

LIFE INDEED.

(By Rev. R. S. Laidlaw, B.A.)

The greatest forces in the universe are its unseen forces. Through these we enter the life that is life indeed. Through these are we drawn nearer, held close, to God. Gazing with clarified spiritual vision on Him, "we all with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit."

Faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," what a potent influence in life! That which penetrates the outward and attaches itself to the inward; which relegates the material things in the world to the subordinate place and exalts the spiritual as supreme; which chooses the right, the honorable, the true, & preference to the wrong, the unworthy, the false; which brings peace in the time of soul conflict, joy in the midst of pain, comfort when sorrow overwhelms; which ushers in a vision of eternal Love, of the eternal God, to supplant the fleeting temporalities of world enjoyment; which steadies itself upon God and grows in strength.

"Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing," and carries the life in safety over many a barren, wilderness experience. How essential and influential in life is hope! The mother in her expectations for her child; the youth in his aspirations for future glory; the business man in his planning for enlarged enterprises; the scientist in his active and accurate research; all find in hope the subtle energizing force sustaining and promoting life activity. The saint, buffeted and baffled by temptations subtle and strong, conscious of imperfection and weakness, is buoyed up by hope in that fuller and final emancipation, when there shall be no more curse, when the rest that remaineth to the people of God shall be entered and evermore enjoyed.

Love, the greatest of all, is unspeakably influential in moulding life effort. Love of the home, of the friend, the loving expectation of dear ones, how precious, how stimulating! Love of the Christ, the unseen Christ! He has gone. He has come. "I go away," "I come again." "It is expedient that I go," "I go, that I may more truly come. I depart, that I through the Spirit may be the more present with you." Whom having not seen, ye love." Love to God, love to the Christ prompted and sustained by the indwelling Spirit's presence!

Influences unseen are ever beating in upon the heart citadel, and a great work of displacement is constantly carried on. Happy are we, if holding the key to this citadel, we open its portal for the entrance of those higher gifts and graces which enrich life.

Belleville, Ont.

PRAYER.

O God, our Heavenly Father, in the light of morning we raise to Thee our altar of thanksgiving. For the mercies of the night, and the gift of refreshing rest, we offer to Thee grateful praise. Keep us this day without sin, and teach us to do the thing which pleaseth Thee. May we ever remember that we are Thy children, not only by creation and providence, but also by adoption and grace. Father, cause the light of Thy countenance to shine upon us and ours; defend us by Thy mighty power, and let Thy banner over us be love. Help us to be loyal to Christ, our Master and our Friend, and banish from us all selfishness, pride, and love of the world. Amen.

The blessing of a man is not the blessing he receives, but the blessing he becomes the channel of.

A SIGN OF THE SKIES.

By a Banker.

Historians inform us that the Emperor Constantine the Great, then a heathen, previous to the commencement of the battle which gained for him his crown, saw suspended in mid-air a large fiery cross; and that after the victory he became a convert to Christianity, and adopted the sign of the cross as his badge. And probably from time to time this natural—probably electrical—phenomenon has been observed, though of course in these days of education and enlightenment the strange spectacle is not viewed with the alarm and terror which it evoked in the days of heathendom, or in the dark ages of mediæval superstition.

A beautiful instance of this startling phenomenon, which the writer was fortunate in witnessing, occurred in the south of Ireland in the early nineties. He was driving along one of those lovely coast roads which it would be difficult to match for natural beauty in any part of the world. On each side of the road was a high and picturesque irregular hedge; not trimmed down in a long straight line by the vandal hand of those who are despoiling the country of its beauty, and robbing the landscape of its greatest charm, but a luxuriant festooned and garlanded sylvan copse; here a tasselled, feathery spray of traveller's joy; here a wreathed chaplet of racemes of the brilliant and handsome scarlet berry of the black bryony; or here a tall bush of the striking and somewhat rare wild euonymus, every bough loaded with its lovely rose-pink and orange triple berries. And now at a turn of the road the sparkling sea-scapes bursts upon the view, the road soon skirting the seashore, the foam of the breaking waves almost reaching the rock-protected border of the road.

But far more beautiful, and far more wonderful, suspended over the sea at an elevation of not more than twenty degrees, and suddenly starting into view, glows a large and gleaming cross, clear and distinct, though in full noon-day; not rectangular, but shaped somewhat like a St. Andrew's cross. And there it hangs, glistening in pale, lustrous glow—though had it been night it would doubtless have shone with a brilliant, quite dazzling fire—until soon it faded away, leaving a memory never to be dimmed, never to be forgotten or obliterated.

Aye, and what does the Cross mean to the world? An emancipation from the cruelties and the horrors of heathendom; a free pardon to all who will accept the Great Atonement made by the Son of God thereon; and an eternal inheritance for all believers, in a realm of surpassing joy, never ending pleasures, and inconceivable glories and felicities.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
The majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gates of death—
He enters heaven with prayer.

—James Montgomery.

TRUE HAPPINESS.

Half the happiness in living
Comes from willing hearted giving.
Comes from sharing all our pleasures.
From dividing all our treasures.
All the other half is loving:
All things tame and all things roving;
Woods and waters, fields and fountains.
Loving skies, too, and the mountains.
So each good child should be sowing
Love seeds while his life is growing:
For all happiness in living
Comes from loving and from giving.

PRESENT DAY APPLICATIONS OF
LAST SIX COMMANDMENTS.*

By Robert E. Spear.

The family is the great institution of God. Church and state are both ordained by Him, but the family and all that it stands for is dearer still. He is father, rather than pope or king. Heaven is a home where the Father dwells, and whither the children shall come. The family can dispense with church and state better than they can dispense with the family. First of all the commandments regarding human relations, accordingly, is the injunction to keep the family love rich and full. Filial piety is the deepest of all social virtues. The man who truly honors his father and mother will honor all men and women, because they, too, are fathers and mothers, or have fathers and mothers who need their honor. And the man who does not honor his own father and mother is capable of any crime.

And the want of love is murder. "He that hateth his brother," said John, "is a murderer." There is other killing than that by clubs and knives and poison. The command not to kill is more than a mere prohibition of violence. It is a positive command to love. The Ten Commandments are, with two exceptions, negative in form, but they are not all negative in principle. The sixth one is a call to love, not only not to hurt others with our hands, but to feel for them with gentle hearts.

And there can be no gentleness in the heart that is not pure. For all impurity is brutality, the beast triumphing over the divine that is within us. And impurity, like murder, is not a matter of external act alone. The wrong desire is sinful as truly, if not as fatally, as the wrong act. No principle of Christ's was clearer or more earnestly set forth than this. The seventh commandment is against all evil pictures and "suggestive" books, against all unclean stories and gossip and slander.

Who is more of a thief than the man who, to-day, takes in any way money which he has not earned, or which justly belongs to others? The sweat-shop owner is a thief and a murderer. The factories which crush out little children's lives are run in violation of this eighth commandment, which forbids this stealing the color from the little children's cheeks and the joy from little children's hearts. The man who bets even a little steals or is stolen from. All cheating is theft, and there is a theft of time that is against the law of God.

Of none of the commandments is it more true than of the ninth that it creates no new moral obligation. It only expresses the fundamental laws of life, written on the constitution of things. No lie. That is the bottom law. No lie. A thousand words tell us no more.

Those who obey the first nine commandments will be content. God and love and purity and truth will satisfy them. They will not want what any neighbor may have.

No man can carry commandments so great as these constantly in his mind, and try each problem of life on them. But love will fulfil them unconsciously.

The goodness which is Christ in the soul is a nobler righteousness than the righteousness of the law.

The value of a gift in God's sight depends more on its spirit than on its size, but one who is able to give much can not put into a few cents the spirit of a widow who cast two mites in the treasury.

Y. P. Topic, July 21, 1907.—Exodus 20:12-17.