

Family Department.

A MESSAGE FROM SPRING.

[Written for the Church Guardian.]

Oh, do not grow impatient at my seeming long delay,
I will offer full amends, as so frequently before,
And when Winter marches off, for my coming to make way,
Unfold my varied beauties to expectant eyes once more.

I'll prove to you the goodness of an ever loving Lord,
Who sees time and the harvest unceasingly doth send,
And raineth down His blessings in fulfillment of His Word—
That faithful promise will endure till day and night shall end.

You may scent me in the breezes that sweep across the snow,
Or may see me in the mayflower that underneath it springs,
In the coloured crocus cup, with its petals all aglow,
And know these are but foretastes of the wealth my presence brings.

I'm laden down with treasures for the garden and the field,
And will clothe them both with colours no painter can pourtray,
While the foliage on the trees shall protect, as with a shield,
The blossoms I'll awaken in the lonely forest way.

Having prefaced thus the glories of golden Summer time,
I'll leave you in enjoyment of its rich and boundless store,
And direct your thoughts above to a purer vernal clime,
Where fairest forms of perfumed flowers bloom on forever more.

Bridgewater, March, 1881. M. B. D.

THE NAAMANS OF TO-DAY.

2 KINGS V. 12.

[Written for the Church Guardian.]

BY REV. C. A. HAYDEN, OF XENIA, OHIO, U. S.

In the conduct of this Syrian Prince we have set forth a picture of the treatment which Christ's salvation and His way of saving too often receives at the hands of the Naamans of to-day. Smitten with the leprosy of sin, and, like Naaman, conscious of their need of healing, earnestly desiring deliverance from the plague of evil which has hold upon them, they are yet unwilling to submit to the simple conditions upon which alone healing and the gift of eternal life are to be obtained. They stumble over the very simplicity of the Gospel scheme of salvation. Met by the one only condition upon which the blessing which they desire can be obtained—faith in a crucified and risen Saviour, and obedience to His commands—they, like the haughty captain of Syria, are offended. And why? Simply and solely because there is nothing in such a demand which appears to them to be in accord with the dictates of reason. They cannot understand why alone in that way they must be saved; and in the pride of their human wisdom cry out, "Are not Abana and Pharpar better than all the waters of Israel? Are not the religions of man's devising? Are not the philosophies of Earth's sages? Are not the teachings of reason and the guidings of Nature better than all the promises and hopes which the religion of Jesus affords?"

Weighed in the balances of human judgment, human means of salvation seem the more noble and worthy; and so, when men are confronted with the solemn declaration of God's Word, that "there is none other Name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," they are angered, and go away in a rage. The pride of the human heart has always stood in the way of willing obedience to the commands of God.

The Jews of old, strong in their own right arm, rejected the help of their God. The Abanas and Pharpar of the world were far more desirable than all that was offered them by a hearty following of Jehovah. They saw no reason in the requirements of the Almighty Father; they even rejected the Son of God when He came among them, seeing nothing in Him to be desired; and when called upon to choose between Christ and a robber, cried out, "Release unto us Barrabas, and crucify the Nazarene." Now, a nation scattered over all the earth; the despised among all despised ones; persecuted in every country; against whom every man's hand is turned—they attest the folly of a refusal to listen to the Word of the Lord, and the insufficiency of man's wisdom and man's reason to guide aright.

And yet to-day, as in the past, man in his pride, trusts self, and turns from the Lord. To-day, he exalts reason above the word of the everlasting Jehovah. To-day, he sees more in Abana and Pharpar than in all the waters of Israel. From the rostrum, aye, and from the pulpit, alas! wherein stand those professing to make known the way of deliverance from evil, we hear the voice of those who eulogise human philosophies; who declare that all the world needs is culture and education to heal it of the malady of sin; who belittle the cross of Christ; who say that Christianity has run its course; that the religion which Jesus taught has outlived its usefulness; that the Church is naught; that the Holy Sacraments are empty things; that they were for a time; and that now we have outgrown them. Such tell us that reason is better than revelation; that with the advances which have been made since the dark ages, when men were led by a blind faith, and were the willing victims

of a designing priestcraft, man has passed beyond the period of childhood, when he was satisfied with baubles; and that now we have no need of faith in a book that is antiquated and found to be false by the light of later investigations. Science has been set up before us, and we are told, as were the Israelites in the wilderness when Aaron made the golden calf and called upon the people to worship it:—"These be thy gods, O Israel."

We have the trustworthiness of the Scripture called in question; doubts are cast upon its authenticity, and the press sends forth by thousands and tens of thousands books and periodicals calculated to undermine the confidence of men in the teachings which have ever been received by the Church as Divine truth.

The fact of the Person and work of Christ is disputed. The blessed hope of His coming again, which His followers have always cherished, is made light of; and instead of looking upon the Scriptures as the Divine Word, wherein the way of life eternal is made known through Christ Jesus our Lord, men are taught to class them with the Koran or the writings of Confucius, a piece of literature to be regarded as valuable, inasmuch as it chronicles the progress in moral and religious respects of the human race since the earliest days; but of no more authority to us than the cast off school books of a century ago.

But the praises of this world's Abanas and Pharpar are sung untiringly. Schemes of reform are set forth by which the crying evils of the day are to be overcome. Rationalism is set upon the throne, and amid the music of sackbut and psaltery and harp, all the world is called upon to fall down and worship the image which man's hands have reared. Liberty of thought, freedom from all restraint, deliverance from bondage.—this is the cry; and all this is promised as the heritage of those who follow the "light of reason."

And to very many these teachings are exceedingly attractive. They flatter the pride of the human heart. They meet men as Naaman verily thought the Prophet would meet him, doing reverence to his greatness, bowing before his exalted station, and feeding his vanity. A religion that humbles the heart; a religion that demands a casting aside all vain glory in self; a religion that demands the yielding of the will to that of another; and casting aside of cherished notions—this, men like not.

It is of no avail to say that we can see no reason in God's commands. It is folly to say that because we cannot fathom all the mysteries of Redemption, because we cannot understand the why and wherefore of all the ways of the Almighty, therefore we will not yield to His command, and go wash in the fountain opened for sin and all uncleanness.

All the washings Naaman might have made in Abana and Pharpar would have done him no good, and if he had died a leper, we should have adjudged his suffering and his failure to receive a cure as but just. But such a course in him would have been no more unreasonable than yours, if you refuse to be cleansed from sin, and delivered from its powers in the only way that God has marked out.

Will you then go searching about among human schemes of religion and among the Creeds of man's devising for some way of deliverance and some method of obtaining the eternal life you refuse at the hands of Christ. You may say His religion seems to you no more to promise the healing you desire than other religions. Perhaps not. Naaman saw no greater promise of cure in the waters of Judea than the rivers of Damascus. You may say there are many things connected with the Church, and with Christianity and the Bible that you cannot understand. Very likely; and so this Syrian Prince might in like manner have said there were many things about the Jewish religion which he did not understand. But he did not stop to study Jewish theology nor the evidences of the Jewish religion, he wanted cleansing, and was told how to get it. And so you need not stop to enquire about other matters before you come and wash away your sins. Believe and be saved. Do not be angered at God's conditions of salvation. Use true wisdom and obey; for if you would not have refused to do some great thing, do not refuse this very simple thing; wash and be clean!

SATURDAY NIGHT TALKS TO THE GIRLS.

[Written for the Church Guardian.]

BY MAY STERLING.

FAITH.

We can hardly help wondering at our own want of faith when we read the many promises given us that leave no room for doubt and mistrust; and yet we often seem to grasp timidly only one little end of a promise, instead of leaning on the whole strength of it, as we may if we will. Take, for instance, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and "My God shall supply all your need." Why should we not take the "never" and the "all" as they are, and let them mean what they do, to us? In the lives of God's children there are no storms which cannot be made "still waters" by His Peace, "be still," if they trust Him. And surely we can trust Him when we are told to cast all our care upon Him for He careth for us, and if we do this He will make the cares His own more so than the wants of the sparrows. When we look around us now, in the beautiful spring time, when every thing seems so

fresh from the Master's Hand, and shews so clearly His great unsearchable wisdom, we feel more than ever His power to guide and keep our small lives; and our inability to do the least of these things ourselves, drives us in our helplessness to rest on His strength, content to know we are His sheep and no man is able to pluck us out of His Hands. When we "come" to Him to have our needs supplied, He will not keep us waiting for an answer one moment more than is good for us.

In the still night hour when Jesus came unto His disciples, walking on the sea, they were frightened, thinking it was a spirit, and cried out with fear; but Jesus "straightway" comforted them by assuring them it was Himself; and when Peter went to meet Him, and, for want of faith, began to sink, He "immediately" stretched forth His hand and caught him. When He does seem to let us wait it is only because He knows what will make us happy and we do not, or He wants to prove His children's faith and increase it by the "waiting-time."

We can bring even our want of faith to Him, instead of worrying all the time as to whether we have enough to claim His promise or not. Let us try to realize more—that he is not only a just and righteous God, but also a loving, living, personal Christ, Who desires our good and happiness far more than we do, and Who does not say "Come unto Me" only to send empty away; all who ever come, believing, will be able to say, "He hath filled the hungry with good things." Giving thanks greatly helps our faith, and we needn't wait until our prayer is granted to be glad and thank Him; David did not in Psalm vi., and we read that Hannah's countenance was "no more sad" after pouring out her heart to God. How we must grieve the Master with our distrusting hearts and cold thanks, and how unhappy we sometimes make our lives when we may be so glad and satisfied in Him. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." (Psalm xxxiv. 10.)

AN INTERESTING CHURCH HISTORY.

The *Kalendar* of Western New York has the following interesting "Editorial Correspondence" in a recent issue about the Church in Savannah, Georgia:—

Christ Church has a singularly interesting history. It is the oldest church in Georgia and one of the oldest in America. Among its rectors of early days were John Wesley and George Whitfield. Strange that Christ Church, Savannah, should be the only parish that Wesley and Whitfield ever held, and stranger still that Wesley, the founder of Methodism, should have advocated from the pulpit of Christ Church views and practices which, if the present rector should maintain, he would not be tolerated in his position for a moment. It was for Wesley to insist upon the re-baptism of dissenters—to advocate the weekly Eucharist and the mixed chalice—to preach auricular confession and a rigid observance of the fast days. Few Churchmen of our day believe all the above tenets, fewer still, if they believe, dare to preach them. And few of our Methodist friends are willing to believe the above of Wesley, any more than they are that he wrote, "I declare that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and none who regard my opinion or advice will ever separate from it." The religious people of England have recently celebrated the centennial anniversary of the establishment of Sunday Schools by Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, but Wesley organized the Sunday School of Christ Church, Savannah, 20 years before Robert Raikes was born, and 80 years before there was anything of the kind in New York or Philadelphia.

George Whitfield took charge of the parish in 1738. During the second year of his rectorship he secured 500 acres of land beautifully located 6 miles from Savannah and erected an Orphan's Home which he named "Bethesda." The institution continues in a flourishing condition. At present 56 children are within its walls, being kindly cared for and educated. The one hundred and forty-second anniversary of the founding of the institution is to be celebrated next Tuesday, the 26th inst.

In Whitfield's time the parish set to work to build a church, and what a struggle it was. For some time services were held in the county Court House, which in those Colonial times was a small hut 12x30 ft., made of split boards. In 20 years the parish succeeded in erecting a skeleton of a building, one with a roof, but minus sides and ends. It took 10 years to get this structure enclosed. In 1796 this edifice, after 46 years use, was burned down. Seven years pass and another church is built, larger than the former. It stands a year when it is partially destroyed by a hurricane in 1804. It is rebuilt in 1810, and in 1838 this is taken down to give place to the present edifice. The site is the same which General Oglethorpe selected for a church and parsonage when the city was laid out 150 years ago.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

LONDON, April 19th, 1881.

THE illness of the Earl of Beaconsfield is likely to end more favourably than was expected, and strong hopes are now entertained that he will recover. It may not be generally known that his Lordship's medical attendant, Dr. Kidd, is a homœopathist. There has been a great deal of soreness and standing upon professional etiquette by the allopaths in the matter. Dr. Quain would not work in conjunction with Dr. Kidd, the "professional renegade"

ill he had consulted the heads of his profession. And Sir William Jenner, though he had the commands of the Queen to call on the illustrious patient, hesitated considerably; and when he did call, would have nothing to do with his heretical homœopathic brother. So says gossip.

Since writing the above, the noble Lord has suddenly relapsed, and expired this morning (the 19th) at 4.30. Thus ends one of the greatest and most remarkable men of his day. Mr. Ralph Disraeli, his brother, saw him last night for the first time during his illness.

On Easter afternoon, there was an overflowing congregation at Westminster Abbey, hundreds of persons remaining standing during the whole of the Service. The following sketch, of the sermon, may be interesting to you:—The canticles were rendered to the fine service of Attwood in D, and after the third collect, and before the sermon, the Easter hymn, "Jesus Christ is risen to-day," was sung. Dean Stanley preached the sermon, his text being the words, "I am the resurrection and the life" (St. John xi., 25). He said it had often been remarked that the Jewish people had no fixed belief in the future state. The contrast between them and the Egyptians, from whom they were delivered, was in this respect remarkable. Several explanations had been given as the cause of this, but the one which had been suggested by the German theologian, who more than any other had penetrated into the history of the chosen people, was this—that the Jew was so thoroughly impressed with the constant presence of God that his mind would not admit any other thought which would come into rivalry with it. The Divine presence was so intimately connected with the happiness, the misfortunes, the battles, the hopes of this world, that it seemed to him as if when this life was over there would be no more connection between him and the eternal Creator whose presence he had hitherto enjoyed. The words he had for his text were familiar as being the first which broke upon the stillness when the coffin entered the Church, and the long procession of mourners wielded its way into the place. What was intended to be conveyed under that one word "I?" Was it merely the historical person who lived and died 1,800 years ago, regardless of the moral perfections which were seen in Him? Was it merely the name of Jesus Christ and the doctrines which sprang up around that name? It was surely much more than this. When they spoke of following or adoring Jesus, they meant, or should mean, that they followed and adored the most perfect ideal of truth and goodness which had appeared in the world. It was this moral aspect of Christianity which secured to it the hope of immortality. They should read the words of the text as expressing that goodness and truth, such as they saw in Him, were great realities, which would rise again and live for ever. Whosoever believeth in that goodness and truth, "Though he were dead, yet shall he live," and whosoever lived and believed in the forms of goodness and truth which He represented should not die eternally. This form of belief in the future existence was the strongest which they could have, and it was essentially Christian, because there was no other religion in which the goodness and the truth which they all desired was brought so near to them in the person of its founder. At any rate, there was no name which, to Christians, carried with it such a savour of all that was the most exalted in the moral mind as the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. It was this which threw a light on the future hopes of man, that nothing would take away. He would enforce this by an illustration. Before the first conversion of this country to the Christian faith, there was assembled in the rude hall of King Edwin, the pagan king of the north, a council of ministers to meet the missionary of the new creed. There was much doubt whether they should hear the missionary at all. The king doubted, the priests doubted. At last a plain, honest layman, who on such occasions was often the best guide—a thane or chief, rose in his place, and said "We all know how, from time to time, in the long winter evenings when we are sitting round our blazing fire, it happens that a sparrow without, in the darkness of the night, flies into our hall attracted by the light, and flies out again into the darkness beyond. Such is human life. The soul from its dark state enters into the blazing, cheerful light of existence and flies out again into the darkness beyond, and is then lost to us. What came before, and what is to follow, this life we know not. If this new religion can throw any light into the state in which that unknown voyage is taken, let this new teacher be our guide and leader." This was the difficulty which the Saxon chief pressed upon his hearers. This was the difficulty which pressed upon the mind of every one of them. What the other world was to the wisest among them was as dark as the darkness into which the sparrow darted out from the illumined hall. They were not told precisely the words in which the missionary answered but they did know the words he might have answered—that the soul went into a condition where it would be able to enjoy whatever goodness, whatever virtue, whatever generosity of heart and purity of heart it had become capable of in this short existence. They knew perfectly well the value of truth and goodness here, and they were led to believe by all that the New Testament told them, and by all that their own consciences told them, that truth and goodness would continue in that unknown, mysterious state beyond the veil.