

age. Facts transmitted from the past must be accepted till new evidence modifies them. A mistaken interpretation must be met by a saner interpretation. Criticisms must be accepted or met by saner and more thoroughly rationalized criticisms. The universe is too vast and its processes too complex and veiled to permit man to feel that he has reached the complete and final solution of the problems of nature and human life. Not seldom will it occur in the future, as it has in the past, that a glance from some new point of view will make it clear that previous conclusions are really out of joint and some new way out of the perplexities must be sought.

The certainties of science, as they are called, will always demand assent. But the wise man will give his assent bearing in mind that probably before long a new set of certainties will appear to challenge assent. The philosophic theories of our period will be supplanted by those of another, each and all compounded like the image seen in the prophet's vision, part gold, part iron, part friable clay. But the process will go on. Some tantalizing impulse is always urging the finite to attempt to comprehend the infinite. Trial after trial will be made. Each and all will fail.

But while the movements, prompted by the desire for the new and what it is hoped may be the better, though some prove to be, indeed devious and even retrograde, they are included in a vaster movement, produced and directed by some mightier cause that bears all things on to some distant goal,—what it is, who knows?

II. If the present has its own life, so had the past. To re-create any period of it with its physical conditions, its beliefs and emotional life, is to divest ourselves for the time of the habits of thought, the feelings and beliefs of our real life. This is well-nigh, if not quite, impossible. It is for this reason that the historical novel gives so little pleasure to many persons. The accepted facts of the past are brought into perspective and magnified or depressed out of their original proportions by the subjectivity of the writer. Here also we find an explanation of the fact that the work of the historian is never completed. The preferences and prejudices of different writers will lead to different estimates of the causes and meaning of the course of events the record of which is called history. Hence it is that the work of our historian is scarcely read before a new one by another author is ready for the reader. A wholly just judgment of the past, therefore, it would be difficult to form. Customs that seem absurd to us had some reason for their existence. Beliefs that appear to us incredible in the atmosphere of an earlier day, conditions of life that would be intolerable for us were comfortable for our grandfathers. Many a noble life has proved its worth above the plain and even hard condition in which it found itself. It has too often proved true that luxury and grandeur in living have arrested the development of true nobility and stamped the life with inferiority. The conceit of the present always needs some wholesome chastening.

III. If it is difficult to reconstruct the past, can we anticipate the future? The attempt to do this has marked the history of man through the centuries. The seer has often called to his fellows to hear his message. But most often his vision has been a vain mirage. If sometimes a favoured few have seen foregleams of what the eternal and active power will bring into being; by the order of natural thought the only reasonable expectation man can reach in regard to the future must be a judgment formed by considering the conditions of the present. No human power can foresee what new forces, what new relations of things, what modifications on the part of man may arise to disarrange the wisest forecast. Man may continue to, subdue nature, but to what his work all tends he cannot discern. We are here between a past of which we know so little and a future reaching on indefinitely, of which at best we can know only a little on the hither edge. It is a narrow heritage. But it is all that the forces of nature, or, what I think is the better view, all that a wise Providence assigns us. In a large sense we are the product of the past and makers of the future. All that remains for us is to serve our own generation faithfully and wisely and leave our work to meet whatever may be revealed out of the depths of the future.

IV. Heraclitus 2500 years ago had a correct intuition when he said that Being is in constant change. The past appears to us as constant movement. While we are saying, this is the present, it is past. We must think, also, that movement will go on indefinitely. It is inconceivable to us that the universe should ever come to an absolute standstill.

But amidst this incessant change is there nothing permanent? Certainly the fact or law of change abides. Our experience comes and goes in constantly successive moments; yet we feel that through it all we abide,—in a real sense the same. It comes to us as by a fixed law of thought that amidst these interminable and innumerable changes some ultimate cause abides manifesting itself in this infinite variety. As we are persons, that is beings acting with intelligence and purpose, it is opposed to the necessity of thought for us, certain it has been for the human race at large, to believe that this ultimate cause is essentially inferior to ourselves. He abides ruling according to his purpose in this infinite sphere of change.

After all that has been said about the transformation of species, so far as relates to the period of human history, the variations occur within fairly well defined limits with a tendency to return to the pattern from which they started. For all practical purposes types remain for us as they existed in the time of our ancestors; and they will in all probability remain for generations to come. The human type, though it exists in several varieties, has remained essentially the same through the thousands of years of the historical period. We see no sufficient reason for concluding that it will be essentially changed for generations to come. So far as we are concerned, our minds must be developed in knowledge and strength and our lives made useful and honorable by the same process by which such ends were reached in the past. Amidst all the changes of the generations, the great facts of human life remain the same.

It is for this reason that the literature of the ancients still awakens responsive chords in our hearts. The impulses, motives and ends that ruled men's hearts in the past, rule the hearts and lives of men to-day.

Lazarus still lies at the rich man's gate. Royal splendor is still loved as in the days of the great king three thousand years ago. Men still prefer the uppermost rooms at feasts. The questions that troubled the thoughts of men thousands of years ago still vex our minds. Men now as of old are arrogant, disdainful, the strong crowding the weak. Young men and middle aged are inclined to spend their substance in riotous living; and some taught by experience, come to themselves, see what fools they have made of themselves and return humbled and penitent to a better life. As it spoke in the dawn of history, a voice still calls from the infinite depths, man, where art thou? and, where is thy "brother?"

The old Bible is still the best revelation of man, the best text-book for the study of human nature, the best guide to the way of life.

We have been making some observations in the Gallery of the College Library and meditating on Change and the Permanent. These studies have direct bearing on our daily work. It may be that old books have some uses.

### Friendly Hints To Inquirers.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

At this time of religious interest, there are a great many who are asking that question which is as old as human sin, "What must I do to be saved?" To those who honestly desire to be saved from a sinful heart and life into life worth living, I venture a few frank and friendly hints. No two personal experiences are exactly alike; yet as certain kinds of food and drink are suited to about everybody, so there are certain spiritual prescriptions that meet about every case.

1. You say that you are "feeling deeply." About what? If you feel deeply what an enormously wicked thing sin is, and that you are a sinner, then thank God for it. But do not be content with mere feeling. Tears never washed away guilt or saved a soul. The world of woe may contain myriads who are weeping over lost opportunities and wasted lives. Your Bibles does not say, "Weep and be saved," it says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved." An ounce of practical faith is worth a ton of mere emotion. To "feel deeply" is well, as far as it goes, if followed by action; but feeling involves one greater danger. To sorrow over your sins, and then to stick to your sins, is a grievous wrong to the Holy Spirit, and an equal wrong to yourself—it hardens the heart most terribly. The most difficult persons to reach are those who have sorrowed and sighed and made good resolutions a hundred times, and yet have never repented of sin or lifted a finger to obey Jesus Christ.

2. The first message with which Christ began his earthly ministry was Repent. When the Apostle Peter was dealing with hundreds of awakened souls at Jerusalem, he condensed his directions into this short, sharp sentence, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Genuine repentance means a vast deal more than grief over sins or even hatred of them; it means to turn from your sins and abandon your sins with a full purpose of obedience to Jesus Christ. It signifies both a change of heart toward sin and a change of conduct. The way for a tippler to repent is to break his bottle; for a profane man to repent is to stop swearing; for a dishonest man to repent is to make restitution to those who he has cheated. I knew of a certain person who was pungently convicted in a revival meeting, and espying a man there whom he had wronged, he called the man out into the vestibule and humbly asked his pardon for the wrong. That was the first step toward a sound conversion. I emphasized the duty of thorough repentance, because in these days there is not enough made of it. Cheap surface work makes cheap Christians; deep subsoil repentance makes strong, healthy Christian who will stand wash and wear.

3. Another vital point is unconditional submission to God. Don't attempt to bargain with God. Saul of Tarsus yielded everything when he cried out from the ground, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" An intelligent woman who had been in sore distress for many weeks, said

to her pastor, "I have done quarreling with God. I am resolved to submit to him and serve him, and to do all the good I can while I live, and then go to hell as I deserve." Her pastor smiled and quietly replied: "You will find it hard work to get to hell in that way." The honest-hearted woman soon found that her willing submission of heart to God and her patient readiness to obey him and do her duty, was bringing her a calm and abiding peace. To know Christ's will and to do it in Christ's strength, is the very core of true religion. Do not try to bargain for the ready pay of "joy" and "happiness." When the festering rifle-ball is extracted, the wounded soldier finds comfort—but not before. When the sin gets out of your heart, and Christ gets in, you will obtain real comfort. Paul was not continually begging to be "happy, happy, happy," like some thin, watery Christians now-a-days. He bore sharp sufferings cheerfully, and to do Christ's will and to save souls was his joy and crown. Don't try to go to heaven before your time. If I can first get to be holy, i. e., healthy in heart, I have no fear but that my Master will give me the full joy of salvation.

4. You may inquire, "Where does faith come in? Must I not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ if I would be saved?" Yes, very true. But saving faith is vastly more than an opinion or a devout purpose. It is an act; it is the act of yielding your heart up to the atoning Saviour, the act of joining your poor weak soul to him as your Redeemer and your Lord. When Christ was on earth he did not say much about "believing"—but he did demand prompt obedience; "Follow me!" Whoever would not take up his cross and follow his new Master, could not be his disciple. Begin, then my friend; to do the first thing that Jesus bids you do. The Holy Spirit, working on your conscience, bids you do a certain thing to please Christ—do it. At whatever point the Spirit presses you, yield! Obey Jesus Christ! When you honestly take any step, either in abandoning a sin or in doing a duty, and do this simply to please Christ—then conversion has begun. That is the first movement. You have changed masters. To be willing to trust on Christ and to go with Christ, even for a single step, is the beginning of a Christian life. As to rapture and ecstasies, you will have enough of them when you get to heaven. The smile of conscience and the smile of Christ will be enough. Any loving, unselfish deed you can do to please your Saviour is a step into the new life.

5. I have not said anything in these plain, simple counsels, about prayer. If you are honestly striving to quit sin and pray. Real prayer is sincerely asking for what you really want. Unless you do what Jesus commands you, years of prayer will not save your soul. Remember also my friend, that you will make no headway without the help of the Holy Spirit. He alone can regenerate your heart. He may be striving with you for the last time, and you drive him away, you are lost: Quench not the Holy Spirit. Every delay is at a terrible risk. Perhaps the loving Saviour in the still small pleading voice of his Spirit may be giving a last knock at the door of your heart.

Finally, the whole great question of your salvation must be settled between you and your Saviour, Skepticism—if that is your trouble—can only be conquered by trying Jesus Christ for yourself. Go to him with your Bible and on your knees surrender yourself to him. One honest hour with Christ is the "inquiry meeting" you need most. No preaching, no talking can save you—Jesus can. "Whatever he saith unto you, do it."—Presbyterian

We need to guard against sins of omission in our home-life. We should make sure that no one in our household can ever say to us: I was hungry-hearted and you gave me no bread. I was thirsty for affection and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger at your door and you took me not into love's warmth and shelter. I was sick of the world's emptiness, vanity and sorrow, and you visited me not. I was in prison in my narrow environment and you did not come to me with the companionship that I craved. Living by my side all these years, you did not do love's duty to me."—Dr. J. R. Miller.

The great forces of life have had small beginnings, and of all of God's creatures, none are so weak, so helpless, as man when born into life; and yet mankind, with age and culture, change the face of nature and may command—control all forces and utilize all resources. Man, at birth so helpless, makes a small beginning, give him time, education, culture, discipline and experience, and he becomes one of the most formidable forces on this earth.

The true Christian studies the happy art of making the most of every one with whom he is thrown in contact—of recognizing in each soul and of eliciting from it that feature of heart and mind in which stands the relationship of that particular soul to God. It is this true self of our neighbor which we are required to love.—Edward M. Goulburn.

The reason why you do not trust him more is that you obey him so little. If you would only ask what God would have you to do, you would soon find your confidence growing.—George Macdonald.