

FASTING: AS A RELIGIOUS EXERCISE:

WHAT IS IT? IS IT NECESSARY?

Much difficulty has been experienced by religious and earnest people in answering these questions; and though, by the vast majority of mankind who think at all about such things, the answer to these questions would be given just as they belong to this or that party in the Church, there are not a few thoughtful earnest minds that have been and are perplexed on this subject. On the one hand, fasting seems to be recognised by our Lord as an accompaniment of prayer; on the other, when they have tried to exercise themselves in it, it has failed to bring a blessing. It is especially for these that this pamphlet is written; though it is hoped that God may use it to show those who lay great stress upon fasting the true ground upon which it stands, and those who lay *no* stress upon it that there is a deep and spiritual sense in which it is necessary as an adjunct to the higher life. For in this matter it is not, as often, that between the two extremes we find the truth. The truth, as I hope to be able to convince the reader, lies far wide of both extremes.

Ist, then, What is fasting?