stands, and it holds them in its leash of light and sends them spinning in fiery orbits and whirling through bewildering arcs. It sends its pulsations of heat through throbbing systems till far away orbits blaze in fraternal reciprocity. It plays with mighty Saturn, with its rings and moons and flings its salutation to comets and constellations till all the wondrous starland sparkles and dances like diamond dust on the garments of God. And out of limitless spaces there is a hand thrust through the sea of twinkling worlds, and there on the open palm of the Ancient of Days, the Maker of Worlds, stands the angel in the sun. Above the life of the world is the sun. And above the sun is God.—United Presbyterian.

## SHUT AWAY FROM THE FEAST.

God asks our obedience for only one reason: that we may thereby permit Him to give us the joy and the blessings that He wants us to have. Every call of his to the doing of a duty is an invitation to a feast—the great supper of which Christ told in the Gospels. And our evasions of our duty are about as reasonable as were the excuses given by those whom the host had hoped to make his guests at that great supper: we have bought a field, or some live stock, or we have "home duties." So in every disobedience we stay away from the richness of the banquet that God himself has prepared for us, cheating ourselves, grieving him, and going about poverty-stricken and unhappy when he would give us wealth and joy. How easily the Devil does blind us!—S. S. Times.