

Better Than Gold.

BY REV. RUPERT OSGOOD MORSE.

Christian faith is a divinely pictured cathedral. Standing without you see no beauty, nor can you imagine any. Standing within every ray of light reveals a harmony of unspeakable color. This is because personal faith in Christ opens to you the portals of salvation, and is the key to the mysteries of God's providence.

Now the proof of this faith is better than gold. This is true of witnessing Christ to the world. Take a single instance: Two young men, one an unbeliever, the other a believer, were assigned to the same room as students in an academy. The unbeliever said at once: there is to be no reading the Bible or praying in this room. For answer, his friend said: But half of this room is mine. I am entirely willing that you should do as you please in your half, but in my half I propose to read my Bible and pray every day." No objection could be taken to this statement of the case. So the reading and the prayer went on. The issue of it was the conversion of the unbeliever. That unbeliever was John E. Clough,—a man than whom none since the Apostles have been more successful in winning the heathen to Jesus Christ. And the seed of this great and far-reaching tree was the brave witnessing of his Christian-chum in his half of the room. What results God shall bring out of our witnessing none can tell. But the duty is ours. The results we may leave with God. Wherever I may be, I am to be a witness for Jesus Christ.

And the proof of your faith in prevailing prayer is better than gold. In Abner Kingman Nott's Memoirs we read of his "three great prayers," for the great revival in Rochester, N. Y., for one at his home, and one at a place where he preached one summer. As we read we learn how faithfully he prayed for these blessings, and of the praying bands he organized who spent the first half hour of each day in prayer. In a single year Nott saw those great revivals and in two of them helped to win the souls. Such prayer has not lost its power nor will it while God is God. Such proof of your faith is better than gold.

The proof of your faith in an honest handling of God's Word is better than gold. The Word of God is not a curiosity shop, neither is it a book of magic. It is what God is pleased to give us as a revelation of himself. He asks us to deal reverently with it. Whatever help there is in any ministry comes from a faithful handling of God's Word. That teaching is most inspiring which consists of the unfolding and faithful application of the truth contained in the text. That teaching which discovers and applies the meaning of the Word is of most worth. It is better than gold to see that Word shape the lives of those who give careful attention to it.

The perennial youth of every great ministry comes from the honest handling of God's Word. Dr. R. S. Storrs, on the fiftieth anniversary of his pastorate said:—"My steadfast and animating aim has been to bring an influence from spheres celestial, declared to us through Christ, to act on the minds and hearts, on the spirit and conduct of those to whom my ministry has been rendered; so that life by God's grace should be enabled in them and in myself, and souls made in his image be lifted to closer fellowship with him. That sums up all that I have consciously sought to do, for all these years, in the pulpit or in the pastoral service, and in that relation I have sought to be a faithful and untiring minister of God. With gladness, though with profound humility, I may say that I have sought to preach, "according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." This was the secret of his great ministry. And it was better than gold.

Every powerful revival of religion is underlain with an honest handling of God's Word. Seventy-five years ago worldliness had driven all spirituality out of the churches of Switzerland. Into this formalism, Robert Haldane went delivering expository lectures on the Epistle to the Romans. Some of the theological students attended these lectures and for so doing were expelled from the schools. But God's Word got hold of them and sent them all over Switzerland as evangelists of truth. One of the converts of this far-reaching revival was one of Switzerland's most cultured women, Madame Henrietta Feller, afterward the foundress of the Grande Ligne Mission in the Province of Quebec. The motto of this mission, "The open Bible for all the people," was the logical outcome of the message which Robert Haldane brought from the open Bible to the people of Switzerland.

I should like to see a revival of pure, spiritual religion among us. But before we can have a far-reaching revival of pure, spiritual religion outside the churches, we must have a revival of Bible religion within the churches. That can come only as God's Word is honestly handled in careful study and impartial application to the life of our day. And this is better than gold.

Chester, N. S.

Timid Disciples Frightened.

When the waves dashed high on the Sea of Galilee and the little boat which carried the disciples and their

Master was filled with water the danger was very great. It was no small danger that frightened those hardy men. Some of them were fishermen of long experience, perfectly at home on the water and familiar with the Sea of Galilee. When they left their oars and aroused their Lord, saying, "Master, Master, carest thou not that we perish?" the peril must have been imminent.

We cannot blame them for being frightened. If we had been there we should have been frightened also. Jesus rebuked them, but he did so very kindly. He understood their infirmities. It was not because they trembled and realized the danger that he rebuked them. It was because of their lack of faith. They could not quite rest in the Lord in so severe a storm. They were not sure that the ship that carries Jesus may not go to the bottom.

It is well for us to take note of the dangers which surround us. We, too, are out on an ocean sailing. Dangers quite as real, and far more to be dreaded, are before us also. It may be that while we are dreaming of peace and safety sudden destruction is hanging over our heads. How shall we behave when trouble arises? What Christian has not asked himself how he would feel and act if he were exposed to the afflictions which have overtaken some of the saints? If he were called, as Abraham was, to give up his only son, what would he do? If he were brought to the hour when he must give up his life or give up his Saviour, what would he do? Would he not be alarmed? Would he not tremble and shrink back?

It is not wise to close our eyes and fold our hands and say, "There is no danger. We shall never be tried in this way." In the time of the prophet there were many who cried, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." Every one should look the danger squarely in the face and prepare for it. Let him not imagine that he is safe because he is a disciple of Christ. The men who rowed the fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee on that memorable night were disciples of Christ. He had chosen them, called them, ordained them, and even then he was training them for great service. They were in the way of obedience. They were rowing the boat at his command when the storm broke over them. They had Jesus in the boat with them when the sore trial came. It is so still. Those whom he has chosen and adorned and sent out are often overtaken by tempests of temptation and affliction. Those who are in the way of his commandments are often sorely tried.

The storm was part of their discipline. They were in training for service, and it was well for them to be used to hardship and storm. Wilder storms than ever broke over Galilee awaited them. The fierce tempests of human wrath and fiery persecution were in store for them. They were all the better prepared for tribulation by the experiences of this awful night. Let not the Christian think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try him, as though some strange thing happened unto him. It is all needful in the way of discipline. It may be that God has some great service preparing for that man who is called to pass through the severest storms. He is preparing him for what he has prepared for him. If he fails in the trial he may never know what honors were awaiting him.

The disciples needed a strong faith. This was one way to learn the lesson. They were brave enough in some ways, but very timid in others. It requires a strong faith to keep from fainting under the trials of this life. Jesus came to supply this strength. Lean on him, we may safely go into any danger. Human nature may quake, but the soul is safe. No ship can sink with Christ on board.—Christian Advocate.

Guarding the Deposit.

(I. Tim. vi. 20).

BY THE REV. J. OSWALD DYKES, D. D.

The mass of Christian dogma about which no difference arises among the great Christian communions is very much larger than is popularly supposed. Set aside metaphysical difficulties about the origination of the new life in the soul, and one deep feud respecting the powers of the church, her sacraments, and her ministry, there is scarcely another doctrine of consequence which is not held substantially alike in nearly every church. That leaves a notable consensus in Christendom. Put together these great mysteries: of the Trinity, of the Person of the Lord Jesus, of the fact of his atonement for sin, of his elevation to glory with power to save and judge mankind, of the Mission of the Holy Ghost, of the New Birth, of the Free Forgiveness of Sins, of the Hope of the Second Advent, of Resurrection, and of Eternal Life for all believers; put these, I say, together, and what a solid body have you of accepted beliefs! These are the most peculiar and influential of all Christian doctrines. About these, Christians are virtually at one. All these they equally prize as the sacred "deposit" entrusted by the Lord to his living church. With reference to this whole body of beliefs, at all events, the duty of Christians is a clear one. It is not to be held like any slight opinion of the day or merely probable theory, open to be revised or set aside

in an hour at the suggestion of some new speculation or liable to be upset by the latest discovery in archaeology. Men cannot build their religious confidence on such a shaky foundation as that. Nor is it in the least wise or worthy of serious minds to assume that, while Christianity itself may be true at bottom, all Christendom has gone hopelessly astray in its understanding of its tenets; that the entire body of belief which, from the days of the apostles downward, has inspired the hope and commanded the assent of Christendom, is as likely as not to be, after all, a foolish mistake. On the contrary, there is, as a mere matter of reasoning, an overwhelming probability in favor of what has been believed from the first and by all Christian ages. The chances are that the accepted conclusions of theological science have a great deal to be said for them, and are far too deeply grounded to be overthrown by every wind of modern opinion. To take up ignorantly the "newest thing out" in religion, as one would a fresh discovery, and be ready without inquiry to throw away the most ancient and stable beliefs of Christendom in favor of the latest dream of some brilliant essayist or the hypothesis of a speculator in theology, is really putting a fool's-cap upon reverent and sober inquiry. All churches owe it to the truth of Christ to protest against such frivolous abandonment of what has come down to us rich with the tears of saints and the blood of martyrs. By all means let the conclusions of the past be open to candid review in the spirit of ripe and accurate scholarship, of sober and cautious science. But do not set light by the most awful verities of our holy religion as if they had only been heard of the day before yesterday, or had not been pondered over by the sages, and lived in by the devout of eighteen hundred years. The truths here in question are too sacred, the issues at stake are too fearful, to warrant a flippant rejection of what has hitherto been most surely believed among us. These truths which have come down to us from Christ and his apostles are simply the most precious possessions of the human race. Study them by all means; understand them better; clear them of misapprehensions and human error where you can. But beware how you fling away at random, in a hasty hour, any portion of your treasure. It is too costly. It is from God. The life of souls is in it. It carries the hopes of mankind. Let us guard it for his honor whose truth it is, and whose great name is concerned in its pure and wide promulgation. Guard it for your own souls' sake; for it is your life and the one polestar to guide you out of time's shadows across the broad gulf of death into the everlasting land. For your fellows' sake guard it and spread it; for it is the Father's word to his wandering, sin-sick children—to all the crowds that have lost their way and stumble down, pierced with the thorns of earth, to the darkness of eternity.—Sel.

Preach the Cross.

BY REV. THODORE L. CUYLER.

In these days no preacher can improve on Paul. To his converts in Corinth, he wrote, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." He also declared, "first of all I delivered unto you that Christ died for our sins." The "first of all" does not refer to priority of time; for he had sounded the gospel trumpet elsewhere before he struck its keynote among the corrupt idolaters of Corinth. It means that as the principal thing he preached the Cross, and salvation by the atoning blood. Whatever else came second, this came first; whatever he omitted, he never omitted the core and marrow of the gospel.

The atonement is the cardinal doctrine of the New Testament; for the very core of Christianity is the sacrificial death of its divine founder. All its paths converge on Calvary. The gospel does not underdate ethics, or the duties of human brotherhood, or the spotless example of Jesus; but the atonement is the sublimest display of the divine love, and it transcends all other revealed truths in saving power. If I could deliver but one discourse to a congregation composed of all nations of the globe, this should be my text, "Christ Jesus died for our sins." This is the truth that has lain closest and warmest to the Christian heart in every age of the church. This is the touch-stone for every pulpit. Wherever the highest spiritual power has been attained, there has been the most faithful preaching of the guilt of sin, and of salvation only through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary. It is the duty of every minister to thunder against injustice and intemperance, and fraud and selfishness and hypocrisy and covetousness and every form of wickedness; but the true vantage ground from which we assail them is beside that cross where Jesus died to condemn all sin, and to save the theory.

Sometimes a theory of the atonement is presented in the pulpit from which every drop of vital fluid has been drained away. Neither Paul nor Peter nor John would have recognized their doctrine. The one theory of the atonement which meets the tremendous necessities of a world lying in wickedness is this plain short simple line, "Christ died for our sins." The three great and glori-