

to have given unrequited beneficences, an useless sacrifice. Bit with Him to have given, binds Him still to give, and with Him the more he calls and we refuse, the louder, and more vibrating with tenderness and weighty with threats of judgment in the voice that calls us. He gives a million of pounds when He gives Jesus Christ; is He going to withhold a farthing? He gives "the pearl of great price" when he gives Jesus Christ; will He not give a case to keep it in? The greater includes the less.

Further, the answer to the questions is clear, because the purpose of the greater gift cannot be reached unless the lesser are continuously given. God does not do things by halves. Men set out to build great Babel-towers, and they are bankrupt before they reach the second story. But the Divine nature when it begins, ends; completes the bestowments; does not start a man on his course half prepared for it. You remember, how our Lord takes up precisely the same thought as that in my text, only that He begins at the other end, when He says, "Fear not! little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Is He going to let you starve on the road to it? He that wills the end wills the means, and when we are thinking of God we can be sure that He that gives the beginnings, gives all that is necessary to carry these on to perfection. He does not us send his troops into the field half equipped. He does not send us on a warfare at our own charges, and fail us in the matter of commissariat, or supplies when we are on the road. If we have Christ we shall have all which we need in order to reach the end for which Christ is given to us.

Then there is a third consideration that I might just suggest, and that is that the triumphant question of our text is sure of its triumphant answer because in a very deep and real sense, the gift of Christ brings with it and includes in it, everything, both spiritual and temporal necessities. For if that relationship which underlies the mysterious Divine surrender is real, the Christ who comes to us is the Heir of all things, and if we can say, "He is mine," then we can say, "All things are mine," in Him.

III.—One or two practical issues of life and conduct from these considerations. First, let me say, let us learn the relative value of the two sets of blessings. On the one hand Christ, on the other sweetness and blessedness, and joys and helps that earth and time can afford. He dwindles them all into nothing, and all the fascinations and felicities which the world is running after, the Apostle crams—if I may so say—into a subsidy "also." What an inversion of our notions of good! Ah! brethren, is that the point of view which we take? Do our lives look as if we were—crowding, crushing, scrambling, and sweating; and morbid and anxious, or radiant with jubilation over earthly good? And yet these are but as the filings and scales that have been triturated off the great solid nugget of gold. "Seek ye first the Kingdom," and the wills of the Father and of the Son and the King, and all these things shall be added unto you.

And further, whilst we thus learn the relative value of them all, let us recognize that one kind of them, viz., our sorrows and our losses, are parts of His gifts, given in Jesus Christ.

The world in its daily revolution brings equally to us bright sunshine and midnight of darkness. The world in its annual course sweep us through summer and winter, but the course is one. The road leads sometimes through dark tunnels and very rough places, and sometimes in green pastures and by still waters, but the road is one. The methods may vary; the purpose remains the same. And so we can take our sorrows and find blessing and strength, which is the best of blessings, in them all, if only we remember our text; and each wave of trouble or care or loss breaks over our heads, lift our heads above the spray and triumphantly say "Shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—Baptist Times.

God's Good Guidance.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D.D.

Luck is a word that ought to be banished from a Christian's vocabulary; for life is not a lottery and this world is not governed by chance. Our heavenly Father's precious promise is, "I will teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye upon thee." When the children of Israel were making their long march from Egypt to Canaan a miraculous pillar of cloud overhung their camp. In the morning, when Israel was to move onward, the cloud gathered itself into one upright column, and pioneered the way in which Moses was to march. All that the Israelites had to do was to watch the cloud.

We may sometimes envy those pilgrims of the desert who were only obliged to look out of their tents in order to learn whether they were to remain quiet or to go ahead; and if they were to move they knew just whither to bend their steps. But our God, if we ask him, will be as truly with us in our life journey as he was with the children of Israel. He will be our guide even unto death. We have his infallible book as a lamp to our feet and a light upon our pathway; and in dark hours of bereavement what a cheerful gleam it pours into sorrowing homes and hearts! One of the best proofs that my Bible is God's book is that it has a clear "thus saith the Lord" over the path that

leads to heaven, and a most distinct "thou shalt not" over the enticing gateways that lead downward toward hell. As the night watchman beside a railway track swings his red lantern in token of danger, so our loving Father holds out what may be called his red lights of warning and prohibition on the pathways to ruin.

Not only does every true believer have his Bible for his rule of faith and practice, but he is promised the instruction and help of the Holy Spirit. "He will guide you into all truth." In addition to this the docile and obedient believer has the example of his Master, who has said, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." There have been some extravagant things said about walking "in his steps," but certain it is that if all Christians would examine their Master's footsteps they would oftener discover their own path of duty, and would not stray into the seductive roads to self-indulgence and worldly conformities. "Follow Me" means, Go where you can have My presence and My blessing; if we cannot carry Christ and a clean conscience with us, then not one step!

The infallible Word and the help of the Holy Spirit and the example of our Lord are not all that we have to direct us. There is also what we may call the pillar of Providence. We often talk about "special providences," because we can then detect the leadings of God's hand more clearly than at other times; but the whole government of God in regard to us may be a complex series of oversights and orderings. Sometimes the workings are exceedingly complex; just as in a watch the wheels move in opposite directions, yet the one main-spring drives them all, and on the dial-plate we read the meaning of the movements. The most vital steps in life turn on small pivots. The Bible abounds in the stories of special providences, from Pharaoh's daughter going down to bathe in the Nile to Philip's meeting the Eunuch on his way to Gaza. Livingstone intended to go to China; but while he was boarding in London Robert Moffat happened in one evening, and talking to the boarders about Africa; that talk decided the young Scotchman toward the most wonderful missionary career of the nineteenth century. Nearly every minister may have his experience of the Divine guidance. After long and painful perplexities about accepting a certain attractive call, I opened a book, and read this seldom noticed text, "Wherefore gaddest thou about to change thy way?" In an instant I made a decision on which the major portion of my whole lifework has turned. My faith forbids me to believe that this incident was a matter of haphazard chance.

One important thing with the children of Israel was to keep their eyes on the movings or the restings of the cloud-pillar. They did not move it; the cloud moved them. A Christian who would be happy and successful in his spiritual life must be an open-eyed servant of his Master. He must come to his Bible, not to read his own preconceived opinions into the book, but to bring God's teachings out of the book. He must be open-eyed to study his Lord's example. "Looking unto Jesus" signifies not only the ground of our salvation, but the guidance of our conduct. We must be open-eyed in our seasons of earnest prayer, to discover what responses our consciences give; for the Holy Spirit often works on a good conscience as the noonday sun does on a sea captain's quadrant. Especially must we keep our eyes clear and "single" to watch the leadings of Providence. Does the cloud very evidently move? Then pull up tent-pins, and be ready to go where it guides you. Paul was not the only minister who had the Divine direction to his right field of labor. Every Christian also whether pastor or teacher or parent, or whatever he or she may be—who longs to win souls must be on the lookout for opportunities. I fear that lost opportunities will cast a shadow on the golden pavement of heaven with more than one of us!

Finally, let us watch for the cloud, and walk by the cloud of God's good guidance. Study the Book. Study Christ and study Providence, and you will seldom make a serious mistake in life. God will show you by the way He leads you, whither He desires you to go. The pillar of cloud will only be needed until you and I get to the Jordan. On the other side of the parted river is the flashing glory of the new Jerusalem! March by the cloud till you reach the crown!—New York Evangelist.

The Ready Man.

One prominent characteristic of the Christian is readiness. In this he is distinguished from all others. He is ready to receive any order from his Lord and to obey. Standing like a loyal soldier who thoroughly believes and confides in his leader, he looks up into the face of his Lord and says, "What wilt Thou have me to do."

With other men it is not so. They have chosen to have their own will. They, too, hear the voice of the Lord, and, for the most part, they acknowledge His authority, but they protest that they are not ready. When Felix heard Paul reason concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, the voice of God touched his heart and he trembled, but he was not ready to forsake his sins. Felix dismissed the apostle with a patronizing promise that when he should find a convenient season he would call for him. Amazing audacity! Puny man presumes to require the Almighty God to await his convenience!

Few men are ready to repent and turn to God when first they hear the call. The blind are not ready to receive their sight. The lame are not ready to receive strength to walk. Lepers are not ready to be cleansed. Sinners are not ready to be plucked as brands from the burning. All this because they are not ready to yield to the authority of their rightful Master.

A school teacher in the West tells of an incorrigible scholar who was so wilful and disobedient as to be a constant menace to the order and discipline of the school. At last the teacher felt called on to bring the question of authority to a definite and sharp issue. Drawing a circle with chalk on the floor, she placed the stubborn and rebellious child within that small territory, giving her to understand that she could not cross the boundary line until she was ready to submit and obey. It was a severe test of nerve power and will power. When the weary lady began to droop the teacher looked upon her with an eye of pity and compassion, and, desiring earnestly to make the way as easy as possible, she asked the child whether she was not ready to obey. Without speaking a word, with compressed lips and defiant look she gave her teacher no understanding that her mind was made up to hold out to the end.

Her heart was fully set in her to have her own way. Hour after hour passed away, and the teacher went about her work. But at last the stubborn heart yielded, and, touching her teacher gently on the arm, and laying her weary head upon her shoulder, with a sigh that came from the bottom of her heart, she said, "I am ready." The struggle was a hard and long one. It was a struggle with herself rather than with her teacher. But when it was over she became one of the most obedient and high-minded scholars in the school.

So we often try the patience of our Divine Master. He calls us, pleads with us, waits for us, pities us, and makes the way easy for us. But with compressed lips and defiant look we give him to understand what we do not say with words, that we have made up our minds not to yield. "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them." We will have our own way. But when the struggle is over, and we yield to our Lord, henceforth we are ready to hear his dictates and obey. Herein is a good test of faith. If we are not ready to do whatsoever he commands, we have good reason to doubt the thoroughness of our conversion and the genuineness of our religion. By this test many a religious profession is found to be nothing more than a hollow pretense. The true Christian is always ready to hear what Christ will say. The soldier stands ready to follow his leader whithersoever he may lead; ready to march, ready to go into battle, ready to endure hardness, ready to die in the discharge of duty.

There is one consideration which should aid us in coming to this happy state of mind. Our Leader is perfectly competent and perfectly safe. The soldier holds himself in readiness to hear the orders of his commander and obey them, even when he knows that he is in a position and liable to err. In some cases he knows that his superior officer is utterly incompetent and almost sure to blunder. There are grand lines in which Temyson sings, "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

Forward, the Light Brigade!
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Some one had blundered.
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die,
Into the jaws of death,
Rode the six hundred!

But Temyson could not sing in such a strain concerning our army or our Leader. He never blundered. He cannot blunder. He is a safe Leader. Therefore his followers are ready.—New York Advocate.

The Man and the Fire Escape.

BY IAN MACLAREN.

The truth that Christ is the Son of God who has died for our salvation is the heart of the Gospel. And why should we make our faith in that, and our living by it, contingent on the clearing up of certain external and secondary questions; chronological, historical, critical, philological, scientific and the like? And why should men be so jangled about the latter as that the towering supremacy, the absolute independence of the former should be lost sight of?

What would you think of a man in a fire who, when they brought the fire escape to him, said, "I decline to trust myself to it until you first of all explain to me the principles of its construction; and, secondly, tell me all about who made it; and, thirdly, inform me where all the materials of which it is made came from?" But that is very much what a number of people are doing to-day in reference to the Gospel of our salvation when they demand that the small questions—on which the central verity does not at all depend—shall be answered and settled before they cast themselves upon that.—Sel.

Sunday is like a stile between the fields of toil, where we can kneel and pray, or sit and meditate.—Longfellow.