

to answer our prayer. We may pray for other things and not receive, because we ask amiss that we may simply gratify our selfish and carnal desires. When we ask more spirituality, however, we are asking what God delights to impart, and that for which Christ died in order that we might receive.

Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians that they might be strengthened in the inner man with might from God's Spirit. This prayer showed the intense interest he had in the welfare of these people. It was to him a matter of greater importance than that they should gain earthly wealth or bodily vigor. He put first things first. The greatest blessing one can have is spiritual life and death.

Paul knew the source of this inner life. It can not be gotten up to order. It can not be manufactured by earthly machinery. Good resolutions do not put one in possession of it. Worldly culture does not cause nor advance it. Men are born again by God's Spirit, not by inheritance, nor education, nor resolutions. The life of the soul comes from God and it must be advanced by the grace of God's Spirit. Those who are indwelt by Christ come to be rooted and grounded in love. They grow in and are nourished by the divine love as a tree is nourished by the rich soil in which its roots are spread out, and from which it draws its strength day by day. People who are in the Spirit, and who have Christ dwelling in their hearts, find great joy and gladness in the love of God. They love to pray. They rejoice in the privilege of being near to God. The highest source of joy is God himself to those who really love him.

To those who are spiritually-minded the things of God are of the highest importance. They come to see them in their real proportions. Worldly-mindedness has been said to show itself in considering great things as small, and small things as great. Passing and trifling matters are held to be of the greatest worth to such minds, while the things of God, of the soul, and of eternity, are passed by as of no importance. But the very opposite is true of those who are spiritually-minded. They comprehend the importance of divine things, though they do not entirely understand them. The height and depth and length and breadth of the great salvation of Christ are seen in something of their true proportions, and their souls are filled with the love of God.

The life of true religion is the only life worth living here on earth. Those who profess it magnify the real and true existence. They live after the Spirit. They enjoy spiritual things. They have their citizenship in heaven even here, and find life infinitely worth living because they are God's Children.—Herald & Presbyterian.

Faith in God.

BY DR. DAVID H. GREER.

It is not uncommon to hear people say what good things they would like to do and indeed would do if only they had the means to do them with; if, for instance, they were rich or richer, had more social influence, occupied more prominent places among their fellowmen, or were in some way differently circumstanced and situated from what they actually are.

Well, that may be true. Different persons have, of course, different qualifications, different opportunities, and different talents, and some persons can work at a given task much more effectively than others. And yet, while that is true, is it not also true—a truth which in the Bible is especially taught—that what men have or are, no matter how poor and weak and inadequate it seems to be, can, when used with faith in God, accomplish more than they think? Is not that the very thing, the principle, which the Bible is meant to illustrate? which makes the Bible so different, or one of the things which make the Bible so different from all other books; which has made the religion of the Bible such a unique phenomenon in the history of mankind?

What you need, it has said to men, with a voice different from all other voices, to do a great work for God in the world—and this makes it a voice for all people—is not some greater instrument than what you have already, some greater gift of genius, some greater natural endowment or circumstantial equipment—do not wait for that. What you have is enough—the shepherd rod of a Moses, the trumpet horn of a Joshua, the scarlet thread of a Rahab, the hammer and nail of a Jael, the sling and stone of a David, the barley loaves and fishes of the lad in the gospel story, the one little talent which you possess of wisdom, skill, experience, sympathy, beauty, power. Do not despise and neglect it because it is poor and weak, or wrap it up and bury it and be afraid to exert it, but with faith in God go use it, looking to and trusting in God to multiply and bless it. You cannot tell beforehand what he may do with it, what great results he can accomplish by it; therefore take it and go; that shepherd's rod, that sling and stone, the one little talent which you possess, the thing you have in hand, with faith in God, go use it.

This, I say, is the lesson which the Bible especially teaches the principles which it illustrates, the great truth for which the Bible especially stands, that what men need to do great work for God is not great machinery, is not great tools and instruments, is not great natural power or circumstantial equipment—or not primarily that, but first of all and most

of all, faith in God; faith in what he has given, which means faith in him who gave it. If it be great, so much the better, of course; but if little, the rod and staff, the sling and stone—go use it, and God will make it effective and strong. See how it was in the days of the early church. What was it that made it so powerful? What was the equipment of the men who were so active in it, and whose activity planted it, even before that age, that generation had passed, all over the face of the civilized earth? They did not have much learning, as we count learning in our time, and certainly not much money, no great facilities for getting about.

Then look at the church at the present time. With a scholarship never so ripe, with a membership never so numerous, with a treasury never so full with a social organization never so widely ramified, with a machinery never so ample, with ways and means and tools and instruments never so great and many; and yet, despite all these excellent tools and this great machinery, what little progress is made to-day by the church in delivering the children of God from their houses of bondage all over the face of the earth! Why?

Because, it seems to me, that we to-day have too much faith in machinery. We are making an idol of it, and putting our trust in it instead of God. Is there some great work to be done, or it may be some little work? Some social need to be supplied or some distress relieved? Instead of casting ourselves on God, and strengthening ourselves in him, or trying to find some man of God to do it, with that personal courage, force, daring which faith in God gives—Go to, we say; let us get together and form a new society, with constitution and by laws and officers, and let us appoint committees and sub-committees; let us make some new machinery with ropes and pulleys, and wheels within wheels, so admirably adjusted and fitted to one another that they will almost go automatically. And so we have more social mechanism, more social apparatus, and another society is added to the hundred thousand societies already in existence in Christendom, and we stand off and point with satisfaction to them, or rather, we are buried beneath them, with personal life, liberty, force, almost crushed and broken, and we have just enough strength left to look up and say: These be thy gods, O Israel!

There is one thing more important, and that is a living faith in God. That is the equipment which first of all he requires, and which, when we have it, will make our present resources, ways and means and instruments, sufficient for and equal to the performance of our tasks. And this, it seems to me, is the message of God to his people here and now, as to that man in Horeb who was to be the leader of his people then: "Go bring my children forth," all over the face of the earth; wherever you hear their cry of distress and see their need for help, go bring my children forth from their houses of bondage to day, lift them up to manhood, make them free, give them hope and liberty in Jesus Christ. You need no machinery, no other than what you have.—Springfield Republican.

Sunshine in the House.

BY DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.

In the eastern and western ends of every home there should be windows, high and broad, to catch the first beam and last glimmer of the day. All things may be pardoned there save darkness and gloom. A father's scowl or a mother's sharp reproof will make a hovel of the most luxurious home; and though the floors be carpeted with velvet and the walls tapestried with Gobelin if there be a lack of sunshine the house is eerie. There's no place like home; but the word is a sad misnomer if it signify nothing but four walls and a roof. It should be a conservatory of warmth and beauty, a barricade against all cheerlessness. I pray thee, Nabal, when thou comest from the workshop, or the office, remember that a man is not half a man who lays the burden of his cares upon his wife and children. And, I pray thee, much cumbered Martha, forget not that thy first duty, above, and beyond the multitude of lesser tasks, is to keep the windows of home open toward the sun. I know that in many a household there are inner chambers of sorrow, and many skeleton in closets; but, blessed be God we are masters of our environment. Therein is the chiefest glory of our manhood. A mighty Anak is Calamity, with a spear like a weaver's beam; but the least of God's little ones hath a two-edged sword of promise that will slay him.

In the household of Charles Lamb there was a shadow so dark that we wonder his own lightsome heart was not depressed with a continual somberness. But he had learned the master art of making the best of things. He had multitudes of friends, but none more beloved than the poor sister who never went away with him on an excursion when she did not pack up a strait waistcoat with her apparel. To care for that wild-eyed sister was to him not duty nor self-denial, but the very joy of love. For her sake he surrendered all more selfish loves, yet made no virtue of it. (And here in parenthesis, let us note the sweet ministries of those elect ones whom God has called to abide alone, in what is often satirically called "single blessedness." There is many a household, with an untold story of illness or querulous age, that can witness a most "patient continu-

ance in well doing" on the part of unwed sons and daughters.) There was a path before the feet of Charles Lamb which seemed to him ordained to heaven; it was narrow and steep; but there were flowers by the way, and palm trees bending over, and the sun shining above; so as he went along he kept his merry heart. Therefore his home, in spite of that and other not less somber shadows, was aptly painted as

"A spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer, sweeter spot than all the rest."

But blessed are those servants whom God calls to the office of housewife (or "weavers") and "house-band." It is to ply the engine that furnishes power for all life's industries; it is to plant trees and dig wells for the future ages. O that parents would more magnify their office! The sorrows that come to them are but the Master's pruning for greater usefulness; the clouds that gather will in due time empty themselves of the refreshing "latter rains." Is there a more edifying or heavenly sight than that of our aged fathers and mothers wearing their silver crowns, and amid the benedictions of their children's children passing on into the light of the celestial city! How momentary now, as they look over their shoulders, seem those bereavements by which was made possible this exceeding weight of glory; and how sweet the reflection that in all life's vicissitudes, they have believed in God and through their flowing tears have been able to see his bow in the cloud. Thus they journey on toward the East. The sun is over them.

In that other home, the Father's house, whose doors are opening before them even now, there is a deeper peace than that which has sanctified these faithful hearts, a more unbroken trust, a sweeter joy. It will be a far pleasanter thing yonder, even than in this hopeful world, for their eyes to "behold the sun."

Then welcome to our earthly homes all genial spirits of content and final trust and love—all warmth and light from the great Father's house. Welcome the sounds of music and laughter. Welcome the chip of the cricket on the hearth. Welcome the sun! And get thee hence, ill-temper, discourtesy, proneness to fault-finding, spleen, moroseness, worship of ego—when then the day dawns let the shadows flee away.—Christian Intelligencer.

"Now is the Accepted Time."

BY REV. R. CRITTENDEN.

Nothing is more clearly revealed in "the words of eternal life" given by inspiration of God than the duty of immediate obedience to the divine command in a present consecration to the service of the Lord. There is not the slightest intimation of any wisdom or safety, but only of folly and peril in putting off a sinner's salvation until some future time. The time is always "now," the present time; always "to-day," never to-morrow. I submit the question, it is not the same as saying, "Don't do it 'now'." Wait until the time set for you to do it.

Neither in the Bible nor outside the Bible is there any to-morrow or future date for obedience. "To-day" is the plain and oft repeated command "To-day" I pass a neighbor "having no hope and without God in the world." I shall never pass him again. O, shall I not think "now" of his peril desiring for the joy I have "unspeakable?" And "now," if only by a smile, endeavor to win him for Christ his Saviour? I have just read an account of "Decision Day" as observed recently. The primary classes were permitted to retire. Passing along the street in my near neighborhood I met "the little children." Do I not love them of whom the loving Saviour said for the third time in His Gospel, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me?" May I not, then and there, try lovingly to lead them into the fold of the Good Shepherd?

Without exception, we always do wisely and well by following the directions infallible that never lead astray. There had been no previous announcement for the decision day when Joshua called upon Israel to "choose you this day whom you will serve." His choice, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," was only a renewal of his consecration just as it should be in the case of every servant of the Lord. To the many precious ones, truly too many of them, among our Sunday school scholars and young people, neglecting the "great salvation," may I not repeat the timely wise words of the great Apostle, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation?"—New York Observer.

ST. NICHOLAS FOR 1905.

Mr. L. Frank Baum, author of the "Wizard of Oz," and of other popular fairy stories for boys and girls, will contribute the leading serial to *St. Nicholas* for the coming year. It is called "Queen Zixi of Ix," and its illustrations are to be a new departure for *St. Nicholas*—they will be all in color, sixteen full pages and more than sixty small pictures printed with the text, the work of Mr. Fred Richardson, formerly a Chicago artist, but now living in New York. The story is one which ought to keep the interest of *St. Nicholas* boys and girls throughout the year.