

No kind of circumstances makes any difference to the Spirit of God when He comes to convict of sin. The secrecy of the mind, which no other meddler with, is open to Him; the hidden man is ever in privacy to all but God. Brownlow North was sitting at the card-table, deep in the play, when the Holy Spirit brought to him the sense of death. He arose and went to his room. There, to his horror, a maid was lighting the fire. He hesitated a moment, but felt his soul stood in the balance; then, falling on his knees, he cried to God for mercy. He relates how his interest in everything but the one thing needful so completely left that, although the events leading to the Crimean War came on, he knew nothing of them all until he heard someone on the top of a coach tell of the battle of Inkerman. He had become the subject of the prayers of others. What wonderful transformations occur under the power of the Spirit of God!

The Secret of a Quiet Heart.

Thy burden is God's gift,
And it will make the bearer calm and strong;
Yet, lest it press too heavily and long,
He says, Cast it on Me,
And it shall easy be.

And those who heed His voice,
And seek to give it back in trustful prayer,
Have quiet hearts that never can despair.
And hope lights up the way
Upon the darkest day.

—Exchange.

A Second-hand Life.

'A little while ago,' said Mrs. Dening, 'I was in Norwich. I went into a shop to buy a dress. When I had selected one and was paying the young person for it, I said, "Now, you'll be sure and send me this dress?" "Oh, yes, ma'am." "You'll send it to me now, at once, to-day?" "Certainly, ma'am." "You won't take it and wear it out first, and then send it to me when it is worn out, will you?" The young woman seemed quite hurt and offended. "Why, you surely don't know our house, ma'am; this is one of the first houses in Norwich; of course, we should not dream of such disgraceful conduct! I never heard of such a thing!" "My dear young friend," said I, "are you not serving the Lord Jesus Christ so? Are you not wearing out your precious life, which he bought and paid for, in the service of the world and self and sin and Satan? Have you given him what is his own right of purchase? You are not your own; you are bought with a price! Have you given yourself, body, soul and spirit to God?" The young woman burst into tears, and said, "O, ma'am, no one ever spoke to me about my soul since my mother died."—The 'Christian.'

Will God Guide us by Special Bible Texts?

How to learn one's duty in an emergency, is a question that perplexes many a sincere child of God. A disciple in Pennsylvania, who has been in doubt on this point, writes:

'Will you kindly let me know whether you believe that, when one is deeply perplexed and is seeking light from God, and, going to the Bible, finds a verse seemingly peculiarly adapted to his case, he is safe in assuming it to be an answer from God? A girl went on the witness-stand to be cross-examined before a noted lawyer. At night she read the verse, "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." On subsequent occasions verses seemingly as direct and pertinent came, when trying to decide between two courses of action. I have heard preachers say that one should not rely for direction in this way. What is your opinion?

It depends on the spirit and needs of the seeker, on the circumstances of the particular case, and on the proper application of the Bible passage. In the case of the young girl who was to go on the witness-stand, and who could not prepare herself beforehand by study, the Bible passage properly encouraged her to believe that God would surely help

her. But if it had been her lesson in school that she was looking forward to, she would have had no right to infer from the text that God would not have her take thought and study beforehand. And so if it had been a clergyman who had to preach a sermon. His plain duty would have been to take thought beforehand what he was to say. Yet he ought to depend on God's help, notwithstanding his best and most thorough study. If, however, a child of God be honestly in doubt as to his duty, with no known way of finding it out, he can confidently ask it from God, and can expect help accordingly. It may come through a remembered text, or a verse in his Bible reading for the day; or it may come by the voice of God speaking to his heart. If God's help be really needed, and honestly and in trustful faith be sought, God will find a way of giving help. We cannot say beforehand just how it will come to us or to another. God's promise as to this point is distinct and positive. 'If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask (that wisdom) of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not (for the lack); and it (the wisdom) shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting' (James i., 5). That promise stands sure. Thousands have had it verified to them through the suggestion of particular texts, coming as an answer in a time of need; and thousands have had it answered in other ways. The promise is sure to be verified; as to the mode of answer, we cannot know in advance.—'Sunday School Times.'

How many interesting things are all around us unnoticed! A New Haven physician travelling in Germany was so much taken with a diminutive clock exhibited in a window that he bought it to take home as a curiosity. His surprise may be imagined when, upon opening it to wind it, he found the imprint of the company whose manufactory was within half a dozen blocks of his own home at New Haven. So it is that many a man goes to hear some famous preacher, not knowing that every Sunday in his own church he is listening to one just as good.—'Forward.'

The Sceptic's Lesson.

An English earl, who was a sceptic, was travelling not so long ago in the Fiji Islands. 'You are a great chief,' he said to one man, 'and it is a pity for you to listen to those missionaries. Nobody believes any more in that old Book called the Bible that they try to teach you, that you have been so foolish as to be taken in by, nor in that story of Jesus Christ—we have all learned better.' The eyes of the chief flashed as he replied: 'Do you see that great stone over there? On that stone we crushed the heads of our victims to death. Do you see that native oven over yonder? In that oven we roasted the human bodies for our great feasts. Now, if it hadn't been for the good missionaries and that old Book, and the great love of Jesus Christ which has changed us from savages into God's children, you would never leave this spot. You have reason to thank God, for without it you would be killed and roasted in yonder oven, and we would feast on you in no time.'—The 'Presbyterian.'

Clear Shining After Rain.

All ye children of God who are under the peltings of poverty, or the downpour of disappointments, or the blizzards of adversity, 'think it not strange, as though some strange thing had happened unto you.' Millions have had the same experiences before you. No storm ever drowned a true believer, or washed out the foundations of his hope. The trial of your faith will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of your Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Two things ought to give you courage. One is that our Lord loves to honor and reward unwavering faith. He permits the storm to test you, and then sends the smile of His sunshine to reward you. Another thought is that the skies are never so brilliantly blue as when they have been washed by a storm. The countenance of Jesus is never so welcome and lovable as when He breaks forth upon us—a sun of consolation and joy after trials.

Long years ago, on a day of thick fog and

pouring rain, I ascended a mountain by an old bridle path over the slippery rocks. A weary, disappointed company we were when we reached the cabin on the summit. But toward evening a mighty wind swept away the banks of mist, the body of the blue heavens stood out in its clearness, and before us was revealed the magnificent landscape stretching away to the sea. That scene was at the time, and has often been since, a sermon to my soul. It taught me that faith's stairways are over steep and slippery rocks; often through blinding storms; but God never loses His hold on us, and if we endure to the end, He will yet bring us out into the clear shining after rain.—T. L. Cuyler, D.D.

Trust that man in nothing who has not a conscience in everything.—Sterne.

Old People.

I want to say a word to the old people. I see you wherever I go. I see you on the street cars. The conductor gives you an extra rest when you get on or off, out of courtesy to your slow steps. I see you at church. You nod sometimes, but the sermon is not complete without your smile of approval. I see you in the warmest corner of the hearth reading the paper.

You have one great temptation—it is to think that your days of usefulness are over. You are only in the way, so you feel, and you'd better be out of the world.

It is a great mistake. If the Lord thought that old people were useless, he would have devised some way suddenly to get rid of them.

What makes a person useful? Not ability to work. A baby cannot earn a penny, cannot do a stroke of work, yet it is often the most important factor in the household. Baby's coming often makes father 'straighten up'; often unites the estranged hearts of husband and wife, often brings sobriety and industry into the home life.

An old man sitting in an armchair, feeble and helpless, may be the most useful member of the household. Let me say three things to you:

1. Old people are a blessing because of their accumulated wisdom. You have made the journey of life. You have the rich experience. That boy is a bright boy who forms the acquaintance of some aged person.

2. Old people supply a necessary conservative force. You make society more stable. You bring reverence to it. The age that is wise rises before the hoary head.

3. Old people link us to heaven. You remind us of the future life. 'My old mother knows how to pray,' said a merchant recently to me. You bind us to the throne of God.

The earth would be positively poor without you. I am not sure that you are the most useful members of society.—'Advance.'

Mr. Spurgeon's Daily Text.

In the early days of Mr. Spurgeon's preaching he was greatly abused. His wife, to fortify him, had the following text hung up in their home. It was read by the great preacher every morning:

'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you' (Matt. v., 1, 12).

He whose money is in the work of God may work twenty-four hours a day at saving men.

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