Sealed Orders.

Before me lies an unknown sea,
The port I left behind;
Strong waves are foaming at the prow,
The sail bends to the wind.

What is my quest? Why face I forth?
Not mine it is to say;
He whom I serve has given command,
I have but to obey.

So to the overguiding Will
My own I gladly yield;
And while my little craft outstands,
I sail with orders sealed.

I may not read them if I would;
I would not if I might;
Nor hold the duty less, but more,
Whose chart is faith, not sight.

Some time, I know not when or how,
All things will be revealed;
And until then content am I
To sail with orders sealed.

—United Presbyterian.

Straight to Jesus Christ.

REV. T. L. CUYLER, D. D.

I once said to an old friend who attended my church: 'I had hoped that long before this you would have taken your stand for Christ.' His frank reply was: 'So I would if you were not a coward.' He had not only enemies within, but was surrounded by irreligious associates whom he was afraid to face; he has never become a Christian yet. The famous Charles G. Finney, who had a deep insight into human nature, always aimed to bring awakened sinners to the crucial point Will you give up your sins and follow Christ, or give up your salvation? He once had a man who was in deep distress kneeling by his side, and as he repeated over the various surrenders to be made he came to this one: 'Lord, I will serve Thee in my business.' The man was silent; and when Mr. Finney asked him why he hesitated at this point the poor man stammered out: 'I'm in the liquor-traffic.' He was willing to go a certain length; but when it came to deciding between Jesus Christ and the profits of his sinful trade he drew back and, rising from his knees, he sullenly left the room. Like that young ruler whom the loving Jesus invited to follow Him, he refused to yield, and he 'went away sorrowful.' If the eye of any unconverted person is resting on these lines, I would most kindly say to him or to her: You have made a great many decisions during your life. Whenever you read in your Bible or hear from the pulpit an invitation to come to Jesus, or whenever your conscience tells you that you ought to come to Him, you decide one way or the other. You become the better or the worse. Every time you refuse Christ you incur fresh guilt, you weaken your own moral purpose, you resist the Divine Spirit, and you diminish your chance of salvation. Every lost battle with temptation leaves you the weaker, and will do so until you set your face like a flint and go straight to Jesus Christ.

The Saviour once said: 'No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' That word 'fit' is not a happy translation: for the original Greek word signifies well put or well placed. It means firmly set, with a determined and unchangeable purpose. There is no wavering and no half-way work, with the mind utterly undivided. John Bunyan's pilgrim, when he stopped his ears and ran eagerly towards the wicket gate, crying, 'Life! life! eternal life!' was 'well put' for the straight road to the Celestial City. My old friend in the theological seminary, Thomas Shields Malcolm, was deeply agitated, when a college student, about his salvation. He tells us in his popular tract, 'One Honest Effort,' that he went to his room and fastened the door, determined to remain till he had obtained the pardon of his sins and reconciliation to God. He fixed his eye on Christ and gave himself up to Christ as his Saviour and Lord. He found peace; and on the next evening he confirmed his resolution by rising before his fellow students and telling them what joy and strength Jesus had given to his soul. Other students were moved, and they, too, set their faces Christward. Malcolm was 'well put' for the kingdom of God when he locked that door and determined that he would never retreat until, by the Divine help, he had won the victory.

My friend, you have probably made but small progress towards that life which your conscience tells you you ought to lead. You often think about this vital matter; you often make good resolutions, and perhaps, offer some earnest prayers. You have made no headway because you are holding fast to your sins, unwilling to cut loose from them. I have seen a steamer at the wharf start its engine, and while the propeller screw was churning the water at the stern the vessel did not move. A rope hawser held it to the pier; as soon as the rope was cast off the steamer started. That vessel was not 'well put' for its voyage until it was detached from the wharf and could use its motive power unhindered. It is of little matter what may be the sin that holds you back, so that it keeps your soul from a full, sincere surrender to Jesus Christ. Cost what it may, make a clean breast of it in confession to God, and clean work of it in renouncing the sin. You cannot cling to your sins and cling to your Saviour too. Up to this time you have failed, and you will continue to fail as long as you try to 'serve two masters.'

At the very point where the Holy Spirit is pressing upon your conscience to take a step or perform a duty, right there you must yield. That is the decisive point. When Christ pressed closely on the young ruler to quit his estate and come and follow Him, the young man drew back, because he would not cut loose from his selfishness. That poor rich youth was not 'well put' for the noble career of discipleship which Jesus held out before him. He would not secure heavenly treasures by abandoning earthly treasures, and so he made the great refusal. Compare him with Matthew, the tax collector, who quitted his toll-booth, and won afterwards his place of immortal honor in the forefront of the New Testament. It was short work with him. He 'left all, rose up and followed Jesus.' He left his old business; he left his spiritual errors and blindness; he left his worldly aims and worldly heart behind him. He found a new calling, and peace of conscience, and a field of amazing usefulness as a disciple and sacred chronicler. He found a friend, and, finally, an everlasting crown.

Enjoying Religion.

Many Christians accept religion as some do poor health—in a spirit of mild resignation, something which must be borne with, but from which not much comfort is to be expected. The voice, therefore, is plaintive, the general bearing is subdued, the undertone of life is sad, and the whole appearance is indicative of a martyr-like spirit which suffers some mysterious sorrow.

One seldom hears religion spoken of in a voice which is natural. Many of our ministers have "holy tones," which they pull out like certain stops in an organ. People in the prayer meeting or class room usually adopt the tremulo, not infrequently ending in a positive whine. Even in our Epworth Leagues and young people's conventions there is a tendency to the pathetic and the lachrymal. Most of the appeals, the exhortations, the experiences in our public services are of the wailing order, and seldom does one hear a bright, cheery, heartsome voice ringing out its glad invitation to discipleship. Now all this is unnatural. It is a species of cant. It creates suspicion. Doubts are aroused in the minds of the listeners. The sincerity of the speakers is questioned. But worse than all, the hollow lugubriousness with which religion has been presented has put it in a false light, and given an impression entirely misleading.

Would a commercial traveler use such tones and phrases in presenting goods? Would a recruiting officer speak in this way when addressing a company of young men? If this spirit animated a regimental band, what a sorry time the men would have as they marched into battle! A religion without enthusiasm, without exhilaration, without the sense of conquest, is a poor, limp, lackadaisical thing, of little use to its possessor and of no use to anyone else.

The secret of St. Paul's magnificent success was in his thorough enjoyment of religion. So completely did he enter into this spirit that from first to last he was a conqueror and a hero. He never whined. He never affected the martyr. He never spoke regretfully of what he had to give up. He never sighed and moaned over the sacrifices which he was called to make. And the reason is simple. He was so identified with Christ that the gladness, the joy, the glory of living fairly thrilled him. It is true that he speaks of the cross, but invariably only as the background of the resurrection. The Christ whom he preached was not dead, but liveth; not buried in the earth, but highly exalted; not a doleful memory, but a mighty, conquering Redeemer, through whose Gospel the world is to be saved. Is it any wonder, then, that St. Paul's ministry was of irresistible sweep and power?

When one thinks of what religion means—the divine assurance of sins forgiven; the actual, definite indwelling of the Holy Spirit; heavenly strength for moments of temptation and weakness; comfort in the sorrows and burdens of life; guidance in perplexity, peace in adversity, light in darkness, help in distress, the knowledge that we are under the care and protection of God, victory in the hour and article of death, and then an eternity of bliss—it is impossible to imagine why praise should ever languish on our tongues, or devotion lose anything of its heat and flame.

But there is a great difference between enjoying ourselves and enjoying religion. In ourselves we are subject to moods, conditions, circumstances; hence one time we may be on the mountain, and at another time in the valley. But the one who enjoys religion is not the creature of emotions. He is "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Enjoying religion means entering with heart and soul into all of the activities of the church. It means the consecration of the whole being to the service of God. It means visiting the sick, helping the poor, welcoming the stranger, comforting the sorrowing, dealing gently with the outcast and the fallen—in short, it means to be like Him "who went about doing good."

Then let us put away whining and crying and quavering. Religion is a glorious sentiment, but it is not sentimental. It quickens. It inspires. It calls out the best and the highest of which mortals are capable. It takes us out of the horrible pit of our own littleness and selfishness, and sets our feet upon a rock of character and strength. Nor does it cease its work until it has put a new song into our mouths, "even praise unto our God."
—Dr. Johnson, in N. Y. Advocate.

Revivals—How Begun.

Revivals of religion are clearly in harmony with the divine plan for the rapid diffusion of the gospel in the eaath. The Word of God is replete with prophecies and promises concerning the abundant effusion of God's Spirit upon the church of Christ.

There is every reason to expect that in the future, as well as in the past, the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the earth is to be built up largely by revivals of religion. These gracious visitations of divine grace are the most desirable of all God's gifts to the church. We dare not rely exclusively on what is known as the ordinary means of grace for the dissemination of the gospel among men.

Then the fact of and tendency to spiritual indifference and declension upon the part of God's people are generally conceded. The environments of the believer often dampen his spiritual ardor and chill his energies for doing good. The cares, pursuits, and pleasures of the world seriously affect his religious life, and rob him of the warmth and power of divine love. He wanders away from God and becomes back-slidden in heart, if not in practice. And this spiritual declension seems to be infectious, so that whole churches and communities are turned away from the pursuit of holiness to the absorbing and exciting things of the world. There is nothing so deplorable in the church as the blight of spiritual declension.

The God of Israel declares, "My people are bent to backsliding" What a sad picture of declension is presented in the seven churches of Asia! At Ephesus, believers had departed from their "first love." At Laodicea they had become "lukewarm." At Sardis they had "defiled their garments." At Pegamos and Thyatira they had yielded to the enticements of heresy and error. So in all the periods of the history of the church there has been this perpetual tendency to forget God and his cause.

How important that the churches should confess to this charge and tendency, and with an intense, longing desire pour out their hearts to God as did this ancient prophet. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

How are revivals promoted? What are the means and agencies by which such a great blessing is secured?

1. The pastor himself must be on fire with intense, longing solicitude for the salvation of souls. His every prayer is, "Give me souls or I die.' His heart is pierced with grief because of the deplorable condition of his people. This spirit gives character and tone to his preaching. He chooses themes of infinite importance, such as the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the worth and peril of the soul in sin, the efficacy of the blood of Christ, the danger of delay, and the wisdom of immediate choice of Christ as a personal Saviour, the uncertainty of life, the necessity of regeneration, and the awful realities of the future state. Such themes as these, presented by an awakened preacher, will be sure to arouse the people to anxious inquiry and persistent effort.

2. Thorough previous preparation is indispensable. Months before [illegible] frequency is witnessed in every church, in every Sunday school, in [illegible] meeting, in every [illegible] revival, in every movement toward moral reform. The delinquents miss the blessing, grow weak, lean, discontented, miserable, lose their confidence and hope, become stumbling blocks in the way of others, cause the enemies of the truth to blaspheme, put a weapon in the hands of unbelievers, with which they wound the Lord of Glory, and bring down on themselves the curse of heaven.—Christian Advocate.

Delinquents.

When the forces of the church are mustered for action, it will always be found that some are absent. When Barak, under the direction of Deborah, went out against the Moabites and conquered them, the inhabitants of Meroz 'came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' When the Jews, under Nehemiah, restored the shattered walls of Jerusalem, the nobles of Tekoa 'put not their necks to the work of their Lord.' When Ezra, by permission of Artaxerxes, went up from Babylon to Jerusalem with a colony of Jews to re establish the worship of Jehovah, and replant the seed of Abraham in the Holy Land, he initiated the great movement by gathering his followers together near the river that runneth to Ahava, and as they passed before him in review he 'found none of the sons of Levi' among them, and noted the fact as one of grave significance. When the disciples of Jesus met together in an upper room after the crucifixion of their Lord, and Jesus entered in, breathed on them, and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' it is recorded that 'Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.'

special effort is made in a revival service, the membership should give themselves to the study of God's Word. There should also be self-examination and the forsaking of all sin. Humiliation and confession, and a realization of the condition of the unsaved, are powerful awakening elements.

3 Music is valuable in revivals. Appropriate, soul-stirring, and convicting songs are wonderfully blessed in melting the hearts of Christians, and fastening conviction upon the consciences of sinners "It is a question whether the sermons of John Wesley, or the hymns of Charles Wesley, were more potential in founding the Methodist Church. How much Whittle lost when Bliss went up in a chariot of fire! Moody and Sankey seemed to be two halves of one evangelistic personality.'

4. Powerful and impressive testimony upon the part of individual Christians in the presence of the cold and indifferent are often blessed to the awakening and saving of souls. Next to the preaching of the Word of God, there is no weapon so mighty to build up the church of Christ and impress the out side world as that of a rich, deep, personal Christian experience.

5. Earnest, individual, persistent, and united prayer for the down-pouring of the Holy Spirit. Genuine revivals start in prayer. The glories of the Pentecost were due to that ten days' prayer-meeting. "It isn't great preaching that we want," says Mr. Moody, "so much as it is great praying The earnest, importunate prayer of one person, who will not let God go without an answer, may call down the blessing."—Telescope.

Every-Day Religion.

Madame de Stael says: "A religious life is a struggle and not a hymn." How soon does this practical fact become known to every earnest soul! Yet, in the every-day combat are there not occasional strains of the sweetest music? It is the music of victory. It is the music of life's best elements gliding up to their rightful supremacy. Hence there is a sense in which the very struggle may become a worshipful hymn. But doubtless Madame de Stael's idea is that religion is not the stop of an organ, to be pulled out for Sunday and then pushed in for the rest of the week. It is, rather, the life, the essential life. It is Christ's vitality in the soul. Hence of necessity it is for every day.

Indeed, the very "every-day" label is the stamp of its genuineness. We may rightly be distrustful of that occasional religion which is put on and taken off as a movable garment. Evidently, without meaning all that might be inferred, the little girl expressed much at the close of her evening prayer After the usual "Now I lay me down to sleep," she continued, "Good by God; good by, Jesus I'm going to Boston to morrow." The every day religion which is our general theme for this vacation month, is needed no less in summer than at any other season It is the kind which will serve us as well in New York or London as in a New England village.
—Zion's Herald.

Does God Answer Prayer?

Does God answer prayer? Go ask Jacob, as he wrestled on the banks of the stormy Jabbok with the angel the whole night through. Go ask Moses, as he stands on the night of the exodus, praying on the seashore. Go ask weeping Hannah, praying in the temple. Go ask Elijah, as he stands with the priests of Baal around the altar on Mt. Carmel. Ask Elisha, in the chamber with the dead body of the Shunammite's child. Ask King Hezekiah, as, sick unto death, he lies with his face to the wall, praying. Ask Jonah, crying unto the Lord from the belly of the whale. Ask Peter and Paul. Ask the faithful centurion. Ask the father of the lunatic child. Ask the Syrophoenician woman. Ask blind Bartimeus. Ask the infant church in Jerusalem. Ask the whole church of Christ in all ages, the multitudes who have prayed and are praying all over the world. Ay, ask the glorious, blood-washed throng around the throne of God in heaven, and let these answer. There is a power in prayer which cannot be overestimated; a power mightier than the armies of kingdoms, a power mightier than the forces of nature, because it calls into exercise the omnipotence of the King of all kingdoms, and the God of nature. It may be the simple pleading of the lowliest child of God, but it moves the hand that moves the world.—Chris. Press.

Is This Your Prayer?

O Lord, send forth more laborers into thy harvest, but send not me nor mine. Here are many others that can go, O Lord, send them! Help them to be self-sacrificing and to live close and to be willing to suffer for Christ's sake, who gave himself for all, but don't expect any more of us here at home, because thou knowest we have to keep up appearances and we might as well be out of the world as out of fashion, and thou knowest how often fashion changes. O Lord, open the pocketbooks of other people and just make them give, for they can afford it, but thou knowest how poor we are and how much we need some candy and gum to relieve the monotony of existence. O Lord, see how humble we are!—We have no strength or time or money for thy service, we are so busy serving ourselves. We thank thee for promising us heaven hereafter but, Lord, don't be in a hurry to give it to us, we're not ready to die just yet. We thank thee for saving us from our sins, but just let us be a little bit selfish, or we die. Just let us alone to serve ourselves here below, and when thou bringest us into thine eternal kingdom we will praise thee forever.

For our own dear sakes we ask it all. Amen.—Free Baptist.

The Truthful Boy.

Says Robert Burdette: How people do trust a truthful boy! We never worry about him when he is out of sight. We never say, I wonder where he is; I wish I knew what he is doing; I wonder whom he is with; I wonder why he doesn't come home. Nothing of the sort. We know he is all right, and that when he comes home we shall know all about it, and get it straight. We don't have to ask him where he is going or how long he will be gone every time he leaves the house. We don't have to call him back and make him solemnly promise the same thing over two or three times. When he says, Yes, I will, or No, I won't, just once, that settles it —Sel.

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AWFUL SKIN HUMOR

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