

THE CLEANER.

“Let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.”—Ruth 2; 7.

Thos. Somerville, Editor. “LET THERE BE LIGHT.” Vol. xv. No. 1

EMMANUEL.

A blessed virgin—Mary mild,
And born of her—a holy child—
The infant Jesus—God come down
To sinful man. Oh, lowly birth,
He leaves His throne to dwell on earth.

The Shepherds watched their flocks by night
When to their gaze, O wondrous sight !
The glory of the Lord shone round !
Their hearts now fail, they were amazed.
The Angel cried, “Be not afraid.”

The angels sing aloud His praise,
As on them now the Shepherds' gaze,
To God be highest glory sung,
“On earth be peace—good will to men,”
And swell the song again, again.

Then let us haste as we've been shown,
And see the sight, the Lord's made known,
And hasting fast, they found the babe ;
Then spread abroad what they had found,
That grace o'er sin did now abound !

The magi came with precious store,
And to His feet they gladly bore
Their gifts of gold, of spice and myrrh ;
Then gazing on the infant mild,
They worshipped Him, the Holy Child.
Brooklyn, N. Y. A. J. R.

THE BIBLE REMAINS.

It is said that when Alexander Duff was on his voyage to India with a large quantity of excellent baggage, including a splendid library of more than eight hundred volumes, the ship on which he was sailing was wrecked off the Cape of Good Hope, and when the rescued passengers reach-

ed the shore the only thing of all his baggage that was saved was a Bible that the waves had washed upon the sands ; and as he picked it up and removed the wrapping he found it was perfectly uninjured, and he was so deeply touched with the incident that he opened it, and read some of its precious promises to the little company that stood around him on the shore. All his splendid books had perished, but the Bible remained as the only salvage from the wreck. To him it was a beautiful figure of that which afterward became the object of his life, that the Bible was the only book that would remain out of the world's literature, and the only book which was worth giving to India—the land for which he was going forth to live and die.

All the literature of the ages must perish in the flight of time, but, like Duff's rescued Bible, God's Word will live and survive the wreck of ages, and also give to those that embraced it an immortality as glorious as its own.

It is very sad and humbling to see the tendency among so many of those who ought to be the defenders and the teachers of this holy volume to win a little cheap popularity and wear the reputation of higher culture by joining in the ranks of those who, if they do not reject it altogether,

will compromise its supremacy and question its infallible authority. The Bible is either everything or nothing. Like a chain which depends upon its weakest link, if God's Word is not absolutely true and all true, it is too weak a cable to fix our anchorage and guarantee our eternal peace. Thank God, we have reason to accept it as the supernatural, revelation of the supernatural God, the word not of man, but the Word of God, that liveth and abideth forever.—S.

THE BIBLE TEACHING AS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

There never was a time when so many strange and unscriptural doctrines were being taught as in the present day. There was never a time when believers needed to be thoroughly taught in the Word of God as now. Satan comes to some with a Bible in his hands; he will get men to reject the Bible, if he can, but if not he will lead them into teachings professedly based on Scripture, but in reality the utter denial of it, as witness the Millennial Dawn teaching, and Seventh Day Adventism.

But our God has not left His people to be deceived. He has given His people a deeper insight into the riches which He has stored for them in His wonderful Word, and has given gifts to them of teachers to unfold these riches as they have never been unfolded before. But there is teaching in the church and among the most orthodox concerning the Holy Spirit which needs to be carefully tested by Scripture. Some of it comes from teachers of very high standing, and

there are various grades of these doctrines down to those which are clearly fanatical. Let us take the Word of God and trace some of its blessed teachings as to the work of the Holy Spirit.

There was a time when "the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." John vii. 39. Just as there was a time when Jesus had not come into the world to die for sinners, so there was a time when the Spirit had not been sent. He had wrought in various ways and empowered men to do mighty things for God. It is even said of John the Baptist that he should "be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb."—Luke i. 15. It was in the end of this long period when the Holy Spirit had not been sent, that Jesus told the disciples that "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

Mark it well that this was said before the Spirit was sent, and that after He was sent no person was ever told to ask for the Holy Spirit. This truth needs special attention in view of what is taught at the present time.

Just at the end of His ministry, the Lord told His disciples much about the coming of the Holy Spirit. John is used to give us one part, the sweet, blessed, intimate part of this teaching; by Luke it is given in a more formal way. And it is by Luke that the command to "wait for the promise of the Father" is given. How different it all was from what they had in their minds! They were

thinking of the kingdom being restored to Israel, God was going to do a new and far more wonderful thing, even to send the Holy Spirit to dwell with and be in His people. And the very last thing Jesus tells them to do is to "wait" for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It was fifty days from Christ's resurrection to Pentecost, He was seen of them forty days, Acts i. 3, so they were waiting ten days nearly. Has God ever told any one since those days to wait for the Holy Spirit?— This may come into the hands of some who are telling believers to ask and wait for the Holy Spirit. Do you not see that God has never since those days told His people to wait or tarry or ask for the Spirit? And if God does not tell His people to do these things and you tell them to, are you not departing from the Word of the living God?

Next to the day that Jesus hung on the cross, that day of Pentecost was the greatest day in the history of God's people. Jesus had come, had made atonement, borne the wrath of God against sin, had shed His precious blood that those who believe in Him might be eternally saved, He had gone back to the Father and is at the right hand of God. And now on that wonderful day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes, comes to dwell with and be in every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, comes to reprove (convict) the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.— Here was an entirely new work of God in the salvation of lost sinners. Believers in Christ were baptised into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13, they were

united to a glorified Christ as the Head of the body, they were brought into a place which no believer had ever entered before. Believers became the temples of the Holy Spirit. By Him they were sealed, anointed, filled. The second Person of the Trinity had come and done His mighty work and gone back to heaven, and now the third Person comes to do His work.

Let us now see what the Scriptures teach concerning the time when the Holy Spirit is received by the believer. The teaching is very simple. The one Scriptural requisite for receiving the Holy Spirit is faith, or in other words, He is received in the same way that salvation is received.— Whatever men may teach, He teaches nothing whatever as to it being needful for any believer to do anything to receive Him. It is just with receiving the Holy Spirit as it is with receiving salvation, man has made man conditions while God Himself has made only the simple one of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.— His ways are simple, plain, He does all the work and receives all the glory. Man would fain do something so as to get a part of the glory. So we hear much about consecration, laying all on the altar, waiting for power, and the like, all of which are of man.

God in His Word never lays down a single condition for receiving the baptism or sealing or receiving the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is an accompaniment of salvation, as much a part of it as forgiveness or justification or sonship. It is the gift of God, and He does not in His

Word make any other conditions for the receiving of this immeasurably great gift than for receiving salvation. Before the Holy Spirit was given, it was His will that this gift should be asked for. For a brief period before the day of Pentecost He was to be waited for. But since that day no one has any warrant from Scripture for teaching or thinking that God requires any asking or waiting by the believer in order to the receiving of His Gift. Scripture makes no account of time in the giving of this Gift. Of course it is the believer who is baptised and sealed with the Spirit; one must be a believer in order to receive these; but there is no intimation that any time must or does elapse after one believes before he is baptised and sealed with the Spirit. If we read Eph. i. 13, "after that ye believed," no interval is implied, they heard the gospel, believed, were sealed. But it is well known that the R. V. gives the correct translation, "in whom having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

In Acts viii. we have an account of what was plainly a departure from the way God deals with His people. The Samaritans and Jews had no dealings with each other. The former denied that the Jews were God's people or something akin to this, John iv. 9, 20, 22, and evidently they needed to be made to realize the power which Jesus had given to His apostles. So in that one case the receiving of the Holy Spirit was conditioned upon the laying on of the hands of Peter and John. In Acts xix. Paul said, (Revised Version,)

"Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" or literally "upon believing." It is given to us by the inspired writer as something strange and unusual, out of the ordinary, and Paul did not tell them to do anything to obtain the Holy Spirit, he simply told them about Jesus. There does not seem to be any ground for thinking they had heard of Jesus or were saved by believing on Him.— Paul gave them the gospel, they believed, were baptised, and received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of Paul's hands, the only occurrence of such a thing as far as Scripture teaches.

There was a large assembly of believers in Corinth, and if it had been common for believers to believe and then go on for a long time without being baptised with the Holy Spirit, some, if not many there would have been without this baptism. But it is written to them, "By one Spirit are we ALL baptised into one body, . . . and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 13. But they are in a very bad condition, and what is told them? to consecrate themselves, to do this or that to obtain the Holy Spirit as the one great remedy for all their ills? That is the way that the popular men talk and write to-day, but you find nothing of the kind in the Word of God. On the contrary we find the solemn words "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" and again, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are

bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body." 2 Cor. iii. 16; vi. 19, 20.

God, when His people fall into sin, puts before them the solemn truth that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He does not anywhere from the second of Acts to the end of Revelation tell His people to ask for the Spirit, nor is it intimated that any child of God (with the two exceptions above noted,) any one born of God has not received the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, believers are always addressed as though they already had the Spirit. How contrary to the plain Word of God is the great mass of writings on the Spirit in this day!

Then Power is not put down as a fruit of the Spirit. But this is generally thought of in connection with the seeking of the baptism of the Spirit. In fact it is often termed by writers the Baptism of Power. Jesus told His disciples that they should receive power after that the Holy Ghost was come upon them, but this power was given to them for a special purpose. God does not lay stress on great power, but on the love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, faith, which are the fruit of the Spirit. These rather than great power are what God delights to see in His people, but somehow the heart turns rather to something that will make one noticed and eminent, rather than to those things which make for lowliness, humility, and the mind which was in Jesus.—The one who bears day by day the fruit of the Spirit is more like Christ than the one who can preach with

power to thousands. God gives special power to His servants to do special service. But after Pentecost there is no intimation that the baptism of the Spirit is given for any special service, or that it brings any special power which every saved person does not possess.

Neither is it said that the baptism of the Spirit is what sanctifies the people of God, nor are believers who are out of the way, who have fallen into temptation or declension, ever told that they need the baptism to restore them, or are they exhorted or commanded to seek such a baptism in order to their restoration. Take the Corinthians, the Galatians, and the churches of Asia in Rev. ii. and iii. while the Spirit is often mentioned, in addressing each of them, the baptism of the Spirit is never mentioned as what they need to set them right. The truth that every believer has been baptised with the Holy Spirit is everywhere taught in the epistles.

God's Word tells me that Christ died for my sins. I may not feel that He died for me, but by faith I accept the Word of God, believe and am saved. God's Word tells me that being saved, I am baptised by the Holy Spirit. I may not feel that this has been accomplished, but the Word says so and by faith I accept God's Word. He tells me not to grieve the Spirit, not to quench the Spirit, but to walk in the Spirit, and to be filled with the Spirit. In other articles it is my purpose to examine the Word as to these.

J. W. NEWTON.

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Romans viii. 9.

THE LORD REIGNETH.

At rest, O Lord, in Thee—at rest—
 No more an anxious care ;
 Thy love can calm the restless heart,
 Thou rulest everywhere.
 There's none can stay Thy hand from work,
 Thy way is always best ;
 Thou art omnipotent, supreme,
 In Thee we well may rest.

The nations like the waves may roar,
 And man assert His power,
 'Tis only as Thou dost permit,
 A short and feverish hour.
 Thou sittest calm above the storm,
 For Thou dost hold the helm,
 All Satan's power and man's strong will
 Cannot the ship o'erwhelm.

Yea, all things here shall work for good,
 To those who love Thy name,
 Thy wisdom and Thy might they see,
 And can Thy love proclaim.
 No wave of trouble e'er shall roll,
 But what Thou dost allow,
 The past and present are well known,
 And the swift passing now.

THOS. SOMERVILLE.

MISSION WORK.

At the beginning of the century just closed the General Assembly of Scotland was much exercised as to the duty of foreign evangelization. The controversy waxed warm. The proposition was opposed on various grounds.

At length Dr. Erskine, ex-officio member of the Assembly, seated close by the pulpit in recognition of his advanced years and honorable service, rose and said, with a deep, tremulous voice, "Moderator, rax me yon Bible, wull ye?" He took the volume, opened it, and read aloud these words: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature;" and adding, "Thus saith the Lord," he sat down.

It was enough. Christ is our Prophet, Priest and King, His Word in matters of faith and practice is sufficient for His followers. No argument can stand against His Word. No authority, no array of the words of the fathers can have a feather's weight against "Thus saith the Lord."

ONE BOND LEFT.

A deserted family was deeply afflicted. They had lost their property and were almost penniless. The wife was sad indeed, and almost ready to despair; but the dear old man was cheerful. The wife was almost ready to "curse God and die." She was astonished at the coolness with which her husband met their lot; so she asked him one day, "Husband, how is it that you bear this trouble so well? It almost crushes me to the earth."

"Why, wife, we are not quite so bad off as you imagine. We have one bond left which we can live upon."

"Why, husband, what bond do you mean? I thought all was lost."

"Oh, no. Here is one bond, and I will read it to you. It is in the old family Bible, and reads as follows, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

His wife said, "Do you call that a bond?"

"Yes, it is the Word of God and cannot fail," he replied.

Dear reader, the common trials of life will come upon you, and you will have sorrow upon sorrow, and you will need some strong arm to lean upon, some refuge to fly to, some bond which will do to live upon.

Now is the time to secure it ; now is the time to live so near to God that all will be well in the deepest sorrow. But I am writing to some who are in trouble already, and they need help now. Then take the old man's bond, " I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." God's promises are always " on demand," and He will be with you in six troubles, and in the seventh He will not forsake you.

THE LOVE OF JESUS.

I know some Christians say they do not feel the love of Christ so much now as they did at first. Oh! shame on you, brethren ; shame on you if this is true ! What ! when you owed Him for one mercy did you love Him, and now when you owe Him for fifty-thousand do you love Him less ? Why, if it be true that saints grow necessarily colder and colder, then it does not say much for their estimation of Christ. It would make Him out to be like some people we know, who are very agreeable to see once in a while, but we should not like to live with them long. Let me bear my witness that my Lord and Master improves upon acquaintance : the more I know of Him the more I wish to know ; and I think I do but speak the mind of all the Lord's people when I declare that, instead of having less love to Him, the more I experience of His favour the more warm is my heart towards Him.

" Alas ! " says one, " but I do not feel as I once did." Well, dear friend, it may be that you make some mistake in reference to your own experience. When the passion of love was first lighted up in your breast,

there was, as it were, a blaze of the match, the paper, and the wood, although the coals had not ignited. Thine was then the flush of joy, but not the vehement heat. Now thy heart is all on fire like a solid ruby. There is much more heat, though there is less blaze. So it is with some converts. The first love they have is wildfire ; and to tell you the truth, I would rather have wildfire than no fire at all. But as men grow older in grace, the fire will not diminish in intensity if God has kindled it ; but perhaps the flash, the glitter and the noise may not be quite so palpable.

Yet I fear that if you do not love Christ better than you did, if you do not feel that there are new tendrils which bind you to Him, if you do not feel that it would be harder now than ever to give up your hold on the Saviour, you have not begun to learn the love of Christ. When we know that love, when we feel gratitude for mercies received, then we see every mercy, both temporal and spiritual, coming from that love. Ungrateful souls cannot learn this love. They have the book of mercy, but they are blind and cannot read it. Grateful souls ; in every letter from Jesus, their absent Friend, whom having not seen they love, and in every book of daily fellowship and of daily mercy, read again that glittering sentence, " He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

The last and highest step of all is that which is called by deep writers and experienced believers on this point, the absorbing love of Christ. How shall I tell you what this is?—

I cannot, except I quote Wesley's words,—

"Oh love Divine, how sweet Thou art!
When shall I find my willing heart
All taken up with Thee?"

"I thirst," can you get as far as that?

"I faint"—that is a high state, indeed.

"I die"—that is the top.

"I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The fullness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me."

"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," said the Apostle Paul; and that is where we must get when the man ceases to feel himself the "I," and recognises himself as part of Christ. It is our individuality that we really have to get rid of in this matter; it is our selfish separateness, I mean. We need to feel that we are a part of Christ, a member of His body, flesh of His flesh, and love of His love; that we have no more desire to act or think, or feel according to anything that is here, but to send our hearts up to the great heart of Christ in heaven, only tarrying here whilst our souls are walking the golden streets with Christ.—Spurgeon.

MAN'S HEART.

God is dealing with realities. He wants nothing from man. He is bringing into man's conscience what is already in his heart. When God's light shines in, it detects what is in the heart, and thus there is a manifestation to a man's conscience of all that comes out of his heart. That light soon teaches him the vanity of washing his hands, and such things. Matt. 15; 2-8. It tells him that to draw near to God with his mouth, and hon-

our Him with his lips, while his heart is far from Him, is all in vain. It shows him that all mere ceremonial offerings and prayers are worse than useless. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." The light detects the evil of man's heart (ver. 11-20): "Not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out of the mouth, defileth a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders," etc. Thus God's light comes in and shows what comes out of the heart. Take the first index of what is there, when seen and expressed in the light—an idle word, perhaps. (James iii.)

But farther, the Lord does not say, simply, You have done this or that, but He traces the evil to the root. He traces the conduct or the words of man to some source;—to what? to the heart! If there are idle and corrupt words, there is an idle and corrupt heart; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. That is what man's nature is, what he is. So that though men have the fairest conduct outwardly, God unmasks what is within, and shows the vanity of all their outward ceremonies as a means of eking out a righteousness of their own.

He regards not the mere outward conduct of man, but measures the heart; and tracing all the evil to that, asks, Why is this? For out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts (ver. 19), and there He closes with man. His purpose, in all these dealings and ways with man, is to show him what He is before God.—J. N. D.

SUPREME.

The reason God emphasizes His supremacy is because of man's ignorant and foolish pride. We live in an age of human self-sufficiency when boasting man is saying, "Go to, let us build a tower to reach unto heaven," and God is saying in divine pity and scorn, "Go to, let us go down and confound their speech."

But it is not in the spirit of our petty egotism that God is ever asserting Himself. It is because His sovereignty is as necessary for the universe as for His own glory. As He repeats the personal pronoun and stands before us in sublime self-consciousness we feel that what would be presumption in any man is right in the case of God, and that it is essential to the order and well being of the universe that He should be recognized as All in All.

His sovereignty and supremacy is the supply of all our need. The more we decrease and let Him increase the more shall our happiness and blessing increase. Our own self importance is the greatest hindrance to the revelation of God in our hearts and lives. In order that He may come in self must go out. The more we die to ourselves the more room we have to receive Him in His fulness.—S.

PASSING AWAY.

A pleasure yacht was sailing off the coast of Nova Scotia, when an iceberg was sighted. It was suggested by a pleasure seeker that, as the day was fine and the sea quiet, they might disembark upon it. It was a hazardous enterprise; but

some succeeded in climbing the crystal mass, and remained there till the iceberg, as if by magic, fell asunder and disappeared. Awe struck they saw its domes and pinnacles, crimsoned by the setting sun, sink like the fabric of a vision, with its living freight, and leave not a vestige behind. So will pass the glory of this world; its thrones and dynasties, its honors and emoluments, its pleasures and its honors, all vanish with life's setting sun.

DOING.

Whether eating or drinking,
Or speaking or thinking,
"Do all to His glory,"
Keep telling His story—
Good always pursuing,
Go about DOING.
DOINGS to be "deadly" depend
On motive and end.
"If these things ye know,
Happy are ye if ye do." E. S.

THE CABMAN'S CONVERSION.

"Will you say a few words, Doctor, to a brother in deep distress about his soul?"

The speaker was a devoted servant of Christ, now gone to be with his Master, who spent all his spare moments in preaching the gospel. His occupation was that of a cabman, and his cab, which was his own, had on it, what he called, "the heavenly coat-of-arms." On the panel of one door was painted "God is love," and on the other "God is light." At night, when his grey horse was comfortably stalled, he might be often seen at a street corner, as with bull's-eye lamp fastened to his waist, he read the Word of God, and then

preached the good news to the passers-by.

Any one who entered his cab was at once confronted by a large printed card, on which were the words, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." He was driving me on my rounds, and I had just come down a long common stair from seeing a patient, and stepped into the cab, when he thus addressed me.

It was a terrible day of rain, and drivers and horses were fairly drenched; but standing by his side was another man, with whom he had been conversing. He too was a cabman, and Peter J. had been conversing with him while their respective fares were engaged indoors.

Turning to the anxious man, I soon found him to be a really awakened soul, but the deluge of rain made it impossible to carry on a conversation at that moment, so I asked him if he could not come and see me in the evening.

"I shall not be off the stance till eleven o'clock," said he.

"Never mind," I replied; "you come to my house at eleven o'clock, and I will be ready for you."

That evening, a few minutes past eleven, the bell rang, and the poor drenched cabman came in. Before saying a word to him about his soul, I made him sit down to eat a little hot supper, which I felt quite certain he must need. He sat down, ate one mouthful, and then pushing the plate from him, said—"Beg pardon, sir, but I'm that wretched I cannot eat any more. Oh, what am I to do to be saved?"

A long conversation followed. The sweet story of the love of Christ was unfolded, the value of His blood declared, and the estimate which God had of His work asserted. The truth entered his soul, faith grasped the simple gospel of the grace of God, his soul passed into peace, joy, and liberty, and he exclaimed—"Thank God, I see it all. I believe Jesus; I see that He died for me, a poor lost sinner; I trust in Him; I believe His blood has washed all my sins away. I see it clearly." And tears of joy rolled down his cheeks.

I then suggested our thanking God for this grace to his soul, to which he gladly assented. We got on our knees, and I thanked the Lord for His mercy to this anxious soul. No sooner had I finished than he broke out in a stream of praise and thanksgiving, the like of which I have rarely heard from a new-born soul, and immediately after breathed the most tender and fervent petitions to God for the salvation of his wife—a sure sign of new birth. When we have learned the goodness of God for ourselves, we always desire that others should share it. And if we can impart it to them, we seek so to do.

Getting off our knees, I begged him now to sit down and finish his supper. Again he seated himself, took one mouthful, and then again pushing the plate from him, said—"Beg pardon, sir, but I am that full I could not eat another mouthful. I'll away hame and tell the wife what God has done for my soul." And rejoicing in Christ, he departed.

Reader, do you know anything about this fullness of joy, this satis-

faction in Christ? Have you yet learned the blessedness of God's forgiveness? Perhaps you are an anxious soul? Is it so? Likely you began this year, careless about your soul, but God's Spirit has wrought in you, and now you have a desire to be saved. If so, do not procrastinate. God always blesses earnestness.

Let not this year of grace 1900 close and find you still an undecided soul. Turn to Jesus now. Come to Him as you are. Believe His love. Trust His precious blood. Pillow your soul on His bosom of changeless love. He will not cast you out. None are too bad, too vile, too far off for Jesus to save. You trust Him. He will save you.

Are you "wretched" or "full"?

May God's blessing so fill you that you will have to go and tell others what the Lord has done for your soul.
—W. T. P. W.

A REFUGE.

Christ is the believer's Refuge in time of affliction. This world is a world of sorrow and suffering. What ills and woes we are called to endure. How often are we made to drink the cup of bitter anguish. What tender ties are sundered. What pangs of bereavement are felt. How the sensibilities of our nature are shocked and tortured. How many days and nights are spent in pain. Who indeed is a stranger to the couch of suffering? Who has not lost dear friends? Whose heart has not often bled with inward sorrow, and sighed over the wreck of its losses?

Let wasting disease lay its hand on you; let riches make to themselves

wings and fly away; or let death enter your family circle and snatch away the desire of your eyes, and where will your smitten heart find consolation? The world has suddenly lost all its charms. Its glitter and fascination are gone, its voice is hushed, its wonted business and pleasure are a weariness, and you turn from it all in disgust and anguish to seek relief elsewhere, or to weep life away in sadness and darkness.

Now Jesus Christ is available to us in just such an hour. When the heart is filled with sorrow, and the soul is made to lick the dust in the extremity of its humiliation and weakness, and the world turns its back upon us, pitiless and helpless, there is a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother—one born for adversity.—Jesus, full of compassion and sympathy, proffers the "covert" of His wings. Spreading them out over us He bids us take shelter from the storm. Amidst the darkness and fury of the tempest, we hear His commanding voice, saying, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

Christ is an ample shield, and a blessed deliverer in the day of affliction. He has consolations sufficient to meet the extremest case. There is no human experience so dark that He cannot cause the light to shine upon it; there is no bereavement so sore that He cannot soothe and heal under it; there is no burden so heavy that He cannot give strength to bear it; no loss so great that He cannot make it good. "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters." O precious experience! Courage afflicted one.

THE LARGER HOPE.

We hear in certain quarters of a "larger hope," by which is meant the possibility of a restoration after death. This "larger hope," is not in the book. We find that all the torturing of eager scholars cannot twist "forever and ever." And there is the "great gulf fixed;" fixed and bridgeless forever. There too is the crystallization of character at the final line: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is holy, let him be holy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still."

The eternal punishment of the incorrigibly wicked results from their inevitable fixity of character. The twelve gates of heaven shall never be shut: but those who dwell in the outer darkness, having wasted their lives and stereotyped their characters in habitual sin, must be forever indisposed to enter in; since, in truth, heaven would to them be more painful than hell. Thus neither in Scripture nor in reason is there room for the "larger hope." Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it lie.—B.

The King of Persia called his grand vizier and courtiers, and asked of them, "What condition of life is most to be deplored? One answered him, "A friendless old age;" another, "Poverty;" still another, "To be bedridden in hopeless pain." But the grand vizier said, "It is to pass through life unmindful of eternity, and suddenly to be called unprepared to meet God."

PRUNING.

A Christian was once visiting a large botanical garden. He walked along the paths, looking carefully at one plant after another. Presently he came to a fine large pomegranate bush or tree. On examining it more closely, he found that some of the branches had been taken off, and the principal stem of the tree had been cut almost through. As the gardener was standing near, he said to him: "Pray, sir, tell me why you have made this deep cut in the stem of this pomegranate?"

"Sir," said the gardener, "this tree used to be very strong and vigorous, but it bore nothing but leaves. I was therefore obliged to prune off some of the branches, and cut the stem in this manner, and when it was almost cut through it began to bear plenty of fruit."

Now, if this tree had been able to think and speak, as you and I can, no doubt it would have thought it very hard in the gardener to cut it so. It would have said that he was cruel, and was doing it a great deal of harm.

Yet, when it came to find that the effect of all that cutting was not to injure it, but to do it good, and make it fruitful, it would have seen that instead of being a trouble to it, it was a real blessing when the gardener pruned and cut it so.

What a future looms up before the Christian believer! Blessed, thrice blessed, are they—be they rich or poor, learned or illiterate, honored or obscure among men—all, of every nation, and clime, and tongue, and age of the world, of whom it can be truly said, "Christ in you the Hope of Glory."