

If you explain them they are mysteries no longer; if you fail you have laboured to no purpose." . . . "Neither do I think it any part of prudence to perplex the minds of well-disposed people with doubts which probably would never otherwise have come into their heads. But I am of opinion and dare be positive in it that not one in a hundred of those who pretend to be Freethinkers are really so in their hearts. For there is one observation which I never knew to fail, and I desire you to examine it in the course of your life, that no gentleman of a liberal education and regular in his morals did ever profess himself a Freethinker."—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

BY X.

(From the Parish Visitor, N. Y.)

Recently I was reading of the first of Christ's miracles, where He turned water into wine to furnish the wedding feast, and suggested three thoughts which seemed to me to bear upon the question of Christian activity. It will be remembered that our Lord's mother bade the servants to do what He told them, and this was simply to fill some vessels which stood there with water, and draw out and bear unto the governor of the feast. They obeyed, and the governor marvelled at the rare excellence of the wine which they brought, and commended what he thought was a designed reversion of the custom of having the best first.

1. The first thought is of the interest which Jesus took in the temporal happiness of mankind, and His willingness to use His powers and talents to promote it. This loving interest Christians should share.

2. The implicit trust of those who obeyed His directions. They felt responsible only for what they were told to do, not for what Christ was to do. They did not question. They obeyed and the blessing came.

3. Their willingness and readiness are exemplary. Willingness in a state of mind which at once recognizes authority and the word of command and harbors no rebellious sentiments. This should always be the attitude of the Christian toward the Master, no matter how trying the position in which he may be placed. Readiness has two meanings—being free from other employments and engagements, prepared to do at once what may be appointed; and the other means prepared, fitted, trained for the work to be undertaken. First, this should teach the diffident ones not to wait until they have acquired great abilities and talents before taking up Christian duties of some kind, for many lives have been wasted by such waiting. Confidence in one's own powers rarely comes except through the use of those powers. Talents increase with use. Doing, not waiting, is the duty of the Christian. The second meaning of the word is that we should undertake such work as we are capable of doing and advance in the line of duty as our capacity increases.

There are three orders of work before the Christian: 1. The necessary daily task, of his bread-winning duties. 2. Those which tend to expand and strengthen his personal character. 3. The work to be done for others.

It is very necessary that the young Christian should understand that the common duties of life are God-given. The home duties, the educational tasks, the business routine, the mechanical pursuits are pathways which lead to noble, useful Christian manhood and womanhood. These pathways should not be shunned, nor considered as leading in any other direction than toward the Father's house. A mistake is made where the religious life is separated from the common life. It is the duty of every

young Christian to seek out the industrial or professional pathway which the Father opens out before him, and follow it faithfully.

The studies and training of the young should be such as to strengthen them to withstand the temptations of life, to avoid harmful habits, and to shun prejudices and false pride as barriers to spiritual progress. The daily study of God's Word and daily prayer, as enjoined by the Church's teaching, should be the unflinching resource of the Christian, and, with humility and a perfect trust, he should walk in the pathway which is illumined by the Saviour's bright example.

In the daily life there should be a resolute application of the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them," in the contact with others. Kind words and helpful, unselfish deeds should be strewn along life's pathway like fragrant flowers, and the spiritual sunshine should be so unclouded that all may see clearly the way of righteousness.

I think it a wise plan to resolve that not a day shall pass without at least one effort to make some life happier and better. It is well to devote a little time each week—a single hour, if no more can be spared—in visiting some person or family whom we can cheer or instruct, or help in some way to a higher and nobler life. Steadfast faith in God and persevering effort for the good of others are steps to the life divine.

WORK FOR THE LAITY.

In a Missionary jurisdiction like Spokane it is impossible to supply every place with a clergyman, and because it is so there is a greater duty and higher responsibility placed upon the laity. While the spiritual oversight of the flock is entrusted to the ministry, the laity should bear a part of the burden of the active work of the Church.

While a large portion of the success of the Church already achieved in this jurisdiction is due to the active and energetic work of the laity, there is still a large field untouched. No member of the Church should rest contented with a mere passive membership, while there is so much to do. Let us never forget we are but laying the foundation of the Church now and anything that is done in the name of the Master is but the adding of one stone to this foundation. Gather around you the lambs of the flock if you have not already done so. Instruct them. They are willing and anxious to learn. What a noble work it is for a man or a woman, unaided and alone except by the spirit of Christ, to enter upon active work in a region unvisited by the clergy. Such a work will be blessed and many stones will be added to the foundation of Christ's Church here.—*Churchman*.

THE LIFE TO COME.

One thought respecting our future life we can with some distinctness grasp; it is the one suggested in Psalm ix, 6, namely, that it must be a state of *infinite progress*; a life not, as we too often think of it, of progress arrested—a life in which humanity, once, and once for all, perfected, has before it only an eternity of virtuous repose; but rather one of intense and incessant activity. The promise of eternal life necessarily implies this, for life is something more than mere existence. Life, in its truest meaning, is the highest and happiest manner of being; it is existence, with every power of our nature in its fullest, freest exercise. Whatever falls short of this, whatever checks or restrains any one faculty of our nature, whatever of weariness or weakness there be in us, comes from the imperfection of our life; comes from

its invasion, in some measure, by its great antagonist death. And so we call it "this mortal life." This life, whose every breath, whose every movement is one half death—for such a life rest is essential, because the waste of it is incessant. But the very idea of a perfect life, that knows no strife with death, that needs to defend itself against no obstruction, to repair no waste, implies, not external repose, eternal activity. It means the existence of a spiritual, intelligent, immortal creature, whose whole being, whose every power and faculty lives, intensely lives, in the glorious activity in which perpetual rest and perpetual service are one. "They rest, saith the Spirit, from their labors." And yet, "they cease not day or night," proclaiming by all the unwearied actings of their glorified natures, saying with the eternal hymn of an eternally happy life, "Glory, and honor, and power be unto the Lamb for ever!" For such a race there must be eternal progress for there must be eternal acquisition without the slightest loss.—*Archbishop Maqee*.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Addressing a meeting of Congregational and Baptist ministers lately, Mr. Moody said that for the first twelve years of his Christian profession, he did not know that the Holy Ghost was a divine Person. The yearly festival of Whitsun-day keeps Churchmen from such a state of Christian ignorance. The Holy Spirit is a Person. But how many Churchmen have clear ideas as to the different ways of His acting upon humanity before and after the Incarnation.

Before the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit rested upon fallen humanity, as He is represented in the material universe, as brooding on the face of the waters. He makes humanity fruitful by bestowing various gifts upon nations and individuals. Balaam and Aholab are filled with the Spirit, to devise the cunning ornaments for the Temple worship, and the Psalmists and Prophets wrote under His controlling inspiration. So now, God divides to every man severally, as He will; and we may call the grace which accompanies the gift enabling us to put it into proper action, Actual grace. Moreover the Holy Spirit was striving with humanity, trying to lead it back to God. So He does now. He stands without at the heart's door and knocks. He puts into our hearts good desires. He forecomes us in every good word and work. Every penitent is brought to repentance by the missionary action of the Holy Spirit. This Good Shepherd grace which seeks us out and forecomes us in every good act, we call God's Prevenient grace. Prevenient, that is, the grace that goes before every good deed. Now these were the two ways the Holy Spirit acted upon humanity before the Incarnation. By the way of Actual, and Prevenient grace.

But since the Incarnation it is by a new and additional way. Before, He acted on our nature from without. Like the spirit moving upon the face of the waters. But He could not and did not enter into humanity. He was like the dove sent out from Noah's Ark who could find no place to rest. The Holy Spirit could not make human nature a dwelling place because human nature was so sinful, and where sin was He could not dwell. But when the Son of God became Incarnate by uniting a body and soul to His one Personality, then the Holy Spirit filled that Body and Soul. The Holy Dove at last had found its resting place. And that Body and Soul became endowed with quickening powers. The first Adam, we read, was made a living soul. The last Adam, Jesus Christ, was made a quickening, *i. e.*, life giving, spirit. This our Lord declared, before His resurrection, when referring to His Flesh and