

Pastor and People.

WHY IT WAS.

In that gracious after season
I shall know—
When the clouds that now enfold me
Outward flow ;
Why it was the way was thorny,
Rough and steep,
Leading often through the darkness
And the deep ;
Why it was that friendship faltered
By the way ;
Why that love was unrequited
Yesterday ;
Why the hand of God should take him—
Mournful fate—
Him, my soul's beloved, falling
At the gate.
O, those questions oft perplexing
To my soul—
Who shall give me answer, and my
Grief condole ?
"Sometime," hear the Master whisper
From the throne—
"Sometime thou shalt clasp for ever
All thine own.
"Sometime all thy doubts and questions,
All thy fears,
All thy seeming sad misgivings,
All thy tears,
"Shall be swept away like spectres
Of the night ;
And thy soul shall bask for ever
In the light."

THE DAY-DAWN IN THE SOUL.

Morning begins with the swing of the earth into the first glimmering rays of light from the sun. Spiritual light begins with the first approaches of the soul to Jesus Christ. All true converts are alike in two respects ; they were once in the darkness or depravity and unbelief ; their day-dawn began with the penitent turning of the heart to the Saviour. The Holy Spirit drew them and they moved Christward. Conversions have been very numerous lately, but no two persons have had exactly the same experience. With one person the first step was into an inquiry room. With another person it was the re-opening of a long-neglected Bible, or a betaking himself to honest prayer. A third began with a resolution of total abstinence from the decanter, for Jesus Christ cannot dwell in a soul that is drowned in drink. With thousands the first step is the banishment of some besetting sin ; and as the sin went out the light broke in. No seeker after salvation ever finds peace until he has renounced his favorite sins, and done it in order to obey Christ. Obedience to Jesus Christ is the test of conversion.

Some people are consciously converted suddenly. They can fix the hour and the place and all the attendant circumstances of their new birth. They can point to the very arrow of truth that pierced the heart, and to the precise sermon, or prayer, or conscientious act that brought the healing balm. With the majority of Christians I feel quite confident that their experience in conversion is literally like the daybreak. A faint gleam of thoughtfulness grew into earnestness, grew into penitence, and enlarged into a fuller, deeper sense of the soul's need of Christ ; then as the soul came on towards Jesus, the ruddier hues of hope appeared, and some flushes of joy kindled up ; and the soul discovers that the night of unbelief has ended and the day-dawn has begun. 'I have come to the conclusion,' said a very intelligent Christian lady to her pastor, 'that it is best for me that I have never yet been able to fix the exact time of my conversion ; I am afraid that I should trust too much to it if I could. Now I trust to nothing but to continued faith and to living in happy fellowship with my Saviour.'

Too many new converts are apt to think that the dawn is enough, that they have reached a certain desired point and need only to remain there. As well might our globe pause in its diurnal motion when a faint streak of morning light is reached instead of rolling on into the perfect day. Conversion is not a point of termination ; it is a point of new departure. It is a start, not a journey. No one has a right to say, 'Now I trust that I am converted, the work is done ; I am saved,

and I need only join the church and ride on towards heaven.' This wretched mistake has dwarfed many a church member for life. They never outgrow their babyhood. Infancy is very beautiful in its place ; but it must not last too long. I am charmed with the bright prattle of our little two year-old grandson, who is playing with his toys and 'choo-choo railroad cars' in yonder nursery ; but that same lively prattle ten years hence would not be so pleasant. 'When I was a child, I spoke as a child,' said the great apostle, 'but now I have put away childish things.' The first timid, brief, and rather incoherent prayer of a new convert in a social meeting is very delightful. It is music to a pastor's ears, and perhaps to the ears of angels likewise. Yet we should not be satisfied to hear the same prayer from him after ten years of sound Christian experience. Even Paul, a quarter of a century after his new birth into Christ, declares that he was still reaching forth unto the things that were before, and pressing towards the goal. The path of the Christian is like unto a shining light 'that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

Progress is the law of true piety. The 'convert' who never grows an inch in grace may well doubt whether he was ever really converted. And let the genuine convert never forget that as the germ of his spiritual life came from Christ, so his advance into godly, useful living will depend on his drawing closer and closer unto Christ. No amount of gas-light or electric burners can create a morning in this city ; we must swing on towards the sun.

So it is in the nearer approach to and closer conformity unto the Divine Saviour that a convert advances into a robust Christian. We only shine, at best, by reflected light. All brightness and beauty come from our Sun of Righteousness ; the plants of grace thrive only under His warmth. My young brother or sister, remember that *Christ's love to you* was an orb that beamed and burned before you ever beheld it. Christ's love turned your darkness into dawn. Christ's love to you is the unfailing shaft of light that shall stream into the valley of death-shade when you are passing over that river that hath no bridge. At evening-time it shall be light.

A rough old fisherman, who stammered in his speech, used to pray often in the weekly meeting, and one expression was always introduced into his homely, fervent prayers—'Oh, Lord—lead us—more and more—into the love of Jesus—for never was love like that.' The nearer the old fisherman drew towards it the brighter and warmer it became ; and now he stands—with certain other fishermen from Galilee—in the noonday glory of his everlasting King !

'Love here is but a faint desire,
But there the spark's a flaming fire ;
Joys here are drops that passing flee ;
But there an overflowing sea.

'Here shadows often cloud my day,
But there the shadows flee away.
My Lord will break the dimming glass,
And show His glory face to face.'

—Rev. Dr. Cuyler.

BIBLE CIRCULATION.

Amid the many wonders of the world, and especially of our century, is that of giving the Bible to the world.

At the beginning of the Christian era the Bible was in two languages. Down to the Reformation it was in 23 languages. In 1804 it was in 57 languages. From 1804 to 1890 there were no less than 342 new translations. To-day the Bible is in 386 languages and 62 dialects. Total, 448.

Estimated population of the globe 1,440,000,000. Languages, 3,000. But, as Dr. Cust says, there are languages and languages, "There are isolated tongues spoken only by a few hundreds or thousands." Whereas Mandarin Chinese is the means of communication for 200,000,000, English 120,000,000 ; Hindustani for 82,000,000 ; the Russian for 75,000,000 ; the German 54,000,000, the Arabic for 50,000,000. Then there are other widely spread tongues as French, Spanish and Bengalian. "The Bible has been translated into 187 of these leading languages which are spoken by 600,000,000 people."

Add thereto the number of the "minor tongues" possessing the Bible or portions of it, and the number is estimated to be 1,000,000,000. Thus the Bible, or portions of it, is now accessible to at least 1,000,000,000, out of 1,440,000,000, the estimated population of the globe. And the wonderful work is mainly the work of this century ; and the principal part been done by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which was founded in 1804. In the first 84 years of its existence it printed or assisted to print the Scriptures in more than 240 languages and dialects. Up to 1889 had issued more than 116,000,000 copies of the Bible whole or in part. In 1893 the same society distributed nearly four millions of copies of the Bible. A truly marvellous work !

Still there is a vast work to be done. Over 2,000 tongues have no translation of the Word of God ; and at least 440,000,000 souls who cannot be reached through this medium. But, each year the number of tongues without the Bible, is rapidly being diminished, thanks to missionary zeal.

Now what does the Bible mean, viewing it simply as a civilizing agency ? Who can estimate its power and influence in the lower sphere of good ? What agency can take its place as the one supreme power, in the civilization of the rude and barbarous people of the earth ? But, when we realize the real purpose of the Bible as not only being a supreme, the supreme literature, but a Divine revelation, the Word of God, then cost and sacrifice are but as the mist of the morning when the sun has risen, all vanish in the light of the claims of that Father, who is not only Father of English-speaking people, but of humanity, and of that Saviour who came to redeem a world, and whose life and glad, glorious work, are enshrined in the "Living Word."

The value of the Bible to us who can estimate ? And if to us inestimable why not its benefits and blessings for others ? Then apart from missions how shall the Book of Life be known ? How shall it be given to all "kindreds, tongues and peoples." If missions had done no more than give the Bible to India, Africa, China, and the Islands of the Sea, the achievement would alone justify all cost and sacrifice.

A HAPPY SUGGESTION.

A clergyman (says the *Congregationalist*), who for forty years has wrought successfully for the Master, gave in a recent ministers' meeting where the question was being discussed, How can our churches become more fruitful ? the secret, as he believed, of the spiritual prosperity in all his parishes. "Once in a while I call my people together. I talk with them about the value of a human soul and about the unsaved in our community, and then I ask each one to take somebody on his heart." To some that seemed one solution of the problem that has perplexed ministry and membership from the beginning. A few in each church are always thoughtful and sometimes burdened with desire for the salvation of men. But in most cases this is so general in its reach. It takes in the whole world, and, scientifically speaking, the power is not equal to the task. But suppose this desire could be individualized, and suppose further that each member of the church should thoughtfully and honestly and earnestly "take somebody on his heart," is there any question whatever as to the church's fruitfulness ? And why cannot the experiment be immediately and widely tried ?

IS THE WORLD GROWING BETTER ?

The *New York Independent* has a symposium on this question, to which several well-known American gentlemen contribute. Mr. Moody's answer is so characteristic, and withal so suggestive, that we give it entire. He writes as follows. "In reply to your question—'Is the world growing better?' I would say that God has a plan in the history of the world, and He is constantly carrying it out. The gospel has converting power, and wherever it goes men are being converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel also has an elevating influence in many ways upon

those who do not accept it. While all this is true, on the other hand men who reject the truth grow worse and worse, and we see the development of the kingdom of darkness going on side by side with the development of the kingdom of light. The facts which every one who is not blinded by prejudice must see about him on every hand, as well as the teaching of Scripture, clearly indicate that 'in the last days perilous times shall come.' There is every indication that the present dispensation will end in a great smash-up ; but I believe that out of that smash-up the most glorious age in the world's history will come. So I look into the future, not with despair, but with unbounded delight."

"THE BEST THING WE HAVE IS OUR RELIGION."

So said an American statesman to a company of Japanese students attending a Christian College in Tokyo. The speaker was General J. W. Foster, ex-Secretary of State of the United States, who took great pains on a recent visit to Tokyo to acquaint himself with the work of the American missions in that city. It is refreshing to have a man of high position in the political world anxious to learn at first hand the working and the results of missionary activities, and to have him say to the Japanese lads : "Any education without a Christian foundation is of little value either to a man or a nation. The best thing we have in America is our religion, and all blessings which we enjoy have been the result of this. Now our greatest blessings we wish to give to Japan, so we send out missionaries to you. If you want to do the most good to your country the surest way is to prepare yourselves by laying a Christian foundation."

ANOTHER BIBLICAL DISCOVERY.

Bible students will be pleased to hear that an inscription recording a seven years' famine has been discovered in Egypt. This new and important discovery throws light on more than one question. It gives to Biblical scholars the fact that a seven years' famine, such as we find recorded in the Bible, is by no means impossible, and the geographical information contained in the inscription is such as might satisfy critical geographers. The tablet is written in the hieroglyphic character, and is dated in the eighteenth year of a king called Tasert, who probably reigned about B.C. 300—250. This date would, of course, be too late for Joseph, but the text does not actually refer to the famine as having taken place in the reign of Tasert, but refers to an event the memory of which two thousand years was not sufficient to obliterate.

A TWISTED CHRISTIAN.

A gentleman in New York recently said to another, "Is Mr. L—— a Christian?" He replied : "Well, yes ; Godward he is all right, but manward he is just a little twisted." How many really good people lay themselves open to this description ? They do not carry out their Christian principles so as to be void of offence. Their life is not lived up to their faith. In small things they dishonor God. In some of their common life dealings they do not carry out their principles amongst their fellow-men. We are afraid the "little twist" is more or less to be seen in us all. Alas ! twists of temper, twists of inconsistency, society twists, business twists, home twists ! May God set us upright and give us in our daily life a straight backbone, so that we may walk upright amongst our fellow-men on our way to heaven.—*The Quiver*.

A young woman whose life was full of lofty ambitions found herself occupied day after day with disagreeable household tasks. As the future seemed to shut down hopelessly around these homely duties, the girl grew complaining and bitter. One day her father, who was the village doctor, said to her, "Do you see those vials ? They are cheap, worthless things in themselves, but in one I put a deadly poison, in another a sweet perfume, in another a healing medicine. Nobody cares for the vials themselves, but for what they carry. So with our duties, insignificant and worthless in themselves, but the patience, or anger, or high thinking, or bitterness which we put into them, that is the important thing the immortal thing."