

Life's Volume.

Open before my wondering eyes,
Great God, life's mystic volume lies;
I wait to see Thy hand define
The fadless record of each line.

No leaf once closed may I retrace
To add a word, or word erase;
Nor may I guess the joy or gloom
Inscribed on pages yet to come.

The past in light I clearly count,
Judge their intent, tell their amount;
But hid in clouds I cannot see
The history yet awaiting me.

But knowing this, that great or small,
My Father's hand will write it all;
I trust to future, and submit
To what is past—what's writ is writ.

But hear this prayer, O Power Divine!
Thou lift'st each leaf, and writ'st each
line,
That where my hands have left a stain
Christ's blood may make all pure again.

Where the last sentence hath its end
In mercy, Maker, Father, Friend,
Write for the sake of Thy dear Son,
"Servant of Jesus Christ, well done!"
—Charles F. Deems, D. D.

How Little to Give.

How little it is to give! It is, in appearance, only a little tenderness in the voice that the spirit that needs it recognizes, though it could hardly tell how it recognized it. It is simply that the soul shows herself for a moment at her window, and the wayfarer looks, and by a sudden recognition sees her here. It is only a something, we hardly know what, in the grasp of the hand, an electric thrill that shows it is no mere formality, but that it is a torch of life—that the hand is warm from the heart. This is all it is to give. But what is it to receive? It is often nothing less than a new life. Here is a poor, suffering soul that feels itself cut off from the common and glad circle of humanity. The common joys and the common life seem not for it. It seems to itself like one shivering apart, while the merry groups of happier ones rejoice in the warm sunlight, and in the play of free and kind intercourse. When this solitary soul meets the touch or the look of sympathy, its isolation is over; it is by his drawn into the common circle of humanity. The common brotherhood reaches it also.

Perhaps this lonely soul had thought itself forgotten even by God. Perhaps it saw no sign that he still remembered it. By this greeting of hearty interest—by this touch of feeling, of comprehension, of fellowship—it is as if God himself spoke to it. It is as if he sent one of his angels to speak to it good cheer; for if one of his children cares for it and loves it, it feels that the father himself can not have forgotten it.—Dr. C. C. Everett.

Stay in the Sunshine.

I have somewhere read that the great Swiss writer, Dr. Merle D'Aubigne was grievously troubled with doubts during his student days. He went to his old, experienced teacher for help. The veteran refused to discuss them, and said: "Were I to rid you of these doubts, others would come. There is a shorter way of destroying them. Let Jesus be really to you the Son of God, an Almighty Saviour, and his light will dispel the darkness, and his Spirit will lead you into all truth." The old man was right. He saw that the young student was falling into a sinful habit that would grow worse by tampering with it. To attempt to poke away the clouds with your own hand is sheer folly. Your true course is to plant yourself in the clear, broad sunshine of Jesus Christ, and stay there.

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear," is a line that ought to be said or sung every hour of the Christian's life. Some good people are the prey of naturally despondent temperaments. Such need a double supply of grace, and must pray for it. So must they whose digestion is weak and whose nerves are over sensitive. The worries of business or household cares, the loss of sleep, or the derangement of the bodily machinery, put such Christian folk under a cloud very often. To-day they sing like larks; to-morrow the barometer goes down, and they are in the dumps again. Such people should look after their bodily health as a spiritual duty. Moreover, they should keep their Christian faith where it would not be exposed to every east wind, or drenched to death by every shower that falls. Keep a good supply of tonic Bible texts within reach, and take them freely the next time that an acute fit comes on.—Dr. T. L. Cuyler.

Popular with one man.

A railway gate-keeper who, one cold night, required every passenger to show his ticket before passing through to the train, and was rewarded with considerable grumbling and protesting, was told by Major Whittle, "You are a very unpopular man to-night."

"I only care to be popular with one man," was the reply, and that is the superintendent."

He might have pleased the passengers, disobeyed orders, and lost his position. He was too wise for that; his business was to please one man—the man who hired him, gave him his orders, and rewarded him for faithfulness, and who would discharge him for disobedience.

The servant of Christ has many opportunities to make himself unpopular. There are multitudes who would be glad to have him relax the strictness of his rules, and grant to them some indulgence which his Master forbids. If he is their servant they demand that he should consult their wishes and if they hire him and pay him, they think they should have the right to control him. But if he serves them he cannot serve the Lord. "No man can serve two masters." He who tries to be popular with the world will lose his popularity with the Lord. He

will make friends, but he will lose the one Friend who is above all others. He will win plaudits, but he will not hear the gracious word, "Well done!"

The servant of God should seek to be popular with one man, and that is "the man Christ Jesus," he who is over all, who is higher than the highest, mightier than the mightiest, and whose approval is worth more than all the world's applause, whose blessing will make us glad to all eternity.—*The Christian.*

AMBITION.—Paul believed in being ambitious. He was naturally very ambitious, but he consecrated every nerve of his ambition to the excellent glory of his Lord. He was not ambitious for his own pleasure. Such a motive would have poisoned the beauty of his ambition. He was alertly ambitious to please his beloved Master. Hence he wrote to the Corinthians, according to the Revised Version, thus: "We are ambitious, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him" (2 Cor. 5: 9, marg.). He felt that every inch of his energy should be taxed to contribute to the special pleasure of his Christ. What a sharp rebuke this is, to those who selfishly seek their own pleasure! How it points the finger of shame to such as are ambitious to minister to their own aggrandizement and elevation! And how reprovingly it appeals to sluggish professors to arise from the couch of their ease and spur themselves to high endeavors for God! One of the most pitiable sights in this world is an ambitious Christian. What an amazing contrast between such an one and the heroically ambitious Paul! If all members of our churches were as ambitious as was Paul, having the same holy quality of ambition, many noble and bright things would be brought to pass which are now left severely undone. Oh, for a baptism of holy ambition on all!

IT IS WELL for the young in Christ to remember that action and movement is not always indicative of advance. A boy on a rocking-horse keeps up a constant action and movement, yet he makes no progress. He remains in the same place. So in the Christian life there may be activities and identification with movements many, yet, in real individual growth in knowledge, grace and usefulness there may be no going forward and upward. Mistake on this matter may be fatal. The young do well therefore who take time and thought to calculate that an advance from day to day is really and honestly made. So will they become strong for Christ and the church.

WHEN THE MEMBERS of the church are so very slow to speak for Jesus, in the prayer and class meetings it is presumptive evidence that their everyday Christian life is very defective. He who is on intimate terms with and deeply interested in his neighbor finds it very easy to speak of or for him in the public gathering, as opportunity may afford or occasion may require. Hence if men and women are slow to speak for Jesus in the class meeting, it is conclusive evidence that they are not interested in or intimately acquainted with him.

FAITH IN THE PROMISES.—A captive was brought before an Asiatic prince; the scimitar was already raised over his head, when, oppressed by intolerable thirst, he asked for water. A cup was handed him; he held it as if apprehensive lest the scimitar would fall while he was in the act of drinking. "Take courage!" said the prince; "your life will be spared till you drink this water." He instantly dashed the cup of water to the ground. The good faith of the barbarian saved him. The word had passed, it was enough; and the captive went on his way rejoicing.

If it is temptation that will not let you rest, come straight away out of the very thick of it; it may be with the fiery darts sticking in you. Come with all the haunting thoughts that you hate, just as you are, to "Him with whom you have to do. You would not or could not tell the temptation to any one else; but then you have not got to do with any one else in the matter, but only with Jesus. And he "suffered," being tempted."—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

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Annual Sermon.

BY REV. A. C. THOMPSON

Behold I stand, and knock etc.—Rev. 3, 20.

In attempting to decide upon a portion of scripture that would be suitable to this time and occasion, I found the one just read, in some unaccountable manner, taking a very strong hold of my mind, and heart; and, with a persistency that was well nigh irresistible, demanding to be taken. Therefore, to the few thoughts it has suggested, I invite our attention.

This book of Rev. is, indeed, a very wonderful part of the Sacred Oracles. Whenever I turn to it, it somehow awakens in me the liveliest imagination; I seem to see the aged apostle of love, reclining under the trees, in the cool of the evening, meditating upon the wonderful sayings and doings of his departed Lord, or considering the state and condition of the churches in Asia, over which he had had the supervision, prior to his banishment to that island. Again, on the Lord's day I seem to see him, as he rises early and, according to his usual custom, first of all, offering to his Lord his morning sacrifice of true worship and humble devotion, and as he kneels in silent communion with the other world, I seem to see in his attitude and expression a reflection of the deep devotion of his spirit.

Again, there comes before me another sight of this wonderful man of God; he has eaten his frugal morning meal, and, now seated under a wide spreading cedar, he is again, indulging in meditation: The hours come and go, and there he sits, lost to himself and to his surroundings, when suddenly he hears a voice like a trumpet, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; what thou now seest write in a book, and send it to the churches in Asia." He turns to see, what this meaneth, when lo! a most remarkable vision presents itself to him. He sees seven beautiful golden candlesticks, and, standing in their midst, a majestic and imposing form that he recognizes as his Lord. The sight of Jesus, clothed in such power, fills him with awe; and, overwhelmed with the sight, he falls at his feet, as one dead. But the loving touch of his Lord quickly brings him back to consciousness, and he is again told to write down what he sees and hears. Jesus now begins to dictate to him a message to each of the seven churches of Asia: To the one addressed to the church at Laodicea, I wish particularly to direct your attention. "Write to that church," says Jesus, "that my eye is upon them; I see and here all they are doing and saying—claiming to be rich and in need of nothing, while in reality, they are poor, and blind and wretched; they are neither cold nor hot—neither heathens nor true Christians—but lukewarm, a condition that I abominate; and unless they do speedily repent, and buy of me the true riches, 'I will spue them out of my mouth.' Notwithstanding their unkind treatment of me, my anxious love to them and my earnest desire for their welfare constrains me to offer them help; so say to them that I am now standing at the door of their church, knocking, desiring to come in, to forgive and heal all their backslidings, and restore them to their former place in my love, and favor.

What an exhibition, of Christ's wonderful love, infinite compassion, and boundless mercy is here set before us. Loving, and offering help to those who had treated Him so ill.

But the picture here set before us calls for more careful study, that we may discover, if possible, the lessons it has for us. In this wonderful portrayal of our Lord's great love, compassion and mercy, what do we see? A church of Christ not indwelt by Him; a band of, so called, disciples of Christ not desiring the Lord's presence with them. That church, having been established by the apostle John, doubtless had a good start in the way of righteousness, but now, lifted up with its pride and worldliness, it had crowded out the Lord of life and glory. But how lovingly, as well as plainly and pointedly, does our Lord set before them, their fallen condition, with its attendant lukewarmness, which is so repulsive to Him; and how graciously He offers to forgive all their backslidings, if they will only hear and heed His knock, and receive Him into their midst again.

This suggests to me for a subject—*The deplorable condition of the Christians.* This denomination believes and teaches the necessity of a belief in Christ, an acceptance of Christ, and a full and unreserved submission to Christ; the consideration of this subject necessarily leads to some of the very foundation principles of our denominational life.

First, the necessity of the saints persevering in the Divine life. While we steadfastly hold to that grand funda-

mental truth of the gospel, that salvation can only be secured through faith, we wish all to know that it is not the dead faith which James so faithfully warns against, but rather the works-producing faith that works by love and purifies the heart, leading to self denial and consecration to the Lord's service, and to perseverance in the divine life.

The plain expression of the Lord, that "If any man... will open the door"—the primary meaning of which is, any member of that Laodicean church, seems to teach us that the majority of the members of that church were then in a backslidden condition. This teaches the possibility of churches and believers so far backsliding as to be without Christ.

Now we understand why so many warnings are divinely sent to believers of all ages: "To watch, and pray lest they enter into &c."; "to remember Lot's wife"; "to labor to enter into the Christians rest, lest any fall through unbelief"; "To take heed lest they fall." Do not these warnings point to us a reason why we should ever strive to avoid a relapse into our old ways, into our old sins, deliverance from which is always difficult, and in some cases, as the word very plainly teaches, quite "impossible." For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Hence we see the need of jealously watching our hearts, lest some root of bitterness spring up, and we are defiled thereby. Spurgeon, that prince among preachers, and a strong Calvinist in belief, upon one occasion, uttered this faithful warning,—Believer, beware! be not over confident, for where thou thinkest thou art iron thou wilt soon find thou art but clay, and when thou thinkest the gates are firmly closed against the tempter with bars of strongest brass, it may prove to be but rotten wood. With respect to none of us, even the holiest, is there reason to trust in anything, but the living Christ, daily served and followed.

Maundrell, the celebrated traveller, tells that in the great valley of salt, near Gebul, there is a small precipice, caused by the constant removal of the salt deposit. In the sides of that precipice the veins of salt can be plainly seen. He cut into one of them, and removed some of the deposit, when, to his surprise, he found that although it had the glitter of the genuine article, on account of its long exposure to the atmosphere, it had entirely lost its savour; but cutting in further, where it was seen clinging tenaciously to the rock, it was found to be good and perfect. So the believer may continue to have the look and glitter of a Christian profession, when by failure to persevere in his submission of heart and will to Jesus, and by his affiliation with the world, he has, in a measure, if not altogether, lost the savour of divine grace out of his heart. And does not our Lord plainly declare that, "If the salt has lost its savour it is thenceforth good for nothing? The salt deposit found clinging to the rock was good and perfect; so the Christian who perseveres; who clings to the eternal rock of ages, will assuredly retain the savour of divine grace in his heart. Why the very spirit and trend of our holy religion is to development and advancement—"First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn"; "A pressing forward to the mark of the prize of the high calling, in Christ Jesus"; "A working out (not in your own salvation)"; "A running with patience the race set before us &c." Hence we affirm that a good start in the way of righteousness is not enough as there must be perseverance in that way: that a backslider's experience, with all its uncertainty and unhappiness, may be avoided, and that growth, development and establishment in righteousness may be consummated.

But it may be possible that some of the members of that church, to which our Lord addresses His message, may not have been backsliders, but were those who had never been fully converted to Christ, but, disgusted with Judaism and with the many forms of idolatrous worship then prevalent, had united with that church honestly seeking something better. They had not been born again, and hence were without Christ; and, by the strong current of worldliness in the church were being carried farther and farther into

darkness as to their real condition and need. These thoughts lead me to consider our belief in, and contention for a regenerated church membership. "Ye must be born again." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His."

Experience has taught us that it is both possible and common for those to join to a church who have never experienced the new birth. And we have also learned that it is possible for those unconverted church members to so observe some of the religious duties of a Christian, and because of their relation to, and their work for the church to imagine that they have a good hope. It is a sort of churchianity that is a very dangerous counterfeit of genuine Christianity; "A form of Godliness without the power thereof."

The great importance of the new birth cannot be over stated. A grave and wise counselor of the French people, on account of his age, was retiring from the honorable position he had so long occupied. The Emperor courteously asked him to give him his parting counsel as how best to promote prosperous government. He complied by bringing to his sovereign a paper, at the top of which he had written "Moderation in the middle, he had also written Moderation and at the bottom Moderation."

Demosthenes being asked what was the chief thing in an orator, replied "Elocution; and to oft repeated similar enquiries he invariably returned the same answer. Socrates when asked what was the great object of human life always replied, "to get wisdom." Augustine in reply to the question as to which he considered the most important Christian grace, answered Humility; as to which was the most needed Humility; as to which was the most fruitful Humility. The emphasis the counselor gave of moderation, the Grecian to elocution, the philosopher to wisdom, the Christian father to humility, we understand Jesus to give to regeneration as the greatest need of human life, the only thing that can assure us entrance to Heaven as well as present and real satisfaction to the soul. Here lies a little shoot of an apple tree cut of from its parent stem; the gardener tells us it is a very valuable shoot, being of a very choice kind; but if it remains upon the ground it will certainly die; presently the gardener takes it up and grafts it into a thrifty vigorous tree, soon new leaves appear, which indicate that the new life has been communicated; and in due time there comes the healthy vigorous fruit. So to day all around us in this world, lay the unregenerate, cut off from eternal life by sin. If they remain where there are they will surely die. The heavenly husbandman tells us their souls are very valuable, and He calls upon us to help him graft them into the living vine; that they may be saved from death by a new life being communicated; bear fruit to the glory of God. Then let us quickly and tenderly take them up; and bring them, in the arms of our faith and love, to Jesus. For our mission in the world is to rescue the perishing, to care for the dying; and to tell them, of Jesus, the mighty to save.

The picture of the loving Saviour, grieved at the waywardness of that backslidden Church yet patiently standing outside, knocking, seeking admission, sets before us another of our foundation principles viz., Christ's demand that His church shall be indwelt by Him, that they may be Spiritually-minded, holy living people, zealous of good works. That Laodicean church had so far backslidden that they seemed contented with things as they were; they were rich in their own estimation. Possibly they had a popular pastor, talented, and philosophical; the best, and most fashionable people attended their church; their form of worship was pleasing, to both eye and ear, and proud of these things, they seem to want nothing more. But listen, to the Saviour's arraignment of them.

"Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Does not this indicate how formal and unspiritual their worship must have been. How this message of our Lord must have humbled their pride. History tells us that they never forgave John for sending it to them, and also that they continued on in their old ways, until they met with terrible disaster, and were utterly cast off by the Lord, as intimated in this message to them.

If I have been rightly informed as to the causes that gave rise to our denominational life, one was the need that then existed, and which still exists of emphasizing the importance of

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supplementing believing faith with holy, righteous living, or to spread abroad the doctrine of scriptural holiness. Hence, at the very inception of this denomination, "Holiness to the Lord" was placed upon our banner, and the word Christian was incorporated in the very name we bear, that term simply meaning to be Christlike, and to be Christlike we must be holy. Is it not clearly apparent then, that it is unkind, yes is even untrue, for any one to assert that the Free Christian Baptists are, in any sense, opposed to holiness? But some may say, even do say, that we have departed from those old principles, and the old landmarks: I appeal to you old brethren, is that statement true? Surely, all will concede those to be credible witnesses, who know whereof they affirm. Then, let it be published from Dan to Beersheba, from the Tiber to Campobello, that "Holiness to the Lord" is still upon the banner of the Free Christian Baptist denomination, and that there we intend it will ever remain, for it expresses a doctrinal truth, which we all love; and strive to teach to the people.

The Sainted Baxter was once asked by an honest enquirer what holiness really meant. His reply was to love mercy, do justly, and walk humbly before God, i. e. to live right before God and man; Remember, it is not to judge others, for that is expressly forbidden; but rather to judge ourselves as to our motives and desires. For any man to expect to get to heaven without having in him those elements of the Divine nature that constrain him to holy living and to active service in the divine life, is as foolish as to think he might see without eyes, or live without life. Yet the trend of the time and age is to place a higher estimate upon culture and ability than on spirituality and earnest piety. In this day, when the school master is abroad, culture is well-nigh indispensable to those who would be efficient workers in the Lord's vineyard; and those of our young men who have spent time and money to qualify themselves, should receive our heartiest commendation. Let us all strive to broaden and develop mind and thought. But let us also be greatly careful to ever maintain that humble, earnest, devoted, spirit, which for long has been a characteristic of our people.

The gracious declaration of the text, that Jesus, the Prince royal of the kingdom of God; stands, and hence waits, knocking at the door of human hearts, seeking admittance, sets before us another precious Bible truth very dear to us all; viz.,

(4) The wondrous love of God manifested in providing for our fallen humanity. Such a compassionate, seeking friend and deliverer, who not only saves all that come to Him, from all their guilt and condemnation, but who, in manifold ways, seeks after and persuades guilty men to accept His help. He, himself, emphatically declares that He came into the world "to seek and to save that which was lost."

While Primarily, as already considered, we understand our text to set before us Christ knocking at the door of that backslidden church, and at the hearts of its individual members, anxious to restore, or convert them, we believe that it may have indeed, as conceded by Bible scholars, does have a still broader meaning, and may, without wresting it from its proper meaning, be construed to set before Christ's anxious desire for the salvation of all sinners, of all the world for which He died. Experience fully corroborates such an interpretation of this Scripture; for does not this same Almighty friend of sinners still knock, in manifold ways at the door of sinners' hearts, seeking admittance.

Knocking By His Providence.
(a)—That illness, brought upon us, it is true, by our violation of nature's laws, as used by the Lord to awaken

(Continued on third page.)

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