

would be difficult if not impossible to find a verse in the Bible more pregnant with lofty and precious thought than this one. Notice the two very suggestive figures employed. "The Lord God is a sun." What the sun is to our system the Lord God is to the spiritual universe. The sun is the source of light to the solar system. It is impossible to conceive the intensity of the darkness which would pervade this portion of the universe were it not for the rays of light which penetrate its utmost bounds. But this physical darkness would be insignificant compared with the intellectual and spiritual darkness of men were it not that the sun of righteousness has beamed forth effulgent rays into the minds and hearts of men dispelling ignorance and imparting knowledge. Intellectually the Lord God is the light of the world. The earth can come as near generating its own light as the unaided intellect of man can come to ascertaining the most fundamental truth with regard to the material universe and man himself. Whence this wonderful earth on which we live and these wonderful worlds dashing through space above us? Not only whence, but why? Let the wisdom of the world answer and we have nebular evolution or some other hypothesis equally untrue. But when the wisdom from on high answers, we are told that God created the heaven and the earth; that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth his handiwork, and that they were created for the glory of God. Whence came man and whether he is going? Some answers which have been given by the "world wise" men are a slander on the Creator of men. They inform us with the certainty of perfect knowledge that our ancestors were baboons! But the Lord God tells us that God created man in his own likeness and image. What can the human intellect per se determine as to the future man? Has he a soul? If so, is it immortal? And what and where shall be his final abode? How black and disappointing have been the answers given by the wisest in mere worldly wisdom. But the wisdom of God assures us that man has an immortal soul and that its ultimate destiny will be bliss in heaven or misery in hell. A thousand other questions might be propounded only to receive the same unsatisfactory answers from the wisdom of this world. Certainly, then, the Lord God is a sun in the sense that he is the light of the world intellectually and spiritually.

The Lord God is a sun in the sense that he is the centre of attraction in the spiritual universe. In majestic grandeur vast bodies move around our sun in obedience to the law of affinity. So in majesty infinitely grander do the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect encircle the throne of God in heaven, while millions on earth, held in the orbit of loving duty by the same almighty power, move round the central attraction on Calvary's cross, rejoicing in his gracious presence and hoping for a vision of his glorious presence.

The other figure is very suggestive. It declares that the Lord God is a shield. The shield is a weapon of warfare, and its mention suggests a conflict. It is a defensive weapon and this suggests an attack by our enemy. The flesh also lusteth against the spirit and the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other. There can be no compromise; one must be conquered. It is a war of extermination. The flesh must finally be vanished, but will not be this side of the grave. And our arch enemy will continue to tempt so long as we breathe the air of this world. But the final issue is not doubtful, for we not only have the shield of faith, but the Lord God himself is our shield, and that wicked one touches us not. Even as we are walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we can raise the triumphant shout, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "The Lord God is a sun and shield."

"The Lord will give grace and glory." On account of our sinful state, grace must precede glory. And it is grace; no meritorious consideration on our part. Grace provided the remedy grace draws us to Calvary, and grace applies the remedy. It is grace that keeps us and grace must give us admission through the pearly gates. The Lord will also give glory. And what is this glory? First, the glory of a Christ-like character. Our character is what we are in the sight of God. We find God's estimate of our character revealed in his work. There must be a washing from moral pollution before we can begin to assume the Christ-like character. "Ye must be born again." Regeneration is the beginning of this character and glorification in heaven will be its consummation. Then he will give us the glory of a Christ-like appearance. At the resurrection we shall receive bodies fashioned like unto his glorious body. We shall be like him when he shall appear, for we shall see him as he is.

"No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly." Broad promise, but confined to that which is good for us, who walk uprightly. We may want that which is not good for us, but God knows best, and will give that which is good. We can not walk uprightly unless we are upright in heart. If our heart is right with God our life will be right with men. "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Be Ye Worshipers.

We were impressed by the appearance of some American visitors at an Italian Catholic service a few Sundays ago. They plainly regarded the ceremony at the altar as a spectacle which was to be looked at as something curious, and not as an act of worship which should have prompted worshipful feelings in the spectator. That might be said to be a characteristic of people who visit other churches than their own, whether in city or country. The city visitor in the country is apt to give chief attention to the plainness, it may be, or the heartiness of the worship, in the same way that the country visitor is apt to be impressed by the order of exercises more than by the worship that they embody. This is a common fault, if we may term it that, of tourists and travelers in foreign countries. They are too apt to view the church service as they would a street procession, and without feeling any more inclination to participate in it than they would to enter the procession.

But this apparent separation of one's interest from the worship may be remarked not only of foreign travelers and of country and city visitors but also of the townspeople themselves when they visit other churches in their own community. They look on without entering in. They have in a sense left their religion at home. They are comparing ministers and choirs and general style and appearance of congregations without vividly remembering the great injunction to "worship God."

We should not complete our observations if we did not say that this failure to enter into the worship of the hour is also seen in more or less persons while attending the accustomed service in their own church. They leave the responses, the contributions, the silent or audible prayers, to the others, while they themselves maintain a degree of indifference to any part of the service except the benediction.

It ought to be the felt privilege of every attendant in God's house anywhere to join with the congregation in the acts of worship. If there be responsive reading, add your voice. If there be a collection, add your mite. If there be congregational singing, join with the others. Even show an interest to follow the pastor in the reading of the Scripture or the hymns. It all helps to make the collective service animated, and it stirs better feelings in your own heart.

"That is all very well," says one, "in a Protestant service, but what shall a Protestant do in a Catholic church or a Jewish synagogue or a Mormon temple?" He can at least be devout, and conduct himself as something more than a mere spectator. God is to be worshiped in spirit, and it is a sorry Christian who cannot bow with Catholics and offer his own prayer to God, or with Jews and Mormons and breathe out his love and duty to the great Father of us all.

Let us all try to improve our worship in these respects the coming year, whether at home or abroad. Let us make the responsive reading and the singing hearty and soulful. Let us patronize the contribution box. It is a part of a worship whether we are in "our own church" or in somebody's else. Let us not be afraid of the amens. The Episcopalians put many of us to shame in this respect. In whatever church we find ourselves, let us regard it as our Father's house and render there the praise that is his due.—Ex.

Pull.

It is an innocent, and even an admirable word. Together with its brother, "Push," it stands for continuous and muscle-taxing effort. That is part of the purpose of life. He is in the wrong world whose life has not discovered these two words. On this planet, where life implies work, the man who can neither push nor pull is a misfit.

The word at the head of this article has another meaning, however. In the vocabulary of slang "pull" becomes a noun of exceeding badness. It is perverted to mean a use of power which is wholly vicious. And yet we are so familiar with this sinister—"left-handed" meaning of the word that it is to be feared we have ceased to hate it.

The political "pull" we have always with us. It explains many a waste of public money, many a neglect of public health, and many a debauching of public and private morals. But politics has no monopoly of the pull. It is in business, society, pleasure. Yes, and it is in the churches, especially the churches whose organization centralizes much power in few hands. It assumes myriad disguises, and we need skill and sense and grace to detect it as being, under no matter what disguise, a miserable and wicked fraud.

Look out for the "pull," you young man! If you are deceived into thinking that it can help you, pray for clearness of vision. For it will surely hurt your life and spoil your work, if you yield to its influence.

The man who obtains his place through somebody's pull cannot be faithful to his work. The pull depends on favor, and favor is fickle. So it must be watched and kept unweakened, and whenever there is a question

between loyalty to one's work and loyalty to the pull that provided the work, the pull will win.

The pull is a short cut to undeserved gain. Like every other deviation from the straight road, it costs more than it comes to. The loss of self-respect, the helpless dependence on the uncertain favor of those who have furnished the mess of pottage, the consciousness that the whole thing cannot bear the light of day—all this is a big price to pay for the privilege of depending on something other than ability of one's work.

And at the end the pull does not count. In the long run the test is not favor, but fitness. The pull—fraternal, social, political, ecclesiastical—may help at the beginning, but the world finally makes its own estimates. There is a very real reign of law in the world, and the law which scrolls the pull is the law that the fit survive. No man, or set of men, can change that law. It can be delayed, counter-balanced, checked. But only for a time. And there is no spectacle of impotence more pitiable than the man who has lost his pull. "He cannot dig, and to beg he is ashamed."

Happy he who can say, with all modesty: "I used no 'pull' to obtain my place and I need none to refrain it. If I keep it I know what to do, and if I lose it I know what to do." He is always in demand.—Epworth Herald.

Loyalty to Christ.

Above loyalty to our society, above loyalty to our church, must come loyalty to Christ. The theory of Christ-loyalty is accepted by all Christians: the practice of such loyalty is far too uncommon. Lack of Christ-loyalty, in practice, is the cause of every evil existing in church or in society. The greatest need of society and church is fuller surrender to Christ. In complete surrender lies the secret of loyalty. A surrendered life cannot be anything else than loyal. The call of the hour is to whole-hearted, unquestioned, continuous, self-sacrificing loyalty to our one and only Lord, loyalty to him in every act, word, thought, desire, study, pleasure, association, work, ambition and effort. Less than what this implies is so much less than loyalty.

Given the individual who lives this life and you have one strong, fixed, valiant, unshakable in the faith; the same results must follow in any and every society and church which live this loyalty. Failure to realize we are called to be "bond slaves" of Christ, thoughtful of ourselves in nothing except as we are first thoughtful of Christ; failure in this is the secret of all spiritual failure. Our Lord demands, as he has the right to demand, loyalty to himself on the part of his own as full as our country can demand of us in the time of her peril. That thousands of professing Christians show more devotion to their country's flag than they do to their professed Lord may be due to the fact that they realize the call of country more clearly than that of Christ. Why is this? Probably because Christ is less real to them than country. Why is the last? Probably because of weak spiritual life which ever results in a few fellowships.

Loyalty to Christ is not an emotion to be stirred up to-day by some eloquent appeal, to die away tomorrow amid the "cares of this world." Loyalty to Christ is fact, fact which never dies because it never can die. Loyalty to Christ is fact which lives in the life of every true Christian to make us what our Lord would have us to be. A truly loyal heart hesitates at no call, shrinks from no duty, accepts every opportunity, shuns no danger, questions no command, believes every promise, holds itself ever ready to obey, and consents to be all that the love and power of Christ have made possible. Loyalty first consists in "being" that it may then obey in "saying, doing, going."—Ex.

The Missionary's Work.

We should be prepared for lowly tasks. Many years ago, when I was a somewhat helpless cripple, I occupied a room with a Bishop. I slept a little longer than he did in the morning, and before I got up I thought I heard the sound of a brush on my boots. I rose on my elbow and saw the Bishop polishing my boots. I insisted that he lay them down, but he persisted and finished the job. A little after that some ladies asked me what I understood by the Saviour's words concerning washing the feet. "Is it," they asked, "a permanent obligation on us?" I said, "It is an example." "But," they replied, "did not Jesus distinctly say, 'Ye ought also to wash one another's feet?'" I said, "Interpreted in the language of the present day that means 'black ye one another's boots.'" Have the spirit of Christ's service in you, and carry that to the ends of the earth, and in every caste-stricken country you can teach the people what depth of meaning there is in these simple words.—Bishop Thoburn.

In truth it is not in the solitary life one shows himself a man; but the victory is his who, as the husband and father of a family, withstands all the temptations that assail him in providing for wife and children, servants and substance, without allowing himself to be turned from the love of God.—Clement of Alexandria.