

over sea, with the winds whereby they are wafted, and the winds whereby they are borne. All this is but God's chain of agencies for providing these good things to regale and to nourish men; and into that chain of agencies I fall, the last link, directly conveying the creatures of God into the hand of those for whom they have been preparing by all my precursors.

Welcome, then, welcome my task. Happy it is to labor when all nature around, set in motion direct by the Almighty's power, is constantly forwarding work to my hand. Did He that placed me here mean me to do my work loosely, negligently, slothfully? Surely not; see how these fruits are made—how perfectly, how wholesomely, how pleasantly. All *He* has done by His own hand in the process of provision is done *well*. What I do must be done *well*. "Be not slothful in business," comes home to my ear from "the double voices of revelation and of its echo, nature. I must not be slothful; God has sent me to work, man needs to be served. Then I am here to do all that I can do to promote the welfare of mankind, and to fulfil the appointment of my Maker.

Christ's Baptism.

In the fullness of time, Jesus came to where John was baptizing, and was recognized at once as the Messiah. Strange to say, He asked to be baptized. Well might John the Baptist, the preacher, shrink back as he saw Jesus coming among the crowd of penitents to receive baptism at his hand, the rite that told of the need of cleansing, while of course, unlike the Christian sacrament of Baptism, it was a mere external symbol, having no corresponding and accompanying inner spiritual grace.

"I have need to be baptized of Thee," he cried, "and comest Thou to me?" "Suffer it to be so," our Lord replied; "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He would honour His Father's ordinance, He would enter on His public ministry with the recognition of the Forerunner. And while Himself perfectly sinless, He comes as the representative of the sinful race, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," to bear our shame, to do penance for our sins. As at the circumcision the spotless Infant, "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," subjected to the rite which was a badge of sin, so at His Baptism, as in His Passion, He is numbered "among the transgressors," our Leader and our Representative, "the Son of Man," in Whom all the experiences of the human family are by a wondrous sympathy recapitulated.

Does not our Lord's Baptism shame our refusal to bear shame, to acknowledge a fault, to confess our sins, to avow ourselves in error? Does it not reprove our self-will in rejecting means of grace, of whatever kind, which He has ordained for cleansing, strengthening, discipline?

By Thy Baptism, teach me, O Lord, humility, obedience, penitence.

Two Abiding Witnesses to the Resurrection.

There are two permanent and abiding witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. These are the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper. Whether we are believers or unbelievers, the fact of the Lord's Day brings home to us fifty-two times in the year the fact of Christ's resurrection. With the evolution of every week Sunday returns to tell of a risen Saviour. The Jewish Sabbath was proclaimed in awful majesty, accompanied by thunder that shook the granite heart of Sinai, and pierced the bosom of trembling unbelief. It was enshrined in the customs of the people, and maintained with the sanction of prophets, priests, and people, as ordained by God Himself. The Jewish Sabbath, which none impugned, was set aside for the Lord's Day, which fell on the first day of the week. Such a change could only have been brought about by an era-making event, and that supreme and era-making event was the resurrection of our blessed Lord on the first day of the week. The Jewish Sabbath was the festal day of the Old Creation. The Lord's Day is the memorial of the New Creation, brought to light by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. The chain

of testimony regarding the day is complete from the earliest century to our own time, when it falls within the region of our own sense-experience. The Lord's Supper has been handed down to us from the earliest days of the Church. St. Paul gives us the first written account of the institution, in 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, and declares that he received it "of the Lord." It was a memorial service which covered not only the death of Christ, but also His resurrection, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

Christian Contentment.

What are the ingredients of Christian contentment, and what are the ruling considerations which should make a Christian happy and thankful to be what he is? The first motive, common in a large measure to St. Paul and to the wisest heathen, is that nothing earthly either lasts or satisfies. Why not acquiesce in whatever befalls us when all is relatively unimportant, relatively insignificant. The second motive for cherishing a contented spirit is confidence in the wise and loving providence of God. We each are placed where we are. God is too wise not to know all about us and not to know what it is best for us to be and to have; and God is too good not to desire our highest good, and too powerful if He desires not to effect it. Our true course is to remember that He sees further than we do, and that we shall understand Him in time when His plans have unfolded themselves. The third motive is that a Christian in a state of grace already possesses God: "If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Surely, if these Divine words are real to us, we must know that nothing that is infinite can be needed to supplement this our firm hold upon the infinite, that no created thing can add to what we have in possessing the Creator.—H. P. Liddon.

Strength in Weakness.

God has not put the meanest Christian into His world and into His Church only to be held up, only to be rescued from falling, only to escape the wrath to come; but He has put every one of us here to serve and glorify Him, to contribute an active share to the great testimony which shall rise, and is ever rising, to Him, to His faithfulness, His purity, His righteousness, His glory, as from all His works, so in the highest and noblest degree from His Church, the highest and noblest of His works. "My grace is sufficient to enable thee for the work which I have set thee to do, sufficient to enable thee, in spite of the trial—yes, and by means of the trial—to bring forth fruit to My glory." "My strength is made perfect in weakness." It is His purpose with all His people that they should work for Him in life and life's duties, not in their own strength, but in His; that their bearing up in their lifelong conflict and then issuing forth into glorious victory should be seen and felt at every step to be not of themselves, but of Him. And for this purpose it is that He sends to them hindrances, trials, infirmities, thorns in their way, that their own pride, and strength, and stoutness of heart, and firmness of resolve may be broken down, that they may not walk in a light of their own kindling and congratulate themselves on the brightness of their path, but may toil through darkness and disappointment, through briars and through tears, to the sunshine of the everlasting hills, where the Sun of Righteousness may light them to the work of life.

Throw Out the Life-Line.

A captain of an ocean vessel one day, as his ship was speeding through the waters, saw a signal of distress some distance off. A glass was turned to the spot, and it was seen that there was only one man on a piece of wreck. To go to his rescue the ship would have to be stopped and turned back in her course, losing much time.

"No," said the captain, "some other vessel will pick him up." He speeded on, and was in port in good time, and was commended for his

swift passage. But he could not get out of his mind the memory of that signal of distress out there on the wild seas, and the sight through the glass of that one man on the piece of wreck left there to perish. By day and night that picture haunted him.

As we are hurrying on these busy days, do we see no signals of distress on life's broad sea? Do we hear no cries, no bitter wails from souls that are out on the angry waves? Do we heed the signals and hearken to the cries? Do we turn away from our business, our pleasure, our ease, our money-getting, our petty ambitions, to carry rescue to these souls that are perishing or that are in sorrow? Or do we hurry on and say that we have no time for these things, no time to save our brothers, no time to lift up fallen ones, no time to wipe away a tear? If we do not turn aside to help or save, may not our deepest sorrow in eternity be the memory of cries of distress unheeded? May not the visions of the perishing ones who called to us for help and got no answer, whom we have left unhelped out on the wild waves, haunt us forever?

Faith v. Science.

If we consider what faith signifies we shall see at once that this contrast ought to carry with it no alarm. It is a contrast which follows on the very nature of faith. If we had understood its nature we could never have expected it to disclose itself under the same conditions as those which govern the observation of scientific facts. Faith is an elemental energy of the soul, and the surprise that we are undergoing at not being able to bring it under direct observation is only an echo of the familiar shock with which we learn that science has ransacked the entire bodily fabric of man, and has nowhere come across his soul; or has searched the heavens through and through with its telescope, and has seen no God. We are upset for a moment when first we hear this; and then we recover ourselves as we recollect that, if God be what we believe Him to be, immaterial and spiritual, then He would cease to be Himself if He were visible through a telescope; and that if the spirit of man be what we believe it to be, that is the very reason why no surgeon's knife can arrive at it.—Canon H. S. Holland.

Faith and Love.

Love is in all true faith, as light and warmth are in the ray of the sun. So soon as faith is kindled in the heart, there is the glow of love, and both come from the same Sun of righteousness pouring in faith and love together into the heart, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. With the increase of love, faith increaseth. But love liveth by good works. Love cannot live torpidly. Even in human love, love which never did deeds of love would grow dull and die. We love those most to whom we do most good. Love is, perhaps, increased more by doing than receiving good, at least by doing good out of the love of God. "Faith worketh" (literally "inworketh;" the word means, worketh in the very soul itself) "by love."—E. B. Pusey.

He Knows.

God has a sympathy with anybody that is in any kind of toil. He knows how heavy is the load of bricks that the workman carries up the ladder of the wall; He hears the pickaxe of the miner down in the coal-shaft; He knows how strong the tempest strikes the sailor at the mast-head; He sees the factory girl among the spindles, and knows how her arms ache; He sees the sewing-woman in the fourth story, and knows how few pence she gets for making a garment; and louder than all the din and roar of the city comes the voice of a sympathetic God: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee."

—Things which never could have made a man happy develop a power to make him strong. Strength and not happiness, or rather only that happiness which comes by strength, is the end of human living.