

The Quiet Hour

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.—S. John vi.: 68, 69.

Can you echo those confident words, spoken by one who knew the private as well as the public life of his Master? If not, would you be glad to echo them? In this age, as in all other ages of the Christian era, there are two classes of people who say, "We are not sure that Jesus is the Christ." One class is eagerly seeking for proof that He is the Son of God, while the other is delighted with every new difficulty that is found to lie in the path of faith. If you belong to this latter class you will not be likely to read this column, so my message will not be addressed to you. I will ask of the former class the question which drew from St. Peter his famous expression of confident assurance, the question put by the Master to His disciples: "Will ye also go away?" Surely, if you have looked into history and the human soul at all, you will be able to say: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Look through the history of the Christian nations, and you can count on your fingers the atheists who were noble and pure and good, pouring out their lives in consecrated service, helping and uplifting their fellows. But who can count the multitudes who have been constrained by the love of Christ to devote the best years of life in self-sacrificing service? Who but God could count those who, even now, are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, in city and country, in tropical heat and arctic cold? Judging by their fruits, we must own that the words of Christ and the inspiration of His Life have power to make dark places light and foul places fair, and to bring joy into sorrowful lives.

Yesterday I was talking to a young and unusually clever woman, who said that everyone had "one time of delirious happiness in life, and after that was over, life was gray." She said she was looking forward to death "to end it all." And yet she is healthy and busy, with artistic surroundings and a devoted father and mother. She says she is "never glad to see another day dawn." What is the matter with her? Simply this—she knows nothing of God or the joy of serving Him. Death, in her eyes is the "end" of life; instead of being the door leading into a grander life. She fancies she can look down on those who are still old-fashioned enough to believe in Christ—and what does she gain by her "cleverness?" Nothing but a miserable heart-hunger and unhappiness. She will not go to Him for rest and peace, and to whom else can she go for those priceless treasures? No millionaire has money enough to buy them, and yet the most ignorant slave may win them for his own. I have just read a book in which the hero reads all the sceptical writings he can procure, looking down with easy contempt on what he is pleased to call the "fable" of Christianity. And he is in a constant whirl of disquiet, life has no meaning in his eyes, sorrow and pain must be endured, but he can see no profit in them. Even character is of little worth if it is to crumble into nothingness at death. Love at last opens his eyes to the fact that if he does not turn to the ever-present God, there is no one else to go to. When his wife is passing out of his sight, the empty creed—which is the absence of a creed—of agnosticism is torn to pieces in a moment by the soul that refuses to lose its hold on another soul.

But life as well as death should convince us that Christ has the words of eternal life. If it is hard to believe that the Ten Commandments were written by God in tables of stone, we cannot break them without finding out to our cost that they are written in our bodies and souls. The nations that break them are uncivilized, the men who break them are brutalized and feeble. But Christ's enforcement of them goes deeper than the outside act; even to break the Sixth and Seventh Command-

ments in "thought," he declares, with authority, is degrading. Can anyone teach higher morality than is given in the Sermon on the Mount? God does not leave Himself without a witness. Though well-doing often brings sorrow, yet—in the end—it results in happiness; and sin—though its first-fruits may be outward prosperity—yet it is like "Dead Sea fruit," turning to ashes in the mouth. If God is not always judging the world, how strange it is that sin should always be the path to misery, and righteousness should lead to honor, peace and happiness! This could not be the case if the world were governed by chance.

A sure trust in God gives buoyant courage. Think of Luther, when a messenger from the Pope told him that he need not expect any prince to take up arms to defend him. "Where will you be then—where will you be then?" was the terrible question, which he answered in calm confidence: "Where I am now; in the hands of Almighty God." Do you want proofs of the truth of Christianity? Then look at it! It is its own proof. If you look at an apple-tree, year after year, and find it bearing flowers and fruit, can anyone convince you that it has been dead all the time? Look at the history of Christianity. See how it has changed common men and women into heroes and saints, by the thousands; see how churches to uplift souls, hospitals, orphanages and asylums of various kinds to help bodies, and schools of all kinds to instruct minds, spring up where it takes root. Look at the marvellous literature turned out by those who have been illuminated by it—though a few writers, who would have been ignorant enough but for their education in Christian countries, strike the mother who has nourished them in the face. To whom shall we go if not to "Christian" countries, if we wish to find these things growing naturally as fruit on a tree that is alive?

And what if we can't all understand the reason for God's apparent carelessness when His children are treated unjustly. We can surely trust Him a little, when we remember how often, since the world began, good has triumphed over the evil. How can we expect to understand the whole of life, when the infinite part of it—the division that lies on the other side of death—is unknown to us? If we reject Christ, this life of ours is a riddle without solution; if we accept Him, light is thrown on much of it, and our love for Him makes us willing to trust the dark bit in His keeping. "To whom shall we go?" but to one who has found the living Christ, for such beautiful thoughts as these? What inexpressible joy for me, to look up through the apple blossoms and the fluttering leaves and to see God's love there; to listen to the thrush that has built his nest among them, and to feel God's love, who cares for the birds, in every note that swells his little throat; to look beyond to the bright, blue depths of the sky, and feel they are a canopy of blessing—the roof of the house of my Father; that if clouds pass over it, it is the unchangeable light they veil; that, even when the day itself passes, I shall see that the night only unveils new worlds of light, and to know that if I could unwrap fold after fold of God's universe, I should only unfold more and more blessing and see deeper and deeper into the love which is at the heart of it all. If you want joy and peace that will grow more radiant year after year, go to Christ for it—you will certainly find it nowhere else.

HOPE.

DO YOU SEE?

An artist went to sea to see
What he could see at sea to draw;
He only saw what all may see—
The sea was all the artist saw.
And when he saw he'd seen the sea,
Proceeded he the scene to draw,
And since his scene I've often seen,
I've seen the sea the artist saw.

—SELECTED.

Ingle Nook

APPROVES OF BOTANY ARTICLES.

Dear Madam:—A little time back I had the pleasure of reading one of the letters in the Ingle Nook asking for information on the subject of Botany. Now, that is a subject I should like to see written upon—a short, racy article, showing plant life as it is growing and where found, its uses and how to avail ourselves of its uses. So-called weeds are held as of no use because people are ignorant of plant life. Weeds in their places are just as useful as grain even. What their places are we can arrive at by a study of botany. I hope the other members of this cosy corner will express their views on this important subject, and so give Dame Durden encouragement to find a writer who knows his subject, and can write the articles that will go to build up the brains of.

A MERE MAN, No. 2.

(You will find Evelyn as anxious as yourself to have some Botany knowledge of plant life in Western Canada, and I hope to gratify you both. You are the second "Mere Man" to write to our corner. Number one has neglected us lately but perhaps seeing your letter will stir him up. Come again. D. D.)

A FINE COMMENT ON A FINE LETTER.

Dear Dame Durden:—Feeling sure there is a chair in the cozy "nook" for the auntie of three score and eight, I confidently knock for admittance. I have been an interested reader of "Ingle Nook" chats for several years, and often find there something I would like to reply to; but as you seem to always have plenty to fill your page, and my time is also pretty full, I have not intruded. But I was so pleased with "The Ideals of a Bachelor," in a late ADVOCATE, and wish to say of that all the various and many sided articles on that subject which I have read in current print for months, I consider "Bachelors" the best, because he comes so near the true, ideal relations between the sexes before and after marriage, as far as he expresses himself; and I could trust him to carry out his definition of married life, along the same happy lines, and live up to it.

Bachelors and maidens have busily aired their different views, in the western press of late, on single and married life, the relations of husband and wife in the home, the house and farm work, share of finances, etc. Every week brings, perhaps, several letters on these and kindred subjects from different pens. I read, and am pleased, amused, grieved, and provoked by turns. Many wholesome truths have been told, many pleasant, many hard and some unkind things said on both sides, and we can only trust that good will result from the controversy.

I do not find one among them who strikes the keynote of harmony in wedded life, as does the bachelor who wrote the "Ideals" named above. The only criticism I offer, is on his calling housework "drudgery." It is not drudgery to the woman who loves and enjoys it for its own sake, as so many do, or "for love's sweet sake," as thousands do. Circumstances often make housework heavy, toilsome, burdensome—so of any other work. The housekeeper can let, or make, her work become harder than it need be. I can speak with authority, having kept house more than fifty years. But so long will our daughters turn from it—and often from marriage because of it—and the young wife regard it as a "necessary nuisance."

Let us learn to love the duties that provide healthful food and clothing for the bodies of our dear ones, and sweet, cheery homes for their minds and souls, (they will help us if we show them how,) and teach our girls that to be true homemakers is the highest ideal of womanhood, because it is God's ideal. Women do many other things, nobly, grandly,

beautifully. But the true wife and mother, standing next to God as His right hand helper—second Creator of human souls—is the most beautiful being He ever made. What nobler, holier work can woman aspire to?

Now I want to tell your readers, who are nursing mothers, how I used to find time to rest when I had a young babe in my arms. When its time came to nurse and go to sleep, I would lie down with it on the bed; and when it was sound asleep, I gently raised its head with my free hand, and very carefully withdrawing my arm, I would rise much rested. Try it, mothers who are not strong; if you can afford to drop to sleep yourself for a few minutes, so much the better—or read the "Ingle Nook."

Have I stayed too long? And may I come again?

AUNT SARA.

(You have NOT "stayed too long," and we shall be delighted to have you come again. Do not bother re-writing for the Ingle Nook. If you will only supply those well-expressed ideas, I'll gladly look after the little details of form before the copy goes to the printer. D. D.)

SPLENDID HELP FOR PICTURE LOVERS.

If Dame Durden's many admirers are so fond of pictures as I am, perhaps they will be interested to know of one way by which really charming effects may be obtained, at next to no expense, with a little care and good taste. Almost every one has some special pictures, which they would like in their own room. (magazine sketches, wash drawings, or prints of good paintings) but which would not warrant the expense of framing, and a most satisfactory way of making it possible to use them, is by cutting the picture, so as to leave a very narrow edge of white all round it, and mounting it, (with a tiny bit of photographer's paste or good mucilage applied on the back to each corner) on various colored papers. Wall paper samples, cut a couple of inches larger than the pictures for mounting, (the size of the mat being always governed by the subject and size of the picture, according to one's own judgment) are surprisingly pleasing. The coloring in the mats seeming to supply the lack of color in the black and white pictures, in a perfectly unobtrusive way, giving them light and life which they lack in a curious degree, when left unmounted. Perhaps many Westerners do not know—or have forgotten—that each year, the Royal Academy and New Gallery pictures are published (at the offices, "Black and White," 63 Fleet St., London, England) in black and white in magazine form, a little larger in size, than the "Cosmopolitan," for the very small price of one shilling. Many of these, when carefully mounted, are really beautiful, and always interesting, from the standpoint of the owner being able, year by year, to see what is being exhibited at the Academy each season and, besides giving one a sense of being not altogether out of touch with the world. There is a small education in them, in subject and form, which one unconsciously gains. This treatment has its own advantages, as it is possible to use many more pictures than if framed in the usual way, without the bewildering air of heavy crowding, and dusty frames—always a menace in bedrooms—and if tastefully arranged (with small tacks, which do not injure the walls) the result is more than a little surprising in that there is no effect of making the room cheap or trivial, but individual, restful and charming.

"DAGMAR."

(You will find the private answer to this letter enclosed a stamp before the next issue. I hope it was some help to you. You have more than made up for your instructive letter with your kindness you felt. We will be with you again. D. D.)