

The Christian.

ST. JOHN, N. B., - - DECEMBER, 1900.

THE INNER LIFE.

NOT LIVING FOR SELF.

A man who has attained the right attitude before God generally perceives that God's plan is larger than his own little life, and includes other people's interests and destinies. David saw that his kingdom was exalted for Israel's sake. That is where you have got wrong. You are suffering banishment from Saul's court, the scene of early prosperity, and you find it hard to be an exile, an alien. You have to live a rough and terrible life with a number of men in the Cave of Adullam with whom you have no great sympathy. You are condemned to cross the frontier into Achish's domain and to find shelter among Philistines. You often say to yourself, "What have I done? Why these experiences?"

And if you look only upon your own happiness, and contentment, and peace, you might well abandon the problem as insoluble. But some day you will suddenly perceive that no man lives for himself, that our lives are interwoven with the lives of other people, and that we suffer, are tempted, are exiled and forlorn and pass through deep waters, that we may write and sing psalms which will live forever; that we may save other people; that, having been tempted, we may be able to find and show a track for those who are tempted to follow.

A great illustration of this is presented in the life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Few women have suffered more than she did. One who knew her well said that her face reminded her of the face of mighty mountains deeply scored by spent torrents. From the age of fifteen till her thirty-seventh year she suffered almost continually, and lay in a darkened chamber. When she was yet a girl her brother was suddenly swept from her by a yachting accident, leaving her, she says, to perpetual nightmare. And so she wrote to her husband, saying,

A heavy heart, beloved, have I borne from year to year,
Until I saw thy face; and sorrow after sorrow
Took place of all those natural joys.

After her marriage her father would not permit her name to be spoken in his hearing, would open none of her letters, and did not mention her in his will. But do you think that she could have comforted tens of thousands of women, or written "The Cry of the Children," or inspired Mr. Browning to write the poetry which is being increasingly woven into the texture of our times, unless she had gone through this for others' sake? Remember to perceive all this, that there is a divine plan in your life, that God means to bless others through it, and that one day you will see that your kingdom was exalted for Israel's sake. No kingdom can be higher than the depth of education and humiliation to which the king was descended. It was because David went down that he went up; because he humbled himself that he was exalted; because he suffered that he reigned. He perceived this.

It is not certain that those who are in young life will at first perceive God's place. If you did it would dazzle you. You would be always looking at the end and goal instead of the path appointed for you. You would not learn obedience by the things you suffer, and would miss the daily education of the faith that has to trust when it cannot see.

Thus God is compelled to veil from so many of us the divine place and program.

On the walls of London lately a new kind of advertisement has appeared. There is only a face and a hand and a foot, nothing more. I never see that without thinking it resembles the life of a young man. He sees a bit here and there of his destiny, but what is to weld them together and fill in he does not see yet, but he waits. If you cannot perceive you must trust, realizing that God is working out his plan in the little things of daily life. He does not show you the whole, but gives you the glimpse of a bit. He says, "Make that; do yonder piece of work, which lies next to your hand. Do not rush it, or slur it; do your duty, and your best." Thus as every day we fulfill the day's demand, we fill in a little more of the perfect plan, and suddenly one day, as we are fulfilling some trivial round, it will prove the connecting link, and we shall find all the disconnected fragments combined in perfect symmetry, and exclaim, "I never saw it before, but I perceive God's purpose in life."

When a man sees that, it delivers him from pride, from envy and from restlessness. From pride, because whatever he has attained is not the result of his own achieving, but of the grace of God—the Lord has made him king. From envy, because he realizes that more could not have been put into his life than has been put. Why, therefore, should not he allow his brother's life to work out its full proportions? Why should he be jealous? Why should he not help to arm his brother for the fight, polishing his weapons, and aiding him to mount in the castle yard? From restlessness. Why should he always be perturbed and fretted by constant emulation? Why should he not be quiet, and wait the evolutions of the Divine plan? It is time enough for him to be aloof when he hears God's clarion sounding the advance. While this thought delivers a man from these besetments, it gives him purity, for he says to himself, "I must not mar, by passion or lust, or the intrusion of vehement feeling, the quiet working of God." Just as the manufacturers who require the most delicate work remove their factories out into the villages that their workmen may be undisturbed by the rush of a great city, so does the soul need to be delivered from strong passion, that nothing may hinder the Divine workmanship. Such a soul is thus made pure, content and quiet, and is brought into great sympathy with all other lives.

David forecasted Christ. Of all lives ever lived in this world, with the exception of the one blot of his sin with Bathsheba, there is none that has more perfectly mirrored the life of Jesus Christ. Both in word and incident there was a prophetic anticipation of Him who was born in Bethlehem, gathered His church out of poor and destitute men, was crowned in secret by His Father, and shall be yet crowned as King of the world.—
In Union Gospel News.

Neil MacLeod, missionary to Jamaica, and Louise A. White, so widely known as the successfully corresponding secretary of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions for many years, were united in marriage at the home of the bride's mother and sister in Stow, O., November 8th. They will be at home after November 30 at Kings Gate, Jamaica, West Indies. Bro. MacLeod is a native of P. E. Island, and the CHRISTIAN joins with their numerous friends in wishing them many years of increasing usefulness and abiding happiness.

Original Contributions.

SOME THOUGHTS.

R. BENTLEY RAY, M. D.

Before our paper is issued again we shall have passed another Christmas, the last one of the present century. There is no day in one year so generally kept in one way or another, by so many people in so many different lands, as this day, supposedly celebrated in memory of the birth of the Lord Christ. We all prepare for it more or less and there are many beautiful things connected therewith. The giving and receiving of small gifts by friends and those that are nearer than friends is a pretty and useful custom, as it reminds us that there is something else besides selfishness in the world, and confers upon us the great blessing of being thought of by others. And how often have we found with joy that when we had all that was needed, a simple gift of no intrinsic value, sanctified by real care and love has brought to our hearts great blessings.

Then there is the opportunity at this time of the year to do good, with a special effectiveness by giving for his sake whose birth we celebrate, substantial gifts to those unfortunate enough to need. This it seems to us is the great opportunity of the season, and will accord more closely with the will of Him whose birth we celebrate than anything else that we can do. The Master came giving; giving to those that needed; denying himself; giving all He had; emptying His own life; filling the lives of others. The Christmas of nineteen hundred years ago was the beginning of His deep humiliation—"was made in the likeness of men." That day was also the beginning of exaltation—"Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

If we would learn what kind of Christmas celebration would be most acceptable to-day we need only go back to that time so long ago and take in its spirit.

It is a sad thing to see some of the things that characterize this season; the feasting, eating and drinking, the loosing of the pent-up passions and appetite of months, and the grief and sorrow that is sure to follow. How strange that any one upon earth should fear the coming of the season and the day that celebrates the birth of the Saviour of men. And yet we have sometimes seen a mother with grown-up son who approached this season with a great fear lest dissipation, sin and disgrace should come with it, a fear that was often realized.

Even among Christian people our Christmas is often we fear like the inn at Bethlehem, full, too full even to find room for Christ. However, let us remember His name comes first in the word, and two-thirds of the word is made up of that name, and then give a fair share of this season to Him and His,