

The Living Christ.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LOVE WE LIVE BY."

And are these promises, then, all for us, as well as for Paul? Yes, all for us, if we, like Paul will give ourselves entirely to the Lord. There must be a self-consecration, a yielding up of everything to God. And while many earnest Christians stumble at the point of faith, it is at this point of consecration that half-Christians turn aside.

But we surely do not wish to give our Saviour a half-service. Let us, then, examine our own hearts to find if there is anything which comes between Himself and us; and let us pray for the light of his Spirit, that we may see ourselves as we are seen by Him who is even now waiting to lead us into his paths of peace.

It is a solemn question to ask ourselves, whether we have so given our hearts to God that his service, his honour, are the object and the happiness of our life. Can we truly say that our first wish in every thing is to please Him? That there is no pursuit, no pleasure, which holds its place in our daily life, but that, at his warning glance, we would instantly drop? But if not, oh let us press the question home: Will Christ be satisfied with any earnestness less than this? Will any external service compensate for this lack within? And even if the answer terrifies, let us not evade it. If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

If, then, our self-examination forces us to realize that we are not yet wholly consecrated to God, let us at once kneel down to pray. Let us pray to that blessed Saviour, so ready to hear us, in all our sinfulness; and confessing that sinfulness, let us ask Him to take it from our hearts, relying firmly on his promise, that He is not only "faithful and just to forgive us our sins," but "to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Such a prayer will be answered as surely as to-morrow's sun will rise. He will give us stronger desires after Him; he will turn our wills from evil to good. Then He will show us, one after another, what things we must yield up to Him, and will give us, too, the willingness to do it. And oh, we shall find an equivalent for all we renounce! It is but casting away tinsel that we may press the pearl of price to our bosoms; only dropping a handful of withering leaves, that from the Tree of Life we may pluck and be satisfied. Do you think that earth's little rushlights will be mourned for when the Sun of Righteousness shines in beauty around us.

And these are no empty words, no flights of poetic fancy. Ask any one who has made this sacrifice, if the peace and joy of his Saviour's presence is not more than compensation for all he had ever cherished, you will hear but one answer, you will see it in the brightening eye, in the look of serenity, in the tranquility of a heart at rest, in the possession of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

And when we have thus unreservedly devoted ourselves to God, what next? Then let us believe his own words, believe them with all the simplicity of children. It may require a struggle of faith to do this; but that faith, too, Christ will give us, if we ask Him for it in a childlike spirit. The theory of the gospel is wonderfully grand, but wonderfully simple. We give Christ ourselves, and He gives us Himself. Now we have done our part, or rather He has enabled us to do it. We come to Him, and offer Him ourselves, soul and body, to be his for ever. St. Paul could do no more. At this point let us review his promises. We must not stagger at them; they are all for us. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollis, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." When our Saviour offers us the richest blessings, let us not draw back, and miss them through distrustful fear. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Heb. x. 38.) No, let us rather say, "Unworthy as I am, sinner as I am, I will yet honor my Redeemer by relying on his word. I will receive his promises, not as a reward for anything I have done, or can do, but as free gifts to me so undeserving. Then joy and peace will come, must come. We cannot

believe such words as these, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me;" "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, no principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" we cannot, I say, actually believe such words without feeling our hearts swell with gladness, without exclaiming, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!" And with this gladness will come a gratitude and love, all the stronger because our unworthiness is so great. Then, looking to our blessed Lord, we shall understand the full meaning of the beloved disciple, "We love Him because He first loved us."

And when we have gained this point of christian experience, is our life-work done at last? Done? Ask him in whose soul this peace and joy have dawned. He will tell you it is but begun. Could he bear to fold his hands in selfish complacency? Ah, the love that is kindled in his breast must find an outlet! Living faith must work. You may tell him to be idle, but you might as well tell him not to breathe. For there is, first, the great work of watchfulness for ourselves. If we draw back from Christ, our blessedness must vanish. If we leave the fountain, we lose the supply. Every day let us renew the consecration to God's service; every day let us, in his strength pledge ourselves afresh to do his will, even in the veriest trifle, and to turn aside from anything that may displease Him. Then we may ask Him, with confidence, to keep us through the day, and rely upon his promise to deliver us from evil. Then will Christ be to us a living Saviour, and we will cling to Him with child-like affection and truth; looking up into his loving eyes to say, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" even anticipating his commandments in the eager springing of the soul to fulfil his pleasure. Oh, what a contrast is this obedience of love to the strict obedience of duty! Not only freer, but fuller; not slothful in business because fervent in spirit; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing. It may seem to us almost incredible that we could live a life like this; that this spirit, when gained, could be preserved; that our path should for ever brighten to the perfect day. But Enoch "walked with God" three hundred years, and had all the while the testimony that he pleased God. Cannot the same grace, that kept him for centuries, keep us for the few score years of our pilgrimage? We are only called upon to live by the moment. Christ does not bid us bear the burdens of to-morrow, next week, or next year. Every day we are to come to Him in simple obedience and faith, asking help to keep us, and aid us through that day's work. And to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, through years of long to-morrows, it will be but the same thing to do; leaving the future always in God's hands, sure that He can care for it better than we. Blessed truth that can thus confidently say, "This hour is mine with its present duty; the next is God's, and when it comes, Christ's presence will come with it."

Acknowledgment.

Rev. John Row sends from Hebron, some account of a donation party who met at his residence on the 19th Nov. Mr. R. says "quite a large number of kind friends arrived at our house early in the evening, from Ohio, where I have been labouring for the past year. The ladies furnished and spread the table with abundance of good things for the occasion. The company was entertained at intervals by the ladies with instrumental and vocal music. All participated in the universal cheerfulness manifested on the occasion. I cheerfully and gratefully acknowledge such a tangible expression of kindness from friends of Ohio, who left in value money and goods for the benefit of my family \$50. The Rev. A. Coburn kindly attended on the occasion, and closed the pleasant interview with an appropriate prayer for pastor and people."

The strongest side of timber is always found to be that which in its natural growth faced the north.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Plain Talk with the Baptists.

THE SECOND ADVENT.

I notice in these columns—though I cannot plead guilty to reading them—a good many articles on the Second Coming of our Lord. The ideas on that subject are soon exhausted. The proofs as to when, and where, He is to appear, are generally worthless. No man on earth can tell whether Jesus is to come before the Millennium or after it. The profoundest Christian scholars can not decide whether the reign of Jesus is to be in person or in principle. It seems likely, judging from the past, that the principles of the Bible will permeate society—that the leaven of the kingdom will leaven the whole lump of the world, during this dispensation. The mission of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world,—to bring back the world to Jesus Christ. That mission hitherto, has not been a failure, and the future will be yet more prolific in victories won by the Third person of the Trinity.

I find that the Second Adventist is a man of hobbies. He is generally unable to see the force of other truths; and is very seldom competent to deal with truths in their relative capacity. One truth, and that seen in a distorted light, is magnified at the expense of all other truths.

Further I notice that seldom a Second Adventist does anything for the heathen world. His mission consists in trying to impress his notion on the Christians around him that it is vain to labor for the world's salvation, until Christ shall come. The Christian missionary enterprise is, in his eyes, a forlorn hope. He talks and argues, and gesticulates, about his crotchet, but when did you hear him pray, or see him contribute for Foreign Missions. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Our Lord and Master left to His Church a standing commission. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." As Luther called the election of justification by faith "the article of a standing or falling church"—so would we affirm of Missions. The Churches of this age will stand or fall as they are faithful to the great commission.

I find farther, that necessarily, the Second Adventist is occupied with affirming and emphasizing the doctrine of the Second Coming. Now, I apprehend that the main business of Christians is to emphasize and reiterate the first coming—the good news that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. With the second coming we have comparatively little to do. There are people who get hold of one truth, and give it an undue prominence. Sometimes it is Baptism, sometimes temperance, sometimes the Jews, or Hines's lucubrations concerning them. But oh how seldom does any man lay himself open to the charge of unduly magnifying the Saviour of sinners! I would grasp the hand of the man whose "speech was always with grace seasoned with salt," who was an enthusiast in the Gospel. I was, once talking to a poor dead-and-alive Christian who never attends a prayer-meeting, whose voice I never hear in Conference, and somehow the subject of the Millennium was introduced, when he kindled up and exclaimed, "I would like to hear a sermon on that." Aye, anything but the Gospel of salvation is eagerly sought after by worldly-minded professors.

But now, after all, "Acier" believes in the second advent, and finds it to himself a sweet and salutary theme. "Come Lord Jesus!" is his heart's desire. He wishes to be found waiting, and watching, and working. Occupy-trade with the talents—till I come," says the Teacher in the parable. "Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour."

"Let every lamp be bright, And trim the golden flame, Gird up your loins as in His sight, For awful is His name."

It is a salutary doctrine that our Lord shall come again the second time, "without (a) sin (offering) unto salvation"—to be admired of all them that believe, and to receive His people, body and soul, unto Himself. The third chapter of ii. Peter is one of the best things inside the Bible, or out of it, to read on this subject.

I would beware of any man who attempts to fix the time. It has been fixed in every age since the ascension. Prophecy-mongers there are in our own time who scare their deluded disciples by interpretations of that which is beyond all human hermeneutics—aye beyond the ken of the angels: "of that day and hour knowest no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," (see Acts i. 7). "It is not for you to know." No matter what they explain, or how clearly they set their figures forth—believe them not!

Dec., 1879.

ACIER.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Telephone Anticipated.

SIR,—The name of Miss Francis Ridley Havergal had been before the literary and religious public for some time, till a few months since she died after a brief illness, induced by exposure and over exertion. Miss H. was a graceful writer in prose and verse, and an unwearied labourer for the temporal and spiritual good of the parishioners of her father, the Hon. Canon of Worcester Cathedral, England.

The particular object of this notice is to record a very remarkable incident in her history and in the history of one of our imperfectly known sciences. In a dream she anticipated the invention of the telephone, by which instrument among others, the name of Edison has been rendered so famous. Her account of the singular occurrence or experience is given by her in these remarkable words.

"I dreamed," says she, "that some one had invented a phonoduct—that was the dream—name of the instrument—by which music could be 'laid on' like gas or water, and at any distance. Fancy having it so 'laid on' from Exeter Hall with a little 'Oratorio tap' in ones drawing room, so as to hear the 'Elijah' all alone in the twilight."

It is evident from this account that the writer had a kind of prophetic foreshadowing of the instrument which Edison has lately invented and which has become familiar to us as the telephone.

Miss Havergal was a classical scholar, being acquainted with both Latin and Greek, which two languages were grotesquely combined in her dream so as to assume the form above given, which like other creations of the fancy when Queen Mab is driving her chariot through our brains, was not to be expected to partake of all the harmonious constructions of our waking thoughts and business engagements. That in her dream she connected the instrument with music and musical appliances is sufficiently intelligible when it is remembered, that she was a proficient in the science and an enthusiastic cultivator of it.

Our interesting friend proceeds to say in the account from which I have been quoting, "I shall be glad to hear your 'Beethoven,' and 'Handel' reservoir, you could 'turn it on' any evening in the twilight, for I generally then practise or extemporize for half an hour—at least I have done so since I have been at home."

The whole account is very curious and very entertaining, and adds another striking chapter to the mysterious science of psychology. It ought to be recalled to our remembrance as often as we hear or read of Edison and his wonderful instrument, and remind us that the leading feature of his marvellous invention was anticipated by a clever and talented young woman in a daylight waking dream, or in the profounder slumbers and obscurer visions of the night.

C. D. R.

Wolville, Dec. 12th, 1879.

For the Christian Messenger.

Concerning Union Meetings.

"And the contentions were so sharp between them that they departed asunder, one from the other, and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed into Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas and departed." Acts. xv. 39-40.

Mr. Editor,—

The publication of the Programme for the Week of Prayer, commencing January 4th, 1880, has produced in me the determination of submitting a few thoughts on the impropriety of Baptists uniting with other Denominations in what are usually, though to my notion very improperly, called

Union Meetings. I am well aware that I shall have to encounter much prejudice and ill-feeling from Baptists, as well as others in this attempt to write against a practice which has not been generally called into question. But being a subject upon which my mind has been exercised to no inconsiderable extent I have thought it advisable to write, perhaps no less for the purpose of hearing what may be urged on the opposite side than of giving my own views to the public. I shall endeavour, "in what I have to say" to treat the subject in as rational a manner as possible, desiring, as I sincerely do, wisdom from above that I may not seem to be governed by prejudice or ill-feeling. I shall argue, as well as I may be able, upon the merits of the question. Believing that the conclusion at which I have arrived is the triumph, in my own mind, of that which is consistent over that which would be more agreeable to human nature, I ask to be heard patiently.

The first observation I wish to make is that so far as I can understand the matter from what I have known of those meetings, or heard of them, there exists no real union but only nominal and therefore dishonoring to God and not required at our hands. It will be admitted that scripture truth is the only true basis of religious union. It follows therefore that where doctrinal differences exist there can be no true union in Christian work. It does not follow however that we are, on this account, actuated by spite or hatred toward one another any more than it would follow from Luke's account of the contention between Paul and Barnabas about John Mark that they hated one another. It is, I conceive, possible for men to disagree and to contend 'sharply,' the contention being about things not persons, and yet indulge no improper feelings toward one another.

When men holding differences, contending "sharply" for them during the year, both through the public press and from the pulpit, come together one week at the beginning of the new year, under the name "union," one of two things must be evident. Either they do it hypocritically knowing in their hearts that they are no more united now than they always were, or else it must be done at a sacrifice of principle for the sake of being thought charitable.

If it be said that there is no need of any reference to points in controversy upon such an occasion, I would reply, "What do we meet to pray for? Certainly not that which we think to be wrong. But still farther, of all the Denominations uniting in these meetings, Baptists only are asked to do so at the expense of the liberty of free speech, upon the sacrifice of which on their part the unity prevailing in those gatherings entirely depends. Here again it will be said that we do not meet to preach but to pray, and that it is not likely any circumstance will arise making it necessary to speak on those subjects in which we differ. That is to say we do not meet to pray expecting immediate results. But if we come together in the proper spirit we do expect immediate results and if our prayers are answered a circumstance has occurred in which we are bound to speak on those things which are controversial.

In this case one of two courses seems to be opened, either to preserve the union at the sacrifice of principle, or obey our Lord and explode the union. Suppose for instance a Baptist, feeling the baneful effects of unconverted persons in the Churches, should pray very earnestly, in a union meeting, that the Lord would give the world to see the necessity of an entirely converted Church membership, he would do violence to the principles of the union. He would in that case be praying for the very thing which if granted would subvert all Pedobaptist organizations the world over. There would no doubt be whisperings and uneasiness in the assembly. Free speech is the birth-right of Baptists and union at the expense of this privilege is too dearly bought. But again I am of opinion that Christians can better advance the cause of Christ when they work in conjunction with those who see as they do with respect to Christian doctrine. "Two cannot walk together except they are agreed."

It would not have been profitable for Paul and Barnabas to have gone on this mission together, inasmuch as there would have been frequent references made to John Mark if he had been left behind; and if Barnabas had gained his point and Mark accompanied them, yet not being with Paul's consent, unpleasant feelings would have continually arisen. We can easily see in this case that it was wise that they con-