

## WEEK OF PRAYER.

The English branch of the Evangelical Alliance has issued its annual invitation to United Prayer by the Christian World during the first week of January, commencing with the first Sabbath of the month. The following is its proposed programme, in which it will be seen the most important of the topics is, as usual, postponed to Saturday, where in most cases it is not likely to be reached.

*Sunday, Jan. 4th.—Sermons.*—"The good fight of faith."—1 Tim. vi. 12; Eph. vi. 10-12.

*Monday, Jan. 5th.—Praise and Thanksgiving.* For the long-suffering love and faithfulness of God; for His many answers to prayer graciously vouchsafed during the past year; the gifts of His fatherly goodness and mercy; the general preservation of peace; for the opening of all countries to the Gospel, and for the power of the Holy Spirit for its publication.

*Tuesday, Jan. 6th.—Humiliation and Confession.*—On account of national sins and the increase of lawlessness; the non-recognition of God's judgments in public calamities; unfaithfulness to God and His truth; for personal transgressions; the growth of infidelity and superstition; desecration of the Lord's day; with prayer that the Holy Spirit may convince of sin and lead men to repentance.

*Wednesday, Jan. 7th.—Prayer for the Church of Christ.*—That all believers may be filled with the Holy Spirit; that the unity of the Church of Christ may be manifested, and brotherly love increased, that the churches may more deeply realize their responsibility in regard to increased evangelistic work among the masses; and that the Lord's coming may be more earnestly looked for. That all pastors, evangelists, teachers and workers may become fervent in spirit, diligent in their ministry, and faithful in preaching Jesus Christ and Him crucified; for Sunday schools; and for the better observance of the Lord's day.

*Thursday, Jan. 8th.—Prayer for Families and Instructors of Youth.*—That God's goodness and mercy may not be withdrawn, and that the word of God may run and be glorified; that Christian parents may more fully recognize the obligation to train up their children in the fear of God; that young people may be saved from intemperance, immorality and other sins; for universities, schools, professors, teachers and students for the ministry.

*Friday, Jan. 9th.—For the Nations.*—For rulers and governments, and all in authority; for the prevention of war; that all laws which favour vice and cruelty may be removed; that wicked men and their conspiracies may be confounded, and loyalty and good citizenship prevail; for soldiers and sailors; for the removal of the opium traffic, intemperance and the social evil; and for the suppression of all that is impure in art or literature.

*Saturday, Jan. 10.—For Missions, Home and Foreign.*—For the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the Gospel in all lands; for more labourers to be sent forth endowed with power from on high; for native Christians, that they may be established in the faith and become more earnest in seeking the salvation of their countrymen; for all missionaries; for God's ancient people Israel, and the conversion of many to the faith of Christ; for increased blessing to attend the circulation of the Scriptures, and the religious training of the young in missionary schools and colleges.

*Sunday, Jan. 11.—Sermons.*—Waiting for the Lord's appearing.—Isaiah xxv. 9; 2 Thes. iii. 3-5.

## OPEN AND SECRET CHRISTIANS.

There are always in a congregation some whose sympathies are with the Church, who accept Christ in their hearts, but do not confess Him openly. The Church has its hypocrites, but so has the world; for there are men who seem to lead a worldly life whose inner life is turned toward Christ. I admit that there are such men; but they make three mistakes in their position.

They overestimate the value of worldly friendships. How much will your friends among the men of the world sacrifice for you? They will desert you when your purse fails.

These silent Christians overestimate the effect of confession on friendship. It will not drive away a true friend. What hurts us most is ridicule. Learn to live above it. Christ suffered the meanest insult. His followers have often sealed their faith with their blood.

Such Christians underestimate their own strength. They are afraid of falling after they have made a public confession, and of giving opportunity to scoffers to blaspheme. They put too low a value on the strength Christ gives for every crisis. At the moment of danger Joseph of Arimathea came forward. His bravery gave Christ a burial; his charity gave Christ a tomb. Is there a danger now that calls these silent Christians to come forth? There is, though this age is no worse than many others. Our literature is full of a lofty scorn, a condescending pity for Christianity. Many of our scientists are materialists. It is time to be brave and outspoken. Christ is polarizing the world; there are but two classes of men.—*William M. Taylor, D.D.*

## THE PRODIGAL SON.

BY A. W. HERDMAN.

"My portion give to me, for I  
My fate in other lands would try"  
The younger son did say;  
Then wrapped in restless selfishness  
He went in search of happiness  
To countries far away.

Ah! sorry youth that breakest free  
From parent's fond authority,  
Thy woes shall here begin!  
Dissatisfaction with thy home,  
Determination thence to roam  
Unsanctioned, may be sin.

Now follow this young wanderer,  
See him a rake and reveller  
In poverty most dire;  
Each cup of sinful pleasure drunk,  
At last in wretchedness he's sunk  
And allowing in the mire!

O ye who live apart from God,  
And slight the Saviour's precious blood,  
And would in sin run riot!  
Know even here assuredly,  
The wages of iniquity  
Is but a swinish diet!

To husks the power to satisfy  
The soul of man that cannot die,  
Dost think it e'er was given?  
The God-implanted soul is fed  
Alone on God-provided bread,  
That living Bread from Heaven.

But to return—as in a dream,  
The past again appears to him  
(This youthful prodigal);  
Sad recollections burn his face,  
Once more his trembling knees embrace  
The ground—he mourns his fall!

Again he sees the open door,  
Again he fain would grasp the store  
He late refused with scorn.  
His now the bitterest cup to drink,  
His fate the saddest thought to think—  
The hardest to be borne!

His reason quite resumes its throne;  
He straight determines to atone  
So far as in him lies;  
His faults and errors—what are they?  
From home he will no longer stay,  
And "Father" loud he cries!

methinks anew the angels raise  
Their voices in celestial praise  
In higher, sweeter strain!  
On earth their loving glance is bent;  
They joy to see the penitent  
Returning home again!

"Father, I've sinned!" Lo, at the sounds,  
His heart with new impulses bounds,  
Fast fall repentant tears!  
Confession always helps the soul  
Which cannot truly be made whole  
Till penitence appears.

But see, the father spies afar  
The home-returning wanderer,  
And weeps with tender joy?  
With love's fond eagerness he shall  
Anticipate the prodigal,  
His long-lost, much-loved boy!

"Father, 'gainst Heaven and in thy sight,  
I've sadly sinned, but now contrite  
I would return to thee!  
No more a son's place can I ask;  
Be mine the humblest menial's task:  
Let me thy servant be!"

"The fairest garment for him bring,  
And on his finger put a ring;  
With sandals clothe his feet!  
My son alive again, I see,  
Commemorate this fact with me,  
With feasts and music sweet!"

"And, child, my blessings give I thee,  
And from the page of memory  
Blot out the ill thou'st done!  
In token of forgiveness now  
Receive my kiss upon thy brow;  
Henceforth thou art my son!"

Thus God receives the contrite still  
And with a joy unspeakable  
To sinners reconciled,  
Forgetting past ungraciousness,  
Forgiving all indebtedness  
He homeward brings His child!

## HOW TO BE SAVED.

Some years ago, a lady was travelling with her husband to Kansas. As she was crossing Illinois, she saw in the saloon of the car a beautiful young lady reclining on the sofa, and asked her, "Why don't you come out and enjoy the scenery?"

The conversation that followed revealed the fact that the young lady's father was the agent of the railroad, and she was ill, and in a despondent state of mind. The lady endeavoured to direct her attention to Christ and the great salvation.

"I am very ignorant," she replied; "I never thought much on the subject, or had any friend to help me."

The tears began to flow. The lady closed the door of the saloon and sat down by her side, and like Philip, "preached Jesus" to her. Then she opened her heart freely. "I have been a gay and fashionable girl," she said "fond of the ballroom and other giddy pleasures. A few months ago, I attended a ball, with an intimate friend, and walked home with our thin shoes in a pouring rain; we both caught cold. My friend is in the grave, and I know I am not prepared to die. I have had no meeting to go to; no Christian friend to consult. I have read in the Bible that I must be converted, and I am still in darkness; can you tell me?"

"It is to come right to Jesus, with a humble contrite heart, and cast yourself on Him. He invites you, and is willing and waiting to receive you. Are you willing to give yourself up to him, and be His forever?"

"Oh, yes! willing and anxious. The world has nothing to satisfy my immortal spirit. All my desire is to have Christ for my Saviour."

"Are you willing to commit yourself to him without reserve, and when you go home to tell your parents and friends that you have given yourself to Him?"

Still weeping, "Yes, I will. Blessed Jesus, take me as I am!"

As she said this her face beamed with joy. She stretched forth her arms and clasped her unknown friend in one long, fervent embrace. "Oh! how grateful I am for your kind words. God has sent you to me. No person ever said a word to me on the subject of religion before in my life. I can, I do trust in Jesus as my Saviour. How can I ever thank you enough. The darkness is dispelled. I am happy now."

As we were nearing the station where her father would meet her, she handed her card and said, "We may never meet again. God bless you. That card and name are sacredly treasured yet, and that conversation remembered, as among the most precious of a lifetime. How many such golden opportunities are lost.—*American Messenger.*

## TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK.

Remember, God gives a special mission to one and to another special work, and each is serving Him. One He sends out to active service abroad, another to evangelize at home, another he sends into his study to prepare works for the Church. Think of the man who compiled the Concordance of the Bible. Many thought, I suppose, that he spent too much time in writing, and yet how useful a work he was engaged in for the whole Church. A man may not be working in our line, but he is all right if he is following Christ who gives every man his work. Now don't let us be "turning about" to see what this man and that man is to do, and to find fault with them; but let us look to the Lord, to receive our orders from Him, and from Him only—"Follow thou Me." Then, let us remember, He addresses the words to each of us. He addresses you, He addresses me; and after all, each one will be called before God personally and individually, and some day you will hear—perhaps sooner than you think—the words whispered into your ear, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." Not the Church, not the nation, will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, but you will. You will have to die, you will have to be judged as to your work by yourself. If you wait for others to do their duty before you do yours, you will wait forever. Fancy an army, when the commander would say, "Forward, march!" and every one of the soldiers were looking to the right and to the left, to see if the others marched before he did himself.—*Theodore Monod.*

## THE SOUL REJOICING IN GOD.

Religious satisfaction and joy in God is one of the few things—almost the one only thing—that having possessed we can really keep. As the years pass we part first with one friend—then with another. Life becomes more and more solitary and desolate. There are many acquaintances, but if we live on there are fewer and fewer friends. The store in Paradise, we trust, grows, but earth becomes more and more a desert for the heart. The heart cannot place all its resources at the disposal of every new claimant. The heart, as the years go on, withdraws more and more into itself, and at the grave it must part with all that is earthly that is yet left. "He shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth; neither shall his pomp follow him," said the Psalmist of the wealthy three thousand years ago. All is left at the gate of death, except, except—that knowledge and love of the everlasting Being who binds us to Himself and which is our true outfit for eternity. It is something in a world of shadows to come into contact with the real; it is something when all is passing from us to lay firm hold on the eternal, on the indestructible.—*Canon H. P. Liddon, D.D.*