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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

Is it Nothing to you?

By an eminent Scotch Divine, for Christians who deem it no harm to use their liberty for drinking alcoholic drink.

Is it nothing to you, O Christians,
As you sit around the board
When the feast is spread before you,
And the rich, red wine is poured,
That a mighty spirit of evil
Lurks beneath its flow,
While pleasure floats on its surface,
That danger is hidden below?

Is it nothing to you, though that spirit
Walks to and fro through the land,
Sowing the seeds of misery
Broadcast on every hand;
That the seeds are to cause a harvest
Of poverty death and woe,
Of ignorance crime and madness,
And you are helping to sow?

Still does the wily tempter
Whisper his oft-told lie
Into the ears of his victim,
"You shall not certainly die."
You may drink, for, look at the Christians!
Do they not think of it too?
And the listeners fall as they listen,
And is this nothing to you?

Ye have the gift of knowledge;
Ye are standing fast in your strength;
But that which is now your servant
May become your tyrant at length.
Would you teach your little children
To utter the Saviour's prayer,
"Lead us not into temptation,"
Then lead them and leave them there?

The path is dangerous and slippery
Which they see you safely pursue;
But they may follow and perish;
And is this nothing to you?
Thousands are struggling before you
In the dark and fearful wave
Which hurries them down to destruction,
Will you reach no hand to save?

But if with a generous effort,
A rope to their aid you send,
That rope will prove unavailing
If you hold not the other end;
Would you draw the perishing drunkard
Back to the shores of hope,
Yourself must give him the courage;
Yourself must hold the rope.

Is it nothing to you, O Christian,
By the blood of Christ redeemed
That through you the name of Jesus
Is by the heathen blasphemed,
Because along with the Gospel
The poisoned cup you bring,
And ruin them, soul and body,
With the accursed thing?

Ye are called with a holy calling
The lights of the world to be;
To light up the lamp of the Gospel
That others the path may see.
But if while bearing it onward
You lead the feeble astray,
And they fall in the hidden pitfalls,
Oh! what will your Master say?

Away with the evil custom
That makes your lamp burn dim!
He gave his life for your ransom;
Will you give up nothing for Him?
Away with the evil custom!
Throw the fetters of self aside;
Nor destroy with your strength and know-
ledge,
The souls for whom Jesus died.

Religious.

The Love we Live by.

We sing our little songs of life, each in a separate key, with our own chords and discords, which only God can bring into harmony; but there is one chorus that comes straight from every soul, and tells of God's love and help, and tender care, to the least and the greatest, to the weak and to the strong. For what we know in our own consciousness about the love of God generally measures the depth of our religion. We may differ in many things, but here, heart answers to heart. Indeed, religious experience is just finding out God's love; and those who do not find it, miss all life's sunshine, and colour, and warmth. Such people always talk about what they must give up in order to become Christians. They never realize what they will get. Perhaps it is not meant that they should, at first; for God makes promises and not bargains; and the heart that has never tried Him does not know how much His promises mean. But this is the beautiful problem of life, to find out the love of God by looking at it when it can be seen, by believing in it when it is hidden, and by trusting in it and following it always.

In speaking of this Divine Love, it might seem to some more natural to say the love of Christ, than the love of God, because to the first phrase they

would attach a more definite meaning. But there is a fundamental truth which we sometimes forget,—that Christ came into the world because God loved us. God's love is the cause of everything. Christ came as God Incarnate, to show us what God was, how He felt toward us; to reveal the love which already existed, and give it its utmost expression in suffering and dying for our sakes. He came, not in order that the Father might love us, but because He did love us; that He might prove it to us, and that we might believe Him. Here is the key-note for our song of life, and here our inspiration for an answering love. For strange as it may seem, it is almost the hardest thing in the world to love God; the one thing harder is to believe in His love to us. If every soul in Christendom were to cry out its heart-felt want, it would be the refrain of the hymn, "More love to Thee, More love to Thee." And yet there is one want that is deeper still, the want of faith; because if we actually realized what God has done for us and how much He loves us, we could not possibly help loving Him, any more than a blind man could help seeing when his eyes were opened. And so we can understand how it is that when we look at a Concordance to our Bible, we find so many columns devoted to the words, "faith" and "believe."

Let us stop a moment, and think about this great fact of God's love; for so many of us Christians shiver out our years in a sort of spiritual Siberia, and "spend our life in keeping up our life." We are so very conscious that we are not loveable that we cannot comprehend how we can be loved. And yet the chief reason why the favorite hymn, "Just as I am, without one plea," has found so deep a lodgement everywhere in the Church is, because it brings home to us the wonderful truth that God is always ready to welcome us, just as we are, if we will only come to Him. Not that he means us to stay just as we are; but because the coming to Him is the first step toward making us what we want to be, and what He would have us. And His reception of us is so much kinder than we expected! God's condescension is so different from man's condescension. Why do we weary ourselves to learn faith's lessons before we come to Him; instead of coming first, and learning afterwards? For coming to Him is the first duty, as well as the first privilege; and if we can say nothing else, we can surely repeat with Fénelon, "O Lord take my heart, for I cannot give it; and when thou hast it, Oh keep it; for I cannot keep it for Thee; and save me in spite of myself, for Jesus Christ's sake!"

The thing we dread at the outset is self-denial—the giving up of our sins, and wishes, and wills. But if we believe that God is ready to help us, and looks with love upon the faintest desire after Him, we will ask for that help, and use it when it is given. He can make it easy for us to consecrate ourselves to Him, or He can enable us to do it even when it is hard, and nobody else can. So the only thing to be done is to pray to Him, to believe in Him, and to keep on praying and doing every thing He bids us do.

It is a happy thing to live by the love of God, and it is the normal law of life which He intends for everybody, and offers to all who will accept it. If He could speak but twice to the soul, I think the words would be, "Come unto me," and "Only believe."

If earthly friends are noble and good and kind, He is better than all, and He loves us! He has lived and died for us; and all our daily helps and blessings and joys come direct from Him. We pray to Him for these little things (which are no trifles to us); but do we thank Him when He gives them to us? Is it not as pleasant to Him to be thanked as it would be to us if we had done any one a favour? These are some of the steps of the ladder by which we climb to the love of God.

Another way is in keeping His commandments. Right-feeling is to be the inspiration of right-living, not the sub-

stitute for it. Feeling is to crystallize into principle. A man must be honest and truthful and benevolent from principle. So too he must use the means of grace from principle. Daily prayer and reading of the Bible must be done whether we enjoy it or not. Happy he to whom the means of grace are means of delight, but they are always means of God's leading. Anybody who tries as hard as he can to please God, because he really wants to be good, is sure of Divine guidance. He will get many deep experiences of human helplessness and a Redeemer's strength, but when God teaches we need not dread the lesson. One may make mistakes; but God's love holds on to him and is ready to help him just as far as he is willing to be helped. It may turn him off from the particular track on which he is going; but it will only be to put him on a higher and straighter one; for the life of duty is always included in, though uplifted by the life of love.

But best of all, we learn to love God by daily living with Him. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Put in contrast His forbearance, and gentleness, and ceaseless patience, with our waywardness, and meanness, and want of faith. What human friendship would we not weary if it only knew everything? But God sees straight through us, and loves us still.

What we need is just faith to take it all in. Then peace and joy will spring up of themselves, and self-sacrifice will be easy. One reason why it is so hard to submit our wills is, that we cannot understand that God's way is the best. We think we are wiser than Omniscience. We need the perfect trust which not only says, "Thy will be done," but is satisfied with it when it is done. We ask the Lord to accept all we have, and are; to use us as He chooses, and to put us where He pleases; yet when He takes us at our word we are astonished and distressed. We supposed He would guide us East, but lo! He sends us West. And we fail to comprehend that His love knows not West nor East, but extends so far on every side that we can never get beyond its protecting wisdom and power.

Nothing but this love can lighten the darkness of life. All other torches go out in the night and the storm. Faith has one grand axiom which it applies to all doubt and sadness. The truth that "all things work together for good to them that love God," and "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." How often it is afraid, tormented with anxieties which He never intended us to feel, oppressed by care which He bids us cast on Him; fretted by mysteries which He never meant us to solve. He is the governor of the world; not we. Is His goodness less than ours, or is His justice less than ours, or His pity less than ours, that we cannot leave His own world in His own hands? And for ourselves, have we not sight as well as faith, to assure us of His love? Who can look back upon the past without seeing the golden thread of His mercy running through the years? All our experience resolves itself into the confession, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We did not always see the help at the time, but we can see a great deal of it now, and we can see, too, how very unfortunate it would have been if we had perpetually had our own way. We are not half thankful enough for unanswered prayers. God knew better than to give us everything we wanted. Somebody remarks, "More tears are shed over fulfilled, than over disappointed hopes," and if we do not see the force of the sentence, we have been spared a sorrowful lesson.

And as we do begin so dimly and slowly, to understand God's love to us, shall not our cold hearts warm into a gratitude not only of the lips but of the life? Shall we be so loved and yet so loveless? Would we be mean enough to take everything and yield nothing in return? For what Christ asks is first the affection of the heart and then the thanksgiving of the life; the loyalty to obey, and the earnestness to work for Him.—*The Christian.*

"Take a Front Seat."

One peculiarity we have often noticed among Christian people. If a concert or a lecture is to be given, front seats are at a premium. Nobody on such an occasion, wants to be poked off into a corner by the door. But let it be a social meeting, instead of a concert, and it is astonishing how modest everybody becomes all at once. The further back a seat, the more desirable it is; and if there is a bench within two feet of the door, it is always the first one filled. Why this should be so is one of the most profound problems of human nature that we have not succeeded in solving. A Pennsylvania pastor—he is a Presbyterian—has hit upon a device for overcoming this tendency, that may be worth imitation. A neat pocket list of prayer-meeting topics for the year has been printed, and placed in the hands of every member of the church; and at frequent intervals in the list, in conspicuous type, are the words, "TAKE A FRONT SEAT." This, though possibly quite as effectual, is a milder method than one that was tried a few years ago in a certain Baptist Church. The pastor had ropes tied across the entrance to the pews, except those in front, and people had to take front seats or climb over. A temporary reformation was effected, but when the ropes were removed there was a great backsliding in that congregation.—*Examiner and Chronicle.*

The Devil's Mills.

A poet has said, "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly small." But the Devil's mills seem to grind very rapidly, and their work is also very thoroughly done. His mills are set up on almost every corner, and thousands are fed into their infernal hoppers. No matter what is thrown in, the result all comes out about alike. Health, wealth, strength, beauty, fortune, fame, honor, love, trust, youth, age, grace, talent, manhood, womanhood, childhood, all are cast into the Devil's mills, and all reduced to a common mass of unutterable ruin. Day and night, year in and year out, we hear the grating of their horrible revolution, mingled with the shrieks and wails of ruined and perishing men. The Devil's mills stand everywhere. They are independent of water-privileges or of steam power. They are licensed for the public good, and indorsed by men who claim to be the followers of the Lord; they are planted on every side of us, and at the doors perpetually lurk emissaries who seek to drag those nearest and dearest to us down to darkness and death. Let parents guard their homes, and so long as the Devil's mills are running and whirling and grinding up humanity, let the cry of alarm sound high and long and loud, that those who will, may heed it, and save themselves and those around them from a doom far worse than death.—*The Christian.*

A Scotch Christian living in Japan went out to buy a screen. The merchant told him to come next day, for, as it was Sunday, he could not sell them, being a Christian. The Scotchman said: "I felt as if I had seen a ghost. I felt so insignificant and so cheap that all I could do was to slip out of his shop and start for home." Another Japanese Christian, about to sell some articles, asked the customer, as he was about to pay for them, "Have you noticed this defect, and this, and this?" The purchaser had not observed the defects, and decided not to take the articles. This is the sort of Christians converted Japanese make.

The *Tiflis Gazette* states that nineteen members of the sect of milk-drinking Sabbatarians, with their families, arrived at Tiflis on the 29th ult., under military escort, the adult males being in chains. The sectarians state that they were condemned by the Khazan Tribunal to deportation for settlement in the Trans-Caucasus on account of having sought to disseminate their doctrines.

Even the wilderness borders on the Promised Land.

The defenders of error may present a terrifying aspect, but they cannot stand fire.—*Rev. John Clark.*

The church at Plymouth, Mass., which was organized in Holland nearly three centuries ago by refugees from England, before they started on their journey for the U. States in the Mayflower, is at present a Unitarian Church.

Elder Joshua V. Himes of the Second Adventists has become an Episcopalian, and has been admitted to the deaconate at the age of 74 by the Bishop of Nebraska.

Exeter Hall, London, is to be sold by auction and put to whatever uses a purchaser may choose to turn it.

The Union Tremont Temple Church, Boston, is worshipping in Music Hall, with good congregations. They greatly need a pastor. There is a rumor that Dr. Fulton is to be re-called. The Temple itself is still in ruins. The work of restoration has not yet begun. There is talk of making some marked changes in the building.

Mr. Joseph Gurney, who died recently in England, was for many years shorthand writer to the House of Lords and Treasurer of the Religious Tract Society. Mr. Gurney, who was brother-in-law to Dr. Angus, was an earnest Bible student, and was a pioneer in the work of the modern revision of the authorized version. For nearly thirty years he had been engaged in this work. Besides "The Annotated Paragraph Bible," which was prepared under his auspices, he recently published, it may be remembered, a "Revised Bible," which embodies, so far as translation is concerned, most of the accepted results of modern scholarship.

ASSYRIAN EXPLORATIONS.—It is stated in the *Manchester Guardian* that the trustees of the British Museum have succeeded in obtaining a successor to Mr. Hormuzd Rassam in the work of Assyrian exploration. Lieutenant Kitchener, R. E., whose name has for many years been closely connected with the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, has accepted the post, and will, as soon as official duties permit, start for Mosul.

A Christian divine, in preaching on zeal in Christian service, said: "Ask the Master for Peter's hook, to bring up the fish; for David's crook, to guide the sheep aright; for Gideon's torch, to light up the dark places; for Gospel seed, without any tares in it; for Moses' guiding rod; for the brazen serpent, to cure the bites of the world's snakes; for David's sling, to prostrate your giant foe; for the armour inventoried by Paul in the last chapter of Ephesians; but above all, for the wonderful Holy Spirit, to help at all times."

THE BAPTISM OF A PRIMITIVE METHODIST MINISTER.—On Thursday evening last, the Rev. George Eales, M. A., Primitive Methodist minister, Pembroke Dock, was publicly immersed in the Bush Street Baptist Chapel by Rev. R. C. Roberts, pastor of the church. The Rev. gentleman assigned his reasons for leaving the denomination with which he had been connected for twenty years, stating that after a careful perusal of the Word of God, and a diligent study of church history he had come to the following conclusions—first, that baptism was an immersion and an immersion only; second, that it was an ordinance exclusively for believers. In avowing himself a Baptist, he felt that the voice of conscience was alive, and he felt bound to yield to its dictates. He recognized Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, and, by obeying His commands, hoped to enjoy the fellowship of the saints. He would make his determination known at the sacrifice of personal feelings or connection, as it was his duty to obey the commands of Christ and the dictates of conscience, and would bear the consequences whatever they might be. The devotional service was conducted by Rev. J. W. Edwards, Neylands.—*London Freeman.*