KNOWING ONE THING AS A CERTAINTY

BY THE REV. S. A. DYKE.

One thing rightly known leads on to the knowledge of other things, and one thing fully known would imply a knowledge of everything. To know a thing fully, in its whence, its what, and its whither, would imply a knowledge of all things from creation and into eternity, for each atom is related, more or less intimately, to every other atom in the universe. Such knowledge God alone possesses. But while we may not know a thing fully, we may know it as a certainty, and rightly, so far as our knowledge goes. And this knowledge of one thing as a certainty will lead on to the knowledge of other things, and thus, step by step, our knowledge will grow according to our capacity to perceive and grasp. Thus the unknown becomes the known, and thus, from any one thing rightly known, we may come at last to the knowledge of God and of his Christ. There is not a lane in England but leads to London, not a truth but leads to the God of truth, not a thing created but leads to the Creator. "These speak all of thee."

The blind man in the ninth chapter of John knew one thing as a certainty, and from that one thing, by a logical sequence of right and reason, he came to a knowledge of Him who had given him sight and of his salvation, notwithstanding all the fog of doubts in which the higher critics of the scribes and Pharisees would involve him. The way this man came from a certain knowledge of one thing to a knowledge of the most important things illustrates the true philosophy of education and progress. "Give me one point," (a fulcrum,) said Archimedes, "and I will move the world." "Give me one fixed point, and I," says the geographer, "will measure the earth." "Give me one fixed star," says the astronomer, "and I will measure the heavens." And so says the christian, "Give me God at any point, at any time, and I will give you God everywhere and at all times."

The flash of a kodak's eye will so fix the features on the sensitive plate that the sex, the age, the race, the disposition, the ability, and a hundred other things may be read by the practised physiognomist. Much more to the glance of the Almighty is the whole inner man and all the past and the future laid open. There is no standing ground in all reason between a God omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, and blank, dark atheism; and there is not a soul but, in the same right use of reason, may come from any certain point or fact in his experience to a knowledge of God and of the Saviour, even as the prodigal came from the husks and the swine in a far away land of starvation. The light of truth, however dim, ever leads to him who is the truth.

Therefore, given one clear and distinct and certain experience of God at any one time, in any one time, in any one place, in our lives, as Jacob at Bethel; and we may, like him, come at last to Peniel, and to his dying testimony (Gen. 48: 15, 16) Our consciousness of his presence may be limited by our powers of spiritual apprehension, but that does not limit his presence (Psa. 139.) Indeed, our preceptions must always come short of the reality; for, however rightly and certainly we may know a thing, yet now we see in a mirror darkly, and we know but in part. But, until there is a distinct and certain experience of God's grace in regeneration and conversion, spiritually the soul wanders in a maze of opinion, speculation and theory. But if, like the blind man, light has come into the soul, even the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, then all uncertain thing take their place behind this one certainty, and eventually are resolved by it, and are put in their proper categories.

Thus the difference between the unit of one sure experience, one fixed certainity, and the cipher of doubt and uncertainity, is the difference between existence and non-existence. A unit is, and a cipher is not. A thousand ciphers are a thousand nothings, and the sum is nothing. So a thousand doubts are but a thousand doubts, and the sum is doubt and nothing in intellectual or spiritual progress. Nevertheless, a ciper has this power,—it can make the unit more or less. Before it, it makes it less; after it, it makes it more. So is it with our doubts and uncertainties. If placed ever in the forefront, our certainties will dwindle to the vanishing point, and we shall become practical agnostics, know-nothings. But if, on the other hand, we place our doubts and uncertainities behind our firm beliefs and certainities, what we do know will come out in brighter relief, even as the picture from the dark background. Nay, more; our very doubts and uncertainities, behind our beliefs and convictions, will urge us on to further conquests over ignorance and unbelief.

So, also, is it in Christian service. Christians in themselves are but ciphers; nevertheless, they have this power,—if they put themselves before Christ, they divide him; if they put themselves behind Christ, they multiply him. Three ciphers with Christ at the head are a thousand; three ciphers in front of Christ, and he is but a thousandth part of one, so far as their life and testimony are concerned. Dr. Gordon relates how, when certain earnest men wrote to a devoted brother asking for help in a case of pressing need, and stating that they had secured a thousand dollars, he telegraphed, "Put me down for a cipher." At first the answer puzzled them, but soon they interpreted it to mean, "My cipher rightly placed will make your $1,000 $10,000." And so it was even according to their faith; and unless we so put Christ first, and ourselves after, we shall be the veriest ciphers in spiritual life and power, and Christ will be weakened by us. Herein also is a lesson: when doubts and perplexities assail us let us get back to the certainties, even as the surveyor goes back to the settled boundaries and produces his lines from these last fixed and ascertained points. For, if we put our doubts first, we do but weaken our certainities; but if we put our certitudes first, our doubts will gradually fade away and vanish. Otherwise we shall be like wanderers hopelessly lost on the boundless plains, or as ships derelict on the high seas, or as floating islands of the ocean.

Here also is a lesson for preachers and for teachers of men. It is contrary to the highest principles of philosophy and instruction to put doubts and uncertainties first. It is ever from the known to the unknown; and if the preacher knows in a blessed experience, and holds as a sacred certainty and trust, the great doctrines of God, of his revelation of himself in his Word, of the Saviour of whom it speaks, of the Holy Spirit who quickens and renews, of regeneration and adoption, of preservation and glory, he will have no time or desire for theories and speculations, for science and art, for literature and politics: and those who come for bread will not receive stones to break their teeth and destroy their digestion, but they will be fed with the finest of the wheat and the richest fruit of the vine. In the names of common sense and of immortal souls, let those who have nothing but doubt and uncertainty to proclaim from their pulpits step down and out; for the world is crying out for reality and for bread, not for negations. And such negative, such cipher, men give clearest proof that they know not the Saviour of men, are not taught of the Spirit of God, and know not his power in their hearts and lives. They have never heard the command, "Preach the preaching that I bid thee," not the warning, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Every true messenger of God to men must be as Paul,—a witness of mighty truths of God's revelation, and of blessed realities in his own experience (Acts 26: 16-18). No other has any mandate from the Master to men.—*Sunday School Times*, Toronto, Canada.

PEOPLE THAT HAVE MET ME.

A great many people call upon an editor, and if he is accessible to all who seek him, much of his time goes practically to waste. Dr. Irenæus Prime used to say that he spent more time in grinding other people's axes than in sharpening his own, yet he always kept a keen edge on his own, and it did good service when a giant evil was to be cut down. Some callers are so agreeable, so helpful in their suggestions, so hearty in their sympathy, and withal so considerate of time and place, that it is a pleasure to see them open the door. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine," and "he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast," says the wise man; I have some friends who always leave me happier and more hopeful than they found me. They can never call too often. There are others who bring their shadow with them, and it is dense and dark. I have to go out into the sunshine to get warm and comfortable again after their visits. There is the noisy visitor, too, who tries to slam the door; he can't slam mine, for since I learned his manners, or lack of them, I have had a patent gradual closing air-brake fitted to it. It amuses me to see him foiled in his efforts to fling the door back. But he no sooner gets inside than his roar resounds. He says: "How are ye?" with such emphasis that every one jumps; then he selects his particular victim, and begins to outline an argument whose chief elements are noise and pertinacity. I have never known his voice to fail. A few weeks ago I was driving over one of the Berkshire hills; suddenly a chocolate colored, wooly-haired dog rushed out of a lonely house upon my waggon. He seemed full of fight, his jaws moved up and down, but he had lost his bark. I knew then what a "dumb dog" was for the first time in my experience. It is the sort of a dog one wants his neighbors to keep. I thought of my noisy caller and wondered whether he would ever have to speak in a whisper. How many people would be less miserable if he were obliged to keep quiet! We all have callers who want to borrow or beg or sell something; they are no more numerous in an editor's office than anywhere else. Indeed, I think there are not so many of this class here as there used to be; for an impression has been made upon this kind of visitors, chiefly, I think, by their contact with the daily press, that editors have no money to speak of, or at least to give away; and that they are rather given to asking unpleasant questions when importuned for pecuniary aid. The interviewer is a bore which editors may properly be said to have brought upon themselves, and how he flourishes at the expense of the being who invented him. The shrewd interviewer who wants to know anything worth knowing hies him directly to the editor's sanctum, and engages his ear without fear or reproach, and he is at the summit of his popularity in these days. If one does not answer his questions he answers them himself, and in such a way as to inflict dreadful penalties upon his taciturn fellow laborer in the public service.

There are callers whose chief object seems to be to exploit themselves, to recount some of their own deeds, and play the game of brag for all that it is worth. Such a visitor came to my office not long since. He was a stalwart Irishman, the solidity of whose jaws and fierceness of whose hair were calculated to appal the ordinary newspaper man. His ferocious bearing was also reinforced by a military title. Time, business, other people were nought to him. His mission was announced in the declaration that he was the embodiment and quintessence of reform and good government; that from the days of Boss Tweed to the present hour all that had been done to purify the city was due to his acts, advice and initiative; that he had unearthed all the scoundrels, revealed the conspiracies, started the reforms and given the clews which others had followed in discovering crime and dishonesty. The intimation that such men as Mayor Havemayer, William A. Booth, Charles O'Connor and Samuel J. Tilden, did meritorious works in this line, was scouted with contempt. Extracts from newspapers of twenty-five years ago, copies of signatures to petitions to the legislature, of real or pretended contracts for municipal works, or for the appointment of certain persons to positions in the public service were flourished before my eyes, and I was requested to see for myself the proofs of the infamy" of such men as John B. Stewart, and Shepard Knapp, and Peter Cooper, and hundreds of our best citizens, living and dead. These were the accomplices of Tweed, the backers of Sweeny, the friends and associates of Connolly and Tom Fields! "Indeed," said he, "it is likely that he whom I address was one of the crowd, for I remember at least one religious editor whose family name is not unknown who heartily indorsed the Ring in his columns with bland curiosity." I begged to decline the honored association, and to bid my visitor good morning. But it was useless. The tide of eloquent denunciation of the rich and honorable and respectable men of New York had to flow and overflow, until the truculent fervor of this grim warrior had exhausted itself. When I again said "good-morning," with an emphasis which was designed to summon the "bouncer" from the back room, my assailant rose with seeming haste, and turning towards me with beetling brow and neck clothed with thunder, roared: "I shall know where to put you, too, sir, and you may be assured that you will not escape me." With this he retired, and I saw him no more. In the words of the great Daniel Webster, "I still live," and though I may be classified with Peter Cooper and General Dix and Mayor Hewitt and others like them, as the associate and accessory of thieves and political villains, and my name be added to the formidable documents that were enrolled before me, I am happy in the thought that there is one the less of that sort of visitors to enter my sanctum and rob me of precious time.

Ladies who wish to read poems, and authors of elaborate but unpublished works, are among the constant visitors of the editorial rooms. I have met them all with a smile, listened to hundreds of their dictionary rhymes and their blank book verse, and to pages of learned dulness; have wasted breath in advice that I knew would not be taken, and in grand and glittering generalities that I knew would be to the author as refreshing as manna to the hungry soul. I heartily repent of the sin of encouraging some writers to make a book at their own charges, when I consider how many unfortunates will suffer therefor. But what else could be done, save to blight the aspirations of genius, offend a friend, and make an enemy. Besides, the advice to make a book has often been the most effective way of bringing a writer to his senses and of ridding me of a literary bore. One utterly unsalable book does more to relieve an editor than hundreds of arguments.

Yet sometimes the editor does not wish to be relieved from his literary visitor. He sees the spark of genius in the applicant, he recognizes modest worth, he is glad to take by the hand the young writer who is to become by-and-by a greater man than himself. He encourages him to write, he turns over the leaves of a long experience for his benefit, and rejoices to believe that a devout seer like the boy Samuel, or a new poet, or a finely organised critic of art or letters, waits before him for development and launching upon the sea of literature. To such visitors my door is always open, and my hand is outstretched. The sooner they come with their virgin treasures, and the longer they are content to stay and give them to me and my readers, the better pleased shall I be.—Augustus in New York *Observer*.

It is quite common to mistake our own incapacity for God's unwillingness to give. We cannot take more than our hearts and lives can hold, not even of the free and abundant grace of God. The limit of blessing for every man is the limit of capacity. Even God does not put more than a pint into a pint cup. Therefore God's richest blessing is the blessing of enlargement. When a soul submits to Him He causes it to grow, so making room for more delight and larger power of use in every blessing. God's will to give may always be taken for granted. Our will to receive is not so sure. And when we are disposed to complain of our small share of spiritual blessing, may it not be best to ask ourselves whether it is not our will that fails and our littleness which connot find room to receive? God's apparent grudging, we may be sure, is always a sign of our incapacity. What we most need, therefore, is a continual enlargement of soul which comes to men only from the continual presence of God's Spirit. God does not offer gifts at random, much less does He enlarge a soul which has no desire for Him. He who thinks that spiritual capacity, may be picked up anywhere along life's dusty road, and that one may set his heart upon the earth and then enjoy the full measure of a disciple's happiness besides, will surely be disappointed.—*Congregationalist.*

"I'm too interested in what is going on to take much time to remember or brood, and I never take but one day at a time." The words came from an old lady certainly beyond seventy, but whose blue eyes were clear, and her face full of the cheer and strength lacking altogether in that of her far younger companion. It was on an elevated train, where often the listener hears strange confidences, or gleans unexpected bits of wisdom, and the words came as the pair passed out, the echo of them remaining as a text for other lives than the speaker's. The brooding, melancholy face at her side had evidently never tried the prescription, . . . Whatever else may be in our cup, we should never fail to add love and gratitude. We cannot always see "goodness and mercy" going before us, but we may feel sure they are "following," and so go forward without the fear of evil. The chemist goes about pouring one ingredient after another into a glass, and the mixture lies dull and quiet. He pours in one more, and it sparkles and flashes and rises quickly over the brim. Take life's cup with its sweet and bitter, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!" and it will run over in praise and thanksgiving.—Emily Huntington Miller.

The lamp of Christ's comfort may seem useless to you in the happy days of youth, when you have no sorrow; but some time it will grow dark about you, with no earthly light to shine upon your path, and then this heavenly lamp will be most welcome; it will teach you where to go when the night darkens about your own soul.—Anon.

A child begged for the story of Daniel one night at bedtime.

"I am afraid," said the mother, "you will dream about lions."

"Oh, no!" returned the little one, "I will dream about Daniel and leave out the lions."

How much more cheerful and serene our lives might be if we, too, could leave out the lions!

Christmas Conference at Vizianagram.

On Monday, Dec. 16th, at the various stations, the missionaries took up their travelling cots and came to Vizianagram, some by train, some by jinricksha, and some by bullock cart.

Business began Tuesday morning with Pres. Churchill in the chair. After an hour's devotional service, the officers for the year were elected, consisting of: Pres., W. V. Higgins; Vice Pres., Miss Clark; Treas., Miss Gray. The undersigned was appointed Secretary. The committee of arrangements were L. D. Morse, H. Y. Corey and Miss Clark.

After reports of standing committees, disposal of some unfinished business, and the discussion of such questions as "How to Preach to the Telugus"; "How to Increase the number of Good Hand-bills"; The Circulation of the Scriptures"; and "How to Conduct Boarding Schools;" etc., etc., the time was occupied with hearing and discussing brief reports from each of the fields. The main problems of the year were thus recalled and grappled with in open court. The experience of each was counsel and inspiration to the others and maugre a myriad mountains we "thanked God and took courage."

At an early session the question of "How to make the most of our Conference," received hearty attention. It was conceded by all that we should live and learn and that every year should be better than the last. As "Power belongeth unto God" it was agreed that more time should be given to devotional services. Each missionary is to bring to these services some of the richest lessons God has been teaching him since last we met. The present committee of arrangements was appointed a committee for the next two Conferences, in order to mature and carry out plans for the best possible programme.

Before coming up to Vizianagram, every station heard the voice of special prayer for a great blessing upon our meetings. Conference opened with a resolution to give a larger place to the hour of prayer. Two and a half hours each day were spent together at the Throne of Grace. From the first session to the last we sat together in heavenly places in Christ. It was the best conference in the memory of any member present. "An unction from the Holy One" seemed to pervade every public discussion and private conversation, and passed over into the Telugu Association which opened Friday morning and continued for three and a half days.

The great theme of all the Telugu sessions was the Holy Spirit. Minor matters were laid aside for a subject that arose and comanded exclusive attention. In the accents of an oriental tongue our Telugu brethren discussed with us "the promise of the Father," as well as the privileges and responsibility of the child. Fear and trembling came upon us as we realized that it was quite possible even for religious leaders to be sitting in the seat of those who "follow after a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." Great was the humiliation produced by the overwhelming conviction that we had never half availed ourselves of that "POWER FROM ON HIGH," which Jesus intended should go always with the preaching of His gospel. It was the best Telugu Association that any of us had ever attended.

During the Conference, special prayer was offered for brother and sister Higgins in their affliction. Since coming to India they have won the esteem of all, by the hearty and relentless energy with which they have thrown themselves into the work. Their hearts are in India, and they go away only because there is no other way for them to turn. The decision has cost them pain unspeakable. Many are the efforts they have made and the expedients to which they have resorted that they might remain and preach among the Telugus the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Bro. Higgins was one of those who mastered the language quickly and he is never more at home than when preaching the gospel in Telugu. To our human vision his removal is a sad loss to our mission, and we dread the day of his departure as if it were to be the day of somebody's death. Many are the prayers that have been offered for the recovery of Mrs. Higgins, and our only explanation of God's silence is that He must have some special work for them to do at home. Should He be pleased to restore her to health once more, warm will be their welcome back again. Meanwhile, is there not some man, called of God and filled with His Spirit,—some young Moody or Gordon or Judson, who will get up out of his country and his kindred and his father's house, and cross the ocean to reinforce our depleted corps? Surely God is preparing someone. O, Father-land! Thrice Blessed of God!! The battle waxes hot! Send us your best man, by the quickest route; and may God pour into your bosom a reward in proportion to His riches,—"good measure, pressed down and running over."

Special prayer was offered also for Miss Gray that she might have a good voyage to America, a blessed season in the home-land and a safe return to the Telugus. By the kind providence of our Father she has been able to spend more than eleven years in faithful service on the field. Even after so long a term she does not come home broken down, but much in need of that recuperation which only the native breezes can bestow. The daily faith and faithfulness have been an example and a stimulus to her fellow-workers, and she comes home with the burden of Telugu souls upon her heart. It is expedient for them that she should leave them for a season and come back again with strength renewed. The Bimli missionaries cannot soon forget her sympathy and counsel during the trials of their first year on a foreign and inclement shore. We bespeak for her the heartiest welcome the denomination can give to a faithful representative.

L. D. MORSE, Sec'y.

Is it not perfectly erroneous to speak of the failure of missions, when they started with a hundred and twenty despised Galileans, and when there are now at least 120,000,000 of Protestants, and they have in their power almost all the resources of the world?—Farrar.

In my opinion, Christian missions have done more real and lasting good than all the other agencies combined. They have been the salt of the country, and the true saviours of the empire.—Sir Rivers Thompson.

THE THANKFUL HEART.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Dull moods are ours when low and dim
About us clings the brooding mist;
No heart have we for lifted hymn,
No eye for hills of amethyst,
No feeling of the dear blue sky
And steadfast stars than burn above;—
Dull moods, when coward fears draw nigh
—And clutch the tender arm of love.

But these are as the passing cloud
Against the splendor of the sun,
So thick our Father's mercies crowd,
So swift to us His angels run.
His table in the wilderness
Before our foes is daily spread,
And in our time of sore distress
We still have Christ, the living bread.

Bright mornings wake with lilt of lark
And light that flushes all the way,
Sweet evenings pale to sheltering dark,
For heaven has watched on all the day.
And rough or smooth the pilgrim land
Is safe for us who walk this road;
Aye, grasping firm the Father's hand,
And, thankful, faring home with God.

Christian Intelligencer.

Christ will give us rest—"to our souls," our innermost life, our immortality; a Sabbath day that spreads over the whole week, and sanctifies every intervening moment; that is the gift of God. When God gives light, it is not a gas jet, or a candle flame, or a corner-lamp, but a light that fills the firmament with blushing glory. So when God gives peace, it is not an opiate, it is a satisfaction of How does the doctor bring health to the cheek? You look on the reviving child and say, "See how his cheek begins to bloom again; dear little one, what has the doctor done to you? Has he painted that cheek with a tender vermilion? Is this enamel?" "No," saith the little one; "the doctor has not touched my cheek." "Then how has he made it bloom?" "By touching my life-springs, by touching the blood, by touching the heart, by touching the inner reality of things; touching that, this bloom has come." It is so Christ gives rest; not from the outside, not by a readjustment of circumstances, but by a purification of soul.—Joseph Parker, D. D.

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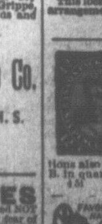

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