

worth having, we have received from Him.

Praise is sometimes defined as "The expression of the price or value in which any person or thing is held," and surely when a congregation of Christian people meet together to render thanks to their Redeemer, Saviour and King, how hearty and full and strong should their songs of praise be. Yet there is some times a danger in these days, when so much is left to the choir, that in some of our churches we will forget that ours is a service of "common prayer" and common praise.

We have sometimes heard our beautiful soul-stirring chants so rendered that few beside the choir could sing them—and only a little while ago we listened to the words, "Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee," so sung, that it seemed almost as if the aim was to prevent the congregation from joining.

Surely we should see that the music is so simple, yet so appropriate, that choirs and congregations may unite in making the courts of God's house ring with joyful strains of thanksgiving—remembering that He has said, "Whoso offereth praise, he glorifieth me."

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"And Moses said, Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me."—Exodus 32: 26.

The people who first listened to these words have passed away and others have taken their places in the world's throng. But this question still remains, and though in an age and under circumstances in some respects different, it retains still much of its original force.

It remains because it is the word of the unchanging and omnipotent God. "His words shall never pass away."

While nations come and go and circumstances, change God and His searching question remains (abide).

Now there is a sense in which these words apply to us. We too, like Israel of old, are upon a journey—the journey of life; we have

time and again heard God's voice calling us to decide for Him, to enlist under His banner. But instead of manfully entering His service and continuing faithful in our allegiance, too many of us have become careless and forgetful, perhaps, even doubtful, of Him. We have set up idols of various sorts, yet from all these God is calling us to follow Him.

This decision we still have to make, "Who is on the Lord's side?"

It is a decision upon the most important matter that ever came under the notice of any man or woman. There are and can be only two sides. Which side are we on? It is either the side of God or the side of Satan; the side of truth or the side of falsehood; the side of holiness or the side of sin.

The following from the pen of the Rev. H. J. Hamilton, B.A., of Gifu, Japan, will be read with interest by many:

JAPANESE CONSCRIPTS.

Japan, like the great nations of the west, with the exception of England and the United States, is a land of compulsory military service. Every man after entering his twentieth year has to return to his native place and appear for examination before the military authorities. A few are exempt, such for instance as the pupils of the higher Government schools, who are not called on for service till they are twenty-seven.

Many are rejected on account of ill-health, defective sight, shortness of stature, etc., but from those favourably reported on a certain number are chosen each year to enter the army and devote three years of their life to a soldier's calling. At the beginning of December the chosen ones enter the garrisons, and as they leave their native towns a great display is made, flags are flying, fireworks are going off, banquets are given and processions formed with the conscripts in the place of honour. All the people seem to unite in congratulating them. But if the truth

were known and hearts were seen, one great and genuine cause for jubilation is "that my son was not chosen."

But to come nearer home, what enthusiastic "Dismissals" one reads about as taking place in Exeter Hall, London, or in Wycliffe College, Toronto, it may be, what congratulations are given, and rightly given, to those called forth as soldiers to the mission field. Yet when seeing how few go compared with those who could go, how many stay compared with those that need stay, one is almost tempted to ask, is there not sometimes with-in this congratulation an unseen reason, like that of the Japanese parent, "that my son, that my daughter, was not chosen."

These Japanese conscripts brought me another lesson not long ago. My teacher, when out in the country last week, stepped into a little wayside Shinto shrine, such as there are thousands of all over Japan, and was surprised at seeing on some matting under the shed an old man and woman with a young woman and baby. He could make nothing of them, but, on stopping at the nearest tea-house he asked who they were and why they were there? "Conscription time will soon be here," said the inn-keeper, "the son of the old couple, who is also husband of the woman and father of the child, is of the age for military service. They are afraid that he, the support of the family, will be chosen as a soldier and taken from them, and so the four have come to the shrine, where for a whole week they intend to stay praying night and day to the god worshipped there to avert such a calamity."

I am not mentioning this as simpleness to be smiled at or even just as ignorance to be pitied and truly helped, but as a patient continuance in prayer fit to teach a lesson to many of us Christians in this prayer neglecting age of ours.

What we workers need to ask the Lord many a time is, Whether our work for Him is really His work for us.

H. J. H.

Japan.