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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

"TO-DAY I MUST ABIDE AT THY HOUSE."

(LUKE xix. 5.)

Heard I Christ The Master say,
"I must abide with thee to-day."
But I looked within my heart,
Sin-defiled in every part,
And I said, "Oh, not to-day!
Please Thee, Christ, to turn away."

"How can I, so poor and vile,
Full of wickedness and guile,
Entertain within my breast
Thee, divine and heavenly Guest?
Wait, Lord, till I holier be;
Then mayest Thou abide with me."

But I heard His voice again,
(How unlike the sons of men!)
Heard Him speak in words of love,
Rising clear earth's noise above,
"Open, child, thy heart to Me;
I bring light and purity."

Then I said, "O Guest Divine,
Come, possess this heart of mine!"
And He came in all His grace,
Put on me His comeliness,
Gave my soul the bliss to know,
Christ and heaven together go!

H. R., in *The Christian*.

Religious.

HELD BY THE RIGHT HAND.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

"Thou hast holden me by my right hand; thou shalt afterward receive me to glory." This is one of the most inspiring and invigorating utterances that ever fell from any man who was under the teachings of the Holy Spirit. It is an experience, and also an assurance. For this world, an actual experience; for the world to come, a glorious assurance. The religion of Jesus Christ is an experimental thing—something to be tested by practical results. It claims an actual relation between weak, sinful man and his Heavenly Father; between the sinner and his divine Savior. The language of this passage is not the language of excited imagination. Millions of the most profoundly intelligent men and women who ever lived have repeated this same strong declaration: "Thou hast holden me by my right hand."

A steamer sinks in mid-ocean. One of the passengers, nearly exhausted by long swimming, sees a loaded life-boat approaching. He reaches out his weary hand to a strong man in the boat, who grasps it, and keeps the swimmer afloat until a safe ship's deck is reached. The act of the exhausted man in the water is an act of trust. The act of the strong man in the boat is one of help and sustaining strength. The salvation of the drowning sufferer begins with the act of clasping those two hands. It is consummated by keeping these two hands firmly together. The withdrawal of either would be fatal.

Now the salvation of any sinner depends on his vital spiritual union to the Lord Jesus. Conversion is the act of joining our hands to the pierced hand of the crucified Savior. The new life begins with the taking of Christ's hand, and His taking hold, in infinite love, of our weak hands. Up to the time of his regeneration every sinner tries to walk in his own strength, and goes his own wicked way of disobedience. He chooses his own path, and walks in the ways of his own selfish heart. The rash and reckless Alpine traveler who should attempt to ascend the Matterhorn without a guide would not be more insane than is every human being who, in this world of temptation attempts to live without God. Yet every impenitent soul ventures on this terrible experiment.

The beginning of the Christian life is in our grasp of faith on the hand of Jesus. Or, speaking more correctly, it is the allowing of Christ to grasp our "right hand;" for He first loved us. Observe that it is not the left hand which is to be given to Christ, but the right hand—the effective working hand. Then the new believer can

sing, "He leadeth me." Then he can confidently pray: "Lord, lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies." Henceforth his best and sweetest aspiration is:

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it matters not,
It leads me to Thy rest."

To every trusting soul the Divine promise is: "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee." What a strong grasp that is which Jesus gives to poor, weak human nature. All the strength which any converted soul possesses is gotten through this contact and union with Christ the Omnipotent. Who supposes that such a man as my eloquent friend Gough, with his nervous, impulsive temperament, and that latent demon of appetite for strong drink lurking within him, would ever have held out for thirty years if the Lord had not holden him by his right hand? The fatal mistake of many a reformed inebriate is that when he lets loose of the bottle, he does not grasp hold on God. Very few are ever permanently reformed without the help of the Divine grace to steady them over the slippery places of temptation.

Not only is Christ's grasp a strong one—it is a long one also. Here is the only foundation for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Strictly speaking, it is Christ's perseverance with the believer that ensures his salvation. Jesus loveth His own unto the end. "None shall pluck them out of my hand." As long as my hand is clasped in my Savior's mighty grasp, all hell cannot sever us. This union must be continuous on my part also; for there is a constant temptation for me to draw out my hand suddenly and try to walk alone. "Just this once," whispers pride and presumption. Selfishness whispers: "Yonder is smoother walking; go there." Whenever I have tried this experiment of wicked folly, then came the backslider's wanderings and bruising falls. Peter undertook once to go alone, and he fell within an hour. Afterward he said, "I will trust;" and he fell into a sweet slumber in the dungeon to be awakened by an angel.

There is a perpetual need of being held by our right hand; for life's journey is over an untried road, with steep hills of difficulty constantly confronting us. Fear looks up the precipitous pathway and says, "that is too much for me." Jesus replies, "fear not, I will help thee." And, with our five fingers of faith made fast in His hold of love, we push upward to the summit. Life is full of "slippery places," too. We come upon them unawares, as Alpine travelers come upon a glare of ice covered by thin coats of snow. Sudden prosperity is a slippery place for any man to tread upon. Where one child of God is cast down by adversity, a score slip and tumble through the temptations of prosperity. I could name hundreds of church members whose religion has declined in proportion as their incomes went up. Great popularity is a position of peril.

"Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Business men tell us that they are constantly exposed to slippery practices, and that it is increasingly difficult to make money with a clean conscience and the approval of God. Political pursuits are proverbially full of pitfalls. Sudden assaults of the devil beset every Christian as they beset Joseph and David, and him who was greater than either. As a child walking over a slippery and dangerous path cries out: "Father, I am falling!" and has but a moment to catch its father's hand, so every believer sees hours when only the hand of Jesus comes between him and the abysses of destruction. When I cried, "My foot slipped!" thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

And so every pilgrim of Jesus goes on his upward way. As he climbs a rugged steep, panting under his heavy load, he cries out, my burden is too heavy for me! A heavenly Friend at his side answers: "Cast thy burden upon me. I will hold thee by thy right hand, and afterward receive thee to glory." Again I seem to see that pilgrim sorely beset by evil spirits. He cries out: "Lord! save me, or I perish." The answer comes quickly: "None shall be able to pluck thee out of my hand."

Before the pilgrim there stretches a dizzy plateau of ice, broken by many a concealed crevasse many fathoms deep. Still the assuring voice keeps speaking, Hold fast to me, and afterward I will receive thee to glory.

Higher and still higher the trusting soul mounts upward. At length a glittering gateway opens. The gate is of solid pearl, and it opens upon a street of pure gold—as it were, transparent glass. As the pilgrim enters the overwhelming light, the last words that we catch are these: "Oh blessed Jesus; Thou hast holden me by my right hand, and now Thou art receiving me to glory."—*Independent*.

For the Christian Messenger.

"BAPTISM AND COMMUNION."

III.

AN EXEGESIS ON ACTS II. 42, 46.

By Rev. George Armstrong, A. M.

Those who invert, or ignore the order by which baptism precedes Communion, have no countenance or support from what the Apostles did on the day of Pentecost and subsequently in Jerusalem. They understood the law of Christ as to what they themselves must do, and also as to what Christian disciples must do; and they taught and carried out that law in its integrity. There is no ground for supposing the Apostles pursued the course they did without design,—that it merely so happened,—and that therefore the order observed in the things taught and done, had no significance, and consequently is not binding on us. For this is equivalent to saying that they were acting without law from Christ, or without direction from the Holy Spirit. But this cannot for a moment be admitted. They had received the Law of the commission from the Lord, and also received in fullness, the promised Paraclete, the Spirit, who was to guide them into all the truth—and they spoke and acted as prompted and directed by that Divine Spirit. We learn from this inspired record of the doings of these inspired men that two qualifications at least, are required in order to commune at the Lord's table; the first is a "Spiritual" one, viz., repentance, such repentance as is connected with remission of sins, or what in effect is the same thing, a cordial belief, a hearty reception of the gospel. The second is a "ritual" one, viz., baptism as laid down and commanded in the New Testament. A person who possesses Christian character, and has in reality submitted to the initiatory ordinance of the gospel is most certainly qualified to participate at the Lord's table. As gospel baptism introduces the recipient of it into the Christian church, he is bound by its laws, and entitled to its privileges, unless forfeited through flagrant immorality, or grave error in respect to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

The church owes, and the individual member owes, allegiance to Christ; and each has a right to the position which is necessary to render the required obedience, without hindrance or obstruction from the other. Nay, each should help the other. Such at least is my decided opinion on these matters. I have now given my view of the relation existing between the two ordinances,—Baptism and Communion, as exhibited in the occurrences at Pentecost in Jerusalem. It is plain that baptism preceded Communion; no other interpretation is consistent with, or sustained by the facts recorded in this chapter. But the

transactions of the day of Pentecost should not be regarded as isolated from the facts and teachings recorded in the gospels, but as most intimately connected with them; and in fact as being their predestined and necessary outgrowth and result. Pentecost was indeed a fulfilment of ancient prophecy, but it was also a grand development of Christian doctrine and spiritual power,—the complement and culmination of the great and momentous facts recorded in the gospels, and the great principles involved in them. The glorious and mysterious events of the Pentecost could have had no existence, and consequently no record, if the facts recorded in the gospels had not occurred; just as these facts themselves would have had no proper completion, appropriate development, and the requisite confirmation, had not the great events of the Pentecost taken place. The Christian system from beginning to end is equally holy; for it all came from God in a special sense, and is the product of his infinite wisdom, love and power, co-operating with infinite holiness and justice. To hold therefore that no part of what was done by Christ and his Apostles before the giving of the last commission to disciple the nations, or previous to the great manifestation of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, is to be regarded as Christian, is, in effect to determine that the beginning is no part of the whole, that the facts which are the foundation of the whole structure, and impart life and power to the grand development, and therefore essential to it, should be ignored in contemplating that development and judging of it. This way of testing the development of gospel doctrines and ordinances is very confusing, and is neither scientific nor wise, and besides contradicts the current and import of the gospel history.

Foreign Missions.

FROM BURMAH.

RANGOON, June 15, 1874.

Dear Editor,—

The *Messenger* is indeed a very welcome guest. We look for it as for an old friend; and when it comes its features and tone are so familiar, that, by a little association of ideas, the scenes of home stand before us as in picture. It first appears at Tavoy and is afterwards forwarded to Rangoon in exchange for the *Visitor*.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul so is good news from a far country." Our spirits have been refreshed by tidings of God's gracious dealings with our brethren. They will permit us to share their joy. We rejoice with them over those who of late have been reclaimed from the dominion of sin. We would gladly join in giving the right hand of fellowship to the new converts; and welcome them as co-laborers in the Lord's harvest field. May they enter upon their Christian life under the inspiring thought, that if they will yield whole-hearted service God will grant a precious season for labor, and ultimately receive to glory. We hope they will drink in the spirit of the Great Commission more freely than we in the early part of our Christian experience. To our mind, its reception or non-reception stands intimately connected with the growth and proper development of individual Christian character. But above and beyond this, is it for the glory of God that His redeemed ones enter most fully into the divine scheme for the world's evangelization.

Never before did our brethren and sisters of the Provinces seem so dear to us. The remembrance of their warm Christian sympathy and interest, so appropriately expressed on the part of many, both in public and in private, ere we sailed, is still fresh. And now the consciousness that so many hearts glow with warm emotions as the cause of Christ among the heathen is borne upon the wings of their earnest prayers, is a source of strength to us.

We know too that we, even we, who are unworthy the privilege of bearing the Glad-tidings to these perishing multitudes, are remembered in particular. With these things in mind, it is not strange if we should feel a new kind of inspiration while performing our duties as your servants for Christ's sake. Our prayers ascend in unison with yours. A "silver cord" unites our hearts with yours, though a wide and dreary waste of waters rolls between us. As often as tidings have come of the continued progress of revivals among the churches in the Provinces our hearts have responded in thanksgiving, and at the same time prayed that the Lord may increase you more and more.

Your missionaries have not yet entered their proposed field of labor, but are preparing themselves by the acquisition of the language. They are also gathering lessons and hints from those who have toiled successfully among the heathen of Burmah. We are impatient to get at the people and preach the Gospel to them, but the language like a wall keeps us at a distance. This wall is crumbling down. We wish it were gone already.

Yours in the Gospel,
RUFUS SANFORD.

FROM SIAM.

A SABBATH MORNING AT WAT KOH.

The different parts of Bangkok receive names from the names of the Wats, or Buddhist Temples in the vicinity, as Wat se Kaat, Wat Chang, Wat Koh, &c.

At Wat Koh, adjoining the temple ground, is a neat little chapel, built by the American Baptist Union, in which the Chinese worship is held. It fronts on the street, and stands in the midst of the bazaar; a better location could not be selected, for the street is swarming with people, buying and selling and passing to and fro on other business. Sunday morning is no exception, everything is just the same as on other days; no Sabbath calm and quiet in heathen countries, except about the homes of the missionaries, and at the places of business of a few from Christian lands. So in the morning when the people see the aged missionary and wife, accompanied by other foreigners, and followed by a number of Chinese men, and a few Siamese girls, (Mrs. Dean's servants), go into this building to worship God, their curiosity impels them to turn aside from their business, and look in to see what is going on. They came with inquisitive looks and peered in at the open doors, so that before service commenced some half dozen or more were standing at each door.

Mrs. Dean motioned them in to a seat, but they shook their heads, and when at last the first one ventured in and took a seat, they laughed at him scornfully. Meanwhile meeting was opened, a chapter was read, a hymn sung, and we all knelt to pray, one of the Chinese Christians led, and while he prayed, the crowd at the door talked and jabbered away as if they were in a place, no more sacred than their own heathen temples. While Dr. Dean preached several came in, some took seats and after remaining, some longer, some a shorter time, they went away and others took their places. One stood for a short time beside a disciple who had his Bible open and looked on as if reading, another came up some distance and took a seat in the centre of the house, but after sitting a short time, went deliberately over to a large Siamese boy, sitting near the door, took hold of his bushy top knot, and pulled him along, past one door, and across the back of the church, and out. Upwards of fifty came and went while the Missionary preached on uninterrupted, and there were about thirty disciples present. We sat looking on and listening, but not understanding one word, still we knew it was the gospel which was being preached, and we prayed earnestly that the Spirit would open some of these dark minds to receive it, and lead them to enquire if