ONE THING I KNOW

by

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DEDICATED TO:

THE REV. J. G. MORTON, MY PADRE,
AND THE REV. S. E. OSBORNE,
MY VICAR—TRUSTED
AND HELPFUL
FRIENDS.

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A CONFESSION

SEVERAL motives have contributed to bring this book into existence at this time.

One of the most compelling is the need to state, in language clear, simple, and emphatic, an unqualified belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and His Atonement on Calvary; and to assert a sincere desire for Christian unity in opposition to further breaks from the Churches, seeing that:

> The Church's one Foundation
> Is Jesus Christ her Lord.

That any Christian, whatever his persuasion or label, could ever flirt with unbelief in the divinity of the Master, could ever question that our Lord's Body was broken for him, or His Blood shed for him, or could wish to set up a new separatist religious denomination in these days of increasing coalition—when those in the front-line are all generally agreed on unity of command—is unthinkable! Our need is not for a new denomination, but a new determination! Lunatics never unite. Seeing that our country is crowded with half-empty churches—gifts to God in widows' mites—a new sect or a new denomination would be For Lunatics Only.

Some, who did not read *For Sinners Only* with care or sympathy, felt there was not enough about the Atonement, although belief in the Cross of Christ was expressed in many places, and numerous stories were told of men and women in whose lives the Atonement was becoming strikingly effective. That any Christian, after reading *For Sinners Only*, could think a Christian

writer was trying to obliterate the Atonement, is incomprehensible. Take away the Cross of Christ, and what is left?

> What can wash away my sin?
> Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

I had taken the Atonement for granted—from the moment of my change-direction-right, years before I wrote *For Sinners Only* or met the Oxford Groups. Only after the publication of that book was my belief in the Atonement questioned. It caused me some astonishment, for I had not written a book about the Atonement, or the Virgin Birth, or the Star of Bethlehem, or the Incarnation, or the Transfiguration, or the Miracles, or the Sacraments of the Gospels. And so none of these chapters in our Lord's life was dwelt upon, though all were, of course, accepted by the writer.

For Sinners Only described a company of fervent Life-Changers who, in an agnostic age, had the temerity to believe in the New Testament, and were endeavouring in an uncompromising manner to put their belief into practice, with some rather amazing results. Not until queries as to the Atonement began to come in—some, though not all, from quarters definitely suspect, that is to say, from persons who were masking their own compromise on purity or honesty or unselfishness or Christian love by attacking their challengers (defence by attack) rather than by allowing the Atonement to cleanse their own spiritual life—not until then did I realise how little the public knew of the Atonement, or how suddenly general was the desire for more information.

Had I realised this, I might have written years ago a treatise on the subject—were I competent to have done so. There are, I believe, some forty theories of the Atonement. But as the Church has never taken a theory and formulated it into a doctrine, I am

unable to do what she has found impossible to achieve.

My own simple belief is that in the Atonement something stupendous was revealed to man, and something tremendous done in the Eternal—and in me! I regard the Atonement as the meeting-place of God's holy love and man's sin, where the Blood of Christ—His life—is offered in loving sacrifice to the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven. Through this sacrifice I became a member of that Kingdom, cleansed from past sins, and, with my co-operation, saved from present temptations to sin.

I do not believe that the Atonement appeased the wrath of an angry God, for there was no wrath to appease. God hates sin, but not sinners. God was love before the Atonement, and in the Atonement He proved that love. The devil delights to misrepresent God as angry with sinners instead of with sin, the devil's product. God loves saints and sinners alike, far beyond our capacity to love anybody or anything.

We had wandered from the path and lost ourselves in sin; had severed our link with His loving power; had not realised our sonship. He came to rescue us in our wanderings, to set our feet back on the holy path, to reunite us with Himself, as sons and daughters of the most High, and thus sacrificed Himself in the achievement. For sin kills us all, not only the sinner, but the Saviour from sin.

Through faith in His loving sacrificial achievement on the Cross, and through sincere endeavour, attended by many failures, to follow the commands of that Divine Redeemer and Way-Shower, our incomparable Lord, I know I am a new man in Christ Jesus; a new man who is still being saved from sin.

My theory, then, if I dare to have a theory of so mighty an event in history—Christ crucified from the foundation of the world—is no more, and certainly no less, than that expressed by the old hymn which is

acceptable to Protestants and Catholics, High Church and Low Church, Modernists and Fundamentalists :—

There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains He had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

PART ONE

NOR TONGUE NOR PEN CAN SHOW

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Whom I saw—with eyes
Which never have forgot, nor will forget
Till Heaven's day shows me Him again—was one
Of a commanding stature—beautiful—
Bearing such countenance as whoso gazed
Must love, or fear. Wine-colour shone His hair,
Glittering and waved—an aureole folded down,
Its long rays lighted locks, which fell and flowed,
Fair-parted from the middle of His head,
After the manner of the Nazarites.
Even and clear His forehead; and the face
Of dignity surpassing, pure and pale
As the Greek's marble, but flushed frequently
With the bright blood of manhood. Nose and mouth
Faultless for grace, and full and soft the beard,
Forked, of the hazelled colour of His hair:
The great eyes blue and radiant; mild as sky
Of spring-time after rain, yet terrible
As lightning leaping sudden from that sky,
When He rebuked. In admonition calm;
In tender hours each word like music's soul
Heard past the sound! Not oft-times seen to smile,
More oft to weep; yet of a lofty cheer
Commonly—nay, of playful raillery
And swift wit, softened with sweet gravity.
Straight-standing like a palm-tree; hands and limbs
So moulded that the noblest copy them:
Among the Sons of Men fairest and first.

*Sir Edwin Arnold.**

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* With acknowledgements to Lady Arnold and the publishers of *The Light of the World*, Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd.

Anybody might have found it, but—
His whisper came to me.

* * * * *

Lord, I was blind, I could not see
In Thy marred visage, any grace,
But now, the beauty of Thy face,
In radiant vision, dawns on me.

W. T. Matson.

THE scene is the Town Hall in Dorchester, above the Corn Exchange, where the Hardy Players produced *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* not long before Thomas Hardy's death.

Into that group of buildings the writer had just led a team of freshly-vitalised Londoners, each representing a different phase of human activity, each apparently transformed by a recent and remarkable religious experience.

We had stressed, in a way fresh, simple, and autobiographical, in language free from old-fashioned cant, the old, old story that everybody knows and disbelieves, or only half believes.

One, an ex-convict, had told his human story in a trenchant manner, which advanced him to instant popularity. He had sixteen years' prison experiences to his discredit, including a period spent locally in Dorchester Gaol for punching a policeman's nose at Poole Harbour. He had also "inside" experience of other famous penal establishments like Dartmoor and Maidstone. Thumping the table, he demanded of his audience what power, since the law of England could not produce it, could have changed him from a modern Ishmael into a Christ-loving, law-abiding British citizen?

" I believe that man," said a retired detective, once a well-known figure of authority in Scotland Yard, who sat in the large congregation. Detectives are not easily convinced by ex-convicts. Others found it difficult to believe he had ever been to prison.

Confident that he was *not* a failure, a consulting engineer, small but virile, a modern Zaccheus, standing on a raised dais, instead of being up a sycamore-tree, told the assembly that he was a business man whose chief hobbies, apart from earning super-tax rates of pay and playing much golf, had once been wine, women and song; he told how something had burst into his life, entirely changing his outlook, his direction, and his interests, while giving him such absolute peace and assurance that he could now broadcast to the world at any time, anywhere, this four-word title—ONE THING I KNOW.

All spoke with a quiet note of confidence which carried conviction and brought us ever-increasing congregations, until at last, our building—the large Corn Exchange—was inadequate to hold all comers. There being no larger public hall available, some were turned away. The whole town was deeply stirred because a handful of visitors, night after night in public, had confidently declared—ONE THING I KNOW.

* * * * *

" These people have something that we haven't ! "

We knew that was the uppermost thought in the minds of many, Christians and worldlings, listening to us. The writer had heard it expressed many times by different people, after similar meetings, at various orthodox and unorthodox places, in both hemispheres.

Before the week ended many local residents had joined us in the possession of the same exhilarating experience; and they too were ready boldly to proclaim that positive truth which makes all the difference to life—ONE THING I KNOW.

But why Dorchester?

Merely because it provides a suitable illustration, for Dorchester is not outstanding. A few weeks before, the writer took a team of Life-Changers among the men of Bideford in Devon. There, perhaps a quarter of the adult population of the town came together one evening to hear our united declaration, told in a variety of ways, in a variety of voices, yet the same simple, ringing message from half a dozen ordinary, everyday persons—ONE THING I *KNOW*.

The composition of the team was secondary; the message mattered. Other congregations, equally large, equally stirred, are drawn together in various parts of the world, and held together for long, interested hours by other witnesses; attentively held by the same simple, challenging announcement from tonic bands of witnesses, temporarily understudying the clergy, speaking without notes, to a company of Christians and worldlings, of an old-fashioned belief which age cannot wither nor custom stale, spoken from a full heart and enriched by a fresh, vital, and cleansing experience.

* * * * *

May we begin again?

The scene is the Town Hall, Dorchester, above the Corn Exchange.

On our right is the ex-convict, who has just shaken hands with the chairman for the morning, the Bishop of Salisbury. We are faced by a big assembly of clergymen drawn from many parts of the diocese.

Mixing with them, free and friendly, are many nonconformist ministers. Later, when the Bishop leaves, he invites a Baptist minister, the Rev. E. C. Ker, to take charge. A friendly and uniting gesture.

The writer's early training did not make him a hero-worshipper of bishops. A leader of his own political party could not finish a speech without holding up the Episcopal Bench to ridicule and public contumely.

But he knew a man when he saw a man!

The Bishop of Salisbury is tall; his presence is

princely; he has much force of character; some of us quail when he looks our way. His glance seems almost a scourge—a scourge of God—warning and commanding; encouraging us to put away all obstacles to spirituality and concentrate on the supreme job of changing lives. For he is that remarkable blend of a missionary bishop with burning evangelism wedded to High Church principles.

And now he is talking to his clergy about a certain book which, to the writer's utter amazement, if not discomfiture, caused everywhere a commotion among sinners and saints—*For Sinners Only*. The Bishop raises a laugh, when introducing the author, by saying that he is either the biggest liar who ever wrote a book, or his stories of changed lives merit the most earnest consideration of the clergy. As the Bishop has said it, the author wonders for a moment if, after all, he is a new Munchausen: if all that he wrote in *For Sinners Only* was but the imaginings of a modern journalist with a fertile brain.

He shakes himself, remembers that the Bishop has been privately complimentary and that for himself he had been scrupulously careful to make every sentence square with a slowly-awakened conscience—a conscience rendered still more active through reading the less friendly reviews. He also remembers that those changed lives he described are still very much alive and still very vitally changed.

The benevolent smiles of the assembly show, too, that he is given the benefit of their belief, while the Bishop continues his waking-up and shaking-up address to his clergy; an address reminding the writer of certain conferences of journalists and advertising men called together when it was necessary to administer a thorough-going dressing-down or shaking-up to keep his newspaper abreast of its unresting rivals.

* * * * *

And now the Bishop is saying heart-searching things

which strike us the more as they come from a Master in Israel and a leader of the Church of Jesus Christ. He is reminding his clergy how they had prayed and prayed again for a revival; and yet no noticeable revival had visited their churches. Instead, they had observed a spirit of defeatism creeping over organised religion.

In some places they saw their congregations dropping away, some to the godless life of the average worldling, and some even into the snare of Communism.

Into this situation had suddenly come the phenomenon of the Groups, a revival of religion coming from a direction totally unexpected. These Life-Changers, associated with no church in particular, were unquestionably being used in many places to change other lives, especially the lives of those whose absence from the churches the clergy were often deploring.

The Bishop's voice took on a note of sternness and sorrow. The clergy of his diocese must not shrug their shoulders and oppose and discredit without investigation. Above all, they must be careful not to repeat the mistake made with Wesley. Even allowing that a new religious phenomenon like this had its dangerous elements, they must become sympathetically awake to the central fact that *It Was Changing Lives*!

And here the Bishop made again our own point, by stressing that provocative note of confidence characterising everyone of the new persuasion. A note which seemed new to our generation, though it was so prominent in early Christianity running all through the Acts of the Apostles, and expressed in that Greek word *parrhesia*, so difficult to translate, which stood for the confident boldness of the early Christians.

The writer listened to the burning words of the Bishop and long mused on their deep significance. Yes, he *was* right! *Parrhesia*, or confident boldness—sometimes counterfeited by the successful criminal—was the key-note of Christianity missing from much twentieth-century Church life and practice, though it

had been recaptured by bands of travelling Life-Changers. Assuredly the Bishop had put his episcopal finger on the danger-spot, the pain-point of utter weakness in modern preaching; yet the sickness for which this generation could have the cure if it wished, a cure many had already found, and that which we were confidently asserting—ONE THING I KNOW.

Our faithless, perhaps not wilfully perverse, though bankrupt generation, was dying for need of this cure. Many had died without it. Everywhere people hungered, some openly, some secretly, for the confidence we claimed, and which they could assuredly have had, since God intended everyone to have it. The Great Secret! The old, old inheritance that each generation inherits, but cannot enjoy until it has found its own golden key to its own golden gate of private entry.

But how?

The answer must be given positively in this book, so that all who run may read and clearly understand. Already many readers of *For Sinners Only* had informed the writer, some through his publishers, they had found the golden key to their own golden inheritance through reading his last book. Perhaps, if he raised the curtain still higher on his own troubled past, and on the experiences of a selected few who were ready to be included for the sake of the Kingdom in a popular and intentionally discursive spiritual autobiography, he might hear of many more who in the future would say for the first time—ONE THING I KNOW.

For, though he may be the least worthy of the transforming revelation, of one thing he is certain: that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten of the Father, the Lamb slain for us all, the Divinely-appointed Redeemer since the foundation of the world, and the solution of every human destiny.

Moreover, he is convinced that everyone may have a kindred positive assurance, and that he need not find the process of ascertaining either dull or disheartening.

"Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

* * * * *

Before revealing one important secret of his unshaken confidence in the Lord Jesus—"the faith and fire within us"—and how it came to him, a journalist, of all unlikely persons; who had spent years on a popular daily newspaper, of all unlikely institutions; in Fleet Street, of all unlikely places; may he quote a few illuminating sentences from the Beloved Disciple?

> Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.
>
> And after eight days . . . Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you.
>
> Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side: and be not faithless but believing.
>
> Jesus saith unto him, *Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*

Whence, then, this great confidence? Why did the populace of Dorchester and Bideford and Louisville and Montreal and Vancouver and Toronto, and other places visited by teams of changed men and women, listen in the mass to this type of witness? To the imperative rather than the apologetic mood in religion? Were we claiming to have received a special manifestation of our Lord?

Far from it? With no apology, we were proclaiming confidence, resting on the inner witness of the Spirit of Jesus, Who is the difference between Christianity and other world religions, and Who always brings joy and peace in believing, the common experience of surrendered Christians for nineteen centuries.

Once we were blind, now we see. Once we had been incredulous, not realising that the wisdom of God is

foolishness with man until he becomes a redeemed soul.

Or, as Charles Wesley put it to an old generation :

> What we have felt and seen
> With confidence we tell,
> And publish to the sons of men
> The signs infallible.

Was that really all?

Not quite. But it was sufficient, for Jesus Himself said : *" Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed ! "*

* * * * *

Yet there did come a time in the early travels of a certain team when the Divine manifestation descended on one of them—perhaps the most unworthy. From that time onwards he knew more intimately what he had known before through faith and sometimes through the felt witness of the Holy Spirit. Now he could complete Wesley's confident line " What we have felt . . ." by saying :

" What we have felt *and seen.*"

No longer was he one of the enviable company of whom our Lord said, " Blessed are they that have *not* seen and yet have believed," for on a certain memorable Sunday he saw, as many others have seen down through the Christian centuries, the curtain drawn aside and, because his need was so great, he too (like doubting Thomas, his stolid prototype) was granted visual proof—the incomparable Vision of Eternal Beauty, " the Chiefest among Ten Thousand . . .," the " altogether lovely " !

Here in modern England, in a Devonshire market town, earth's clouds twice dissolved, and He Who dwelleth in Light Unapproachable was twice beholden by one utterly unexpectant and completely unworthy, in this year of our Lord, Anno Domini, nineteen hundred and thirty-three.

Once, when reading the Old Testament, his sensitiveness had been repelled by that reference to our

suffering Lord, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Perhaps true of our Lord on the Cross, but not of the One Who came on that wonderful day of the double manifestation! The King seen in His Beauty! Beauty and Grace of Form unutterable. Exquisite Beauty of Colour. The Risen Lord as He was and surely is. Infinite Beauty beyond compare.

"And last of all," said Paul the Apostle, "He was seen of me, as of one born out of due time."

Without presuming to paraphrase St. Paul's wonderful experience, though the text may not be entirely inappropriate, the writer prefers to declare:

> O thou art fairer than the evening air
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

I felt so young, so strong, so sure of God.
Browning.

* * * * *

Those evening bells ! those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells !
Of youth, and home, and the sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime.
Moore.

* * * * *

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles and tears
Of boyhood's years.
Moore.

THIRTY years ago, as a boy, the writer regularly attended a village church in the Isle of Wight, and would be occasionally conscious, during the preaching, of a supernatural Presence or Influence charging the atmosphere with holy power.

In those days his young, decidedly inquisitive mind, and hypersensitive temperament, did not require the intellectual proof, which he demanded later, of Scripture claims. The supernatural proof was present, invisibly convincing. Intuitively he *knew*.

The preachers were varied—varied in size, tone, and spirituality; in education and temperament; although he then assumed that a preacher was necessarily good because he occupied a pulpit, a juvenile mistake he has seen exposed in more lives than one, including his own, since those formative days, and since he learned never to take any man's goodness or wickedness for granted.

Some of our preachers were dreary old fellows who distilled sound doctrine in somnolent monotones, while we impatiently watched the crawling clock. Some sent us boys soundly to sleep; some testy ones, who had solved to their own satisfaction the injunction, "Be ye angry and sin not," banged the pulpit and woke us up; some even ordered the nearest adult to shake us into wakefulness. (The time was to come when a church service would keep us awake, though a theatre sent us to sleep.)

One preacher interrupted the worship by commanding the writer to secure a hymn-book and sing, awaking subsequent boyish regrets that he did not use the hymn-book after the manner of David and the slung pebble.

Another eccentric insisted on leaving the pulpit and crawling about the aisle to pray. His fervency and his vegetarianism and his odd surname, Tidswell, gave this boy a youthful shiver. He disliked all three attributes thus expressed. Nevertheless, with the passage of the years, he has developed some of this preacher's zeal, is becoming a vegetarian, and has even discovered literary value in that quaint surname. If ever he writes another crime novel, his hero may be Tidswell the 'Tec.

One preacher interested because of his shortness of stature and superabundant energy. That big family Bible, resting on a red cushion, endured a merry dance and dusting through his exuberance. Often it worked hopefully near the edge, while the boy below waited in impish expectation. One day that hope matured, and he exulted. The Bible fell—and the red cushion with it; crashed, almost at his feet. A record sermon! Nobody slept through it.

"Happy Bob" Harvey thrilled us most of all. He was about five feet ten inches, with dark, greying hair and a happy, full-moon face, lined and tanned with much deep-sea fishing, and a merry smile of unbounded confidence in the Lord. He spoke with a pleasing lisp, but his sermons were filled with the Spirit. Very

unconventional, he would sometimes welcome a hesitant late-comer peering in through the door with the encouraging invitation :

" Come in, brother. *I* can't save you, but the Lord can ! "

Sound doctrine that !

" Happy Bob " was a man mighty in prayer, and so completely surrendered to the Holy Spirit that his coming always electrified the church as well as crowded it. He was a bubbling humorist—one of those rare preachers who could use sanctified humour without quenching the Spirit.

* * * * *

In those days there were some remarkable old Christian characters in the cluster of hamlets surrounding the writer's home. Old Jimmy Belman, the shepherd, loved Nonconformist prayer-meetings. So did his friend, Brother Wallis, the stone-mason. At one of their prayer-meetings Jimmy Belman was praying most fervently that God would come down among them, when he picturesquely added, " Come, Lord, right down through the roof ! Brother Wallis'll come and mend it up."

When a good preacher named Peter Labdon came along, Jimmy Belman begged him " Not to put the fodder too high." That request, said the preacher, was never forgotten. Never again did he preach over the heads of our villagers.

In the near-by hamlet of Apse Heath there lived a sombre old lay preacher who had become a tradition, so many quaint stories were told of him. Here is one of the quaintest. He had planned to preach at a Nonconformist chapel some six or eight miles away, and his ageing legs were his only means of locomotion. He arrived very late, very hot, and very tired : too tired to give a humble apology. As he entered the pulpit he surlily announced :

" Friends, I don't know if you be tired of waitin'. I know I be tired o' comin'."

Some of the Biblical names gave him trouble, as, for instance, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, which he extemporised into Shake-Rags, Make-Rags, and About-to-go.

* * * * *

The Isle of Wight was raided and captured almost entire about a century ago by a religious denomination strongly rooted in Devon and Cornwall, the Bible Christians, who turned out some mighty men (and women) of prayer and power; the denomination is now merged with the Methodist Church.

The first Bible Christian Missionary to visit the benighted Island was Mary Toms, who, in 1823, felt moved by the Holy Spirit to write to Mr. O'Bryan, then in charge of the denomination, and inform him that she must go there. Nowadays we talk about Guidance. That woman had it clear as long back as 1823. She said she had never been to the Isle, but she had seen it in dreams and visions of the night.

Mr. O'Bryan wrote back to say they could not open the Isle of Wight because they had no means. Mary replied that she must go—the Lord had said she must, and she would go if the roads were paved with fire all the way from Cornwall.

She sailed from Plymouth and landed in Cowes, where she borrowed a chair and standing to preach in the street, she had a stormy reception. When someone attempted to throw her into the river, popular sympathy was aroused. Doors opened and a tremendous revival began, which swept right over the Island. The results still persist everywhere.

The local Member of Parliament, a Mr. Thomas, became one of the converts. No less than thirty places of worship were opened in a district scantily populated and only twelve miles by twenty-four miles square.

Some amazing stories were told of Mary Toms, the woman evangelist, whose preaching changed our native

island a century ago. One dark night she was walking alone through a forest when she felt some protecting Presence, man, animal, or spirit, no one knows, join her on her entry, and continue protectingly until it mysteriously left her as she reached the outskirts. Similar stories are told of many of the Saints, including Sundar Singh, the Apostle of India and Tibet, and some of these appear in the penultimate chapter of this book.

Livingstone used to say that until his work was accomplished, he was inviolable. Elisha prayed that the Lord would open the young man's eyes to see those protecting horses and chariots.

* * * * *

That big push to gather in the Island prodigals, led by a woman over a century ago, was not unattended with humour. One of the newly-arrived company of evangelists, Billy Bailey, visited Rookley, an uninspiring village in the centre of the Isle, and there learned of an elderly couple who gave no heed to religion, either of the old type or the new. No parson was ever known to cross their doorstep.

The visiting revivalist decided to call. An inflexible housewife opened the door and barred the entrance, but three pennies made a silver threepenny-piece a hundred years ago in the Isle of Wight, and so (hoping to catch her with guile) the preacher offered her threepence for permission to pray with her husband; and she yielded to temptation.

The elderly housewife did not "make company" of the visitor. Unceremoniously she followed him inside. While the revivalist preached and prayed with the old man, the woman made staccato interruptions with her broom, as she truculently swept the room.

The revivalist continued undaunted. Grimly she continued to sweep. The prayers developed intensity. Presently the kneeling preacher felt sudden blows on his back from the vigorously swung broom, accompanied by an imperious feminine word of command:

"*Here! That's enough for threepence!*"

Did Bobby Burns have in mind the old woman of Rookley when he wrote:

> As father Adam first was fooled,
> A case that's still too common,
> Here lies a man a woman ruled
> The devil ruled the woman?

Wives are often, but not always saints; they play other parts in preachers' lives, as shown by that beautiful chestnut which the cloth will sometimes tell of one of its number, who began to pray for Guidance as to whether he should accept a call to a higher-paid living—while his more matter-of-fact wife started immediately to pack!

Perhaps she had received clear Guidance already.

* * * * *

Recently the writer met an ex-President of the old Bible Christian denomination, the Rev. Arthur Hancock, who supplemented some of the stories he already knew of that amazing revival in our native island, when, as the Anglican Church admitted, the Bible Christians had the most spiritual vitality of any Church in the area of its activities.

The Rev. Arthur Hancock, a veteran of seventy-eight, has been a great preacher in his day, and still is; and his lecture on the inimitable Billy Bray, the Cornish miner-evangelist, should be heard by everybody. Mr. Hancock is delightfully reminiscent about old-fashioned evangelists:

"One mighty man of prayer and faith was the Rev. Arthur Aitken, of Pindeen, Cornwall. Great in physical stature, he was greater still in spiritual power. Possessed of a remarkably strong voice, and filled with flaming zeal, he became widely known. Conversions were frequent in his church, and many notorious sinners became eminent saints. Sometimes he would leave his pulpit during service, and, visiting the Sabbath-breakers who might be loitering in the public-houses, would compel them to come in.

" His well-known son, the Rev. W. Hay Aitken, following in his father's footsteps, became one of the most effective evangelists the Church of England has ever produced. I heard him preach in St. John's Church, Lewisham, from the text, ' What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it, wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? '

" The sermon closed with an irresistible appeal. Stripping himself of his surplice, he moved about among the congregation during the after-service, leading one after another into the personal experience of salvation.

" Contemporary with John Wesley was Parson Grimshaw, of Haworth, in the Brontë country. A fervent evangelist, he thought the ' terrors of the Lord ' justified the use of a horse-whip in compelling recalcitrant parishioners to attend church. He, too, vacating his pulpit, would give out a long psalm or hymn, and, with whip in hand, make a speedy detour of the highways and byways in search of sinners, and if they showed any reluctance about coming to church, he would wield his whip to illustrate the terrors of future punishment. In many places the people were in mortal terror of the parsons of those days; for they exercised an authority that none would dare claim nowadays.

" You will gather that some of these parsons needed changing themselves, as Billy Bray also discovered. After Billy's conversion, he was going up the hill to Baldhu in Cornwall, when, as he afterwards related, clear guidance came: ' I will give thee all that dwell upon this hill.'

" Thereupon Billy entered into a covenant with the Lord, realising that he had his part also to play in its fulfilment, which was to visit all the people on the hill. There were not many houses, so Billy kept on visiting until he had seen all the people changed. The hill was just about won when the Church of England built a

new church with a vicarage alongside, occupied by an unsurrendered clergyman. Billy went to the church when it was opened, but came away disgusted with the preaching of the Rev. William Haslam. From that moment onwards Billy continued to remind the Lord that the hill belonged to them both, and so he ceaselessly prayed for the clergyman's conversion."

After this had taken place, Billy heard the news, and called one morning before breakfast, his face beaming. He carried the clergyman round the table, and then, placing him in his chair, rolled on the floor for joy, saying he was as happy as he could live. Subsequently that Anglican clergyman became the greatest life-changer of his day.

"My honoured father had special opportunities of meeting Billy Bray," said Mr. Hancock, "and took part with him in special services; for he was the oldest lay preacher on the Bodmin Circuit, and walked tens of thousands of miles through Cornwall, preaching during sixty to seventy years of his life.

"A dear old soul during my ministry in Devonport was Mrs. Dinnick, a special friend of Billy, who was a welcome visitor. Prayer was conducted in the kitchen.

"She knew how absolutely dependent Billy was upon his dear Lord, and would often be the almoner of Divine supply. Betty used to say that 'he and the Lord only kept one purse between them.' When the day opened, he never knew how its needs were to be met, but he always came through triumphantly.

"Five of Mrs. Dinnick's family became ministers, one a town missionary, another a lay preacher, and a daughter a minister's wife. Billy's influence as a visitor contributed to their sanctity and the power of religion in that Cornish home. Six sons, all in their ministerial attire, except the town missionary, carried the body of their mother to the grave. It was my privilege to conduct the service.

"I knew a man at Devonport who boasted that they

would never catch him at one of those religious meetings, but one evening he was fairly captured. Escape was impossible. He became convicted of sin during that meeting, and, observing the Divine grace working, old Mrs. Dinnick devoutly exclaimed: 'Now, Lord, let 'n have it!' That never-to-be-forgotten night left its mark on all his after life! Yes, he had it!

"Another memorable time at Devonport was the great revival that shook the town. My church had suffered much from internal strife, and I was at my wit's end when God in His goodness sent to my help a young doctor who was 'filled with the Spirit.' He began with a burning exposition of Ezekiel, chapter eight. Night after night, for a week, we never left that chapter.

"Talk about horse-whipping. It was the severest tongue-thrashing I ever heard administered to a church for allowing paltry divisions and jealousies to enter its sacred precincts. Talk about stung consciences! Consciences were stung night after night. The whole church was changed as a result of that baptism of fire.

"The power of the Spirit was tremendous. There we were, all together; and all were filled. Conversions soon followed. In one service, I received a hundred converts. Other churches caught the flame. George Andrews felt the Spirit like an electric magnet; and so we went on, meeting after meeting. We did not need to invite the outside public or publish anything. The revival simply *broke out*, and the working of the Holy Spirit was mighty in our midst."

"Why no general stirring nowadays?"

"I think the Church has become less spiritually-minded, and has resorted to other means of maintaining its power and influence, and to questionable means sometimes, which have driven out the Spirit. . . .

"There is no doubt man has a little bias towards sin, but I like to tell people that while there is a law of gravitation, pulling the skylark earthwards, there is a law within the bird itself, which resists that gravi-

tation and sends it soaring heavenwards with melody and enchantment."

* * * * *

In those great days, men of God in England were often listening attentively for Guidance.

"I remember coming out of my house in Devonport," said Mr. Hancock, "and I was going left, when a voice said—'Go right.'"

Passing a certain house, he felt an impulse to go in, when a woman, Mrs. Clifton, came from the wash-tub, saying, "I was praying you might come." "Her husband entered," Mr. Hancock relates; "he had not yet made the great surrender, but in the house on our knees the victory came. After half an hour—the time passed quickly—I saw the dawn, and soon the sunrise on that man's face. You could see the change from the expression of gloom and struggle, when his soul had found the path to perfect peace. He clasped my hand in gratitude, and thanked God that I had come. Husband and wife lived in happy union from that time."

"Supposing a sceptic suggested that telepathy took you to that house?"

"The man who did would not know the Spirit of the Lord. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. . . . I remember a man who was one of the crookedest, nastiest individuals you could possibly encounter. But the power of the Spirit changed him into one of the sweetest and most lovable of men, ready to help anybody. He seemed turned inside out and upside down; that was the working of the Holy Spirit within him. I think of the Holy Spirit in relation to Christ as the light to the landscape, which is thus revealed to us in all its beauty and charm. The double mystery of the Holy Spirit is vision and revelation."

"About healing?"

"I always abide in the will of the Lord, and if I am to be sanctified through suffering, I am willing. I

don't think we can claim healing unless we are led by the Lord to know that it is His will.

"Take the case of Henry Drummond. He went through about thirty years of perfect health; yet it was given him to suffer grievously during the last few years of his life, when his bones became brittle, the marrow having left them through an incurable complaint, in which he was utterly helpless to move himself. Yet in this way it was given him to show it was the will of God that a follower of Christ should suffer as well as that Christ should suffer; not only did Drummond bear his sufferings patiently, but he sang joyfully of the Lord, and invited his friend Barbour to join him in singing the glory of the Cross."

"Your best advice to a new Christian?"

"Prayer, personal meditation of the Word, and regular habits of devotion. My Quiet Time is in bed, with my Bible beside me, before I dress, and, like the late Sam Chadwick, every Sunday morning I read the first chapter of Revelation, where, to me, at any rate, that personal revelation of Christ resolves a great mystery: 'And His voice was as the sound of many waters.'"

Speaking of eminent preachers, Mr. Hancock said that Dr. Dale, who declared the letter to the Ephesians to be the most wonderful book in the world, was one of the greatest preachers that he had heard; but undoubtedly the greatest within living memory was Spurgeon. "When I was near, I never missed the opportunity of hearing him—one of seven thousand people present. (The old deacon used to say: 'We counted seven thousand out of her to-night!')

"Spurgeon walked down from his vestry into the pulpit, and stood there addressing us in a voice like a silver bell, a powerful, silver voice. He was a marvellous preacher. Yet his MS. was a half-sheet of notepaper.

"He raised his hand at times while speaking, but did not move about the pulpit; in fact, his rheumatism

was occasionally so bad that I have seen him preach kneeling on one knee.

"I remember one anecdote of his which amused us: old Billy Dawson, a Methodist preacher, dealt in his sermon with those who were weighed in the balances and found wanting. He put them in the scales, and among them the unconscionable tradesmen who did not give honest weight or measure.

"In his congregation was a tailor, or draper, accustomed to use his yard-measure as a walking-stick; and the more he walked, the less the customer got for his money. The conscience-stricken tradesman became more and more uneasy as he listened to the preacher's impassioned words. At last he could stand it no longer; so he jumped up, broke his old yard-stick in two, flung the pieces down and shouted, 'Now, go ahead, Billy!' and resumed his seat with an expurgated conscience."

* * * * *

Another former President of that extinct but once virile Bible Christian denomination is the Rev. W. B. Reed, of Bideford, a lovable nonagenarian; a deeply spiritual man who is still somewhat of a wag.

The other day he needed some books from his library, and they did not arrive. So he wrote a reminder:

"Need for haste—I'm . . . ninety-seven!"

Mr. Reed told the writer that he had no regrets at following Christ for the past eighty years, for he started when he was sixteen; but he did regret wasting twenty years with Modernism. But what are twenty years among so many? He believes in restitution, for he practised it when he became a Christian, returning half a crown that he had stolen from a grocer. He says God provides, not much, but He gives enough.

Mr. Reed is one of the few men living who knew Billy Bray, who was born in 1794. We asked him for a story of Billy, and he replied that he sent to F. W. Bourne, Billy's biographer, that saying, now so widely known:

" I can't help praising the Lord. As I go along the street, I lift up one foot, and it seems to say, 'Glory,' and I lift up the other, and it seems to say 'Amen'; and so they keep on like that all the time I am walking."

The ex-President thought the most remarkable convert to his preaching was a man who entered the service while he was speaking, bearing a letter, and gradually worked his way towards the pulpit to deliver it. This man had been the subject of many prayers, for he had a saintly wife.

The preacher was saying, " Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian " when the man entered after a two-mile walk, and exclaimed " That's me." On his way home he saw the light, and afterwards came along and witnessed to a wonderful experience. That was sixty years ago. Two of his grandsons, the Revs. J. B. and C. Stedeford, became ministers of the same denomination, and one of them was ordained by Mr. Reed, whose sermon had changed their grandfather. Both these grandsons were called to the Presidency of their Church, one, the Rev. Charles Stedeford, held the position of Connexional Missionary Secretary for a quarter of a century, and his nephew, Dr. E. T. A. Stedeford, has been for some years a missionary and doctor in China.

The dominating founder of that spiritually virile Bible Christian Church, William O'Bryan, made the grave mistake common to founders of religious movements, of trying to retain all control. He left, but the movement spread until it flowed into union with the Methodist Church.

* * * * *

Those revival experiences in the south-west of England were repeated in the Isle of Wight.

Few there were who doubted Christianity in our villages, though many defied it; but some of those tougher characters, of whom everybody despaired, would suddenly surprise the countryside by a right-

about-face, the teaching imbibed in church or chapel during youth asserting its power in one of life's crises.

The writer's father used to describe the leader of a village gang who would wait until service began before entering church; he would then march in lonely state right up the centre aisle, his long, straight hair combed vertically, giving many more inches to his peculiar figure, thin, erect, and six feet in height; while his strained white face and eccentric appearance would almost convulse the congregation.

In other days, at the close of the service the preacher would movingly challenge us youths to fall into the ranks of the Master's Army. The appeal would be pointed and piercing, though we did not respond. We were called cowards, and our silence justified the charge. They piped unto us and we would not dance. But their challenge was answered in time, though God alone knows how many and devious are the ways that some prodigals have to thread and wind before they seek light and release and clear guidance through the straight gate which opens at the foot of the Cross.

* * * * *

When that happened the inevitable followed.

In those days boy preachers sometimes appeared, and were encouraged, praised, and even photographically reproduced in the popular religious press. A way opened for the writer to become a boy preacher, and this is why he later became suspicious of others who were so. Perhaps unjustifiably so, for he knows of some who made full proof of an early ministry.

Nevertheless, a lesson which every boy preacher might learn is—study to be quiet. Witness is one thing, preaching another. When a boy feels that he must commend Christ by his life and words, he should be greatly encouraged. But let him also witness in the open air for a while, in his office or workshop, or in his home or Group, thus learning to serve the Master with humility; for preaching from a protected pulpit may just pamper his vanity. Walter Hylton,

the mystic, writes of the false light which shines between two black, rainy clouds, of which the upper is presumption and self-exaltation, and the lower under-valuing our neighbour. Men of this kind are full of pride, but see it not, and their preaching tends to strife and discord.* These types are still with us. Spiritual pride is still a sin; self-love is still a hell.

Some facility for public speech opened many doors, including some church doors, to this seemingly transformed lad in his teens. Not that his religious experience was unreal, for it was a thorough-going spiritual upheaval, though a long way from sanctification. Almost from the start the thorns sprang up and choked the Word. Small temptations came. They were wrestled with, but not always beaten! Sometimes bigger sins threatened, and triumphed after a feeble contest.

At this stage, instead of being encouraged to speak acceptably in public, he should have been taken in hand (as Wesley took his young men to task in his class meetings) and his spiritual life tested to discover how much he was growing in grace. But sharing was not practised in those parts; and who knew the spiritual level at which the other was living? And what spiritually proud youth was prepared for such heart-searching?

Yet a good many preachers, ordained and lay, are being spiritually searched to-day, to everybody's benefit, as some voluntarily testify.

* * * * *

Paul warned his young friend Timothy when he advised him that a bishop must be "Not a novice, lest, being puffed up, he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

Puffed up this writer most assuredly became; although it was not mere vanity that drew him away from his Lord. Ambition was the root cause. Ambition—"avarice on stilts"—in tryst with other occasional sins. Remembering now the text of his first

* *Studies of English Mystics*, Dean Inge.

boyish address, " And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save the people from their sins," it was natural that *For Sinners Only* should become the title of the religious book which proclaimed his return to Christianity, though incidentally it surprised him that anyone should ever question his belief in the Atonement.

As a young preacher he was rather leisurely at sermon preparation, for he had other work. One day he committed a deliberate theft. Of a sermon! It may as well be revealed here as anywhere, so that the apology can be made, belated though it is; for that sermon, preached nearly thirty years ago, was appropriated from the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, the doyen of Methodism, the kindly veteran who—life is like that!—wrote last year of *For Sinners Only* that " It is a glorious book! "

Dr. Dinsdale T. Young came to the Isle of Wight and preached a rousing five-decker sermon. That is to say, it had firstly, secondly, thirdly, fourthly, and fifthly—five powerful points; but the writer has forgotten the theme and the points—he has forgotten every sermon he has ever heard—though, with no note-book to hand, he then memorised most of the sermon while it was being delivered. A few days afterwards he was called upon to address a certain religious gathering in another part of the Isle of Wight. Eagerly grasping for something to say, and either careless or fearful of the Holy Spirit's support, he spoke for a full half-hour from the same text as the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, using most of his material.

Only one thing he forgot to quote—the kind of thing one learns to remember in journalism—the source from whence that sermon came! But one worshipper, who happened to be present at both services, atoned for that omission by a remark which left it quite clear that he had heard the same message twice!

Dare the writer hope that equal profit was derived from each delivery?

* * * * *

They made me keeper of the vineyards
But mine own vineyard have I not kept.

So sang Solomon in his Song of Songs.

This neglect of his own vineyard, while keeping the vineyards of others, is a secret chapter in many a preacher's life, almost as universal an experience as that of the prodigal son.

Did the writer enlarge the Kingdom when he was a boy preacher? Not from the pulpit, so far as he knew. The only life he remembers to have changed was his own—a gradual change for the worse. Though, when out of the pulpit, and active as a lay worker in Miss Beaumont's wonderful mission at Shanklin, he was the means of bringing worldlings to their Lord.

But the day was near when he would turn his back on these things and become Mr. Worldly Wiseman himself.

* * * * *

The writer's great-grandfather was cut off with an eighteenth-century shilling for eloping with a pretty housemaid. Fifty thousand pounds consequently passed into Chancery, and still reposes safely there. His great-grandmother surprised an unsympathetic village by nursing a policeman suffering from small-pox, when no one else would approach his house. The policeman recovered, but the volunteer nurse died. The characteristics of those ancestors frequently clashed in their great-grandson, who, at various times, has been stretched taut and sometimes torn by opposing interests—the calm of the cloister, and the prayerless life of noise and tumult with big headlines and daily shrieks of yellow journalism.

Some may have traced both characteristics in *For Sinners Only*, and probably they were there, for, like so many of our fellows, we seem to possess, or to be possessed by, a dual personality, two characters in one, each friendly to the other, even in opposition and, we hope, both energetically sincere.

Let us call them for convenience Bunyan and Barnum: a diminutive Bunyan-the-Seer and a not-so-diminutive Barnum-the-Showman—world-renowned organiser of the greatest show on earth. (They will justify the use sometimes of "we" in the place of "he" or "the writer.")

Who does not know, among all the smart stories of that smartest of smart showmen, the story of how Barnum, to empty his greatest show on earth faster than it normally would have emptied, so as to keep the box-office busy, erected a notice "To the Egress," whereby many of the uneducated, seeking some new wonder animal, were beguiled through a doorway which shot them into the street? There, in dudgeon they had to pay again to re-enter, for there was no re-admission.

* * * * *

When a larger world beckoned strongly, young Barnum declared open war on young Bunyan. Journalism and religion might shake hands in an island where most of its inhabitants were living in a background saturated by the religious revival of a century ago. What of London? And Fleet Street?

One day an advertisement appeared in a London daily offering a minor position to a live young journalist. He felt little confidence in the success of his application from a remote county; nevertheless the Barnum in him wrote, pushfully offering his services.

Perhaps the Bunyan in him sealed that envelope with some regrets, sensing breakers ahead. But Barnum had no qualms, and told Bunyan that their application would not even be read unless they did something unconventional to direct attention to their just claim.

On the left-hand corner of that envelope Barnum boldly wrote the word ORIGINAL. Then he penned a telegram instructing the advertiser not to engage the new journalist until he had perused the letter so identified.

As they waited, Barnum offered Bunyan this consolation :

" We may not get the job. But if there are several hundred applicants, as I think there will be, you may take it from me that our letter will be read ! "

And read and approved it was, although there were some three hundred replies. For in those days the unconventional was so daring that it caused a conventional editor to make an unconventional appointment.

A few days later Bunyan and Barnum set out for London.

Barnum's head was well up. . . .

PART TWO

IN THE WILDERNESS

CHAPTER I THE STREET OF SNOBS

For him there is a story in every breeze
And a picture in every wave.
Moore.

* * * * *

Nor ever once ashamed,
So we be named
Press-men; Slaves of the Lamp; Servants of Light.
Sir Edwin Arnold.

* * * * *

Some said, "John, print it"; others said, "Not so,"
Some said, "It might do good"; others said, "No."
Bunyan.

THE reader must now either make allowances for what appears in this section, or pass immediately on to Part Three.

It should be remembered that Barnum, in this stage, is generally triumphant over Bunyan, and consequently many things are done which Bunyan should not have permitted.

The Barnum atmosphere is deliberately allowed to permeate this section, which may be regarded as contrast, which throws into relief the true message of the book. If it raises a smile—well, smile.

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The war between Bunyan-the-Seer and Barnum-the-Showman continued merrily on right through youth into middle life, even when Bunyan was so smitten with sleepy sickness that Barnum would seem to have achieved absolute dictatorship; but there would come sudden temporary reversals of power. After a day's round at the core of world events, among brazen-faced go-getters who exploited the changing age for gain only, among journalists who laughed at religion, while

they did many a kindly act because religion was in their blood, Bunyan, seeking to re-assume control, would drag the resisting Barnum away from the clarion tumult to his parish church for a sparsely-attended organ recital or week-night Evensong where he would find momentary peace as the congregation sang :

Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea.

Next morning back to the Barnum life, to the rush and the tumult, and sometimes to deeper experimentation with the glittering and the sordid along the world's broad and ever-broadening highway, strewn with obstacles and thick with warnings of wrecked humanity.

In years to come he was to speak publicly of those four standards whereon Christ never compromised—Honesty, Unselfishness, Loving-kindness, and Purity. Step by step he penetrated those arteries of the Broad Highway where none of these standards was obeyed.

In time, he found that he was compromising with them all.

* * * * *

Never give chocolates to a sweet-shop girl or talk politics with a journalist. Both have usually consumed more than their share and have ceased to care.

The writer has served many daily and weekly newspapers of varying shades of political complexion, but never has he been asked his politics when being offered employment as a journalist. One sometimes meets a newspaper man with bitter partisan political views, but he is often a partisan of politics differing from those espoused by his own newspaper.

Seeing that some volatile newspaper proprietors change their political ideas, and ideals when they have them, in a midsummer night's dream, it would be impossible to maintain a staff stereotyped to their floating politics.

The editor may be confidently, if not cheerfully, pursuing an even course with a ready-made policy which all his staff understand and blindly follow, when

suddenly there comes a mighty roar from Olympus, and lo ! the new party or the new policy is instantly born and already squalling lustily.

Not long after the War, the writer was on the staff of a widely-read newspaper whose temporary hero was Lloyd George. So popular was he that our proprietor had just issued a *communiqué* congratulating the editor on publishing at the top of page one, the premier position, a streamer composed entirely of photographs of " L. G." in different happy moods. Soon after, we proposed a new story with " L. G. " as the peg to hang it on, when the editor shook his head :

" No more Lloyd George."

Why ?

There had been an angry roar from Olympus.

* * * * *

Newspaper owners have amusing ways, and amusing antipathies, not always confined to matters of policy. One of them was sensitive to words without euphony, and insisted that " disgruntled " should never again appear in the paper.

Another may have the Quilpish habit of upsetting most of his editor's friends by insisting on their being publicly lampooned. Of course, the editor, being legally responsible for what goes into the newspaper, can do exactly as he likes, and is never ordered to do anything, for, technically, he has the last word. Only, in practice, it is well for him, and for his security of tenure, if his last word and his proprietor's views happen to agree.

There was an outstanding case in Fleet Street of the editor and the proprietor being in such complete disagreement that the proprietor solved the situation in the grand manner, not by changing his outstandingly capable editor, but by selling his newspaper (with, of course, its main asset, the editor) at a substantial profit. Not all newspaper proprietors are unwise in their own generation.

* * * * *

The writer's most bizarre experience of a newspaper millionaire was during a conference of the staff over which the proprietor grandly presided. We discussed the news and the views, the features and the politics, the pictures and the advertisements, and all that goes in between to light the Englishman's home and lighten his pocket, and to enlarge the circulation, and the owner's power and fortune. The conference proceeded apace; good business was being done, even if the fates of empires were not being determined.

The proprietor was in great form. A clear, remorseless brain directed a powerful searchlight on everything that arose. We admired the brain, although we could not withstand it.

The door opened, and a flunkey appeared announcing what the writer understood as " Your father."

We thought our proprietor's father was dead; furthermore, there came hectic moments when some were even resigned to his ennobled son being speedily gathered to his fathers.

There entered a little man carrying his hat and a small valise. We detected no resemblance between the small head of the newcomer and the massive head of our Mussolini.

There was no hand-shake. Our proprietor said:

" Carry on."

Our conference also carried on, the writer furtively watching what was proceeding behind the chairman's chair. A large white sheet drew out from the valise and extended itself at the back of the proprietor, who then rose, stepped back with his chair to the centre of the white square while the conference continued unabated under his lively direction. We began to grin, biting our troublesome lip until it hurt.

Another white sheet appeared, and now encircled the proprietor. Then came understanding, a comb, a pair of scissors; and the stranger began to snip, while the conference went aggressively forward. How we

sat there without yelling is a tribute to the dignity of newspaper millionaires and the House of Lords.

When the ceremony was over, the proprietor turned to his editor with the invitation :

" Have a hair-cut ? "

A stout negative.

" Find out from my secretary where I shall be at this time in three weeks and come to me again," commanded our Mussolini of his itinerant hairdresser.

And the conference continued.

* * * * *

The young journalist generally leaves his soul on the mat when he dives into the hectic atmosphere of a newspaper office in Fleet Street. He maintains his spiritual aloofness at religious gatherings, although sometimes he is tackled by evangelists. He is there on duty, not to have his soul saved.

A letter from a lady journalist which came in this morning will illustrate :

" My Christian witness cuts little ice, for you know as well as I how journalists are regarded," she wrote. " A Salvation Army officer came up to me at a meeting and said : ' Sister, are you converted ? ' I said, ' I am a Press reporter '—and he immediately begged my pardon and moved off. They always say at the office that our only hope in the next life will be to run an asbestos *Times*."

* * * * *

Yet Fleet Street is the magnet drawing the young British journalist from far and near. Where under the Northcliffes and Southcliffes, Eastcliffes and Westcliffes, could this young journalist, fresh and green as his village green, find an opening ? After one or two false starts, he found it in 1909 on Gladstone's one-time favourite the *Standard*, a fine old British institution that succumbed during the first year of the War it had feared, a newspaper once advised by Disraeli to " specialise in estate agents' advertisements. They are so respectable ! "

It was the boast of the staff that a former editor attained such prestige in Whitehall that he pontifically turned away a Cabinet Minister who dared call without formally writing for an appointment; for in those days the old *Standard* was IT.

In our day it was declining, but still possessed enough prestige to offer a useful journalistic education to the newcomer who needed it.

Pitt spoke of " the atrocious crime of being a young man." George Chapman said that " young men think old men fools, and old men know young men are fools "; but Kingsley said it better:

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

* * * * *

There was not much tenderness shown to newcomers in Fleet Street, or tender green growing about the doorsteps of newspaper offices, even though the young journalist had peeped into Byron and Shelley, and loved the great open spaces, and discovered there was pleasure in the pathless woods.

Early days in Fleet Street were a dog's life, but every dog did not have his day, even though he had young blood and the thirst for adventure, and was prepared to crawl through a nine-inch drain-pipe to discover just that piece of world news that would make Lady Angela Eagerly enjoy a horrified breakfast.

The editorial mind, a composition of many minds daily assembled in the editorial conference, seemed obsessed with a craving for interviews with the celebrated and the impossible, who never were in, or whose address was a closely-guarded secret, known to the few, their wives, their bankers, and their mistresses. 'Buses crawled and conked out, the tubes neatly circumnavigated the Mayfair residential area; cabs

were unpopular with the management; to walk was the quickest way. What journalist, after spending his first hot August hiking round Mayfair and Kensington, entering the street at the wrong end, his particular number far away yonder in the greenless haze or spirited away to the wrong side of the square, or when, his objective reached, he was received by his Lordship's condescending butler, who gave an imperious bow and a still more imperious "Not at home"—what journalist ever required a second helping of an August in London?

"I have called to see Admiral Togo." "Do the Siamese Twins live here?" "Is this Mrs. Brown, whose daughter has lost her life in an avalanche?" "Have you drawn Pop-Goes-the-Weasel in the Irish Sweep?" "Is your grandmother a centenarian, and will she say why?"

The elderly lady who half-opens the door says that you can come in, but Granny has been bedridden for years, is stone-deaf, and *such a trial and expense.*

You enter, and grandmotherly grand-daughter takes you into the bedroom where a tired old lady, white-haired and apathetic, is lying near to eternity. You feel dumb and helpless; and of the earth earthy.

"This gentleman has come to talk to you about your wonderful age, Granny."

Granny's enfeebled brain shakes off its coma. Her voice is thin, wavering, and very old. It vibrates with fear.

"Has he come to take you away from me?"

You feel in league with Satan. Remorselessly the interview proceeds.

One journalist was shot off to the north of England to see a centenarian in an attic, his poor old face, like Hezekiah's, turned to the wall. He was waiting for the end, with no further use for this earth or its eager, inquisitive citizens.

"Look, Grandpa! This gentleman has come all the way from London just to write about your great age."

No answer.

The message is repeated.

Again no answer.

Overawed by the visit of a representative of the *Daily Wonder*, the relative importunes Grandpapa.

Hezekiah begins to mumble, his face still to the wall.

"Where's he from?" asks a thin old voice.

"All the way from London, Grandpa."

The significance of the visit sinks into the comatose centenarian.

"All the way from London to see me?"

Old Hezekiah slowly turns his face from the wall and his dim eyes alight contemptuously on the young reporter:

"You blankety blank fool!"

His face returns to the wall.

The interview is over.

* * * * *

Interviews may be more exciting than conversations with centenarians. A liner may be wrecked, the *Titanic* sunk, an airship crashed, and distracted relatives besieging the London offices, hoping for that news of rescue which seldom comes, while stoical journalists, as in duty bound—for Lady Angela must read every heart-breaking detail in her morning's paper—close in on them, eliciting names, addresses, descriptions, presentiments, and all the human detail available about relatives drowned less than twenty-four hours ago, whose dead bodies still float in mid-Atlantic, or lie charred and unrecognisable in the tangled framework of the last airship to crash.

* * * * *

It was a London mortuary, not a hundred miles from the "Elephant and Castle," and it was midnight.

The writer sat between two dead bodies, while the mortuary-keeper, a cheerful Cockney, who took pride in his work, told him hair-raising stories out of his turgid past, including a midnight visit from a notoriety, subsequently hanged for murder, who glared through the window at the body of his victim while the energetic official prepared it for interment.

* * * * *

From too much love of living
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Swinburne, who wrote this, lay dying near Wimbledon Common.

Barnum was the late man on duty, sincerely hoping that London would behave itself for a few more hours until midnight sounded his release. But news editors may take no risks. The one on duty ruled that the writer must call between midnight and morning to discover if the mad poet had yet left this realm of blank verse and rugged prose.

He who thinks journalism unalloyed joy and pleasure should pay a 2 a.m. call on a dying poet, politely to inquire if the genius is yet dead. Yet the writer missed that appointment through his habit of punctual departure. He sauntered into London's night as the leisurely night editor walked into his room, just a few minutes too late. While the escaped journalist enjoyed peace in sleep, his superior paid that nocturnal call on the passing poet.

It was Swinburne who, when once asked to propose the toast of the Press, jumped up excitedly, and, before he could be restrained, discharged a volley, not of praise, but of vigorous invective, reaching a triumphant finale with: "The Press is a damnable institution!"

Then he sat down, while the company gasped at the most amazing toast they had ever heard proposed.

* * * * *

Those miles of tramping the unyielding pavements of residential London in search of the uninterviewable were disheartening, but not so disheartening as the discovery next morning that the interview at last obtained had not been published; this often happened,

much to the exasperation of the interviewed and the explosive anger of the interviewer.

There seemed to be always a mysterious feud between news-gathering departments and the sub-editorial staffs who fitted the news into the paper. Nevertheless, those walks across London taught the writer the topography of the town. He began to boast that you could blindfold him and take him to any part of London, remove the bandage, and he would tell you where he was and even the maximum he could charge the office in expenses for the return journey!

It took an all-day search of London, about twenty-five years ago, for the writer to discover Gandhi, Indian mystic and agitator. Gandhi was then merely concerned to show that India was only a British Protectorate, and not a British possession. His vigorous protestations when the latter claim was made, may have been reproduced in the story, but nothing of the interview was published.

The paper refused to broadcast views then considered so seditious.

* * * * *

The writer early discovered that Christianity did not take a place of prominence as first-class news unless some Church dignitary brought disgrace on the cloth, as in certain well-remembered cases. When New York journalists discussed what would make the most sensational news story conceivable, they would usually award the honour to their President eloping with a Royal Princess or a film celebrity; or some religious dignitary doing the same. And yet not one of them ever suggested anything so astounding, used so effectively as a circulation-raiser, as the pathetic and revolting tragedy of the Lindbergh baby which happened when we were in New York—a news horror that shook the world.

Every woman, mother or potential mother, who could read, read that story. Every man, father or potential father, did the same, for Lindbergh is as popular in America as the Prince of Wales in this

country, and is also an international hero. And when crime thrusts its sinister hand—the hand of the kidnapper and the assassin—into the home life of an international hero, the sympathetic and morbid interest awakened seems unappeasable.

War is always first-class news, especially when one's own nationals are engaged; but a devastating earthquake almost equals it for mass interest. So does a collision between warships or liners at sea, and what Fleet Street describes as "a good murder," with plenty of mystery, and a background of cupidity and sex, will engage the public interest for months.

A royal funeral awakens almost as much public interest as civil war; then comes a royal wedding, or a coronation. And the Derby will sell newspapers by the million.

Religious organisations complain that a crowded meeting in the Royal Albert Hall may go unnoticed by most newspapers. The reason is that editors do not believe that anything new is uttered at these meetings. All the sayings of Jesus were published nearly two thousand years ago. But if a new Gospel were discovered, or another letter of Saint Paul, or Saint John —that lost letter of Saint Paul to the Church at Laodicea, for instance—or some more sayings and parables of our Lord were unearthed, then Fleet Street would go frantic over the "uplifting news," and fight each other to purchase serial rights.

And they would show a tear-stained interest in the religious meeting at the Albert Hall if lightning or fire suddenly changed it to a calamity. But ordinary, every-day Christianity—stories of transformed lives, for instance—leaves Fleet Street greatly bored. Yet the old, old story of Jesus, human stories of our Lord's dealings with modern people, if freshly told, will, in this generation, as in past generations, find a ready-made congregation of readers sometimes running into millions.

One day the writer may return to Fleet Street to introduce a Life-Changing Department, staffed with

surrendered men and women, trained in the highest of all arts—of leading sinners from those dark tunnels of tragedy and misfortune, as portrayed in newspaper columns, into God's sunlight. Human stories of broken lives mended through the activities of this novel department may yet occupy a daily column in one of our London newspapers. But Fleet Street will have to see that Life-Changing Department really functioning before it becomes convinced. And perhaps the first visitors may have to be a proprietor or two, followed by a few agnostic editors.

Meanwhile, religion is still old news or poor news with many journalists. One young journalist, whom the writer met in his early days in Fleet Street, astonished his colleagues by proclaiming himself a Christian Fundamentalist. Considered to be a poor fish, he was generally ridiculed. A man of that impossible mentality could not expect success. Though we had clear-cut expectations for ourselves.

Nevertheless, he became more successful than the clever ones who enjoyed scoffing at him, and presently he was placed in a position of such importance that, when he was at the other end of the telephone, even editors began to tremble.

Committing his life to a spiritual law which he probably did not understand, he found more power in the Name than the rest of us suspected. For by this time, the writer was among his critics, having blindly decided that Christianity would hamper his advancement in this unbelieving street of adventure.

Wisdom is ever justified of its children.

* * * * *

Some editors, like conies, are timid, if not feeble, folk. The writer knew one influential editor, whose skill had attracted a *clientèle* numbering over a million, but who went in considerable fear of his wife.

" 'Sh ! Wipe your boots ! " was his whispered injunction as you crossed his threshold on one of those rare occasions when invited to his home.

And there was another editor who, having been

soundly nagged to silence by his wife over the breakfast-table, entered his editorial sanctum, settled his correspondence, and then bravely announced, "And now a word to the Czar," as the theme of his leading article. Those were pre-war days, when the Czar was a power in Europe.

And there is another story of a disgruntled competitor who wrote from the north that he was coming to London to murder the editor. He had decided to walk! He walked, and every morning the editor received a note saying he was so much the nearer death. The last morning there came a letter, posted near London, announcing:

"*On the threshold.*"

But that potential murderer of editors never got beyond the threshold. Nothing more was heard of him.

* * * * *

One clever editor, famous for his bargaining powers, especially in determining his own income, would silence his protesting proprietor when something in the paper had occasioned annoyance with the disconcerting remark:

"Well, then, I suppose I must accept a reduction in salary."

A comment so droll would invariably cause the irate proprietor to subside in a roar of laughter.

* * * * *

We were a Tariff Reform Tory paper, and sometimes it was our duty to spy out the enemy country. One day a superior called the writer to his room and said he had news that Lloyd George was going down to Birmingham to stand as Liberal candidate against Joe Chamberlain, which, if true, would make a political sensation. (In those days a visit to Birmingham by "L. G." caused an uproar.) The writer must be careful with his inquiries, for the enemy were not likely to be very helpful, and might throw us off the scent if we made a direct approach. Then came one of those diplomatic warnings, common in business, to

the effect that whatever the writer did, if it caused trouble he must take the blame, and *not the paper.*

And so, away to Birmingham, having read into his instructions that he could do just as he pleased, provided he discovered the information and took all the blame if he made a mistake or did not get the news. Reminiscent of early education in the school playground, when the sharp elder boy stipulated, " Heads I win, tails you lose."

Barnum, having now the ascendancy over Bunyan, straightway decided to pose as the nephew of a wealthy Britisher returning from abroad who wished to make an initial splash in politics, and knowing that he could not win a Liberal seat with an outgoing Liberal Government, was therefore ready to fight a forlorn hope by opposing the redoubtable Joe. He elicited his information, and his wealthy uncle, had he possessed one, could have obtained his nomination as Liberal candidate, for there was no competition.

And so Barnum returned to London, while Bunyan slept on.

* * * * *

Just after the War the writer served a newspaper, edited by a prominent Fleet Street journalist, who provided him with an early experience of religious journalism not unattended by comic relief. The miners' leader, Bob Smillie, who resembled the author's father, and who once told him what a delightful place the Royal Albert Hall was to speak in, had made a public pronouncement, in one of his outbursts of class sympathy, to the effect that no millionaire possessed a soul.

The editor's roving eye caught that announcement, and his restless brain pounced on it for what Fleet Street calls " a good follow." He instructed the writer to obtain a symposium of views from a dozen millionaires on the important problem for which the whole world eagerly awaited a solution: did a millionaire possess a soul, or merely a dark vacuum where his soul should be?

Lest it be thought incredible that a journalist should

thus be instructed, we add that this same successful editor once commissioned this same writer to call at the head-quarters of the Woman Police to discover "if that fatality"—those were his words—which dogged the footsteps of male policemen, giving them a world-wide reputation in theatre and Press for expanse of footwear, had yet appeared among their uniformed sisters of the streets?

An inquiry which might have produced good copy had it not been dexterously evaded.

One had to be wide awake with that clever editor if one wished to reach home at night without being carried there through exhaustion, and especially on Saturdays, when the Sunday edition was in travail.

He was small, and the writer nearly six foot three, and he probably enjoyed ordering a giant around, even to telephoning publicists to ask questions, perhaps justifiable only as a reason for keeping his staff fully engaged. One way which kept this industrious editor at bay was for the writer to wear a brown suit, and to lie at full length on a brown-painted shelf in the big editorial room, with a sheet of brown paper over his face to make the camouflage complete. Though unobserved he was still on duty if anything blew sky high and the editor became really excited as to his whereabouts.

Meanwhile, a giant, out of sight, seemed to be out of the editorial mind. Nevertheless, some of us needed an editor's watchful eye to ensure our utility.

* * * * *

That sudden desire of the editor, and presumably of his million readers, to know whether millionaires possessed souls—although no one was interested in the souls of the staff—apparently had to be appeased, but no millionaire displayed much zeal in proffering information. The writer soon found that millionaires were super-sensitive about their souls, and discovered in himself an increasing super-sensitiveness in approaching them on those subjects, a sensitiveness which disappeared later, as he found that almost everyone

is ready to talk about the deep things of life in a diplomatic way.

As he was engaged on a fairly long agreement, he suggested to the editor that the time had arrived to tear it up; then he sauntered down a long corridor in the same building and started work again for the same newspaper millionaire, but under another editor who had more interest in ordinary people's doings than in wealthy men's souls.

That was nearly fifteen years ago. The newspaper millionaire has long since gone to his rest, though the symposium has never appeared.

Nevertheless, interviewing is an interesting art when editors have not to think out freak ideas to enlarge circulations; and there are always eminent persons, known to Fleet Street, willing to give free advice to the million, even though they run the risk of an occasional misquotation.

A newspaper photographer told the writer that he had been amazed throughout his life by the readiness of all classes to be photographed for the Press, from statesman to shivering stowaway.

* * * * *

They were having Pleasant Sunday Afternoons at Whitefield's Tabernacle when that Free Church giant, the late Rev. C. Silvester Horne, was in charge. The writer was detailed to attend one of these, when the speaker, Mr. Hemmerde, K.C., gave an amazing political speech attacking "our old nobility." The writer's report began: "P . . . S . . . A . . ., once standing for Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, must now mean Political Sunday Afternoons"; and so on, in true Tory style, which elicited from the Rev. C. Silvester Horne—of all comments—a letter of congratulation on the writer's "spirited attack."

What Bunyan had learned in his teens was now being attacked by Barnum in his twenties.

But in his forties, Bunyan was back again in Whitefields, this time in the pulpit.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.
Longfellow.

* * * * *

Here lived the soul enchanted
By melody of song;
Here dwelt the Spirit haunted
By a demoniac throng.
Here sang the lips elated;
Here grief and death were sated;
Here loved and here unmated
Was her, so frail, so strong.
J. H. Bonar.

ONE morning the Fleet Street Favourite appeared with the exclusive news—" Political Assassinations in London Last Night."

High officials at the India Office had been murdered at a Government reception by an Indian seditionist who was subsequently hanged. We listened to his plea of justification from the dock and his prophecy that future generations of his countrymen would rise and call him blessed. They have not done so.

Once the writer dashed into the City, and saw the police in charge of Mappin and Webb's, from which five burglars were being neatly hauled. Another day saw him switched to the north of London, attending an inquest on an English immortal—Sir W. S. Gilbert, lyric writer of those Gilbert and Sullivan operas which set all England laughing during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The immortal writer of comic operas had been bathing with friends, including several ladies, in his garden lake,

when he sank, while attempting to rescue one of the ladies who had become exhausted.

Once the writer rushed into the Midlands, and was taken into a fine manorial house, set in splendid grounds. Escorted up a great staircase, he was shown into an attic fitted out as a blacksmith's forge, where nothing had been disturbed since the death of its owner, James Watt, inventor of the steam engine. Our guide was William Mills, genial inventor of the deadly Mills bomb.

* * * * *

Edgar Wallace, representing the *Standard*, and a diversified company of international journalists, were at Dover waiting impatiently for one of those pioneer airmen, dawdling on the French coast, to risk his neck in registering the first cross-Channel flight.

Weary of waiting, the pressmen slept.

It was Sunday morning early.

On the French side there was a little stir, and a man with a broad smile limped into a midget aeroplane. In about half an hour his baby 'plane had alighted, with some damage, on the Dover downs.

Blériot had achieved the first cross-Channel flight while Fleet Street slept !

Next evening, after his aeroplane had been on view in an Oxford Street emporium all day, Blériot was the guest at dinner of the baby Royal Aero Club, just formed and still more recently Royal. The writer counted about twenty present at that historic dinner in Piccadilly. Blériot explained his limp by saying that he had burnt his foot before starting. He deprecated his lounge suit—the only one present in a display of tails—by saying he had forgotten to put a dress suit in his aeroplane ! We laughed our delight. He spoke a few words only in English and then, finding the language impossible, dropped into his native French. But he could have appeared without a suit, on two crutches, and spoken in Double-Dutch, and still have enjoyed the same tremendous ovation which twenty admiring Englishmen gave to their rival, a history-making Frenchman.

Twenty years later, the writer met him again, at another aerial banquet in London, when there were perhaps five hundred present.

The War had come and gone. Englishmen had been the first to fly the Atlantic, one now being present. So were other distinguished flying-men, many of whom would shortly lose their lives in the wreck of *R.101*.

Just the same happy-faced Blériot, somewhat older, a little balder. Again he spoke, a few words in English, then again in his native French. Apparently his knowledge of the language had not kept pace with the progress of flying. But—he wore a dress suit! and (surely?) he had lost his limp!

* * * * *

We encountered most of the pioneers of aviation during those tragic days of early flight. News came that the Hon. C. S. Rolls had an aeroplane on Dover downs and was preparing to do something mysterious. The writer watched Rolls' first attempt at a double cross-Channel flight, in a funny little Wright aeroplane, with fan-like propellers at the end of the wings, revolving parallel to the line of flight.

As he rose, a crowd surged about his machine, forcing him to crash—to avoid tragedies. A few days later, Rolls accomplished the first double-flight across the Channel. Not long afterwards he joined the ever-growing list of pioneers who sacrificed their lives to aviation, while exhibition-flying at Bournemouth.

Most picturesque of those early pioneers was Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill's brother), who wore a pig-tail, told stories of hair-raising adventures with kites, and flew a home-made 'plane which looked like an omnibus, in which he was killed when it crashed, as did nearly everything that entered the air in those grim days of the past.

One good-natured airman, Raynham, gave the writer a friendly hop at Brooklands on his Farman biplane during the first year of flight.

A thrill and a memory!

* * * * *

Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener were occasionally seen at public banquets in London in those days. And as the writer for years attended about four or more of these per week, consuming guinea and two-guinea dinners as part of his daily work, followed next day by chasing elusive celebrities as slimming penance, he sometimes dined with these noble war lords and national heroes.

One day he saw Kitchener in his Field-Marshal's uniform leaving the Foreign Office of all places, and one of his watching colleagues observed there could be no significance in that, although it was probably Kitchener's first appearance in Whitehall for a very long time.

A few days later there was a war on and Kitchener was Secretary of State for War!

Was ever Englishman born who looked so stately and impressive in a Field-Marshal's uniform as did he?

A year or two later the writer saw a small, rather shabbily-dressed man with long flowing grey hair and elastic step enter an old residential building in Whitehall Gardens, now to become the first home of the new Ministry of Munitions, which he, David Lloyd George, was to found.

The first news of the Battle of Jutland came from the Admiralty when the writer was in the official Press Bureau in Whitehall. The first Admiralty *communiqué* was such an uninspired piece of official sharing that the Press Bureau, so it was said, declined to circulate it.

Meanwhile, the German cock-a-hoop story of victory over the British Fleet was being wirelessed round the world. The new bulletin which came forth from the Admiralty was written, so we heard, by Earl Balfour, the First Lord, himself.

* * * * *

An interesting American celebrity visiting London before the War was Mrs. Carrie Nation, who achieved notoriety by physical onslaughts on American saloons with a hatchet.

She was known as the " Saloon-smasher."

We met at Christ Church, Westminster, then in charge of the late Rev. F. B. Meyer, in which church pulpit the writer was to speak on Good Friday morning many years later. He remembers two incidents of that meeting with Mrs. Carrie Nation.

As we conversed in a flagged lobby, she broke off the conversation, and spat on the stone floor.

Presumably this was not in contempt, because she later produced a little silver hatchet, bearing her name, and placed it in the writer's button-hole, calling attention meanwhile to the prophetic significance of the words :

CARRIE A NATION.

" I am going to carry a nation for prohibition," she stoutly said.

We did not believe her, but carry a nation she surely did, though, according to latest advices from the United States, the lady " Saloon-smasher " did not carry it very far.

Carrie Nation was engaged to give an anti-liquor talk as a music-hall turn on the London stage. The engagement ended suddenly. There was standing room only in the auditorium when silver-haired Carrie came defiantly on, carrying an open Bible, and prepared to speak.

A young man, standing in front of the writer, threw something round, and a bad egg broke in the speaker's face. More eggs followed from other parts, and the manager, in evening dress, had to come on with a handkerchief to the assistance of his quixotic turn.

Carrie Nation could not get her message over. The young bloods of the London music-halls were too proud of English beer to encourage American propaganda. Yet throwing bad eggs at a woman visitor seemed a poor exhibition of the British spirit.

* * * * *

One of the leader writers on the *Standard* was Alfred

Austin, the Poet Laureate. Another colleague, who shared the writer's room, was Edgar Wallace, already famous for his crime novel *Four Just Men*, though most of his other well-known stories, and his plays, were then unborn.

Edgar possessed a strong personality, coupled with a happy-go-lucky manner. He would order a meal from a neighbouring restaurant, leave a five-shilling deposit on the tray, and never trouble about the return of either. The tray would hang about the room until the cleaners removed it and its mouldering contents from our outraged sight.

Religion was not a popular subject in our room in those days, and the writer had retreated miles from it. Edgar Wallace was despatched to Windsor to describe for us the funeral of King Edward VII in St. George's Chapel, and his description was masterly. He knew the telling place in his article to quote a couplet from the hymn "Now the labourer's task is o'er" :

> Father, in Thy gracious keeping
> Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.

He would regale us with entertaining stories of how he sold newspapers in Ludgate Circus as a boy, or stole a pair of boots from a cottage window, or of his adventures as a war correspondent in South Africa, as the founder of a daily newspaper there, and as a one-week (or one-day) editor of another; he would speak of his talks with Kitchener, who asked him to write a leader for a London newspaper attacking something or somebody; and he dilated on his clever ruse for transmitting the first news of peace by signal and coded cable.

Later, when the writer became Literary Editor of a more influential and more widely-read London daily newspaper, he would sometimes commission Edgar Wallace to write articles or a serial story, and then have further opportunities for realising Edgar's greatness as a journalist.

Arnold Bennett estimated the output of a novelist to

average about five hundred words a day. The writer asked Edgar Wallace what was his maximum output for any one day of his life.

"Twenty-four thousand words," was the answer.

Humour is the most difficult literary commodity to produce, more difficult than poetry. We telephoned Edgar Wallace and commissioned about a column of topical humour and poetry as quickly as he could produce it.

"O.K., old man."

"When will it be ready?"

"Send a messenger; it will be ready by the time he arrives."

And it was.

Yet Edgar Wallace lived only half an hour's journey by 'bus from the office.

One day we required a new serial-novel. We were developing the feminine interest, and so the writer insisted that women must take nearly all the character parts. Wallace was a man's man, and decidedly not at his best when describing women. Nevertheless, he agreed to write this new serial, plentifully sprinkled with women characters.

A few days later the first quarter of the story came along for approval. Within a fortnight the book was finished.

Accompanying the manuscript was an Edgar Wallace drawing in which the author waggishly depicted himself standing on his head, through departing from his practice of writing about men criminals. When that story subsequently appeared in book form, entitled *The Girl from Scotland Yard*, the author inscribed in a first edition:

"To A. J. Russell, Author of the Idea,
From the Author of the Story—Edgar Wallace."

Wallace wrote a number of thrilling books and clever plays; and some not so good. *The Girl from Scotland Yard* was probably his worst, perhaps because A. J.

Russell was, in Wallace's own words, "author of the idea."

* * * * *

The writer was born without musical talent, but contrived to play in his school band for a year, and perhaps two, without that elementary fact being discovered.

When the master came too near he would press his thumb on the escape and blow on his wind-instrument as vigorously as the rest, trusting the others to produce sufficient volume to balance his own insufficiency. He further masked his incompetence by imitating the finger movements of the other boys, while he escaped the physical drill the rest of the school executed to the music of his band.

Once he was promoted to the big drum, but having no sense of time, as well as no sense of music, he perforce followed the cymbals through the performance, while the school world wondered!

At last, a part of his secret was out! he was promptly degraded to his old wind-instrument—the ocarino. Why it was never officially discovered that he could not play a note still leaves him puzzled, though there is no doubt of the silent loyalty of his band colleagues. Perhaps ours was not the most efficient of school bands.

Being so musically ungifted, the writer felt very much ashamed of himself in musical company; but he soon learned that his case was not so rare as he imagined. One of his journalistic friends could neither recognise the National Anthem nor the Marseillaise (he was also colour blind), and so had to keep eyes and ears and wits very active, after he obtained his commission, so as not to appear flagrantly disloyal when those two tunes floated out of the orchestra, as they seemed to do every ten minutes or so during early war days. As the writer knew one of those tunes, though he could not play it, he was a fifty per cent. guide to his unmusical friend.

In the first flush of his early Christianity he once

lent a powerful young shoulder to a street barrel-organ labouring up a steep hill. He accepted the Italian's smiling thanks and felt assured that was his nearest approach to the musical life—ever! Yet one never knows. For several years he was editor of a journal devoted almost entirely to music.

The whirligig of his Barnum life also brought him bang into the centre of a constellation of musical celebrities. He just missed Caruso, had long interviews with John McCormack, Melba, Tetrazzini, Kreisler, Chaliapine, Kubelik, Backhaus, Titta Ruffo, Mischa Elman and lesser lights.

Dame Nellie Melba once told him a number of amusing and entertaining stories about herself. One night she went to the Carlton to dinner and sent word down to Escoffier, the world-famous chef, that she was in the restaurant, and wished him to try his great art on something specially sweet and pleasing.

Presently there came up a fascinating new dish, richly-coloured, containing peaches and ices. Melba tried it, enjoyed it, and asked the celebrated chef what he called it? "With the famous Prima Donna's gracious permission," he gallantly said, "I would like to name it *Pêche Melba.*" Nowadays that dish, so named, appears on almost every hotel menu in the world.

Was Prima Donna ever given a more gallant free advertisement?

One of the stories Melba delighted to tell would hardly have figured in a pre-war book, let alone one with a religious flavour. But those who are merely prudish may skip this page. Melba's real name was Nellie Mitchell. Her adopted name was a contraction of Melbourne, her home-city. She had a girl friend who accompanied her to the first concert at which she sang,—some little village affair where everybody knew everybody and applauded every turn.

Melba, a little girl in a short dress, stood on the platform and sang. All present clapped but her girl

friend, who seemed to be green with envy at this overshadowing. After the concert, everybody praised the little singer with the crystal-clear voice. Still the little friend said nothing.

Next day they met and talked of everything, but the girl friend still shied off the concert, and especially Melba's contribution to it. Presently the future Empire Prima Donna grew impatient.

"Well, how did you like my song?"

Then jealousy deepened to green hatred, as the girl friend snapped out her devastating reply:

"Nellie Mitchell, I could see your knickers!"

No dramatic critic has ever written a criticism so scathing.

* * * * *

Madame Tetrazzini told the writer many interesting stories from her life, at the Savoy in London, and also when he called on her in Rome. When Tetrazzini was a young girl her musical sister was friendly with a youth working with Verdi, the composer, who, it was then known, was composing a new opera which was being awaited with awed interest.

A mysterious musical score arrived at Tetrazzini's home, addressed to her big sister, which the future Prima Donna was forbidden to explore. Presently she heard her sister go to the piano and begin to sing. Creeping into the room and peering over her sister's shoulder, little Tetrazzini discovered the long-awaited new opera, still unpublished—Verdi's *Otello*.

Her sister's friend at Verdi's court thought that if she rehearsed the new score before the public saw the opera, she would become so proficient that she would be offered the part when the opera was produced. Now that Tetrazzini had come into the secret, the two sisters began gaily singing through the score.

Musical people cannot keep secrets, especially such a secret as a new opera by Verdi. As Tetrazzini was leaving for her conservatoire, she slipped *Otello* into her music-case and took it along for her Maestro to have

"just a peep." At her whispered news he jumped excitedly into the air demanding to see it "Quick! quick!"

They entered one of the music-rooms, and he played while she sang. But that secret could not be kept. Presently their rehearsal was interrupted by heavy banging at the door, and the Principal stormed in, demanding to know what was being sung. The score of *Faust* stood innocently on the music-rack.

"*Faust* indeed!" There must be no bluffing. It was also useless to suggest an old opera. He knew every opera, old and new, and none contained that glorious music he had just overheard. Where had they hidden the new opera?

Yet another was let into the secret, showing how great a spell a new opera by Verdi could cast on any music-lover. The Principal locked the door, and they went through the stolen score together, the three thrilled to ecstasy.

"This is Verdi, but a different Verdi," exclaimed the Principal. No longer a composer in the Italian style, but Verdi turned Wagnerian.

"Oh, but it is beautiful!" he rhapsodised.

Tetrazzini met Verdi in later years on the shores of Lake Maggiore, and endeavoured to apologise for her part in this escapade. Her courage deserted her, and she postponed the effort. He died soon after.

* * * * *

Every man enjoys Kreisler, and every woman adores the world's leading violinist.

So do those who listen and—marvellous to relate!—so do those who know him. The writer picked up a few good stories from Kreisler during a cab journey across London, though the violinist forgot to admit that during the War, while fighting as an Austrian officer on the Eastern Front, he spent his money freely to provide for international artists, stranded in Vienna, friends or enemy, irrespective of nationality.

Kreisler is a truly gallant gentleman.

The violinist holds an original view of his art—with the licence of genius, he inclines to regard it as a vice. As our cab moved forward, he said that a man born with a craving for drink or crime often comes to disaster when pursuing his desires. Yet for him, life's craving brought fame and great fortune.

The writer asked him if he never desired rest and freedom from his ceaseless rush around the cities of the world, jumping in and out of trains, cabs, sleeping in a different hotel every night, doing England in a fortnight, and away again, using steam-boats, liners, or aeroplanes to maintain an inexorable itinerary of engagements.

Kreisler smiled in his friendly way and admitted that he enjoyed his quiet times occasionally.

"When?"

He described the experience.

There came a time, he said, once or twice daily, when the lights went down on everything that disturbed his life; taking up his fiddle, he would sink into a sleepy ecstasy, oblivious to everything but the rapturous joy of his art. Presently he would reach the end of the score, and for a while his rest would be disturbed by a burst of sound, clapping of hands, thunderous applause, and perhaps the return of the lights.

Again the interruption would subside, and he would slip away once more to his peaceful dreams. There, according to Kreisler, alone in the middle of a silent ten thousand, he would have his quiet time of rest, refreshment, and recuperation from the worries of the day, the rushings hither and thither, and the dust and turmoil of this mechanical age.

Yet it was Kreisler who described his art as a vice.

Only Kreisler would dare.

Unless perhaps he suspected our own musical talent.

* * * * *

One of our experiences as a publicity expert that

caused most amusement when told behind the scenes was the story of the Haggis.

A certain fashionable hotel, not fifty miles from Charing Cross, invited the writer to inspire the Press to report hotel activities. It was good publicity and brought patrons. The job was well remunerated. The Press displayed no desire to be inspired.

One of the first problems was St. Andrew's night, for which a special public banquet had been arranged, the management hoping to attract as many of the Scots in London as could afford the experience.

The usual notices had gone to the Press, but Scottish sub-editors in Fleet Street were not giving something for nothing, any more than they do in Scotland. So the publicity manager invited the writer to do his best—or perhaps his worst. He could have a free hand.

The outlook was unpromising. There was no news in the situation, and Fleet Street only wanted news, and not too much of that if it contained the cloven hoof of free advertisement. Where there is no news, news must be created, which does not mean invented. The news had to happen so that it could be confirmed on inquiry, for Fleet Street inquires.

The writer made inquiries. Was there to be Haggis on St. Andrew's night? Of course there was to be Haggis! Well, that abomination to Sassenachs—as the Scots call us—was usually a good talking-point; if only one could develop it into a news story.

Haggis was to be brought down by special train from Scotland for this forthcoming feast of St. Andrew, but there was no help in the writer knowing that, for Fleet Street refused to be interested. They had received lots of dope about this banquet, and consumed none. One was now given to understand that as Fleet Street had not taken a soup or savoury story, they would not take the Haggis. But that, the writer explained, was because the story was inadequate.

Now—supposing the lordly Haggis, coming down by special train, suffered an accident. Became lost, or

something worse. Could they get more of the beastly stuff? Oh, yes, we could bet they could! Very well, then, when this consignment of Scottish horror arrived, would they be so good as to lose it? Better still, let it be misdirected to their steam laundry, by some awful mistake. Very well, they could do that, but it seemed rather childish. But newspaper readers are grown-up children.

With the Haggis safely on its way to its natural home, the sanitary steam-laundry, the writer took a stroll towards Fleet Street, communicated with a journalistic friend on one of the news agencies, and gave him a little gem of red-hot news.

Fleet Street swallowed that story as joyfully as Scotsmen ever swallowed Haggis. One bright daily, with a tremendous circulation, now almost the largest, was so captivated that it gave the honoured position of the day, a bull's eye in the centre of the front page, to the story, entitled:

IT WON'T WASH

As for the Scottish papers, that astounding behaviour of the fashionable hotel that sent the Haggis to the wash—they took it up with pseudo-indignant relish and spread it all over the country. At least one influential Scottish daily affected such a shock that it published a Barriesque leading article, in place of its usual political leader, protesting against this insult to the national dish of Bonnie Scotland.

* * * * *

Jubilation at the hotel.

The publicity manager entered, rubbing his hands gleefully.

"Fine!" he repeated several times.

Perhaps every available cover was taken for that public feast of St. Andrew.

* * * * *

One of the visitors to London about this time was the Prime Minister of Iceland.

It was a cold day in London, so the writer called on the Premier of the Isle of Shivers, who received him courteously and was ready to talk. But there was only one question of outstanding importance, which he introduced at the appropriate moment. Upon this question hung the whole interview. Fortunately, the answer was in the affirmative.

And it wasn't many minutes afterwards that an evening newspaper, fresh from the press, carried a ribbon streamer right across the top of its front page, jubilantly conveying to its half-frozen readers the consoling news:

PREMIER OF ICELAND SHIVERING IN LONDON

* * * * *

One day the writer called on the late Sir William Orpen and commissioned the famous artist to write an article entitled "How to Live Long," in which Sir William mentioned that he believed in plenty of exercise, and himself spent hours walking around Hyde Park, while he smoked about forty cigarettes a day.

Great artist though he was, his appearance did not suggest greatness or robust health. He died a few years later, a comparatively young man.

Alarming news from Clapham Junction sent us, leading a team of four, to where Arding and Hobbs' South London emporium was burning to the ground. The crowds were kept in check by a thin cordon of police extending across the railway bridge. Even journalists were refused admission. The situation was desperate. We espied a house with one door inside the cordon and one without. We knocked, the occupant was friendly, unhampered we strolled about inside the cordon, where John Burns, the first Labour Cabinet Minister, had been participating in the work of rescue.

About half-a-dozen charred bodies lay on the pavement beside the smouldering building.

* * * * *

The custom in journalism of leaving one's soul on the mat continued with the writer during many hectic years of interviewing and news-gathering, though occasionally thoughts of the old life would flash through. During a series of conversations with Tallulah Bankhead, actress and film-star, whose life-story the writer purchased, she casually remarked that, as a preliminary to appearing in a new production, she always prayed for God's blessing on it!

As she said this, Tallulah turned to her dresser with:

"Even you didn't know that!"

* * * * *

Though we missed Caruso, Madame Tetrazzini and others told us good stories of their friend the great tenor.

Caruso was entertained to dinner in London and was provided with a benefit dish of macaroni. The delighted tenor insisted on "expressing the thanks of one artist to another," and was conducted ceremoniously to the kitchens.

Cook glowed and blushed and bowed and curtseyed and expressed a desire to hear the great tenor sing one day.

"So you shall. Will you have a ticket for the Opera? Or shall I sing now?"

Cook was taking no risks, although after that macaroni Caruso probably was. Standing by the kitchen table, he poured out his grateful soul in song to another equally grateful artist.

As a boy, Caruso played the flute, which he took to a shop where they sold phonographs, and tootled while a cylinder record was made of his playing. The box was changed to a reproducer, and the budding musician heard the first record of himself.

"Do I play like that?" asked Caruso.

"Yes." Then (eagerly), "Will you buy the phonograph?"

"No!" said Caruso. "But I will sell you my flute."

* * * * *

When the newly-born gramophone used to sing like a tin can, an attempt was made to induce Madame Patti—the world-renowned Prima Donna—to record her voice.

She shivered in horror, but presently agreed that if satisfactory records could be made she would sign on the dotted line.

A recording team hied to Craig-y-nos Castle in Wales, where the Baroness was in residence. She gave them a test, but there were rivals in the offing. They hurried away and made the waxes, but the night before the audition was indescribably stormy, and none dared venture into the Brecon mountains where her lonely castle was perched. Rival recorders were around. Motor cars were unavailable, and the car lent by a private owner for a large sum side-slipped, and all, including the records, entered the ditch.

Out of the darkness appeared two Welsh maidens carrying miners' lanterns. They were little more than two hundred miles from Charing Cross, but none could speak the other's language. Desperately anxious for a horse, the chauffeur went on his hands and knees in the dim light and pretended to pull the car. Laughter from the little ladies showed they thought he was playing bears for their entertainment. By the tiny light they drew a horse.

"Ah!" cried both: "ceffyl."

Welsh for "horse."

A horse appeared, a burst tyre was repaired, two golden sovereigns were paid to the carter, and the race to the castle was won.

"Picture the great hall of the castle," wrote Major Dixon in the article he sent the writer for *The Voice*. "A grand staircase winding down from the upper storey. In the centre of the hall stood a gramophone

with a long brass horn, and on the turn-table was Patti's record of ' Pur dicesti.'

" Again imagine the long wait until the all-famous lady appeared at the top of the stairs, poised her graceful figure like a fairy and nodded to us. The beautiful notes of Patti's music made by Patti's golden voice went winging their way through the lofty building. The diva's face was wonderful to watch. No Rosina has ever looked more youthful or more radiant than Adelina Patti did that morning as she came down the great staircase, went straight up to the machine and putting her arms around the horn, kissed the polished brass.

" The sun shone through the great windows, and we were beside ourselves with joy."

* * * * *

Every experienced journalist has a quiverful of stories to unload on friends too slow to dodge them.

A series of articles by celebrities, entitled " Your Marriage Problem," had proved a success. The most distinguished contributor of all, Queen Marie of Roumania, sent her contribution too late, and so her article remained in the writer's desk awaiting a topical opportunity for publication.

It came quite unexpectedly when Prince Carol began that famous quarrel with his royal parents over his own marriage problem. Next day the newspapers led their main news pages with flaring stories of trouble in the Roumanian Royal Household.

And when the editor, rubbing his eyes, discovered that our leader page ably supported his news columns with a topical commentary upon marriage problems by no less an authority than Queen Marie of Roumania herself, his dumbfounded admiration for the up-to-dateness of his newspaper was gratifying to behold.

CHAPTER III SPORTSMEN, SCRIBES, AND SINNERS

A fault confessed is half redressed.
Proverb.

* * * * *

Sport that wrinkled care derides,
And laughter holding both his sides.
Milton.

* * * * *

It is better to suffer once than to be continually on one's guard.—*Julius Cæsar.*

SOMETIMES when we hear of a woman being poisoned, we also read in our newspapers that it is "another Crippen case." During the writer's early years in Fleet Street, he was shot off to Hilldrop Crescent, Camden Town, where policemen could be seen digging up the garden of one of the large houses, looking for the presumed dead body of Mrs. Crippen.

At such times the police are wary of journalists. Our news stories have an infuriating way of scaring the murderer as the net is encircling him. But it was not the Press that scared Hawley Harvey Crippen, who absconded with his girl secretary, while the police were still ignorant of Mrs. Crippen's whereabouts.

Crippen was a quack doctor, an abortionist, an ineffectual little egotist who had worked for quack companies and met with many failures before marrying a flamboyant lady of vast conceit whose stage name was Belle Ellmore, and who had day-dreams of grand opera without the necessary talent. An ill-mated couple, they often quarrelled before Crippen used his medical knowledge and opportunities for

poisoning her so that he might enjoy life with his secretary.

Crippen had not long left his office in New Oxford Street when we called there, but he was already a long distance away, and the police of both hemispheres were on the look-out for him. We called on a stage friend of Mrs. Crippen, but the news almost sent her into a collapse; she was too upset to be coherent.

For weeks Crippen was the writer's daily fare; a news story a day, and always Crippen. When Chief Inspector Walter Dew, in charge of the case, dashed across the Atlantic to Halifax on a fast liner to overhaul the slower *Montrose* on which Crippen travelled, disguised as a clergyman, with his secretary, in boy's attire, all the world and his wife were volubly discussing that first use of wireless for catching a murderer. But we journalists were amusedly discussing something else as well, a sardonic touch by Canadian reporters who cabled the description of Crippen's capture at Halifax in this style :—

> The pilot boat went off to the *Montrose*. All the world knew who was on that pilot boat. Both hemispheres knew. So did the Captain of the ship. All save Crippen.
>
> "Who is on that boat?" asked Crippen nervously of the Captain.
>
> "That's the pilot," said the Captain, unconcernedly.
>
> "There seem to be a lot of pilots," said the anxious Crippen.

Good journalism that.

Before he absconded, Crippen was asked to show the police inspector into his cellar, where the officer went on his hands and knees and began tapping the floor, brick by brick, without then discovering signs of any disturbance of the flooring, though at one time he was actually over the spot where the decomposing body of Mrs. Crippen was subsequently found.

Good that the police officer, making his preliminary

survey, did not discover more at that time. For it became known afterwards that while the inspector was investigating, the little doctor, subsequently the notorious murderer, was watching him carefully, one hand in his pocket tightly encircling a loaded revolver, just in case . . .

The writer watched Crippen standing before the Lord Chief Justice in the Law Courts while his unsuccessful appeal was being heard; a small, ineffectual figure.

His courage had failed him before arrest, and he had resolved on suicide, for he had no prospects and was short of money. A farewell note, threatening suicide, was discovered in his pocket when he was arrested. He went to the gallows.

* * * * *

Everybody has heard of the Hounsditch shootings, followed by the Siege of Sydney Street, when Peter the Painter and his comrade, who had killed several policemen, were shot or suffocated in a burning house in Stepney, surrounded by police, while Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary, directed operations. One of those rare street battles in which journalists are in their element.

The night before that encounter between police and desperadoes, we were one of a company of journalists, twenty or thirty strong, hovering around Lime Street Police Station. The police officer who most distinguished himself on this case and who had charge of Lime Street operations was Detective-Sergeant Wensley, subsequently Chief Constable Wensley of Scotland Yard; nicknamed "The Weasel" by the crooks, because of his uncanny facility in ferreting out incriminating information.

The police were sparing in the news they handed out at this ticklish period, for they had the murderers practically rounded up and they were ready for a big catch. We saw a man who looked like a police officer

in plain clothes in a near-by hostelry, and accosted him, to ask his help in getting a chat with Wensley's clerk.

What Wensley, for it was he, then thought of this writer as an amateur investigator can be imagined. Later when he met Ex-Chief Constable Wensley, of Scotland Yard, to negotiate for the purchase of his life-story for the newspaper he managed, the writer tactfully inquired if Wensley remembered him. And the Chief Constable's rejoinder was still more tactful:

"I only remember criminals."

Wensley caught many murderers, probably more than any man in his time. When advertising the big news that our paper had secured his life story, the writer had a large post-card printed, some ten inches by six, on which appeared the head of the former Chief Constable, looking very grim and determined, beneath which was the ominous slogan:

THE MAN WHO CAUGHT THE MURDERERS

There were no serious consequences from distributing this card in thousands, though if any recipient did possess a guilty conscience through repeating the crime of Cain, the unexpected receipt of this post-card advertisement may have disturbed his breakfast.

An autographed copy of *Detective Days*, dated 17.2.31, came to the writer with this inscription:

"To A. J. Russell, who saw this book in its cradle—F. P. Wensley."

The compliment was returned when a book arrived at Mr. Wensley's house entitled *For Sinners Only*.

* * * * *

Not long ago the newspapers contained reports of the tragic death by self-shooting of Edward Marjoribanks, M.P. for Eastbourne, whom the writer knew. The tragedy recalled that story he told the writer one day during the War, when we marched side by side round the saluting base at Bushey during our

period of training for commissions in the Brigade of Guards.

Whence came his unusual surname? asked the writer.

As we passed a certain spot we had to salute, three paces before, continuing to three paces past, the saluting base.

"King Robert the Bruce of Scotland," began Marjoribanks, "had a soft spot in his heart for a certain pretty lady named Marjory."

Our right hands went up and we saluted.

"He provided her with a home on the banks of the Forth, and so the name of that home became Marjoribanks."

"And they were your ancestors?"

We saluted again.

Unhappy Marjoribanks! He was brilliant in many ways, as a politician, writer, and scholar; but, like the writer, he did not excel on the parade-ground. Though he was Captain of Eton and won a double-first at Oxford, he was a rear-rank soldier.

Once the writer apologised profusely for clumsiness while standing next in line in the rear rank of No. 10 Platoon and dropping the butt of his rifle on Marjoribanks' toes, when ordering arms. Arm drill in the Guards meant a snap and a bang in every movement. Marjoribanks' experience was but a minor penalty for mixing with rear-rank soldiers, which he accepted with good grace. Both of us with about the same frequency usually earned the peremptory command "Get your hair cut" from our platoon officer.

Marjoribanks was interested in religion, and once opened the subject by asking:

"Are you pi?"

He made a start in journalism before taking to the law, and told us over a cup of tea in the Press Club that he had no liking for newspaper work. But he was a good writer.

* * * * *

After the "My Religion" series of articles, which awakened Fleet Street to the potentialities of religious discussion as part of newspaper activities, reverberations of which one still hears as one moves about the world, there followed a further series, run on the same lines, into which another tragedy entered.

The last of the writers for that fine series entitled "Life," was a celebrity well known throughout the City, the West End, and also on the Turf, the late James White. A tall, powerful figure of a man, he had a reputation for big business, reckless deals, and prodigal giving. One of the oddest sights witnessed in James White's room at the back of Daly's Theatre, of which he was the owner, was his commanding figure, the size of Kitchener's or Conan Doyle's, standing alongside the diminutive form of little Steve Donoghue, both poring over the racing form of horses and sizing up their winning possibilities for the day.

About the time the "Life" series was launched, Jimmy White's amazing run of luck had completely deserted him. His theatre had ceased to bring him in anything but losses. He was interested in a large oilfield, the shares of which had been jumping about the market to the profit of some and the ruin of many. They had been talked up to ten times their value, and Jimmy White was holding large blocks and still buying.

Others were selling against him, and Jimmy was being vanquished disastrously in financial battle.

One morning we received the staggering news that James White had committed suicide—James White, perhaps the most spectacular figure in London.

The oil shares dropped plumb to a third of their previous day's value, while City men walked gloomily about office and pavement, talking in awed whispers. Turf and West End were similarly punctured. By this time the writer had transferred from the literary editorship of the Daily to the managerial chair of the Sunday. Our circulation was on the upturn and we

needed one strong feature each week if we were to sell big and to maintain the impetus already created.

Thursday came, and we had no big selling feature for Sunday. That evening the writer was called into the office of the Editor-in-Chief to confer with him and another from the Daily on a matter of some mystery. The Editor-in-Chief produced an envelope, looked solemn and very mysterious. His late friend, James White, lay in his coffin. All London was talking of his tragic death.

He read us a secret letter, the last ever written by his dead friend. Vividly it described James White's mental condition on that night of blackness when the financier's world was reeling and tottering to ruin; a heart-stirring letter confessing the sin of gambling which had lured him upwards to great fortune, then back to ruin and suicide. Accompanying it was a remarkable article, bearing authentic marks of inspiration, written in farewell to earth as a contribution to our "Life" series—an article which, for topical importance, was worth all that had gone before and many more that were to succeed it for months. The writer will never forget the impression made in that semi-darkened room by that last letter from the hand of the Editor's dead friend. Fleet Street ever revels in the human story; here again was the human story of stories, speaking to us fresh and poignant from the warm dead: the story of James White, once a working man, gifted with a powerful brain, who became a self-made millionaire and then a self-made failure; a candid revelation, a frank sharing, of his meteoric rise and reverberating crash. Once he had walked from London to his home in the north (or vice versa) because he was unable to find his railway fare; then fortune had come: once he had made a profit of three-quarters of a million pounds in one day's deal. He had been fêted by the great and had called peers by their Christian name.

When Stead went down in the *Titanic* and Captain

Oates walked out from Captain Scott's snow-hut—"a very gallant gentleman"—to die in the blizzard round the South Pole, some of us hard-boiled journalists even consented to be stirred to the depths. The writer, for one, for he knew Stead, and Captain Scott. For Scott had outlined to him the plan of his Antarctic Expedition late one night at the foot of his staircase by Victoria Station, just as the news broke, after we had called him downstairs from his retirement.

But none of these happenings gave us a deeper stirring than the death of Jimmy White and the human story of his life that he wrote just before passing out.

The day we published Jimmy White's farewell reflections on "Life" there appeared in a rival journal a cleverly-worded article insinuating that no such story had been left by the financier. To this day there are people who doubt the authenticity of "My Last Night Alive, by James White."

But that article was no fabrication. And those extra hundred thousand readers who came into the paper that week may be assured they were reading the last words of a spectacular financier, who, after great successes, and great failures, again touched the lone heights at his death.

* * * * *

The writer must confess to having availed himself of useful information, obtained from a tapped telephone, on a very important occasion for him. News of the Clapham Common murder, for which Stinie Morrison was sentenced to death, but reprieved, had just reached Fleet Street; about the time the bells of St. Bride's were inviting unresponsive journalists to leave their desks for Sunday Evensong.

After an abortive dash to Clapham Common, followed by an equally abortive round of the police, who stolidly refused to be communicative, we became anxious. We knew there had been a murder, but who was murdered, or anything further about it, no one seemed

to know on that Sunday evening round New Year's Day 1911. If our newspaper appeared next day without the information there would be black looks and sour language.

It was now eleven o'clock, the last page was just going to press without the news; disconsolately the writer sought a telephone to announce defeat. But the only telephone accessible was at the exchange. As he gave the number, he suggested to the telephone operator, as a final resource, that he must have had a busy evening, for there had been a murder on Clapham Common.

Yes, the telephone operator had heard about it. Another journalist had just been sending the information to his office, the Fleet Street Favourite.

"Did you catch the name of the murdered man?"

"Yes—Leon Beron."

Eureka!

"Where did he live?"

"Commercial Road, Whitechapel."

And then the writer connected with his office. Next day only two newspapers had the name of the murdered man, the Favourite and the "Also Ran."

Stinie Morrison was reprieved, sent to Dartmoor and Parkhurst. He became one of the most troublesome prisoners, always quarrelling with his fellow-convicts. Once he held a dozen or more warders at bay, and even sneered while undergoing the resultant flogging. Once or twice he attempted suicide; he tried to drown himself in a pond, and also attempted hunger-striking, and died in prison after spending ten years behind bars.

One of his most astonishing antics was to seize a fellow-convict, lay him on an ironing-board, and then pass an almost red-hot iron over his helpless body. For Stinie Morrison was a man of prodigious strength, and perhaps on the border-line of insanity.

"Needs must when the Devil drives," had to be one of the writer's slogans during those days in the

wilderness. He does not defend that method of securing information about the Clapham Common murder, enticed as it was from a telephone official pledged to secrecy, any more than he could have defended himself for returning without the information. Journalists always get what they are sent for, and if they don't, the time soon comes when they are no longer sent. If the writer had stopped to ask himself the question, "Is this absolutely honest?", the answer must have been "No."

The insatiable thirst of newspapers for news, and the tempers that are sometimes roused when that thirst goes unsatisfied, are excellently illustrated in the case of one journalist, quite new to the life, who was suddenly shot out to describe a devastating fire, consuming one of the most famous business concerns in town.

The sub-editorial staff waited and waited with growing impatience, as the clock rushed to the time for catching newspaper trains. Presently something inadequate was collected and written in the office and the paper was born.

Then the telephone bell tinkled and the new reporter began volubly pouring his impressions of the greatest fire ever into the Night Editor's ears. When he paused for breath, there came a voice, cold and hard, back to him:

"Say, are you anywhere near that fire?"

"Yes, sir, it's just across the street."

"Will you do me a great favour?"

"Of course."

"Will you kindly stroll across the street to a place where that darned fire is the hottest, and when you get there, please jump right in?"

* * * * *

Lord Baden Powell had just been elevated to the peerage, and there were many celebrations among his admiring Scouts.

The Hero of Mafeking became besieged again—by

interviewers; and the newspapers reproduced many of his photographs.

We sent one of our men to interview him. But the Chief Scout had retired into the country for rest and quiet.

Our interviewer found the Chief Scout's country home, ascended the steps and named his newspaper. The answer was not encouraging. The General was out and wished to be left alone. Naturally! But an interviewer dare not accept that kind of situation; the celebrity must be seen, if possible.

Diplomatic persistence elicited the Chief Scout's whereabouts. He was some three miles up the river—fishing. A three-mile plod, and lo! the Chief Scout is discovered in contented ease, his line peacefully dangling in the placid water.

For once a frown, then a stout refusal to be interviewed, and a curt military demand to know why he cannot be left in peace?

"Well, sir, I'm surprised that you receive me like this," said our man, unabashed.

"What did you expect?"

"*I expected you to congratulate me on a fine piece of scouting.*"

On the way back the Chief Scout, and our well-trained younger scout, talked freely, and with great friendliness.

That young man is now an editor in his own well-earned right.

* * * * *

News came from the West of England that a lady, true daughter of the bull-dog breed, was keeping a pet lion—loose!

The postman, calling one morning, had seen the lion watching him through a gap in the hedge as it sat unleashed on its haunches on the fringe of a field. The postman said, "Never again." Sometimes the same lion would be seen in the motor-car as its lady-owner drove about the district.

We sent a live journalist to call on the lady. He went—a revolver in his pocket, just in case the lion was uncivilised. He was shown into the reception-room, and the lady listened to his inquiry with stern interest. Oh, yes, she would be quite willing to confirm the fact that she possessed a lion, if he would wait a moment.

She disappeared, and presently he heard a roar and a snarl, and the lion bounded into the room, lay on the mat, snarling. The interviewer recoiled, but stayed on. It was the first time he had been asked to interview a lion without bars. He held his pistol pointed at the animal, as he thought; and hoped for his life.

Presently his hostess rapped out a command, snapped her whip, and the lion bounded up the stairs and lay couchant on the landing, snarling ominously. The interviewer had been well rewarded for his impudence in calling.

A few days later, it was decided that a loose lion, although not fully grown, was unsafe in that house, and it was sent off to grace a menagerie.

That interviewer, too, soon became an editor in his well-earned right.

* * * * *

During this exciting period the writer was ascending the ladder of journalism until he presently found himself in the highest paid position on his paper, for he had discovered that newspapers thrive on ideas, and those who are in the habit of throwing up circulation-raising suggestions, can command top salaries. He was constantly being consulted and requested to produce something new to wake things up. The newspaper war, which always goes noisily on, was at its hottest. Those in the more spectacular positions were being enticed away to other newspapers, perhaps to be enticed back again immediately afterwards by the bait of higher salaries.

As the writer's salary had been stationary for nearly

a year, an unusual circumstance in those days of strenuous climbing, it became necessary to discover a serviceable idea in his own interest, for he had lost some thousands in the City, and had to allocate a large slice of his salary to reducing the debt. No offer had come of a better job elsewhere, but debts had to be wiped off, and an excuse for a higher salary had to be found. But there would have to be a little originality infused into the request, for the salary then received was higher than the job warranted.

So his letter of application for an increase contained a reference to our office prodigals who left home to seek better fortune in the far country, while he stayed loyally on, developing in the meantime an elder-brother complex, as he watched those prodigals being received back to higher and better-remunerated posts.

Surely, he thought, this new point of appeal in asking for an increase deserved success, since it was now up to the proprietor to confirm his knowledge of Scripture by informing the elder brother that "all that I have is thine."

He did not!

But presently a powerful proprietorial voice came chuckling over the telephone, asking if notice of an increase of salary had yet been received. The writer said no.

"You will hear soon."

And in a few minutes a messenger dashed in bearing a letter announcing that the managerial salary had been substantially increased. A useful jump this time. Another five hundred a year had been added.

For once an elder-brother complex was justified. Our debts began to diminish.

* * * * *

That steel-nerved racing motorist, the late Sir Henry Segrave, who aroused the admiration of both hemispheres by his dare-devil successes at Palm Beach, came into the writer's room on his return from his last achievement, which brought him a knighthood.

We discussed many things, including the future of speed.

Segrave's well-poised head was almost an oval, his face clean-shaven, eyes a steady grey-blue. His greatest rival in the sphere of modesty among celebrities was probably Senatore Marconi.

Segrave told the writer several rattling good stories from his recent experiences, including that about a certain multi-millionaire, who had advertised a racing motor-boat for sale, which Segrave sought to purchase. Calling by appointment, he walked through palatial halls, sinking into thick carpets, to the luxurious central citadel, where sat the multi-millionaire, a diminutive Jewish figure, almost obscured by his wealthy surroundings. By his lonely chair was a large bottle of liqueur, which he frequently sampled. Curtly he informed Segrave that he disliked Britishers.

"Very well, sir," said the champion motorist, with the frigid politeness of a major in the British Army, "then I'll retire."

"Sit down!" commanded the little old multi-millionaire.

"I prefer to stand," said the rebuffed Major.

"Sit down," repeated the man of money, thickly.

The situation was humorous, so the dare-devil motorist humoured him.

The thick voice became more friendly.

"Though I don't like you Britishers, I like you. What can I do for you?"

"That motor-boat of yours . . ."

"What about it?"

"I'd like it, if I can buy it for, say, two thousand dollars."

"Well, you can't."

He indicated the liqueur bottle.

"Have a drink."

Segrave declined and rose to leave.

"Sit down," said the millionaire.

He turned to the wondering Segrave. "Though

you can't buy my boat, you can have it. It's yours!"

Here was a new phase of American business enterprise.

Segrave expostulated. He hadn't come begging.

The little millionaire knew that, but a free gift was the only condition on which he was ready "to sell."

They began to talk, the conversation becoming increasingly jovial. Presently Segrave left, and returned to his hotel to find that, as his host owned practically the whole town, the situation had already changed. Everybody was anxious to do everything for nothing for him and his team. Orders had already come through to the hotel proprietor that on no account must a bill be presented to "the Britishers," and that any money already taken from Segrave, or his staff, must be returned forthwith. Had the little Jew been reading the story of Joseph and his brethren—the money in the sack?

This is still a world of wonder.

Having seen his staff offered the money they had paid for their entertainment, Segrave decided to stroll out and inspect the gift motor-boat. Already he was too late. American hustle had combined with American generosity to have that motor-boat packed. It was already securely boxed and about to leave—for England.

Before leaving the town, Sir Henry became so friendly with the millionaire that one day he hazarded an inquiry as to his financial worth. The multi-millionaire made a careless gesture, pushed the bell for one of his many secretaries—the financial secretary—and instructed him to ascertain exactly what he was worth at that hour of the day, taking into account the day's market prices of all his holdings.

There was efficiency in that establishment. Presently the secretary re-entered, bearing a long typewritten document, which he solemnly handed to his employer, who, after giving it one careless glance, passed it to Segrave.

"How much do you think was on that paper?" he asked the writer, who was ready for a thrill.

Segrave spoke impressively:

"In English money—over fifty million pounds!"

One felt that the British racing champion had not violated hospitality by accepting a five-hundred-pound motor-boat for nothing as the millionaire's apology for saying he did not like Britishers. When the writer was in America, he early realised that the millionaire's initial attitude was not representative of the country, for Americans like Britishers more than Britishers like Americans.

During our conversation, Segrave made two significant statements, which the writer had cause to remember not long afterwards. He had mentioned to Segrave that the British airship *R.101* was about to be launched at Cardington. Segrave shook his head.

"She's no good."

The journalist cocked his ears.

"Why?"

Segrave looked very sure of himself, and announced that he had heard something about the *R.101* that augured ill for her future. We passed on to discuss motor-boat racing, which he had now decided to take up in earnest, hoping to do one hundred miles an hour, and so break the record on water, as he had just broken it on land. He listened indulgently to the remonstrance that he should stick to the land. "It's more spectacular."

No, he was determined to break the motor-boat record.

The writer asked him what would happen if, when speeding at one hundred miles an hour, his boat struck a floating obstruction, say, a bottle, or a piece of wood?

His reply is not likely to be forgotten.

"If I struck a bottle, on the water, when travelling at a hundred miles an hour, it would cut a hole right through the boat, and the inrush of water would be so

great "—he extended his arms—" the boat would divide and sink."

" And if you had touched a dog when doing over two hundred miles an hour at Palm Beach—what then? "

" I should have been finished, and the car wrecked," he quietly said.

The writer thought of those answers not long afterwards, when Segrave's racing motor-boat was reported to have struck a floating branch on Lake Windermere. It overturned. Unlucky Segrave !—probably the finest racing motorist the world has ever seen, the ideal starter, and the steadiest finisher; he lost his life in the moment of triumph.

The equally luckless *R.101*, for which he had no liking, passed over the writer's home in Kent, carrying the British Air Minister, General Sir Sefton Brancker, and many other British heroes to their doom in France in that unhappy attempt to visit India before the Round Table Conference.

* * * * *

One of the most spectacular persons to enter the writer's office told a story about a boat in the open sea which was very different from the one mentioned by Segrave. This man had achieved notoriety through being sent to Devil's Island by the French Government, for his share with another notorious criminal, Chicago May, in robbing the American Express Company near the Opera House in Paris.

His name was Eddie Guerin. He was tall and massively built, and must have made a tough handful for his captors. Chicago May was very fond of him, but on one occasion expressed that fondness by inducing another to shoot him in the foot in the public street, for which she received a sentence of ten years' imprisonment.

Eddie Guerin told the writer of how he escaped from Devil's Island in a rowboat—it was probably from one of the islands in that group of penal settlements in

French Guiana of which Devil's Island is the best-known, though it is only used for political prisoners.

Guerin dwelt on that row in the stolen boat towards the mainland in equatorial heat, with himself sitting in the stern, holding the pistol, while the other did a good deal of the rowing; a common-sense attitude to life on a hot day in the Atlantic for which the writer could not withhold sympathy. The escape succeeded —a rare event—and Guerin returned to England. The French Government attempted to regain their lost prisoner, but extradition proceedings failed.

One could understand that desperate attempt to escape from those penal settlements round Devil's Island, where some fifty prisoners a year die at the hands of their fellow-convicts, and many more from the terrors of the life and climate; even though an attempt to escape is regarded as an infinitely worse crime than murder, which may mean three years in the bear-pits. Bear-pits are cages of solid concrete with no windows and heavy bars as roofing under a large, iron-roofed shed. The guards walk along the top of the cells looking on the caged human animals, who are completely and always on view. On the brightest of days it is dark in the bear-pits, where according to Richard Halliburton in *New Worlds to Conquer* some slowly go mad. When the prisoner begins to howl and weep, he is dragged from that line of bear-pits and put into a similar line reserved for the insane.

* * * * *

During those early days in the Wilderness, a new friend enlisted the writer's interest in getting rich quick with one of those simple systems which promised a fortune by increasing stakes on favourites. One of those old systems that have ruined countless homes. He could see that otherwise many columns of news must flow from his pen before he made big money.

For fifteen years the writer endeavoured, with degrees of consistency, to enlarge his income by nearly every form of gambling—the gambling-table, the Turf,

cards, the City; always he was beaten! The more he lost, the more determined he became to win. The born gambler's undying hope. If only he could make just one big coup, then he would abandon this nerve-shattering game of doubling and trebling, of poring and juggling, waiting for the right horse, the right number, or the right price to appear in the position of advantage. If only . . .

A few wins, innumerable losses, and never the big coup. Yet fate had led him right into the centre of the big information, in City and on Turf, information that could have been sold publicly for considerable profit.

Fifteen years of gambling have convinced the writer of its folly and sinfulness. Only God knows the future: when it is necessary for one of His children to know it, He lifts the veil. Until then it is unwise to exploit a guess. God has other ways far more reliable in providing for His children, without encouraging them to break His laws of righteousness.

One day the writer was at Newmarket, seated in the drawing-room of one of the best trainers of race-horses in England, who had won a couple of Derbys and nearly every other big race as well. One Derby win had enriched him by nearly twenty thousand pounds; and yet he was not wealthy. He was telling the writer some of his bizarre experiences on the Turf, when he stopped, took out his watch, and announced that it was five minutes to three.

That afternoon a horse of his was running at York, in the three o'clock race. It should not be said that a guest was in his house when one of his charges was winning a race without being given an opportunity of making something on the event. The trainer had three hundred pounds invested on this race. If the writer cared to take the risk of five of those pounds, the trainer guaranteed him the winnings to that amount.

Racing enthusiasts regularly enter little shops in

almost every street in the country to buy somebody's latest wire from the course, hoping thereby to get the real information. Here was real information, fallen into our lap.

Gladly he joined in the bet.

Back in London, he bought an evening paper, read the result, and wrote out a cheque for five pounds, and sent it to his trainer friend, for the "information horse" had lost by lengths.

* * * * *

The best trainer in England once invited the writer to spend a day at his famous stables. Derby winners, worth upwards of fifty thousand pounds a-piece, were inspected, and other priceless thoroughbreds paraded.

"Do you risk much in betting on your horses?"

The trainer looked very wise and stressed his answer, which, if remembered correctly, was as follows:

"Mr. Russell, believe me, if I had betted on every certainty—not every horse, but every certainty—that I have turned out of my stables, I should probably not have a shirt to my back."

England's cleverest trainer of race-horses was speaking.

What hope, then, has the ordinary man of winning on racing?

* * * * *

As a cub reporter we were sent to interview Horatio Bottomley, then a political candidate. He said his political knowledge came from John Stuart Mill. He gave us a biscuit in his weekly paper for discovering "defeat in sight for Mr. Bottomley" at South Hackney, for he won with a great majority. We noticed that he had laughing blue eyes, which explained some of his one-time success. That he had the most popular vowel repeated four times in his name was perhaps a contributory factor.

Many years afterwards, passing the Old Bailey, we saw a crowd outside waiting for the result of the Bottomley trial. An old Press card was rummaged

from a disused pocket and we cajoled our way in. Standing at the back of the dock, we heard Mr. Justice Salter sentence Bottomley to seven years' penal servitude, and also heard the low, almost sadistic hiss of surprise which went round the court as the sentence was passed. Bottomley flung an angry reply at the Judge—he would have had something offensive to say about the summing up had he been given the opportunity—and was then taken below. His head rolled back, his face was livid, and he looked like a dying animal, as he was carried down.

About five years later, a journalist friend of Bottomley, then in Maidstone Prison, came into our room asking us if we were prepared to treat for his prison experiences. We declined them, saying the only chance Bottomley had of a " come-back " was if he came out a thoroughly changed man. We offered to buy his confessions, for if he had found God in Maidstone, and was now determined to live the John Bunyan life, people would again listen to him. But he must write his full confessions, and what earnings he did not require for absolute necessities, he must pass on to those people who had lost their money through him.

Bottomley's advocate listened in amazement.

That somebody in Fleet Street in 1927 should seriously suggest that Bottomley should turn to religion—be a convert, in fact—incredible !

Bottomley did not write his confessions. He sent a letter saying he had nothing to confess.

Yet—Bottomley could have come back, as anybody can, however big his crimes, if he is prepared to return through " the Strait Gate."

CHAPTER IV THE LIFTED HAND

> The man who to untimely death is doomed,
> Vainly you hedge him from the assault of harm;
> He bears the seed of ruin in himself.
>
> *Matthew Arnold.*

IT was 1921.

Barnum was still in charge, and the gambling craze was still Barnum's master. Earning good money, he watched it drain away as fast as it flowed in, though continually expectant of gambler's luck, which never came.

Breaking the higher laws of the universe, he found himself driven—shepherded may be the right word—into folds of defeat and internal disharmony. Unhappiness within and around, his progress handicapped or definitely blocked at many points, frustrated in his chief ambitions, he retired further into his inharmonious self.

In that state of disgruntled aloofness, he began to glimpse how utterly self-centred, how essentially first person singular, his life had been.

Then someone breathed into his ear a hard-luck story which opened one way of escape from selfishness. A young man of good education and appearance had found himself in trouble with the police—he screened a relative who forged a cheque, and so had been sent to prison for his altruism.

Sentenced by Lord Darling at the Guildford Assizes, for what seemed an almost venial offence, he had served most of his time in Dartmoor and Portland, earned all remission possible, had recently been released on ticket, was an excellent worker (and proved a good writer), and was now in urgent need of sympathy and work. What could be done?

The informant was trustworthy, had rarely been mistaken in these intuitive judgments. And here was opportunity to recover leeway on that selfish prodigal life. The writer was interested in criminals, especially those who (he knew) had been harshly treated for their first offence, and had become irreclaimable in consequence. Once he attended at the Middlesex Guildhall when a harmless-looking old lag received a ten years' sentence, plus a flogging, for being found in the garden of a house, presumably intent on committing a felony. But the felony had not been committed! Our reports aroused a public outcry, the newspapers commented adversely on the law's severity, and Mr. Herbert Gladstone, then Home Secretary, pacified a shocked House of Commons by announcing that the flogging would not be administered.

Some time after this, the writer interviewed the Judge in this case, and was surprised to find another side to his nature. He often used his influence to help discharged prisoners desiring honest employment. One day a man called at his house and announced:

"I am the man you sent to prison for eighteen months."

The Judge looked at him fearlessly.

"Well, if I gave you eighteen months, I'm jolly certain you deserved it. What do you want?"

"A job."

And the Judge endeavoured to find work for the discharged prisoner.

But that is not the most remarkable story of a discharged prisoner's call on his Judge.

Stuart Wood, author of *Shades of the Prison House*, who had spent sixteen years in half as many prisons, including six weeks in one prison under the seal of Lord Justice Phillimore, called one Sunday evening on his old friend the Judge, just as he was sitting down to dinner. He presented a card, "Captain Carrington."

The ex-convict recognised his host immediately; not so the Judge the ex-convict.

Stuart Wood explained that he had been gambling in London, had lost all his money, and had to get back to the north of Scotland—the old tale, which every judge and every magistrate, every policeman and every soft-hearted benefactor has heard on many occasions.

But the setting of the tale was enough to disarm and convince even a judge. Captain Koepenick hardly showed more audacity than "Captain Carrington."

Lord Phillimore tried a sudden test; his caller was well prepared.

"What school were you at?"

"Winchester."

"That's my old school. All the Phillimores have been to Winchester," said the Judge. "What House were you in?"

The only "School" that Stuart Wood had entered in Winchester was the County Gaol, but he had read sufficient in stories by old Wykehamists to know the names of the Houses, the names of the masters, even their nicknames, as well as a number of the Judge's contemporaries; and those who came after.

Instead of giving the House Master's name, he gave his nick-name:

"I was in the Doge's."

That bit of realism was convincing evidence, says Stuart Wood.

The Judge sent his butler to his cashbox, and "Captain Carrington" was presented with a note.

"And," confessed the ex-convict, "that Sunday evening I touched my old Judge for a tenner."

* * * * *

A certain daily newspaper, which employed the writer for a long time, came into special prominence because it published an interesting letter about the Mahon case. Mahon was hanged nine years ago for a particularly revolting murder in a lonely bungalow

at the Crumbles near Eastbourne, to which he had lured a trustingly infatuated girl named Emily Kaye. Mahon isolated her from all her friends, murdered her in the bungalow, and tried to dispose of her body by burning it. Before he was caught he lured another girl to the same bungalow for a week-end, she being totally ignorant of the sinister contents of one room whose door was kept locked.

Two other notorious murderers of that period were Vaquier, a Frenchman, who poisoned a man at Byfleet, and Thorne, who, inspired by Mahon, treated his sweetheart similarly, only more cleverly. The newspapers were very full of these cases, which, dragging on for a long time, were the talk of the British Isles during a large part of 1924. But none of them had come to light when the writer's sympathies were first enlisted for the unfortunate ex-convict who received a sentence of five years at Guildford Assizes for misplaced altruism with a forged cheque.

The trusted informant introduced this ex-convict to us at Alexandra Park Racecourse. From that day onwards, for several years, he became a character of increasing interest to the writer, who knew him as Patrick.

Tall, thin, smart, and distinctly superior in appearance, he had a voice which was pleasantly insinuating, except when it was raised, when it sounded false; a face handsome, with marks of much suffering, such as imprisonment for another's offence might produce on a sensitive character; large, brown eyes set in deep sockets, good teeth, a long and rather projecting jaw, very fine and wavy iron-grey hair. About thirty, he looked prematurely aged, as though through shock; though his smile would still have drawn him a large fan-mail, had fate thrust him into Hollywood. Yet never has one observed a man who seemed to reveal such a dead weight of suffering in his handsome face and dark brown eyes as Patrick, the ex-convict. Nor a man with such natural charm in any society, whether wearing his long

ulster on the race-course, or in evening dress in a drawing-room.

For several years we saw much of him, and sometimes heard a good deal more. Usually he was pleasant company, but once or twice he would become angry, murderously so, when his eyes would change with lightning swiftness from brown to jet, and blaze furiously as though he were demon-controlled. But his fiendish tempers were soon mastered, and he would be radiating again his magnetic charm. Absinthe—" the little green god," as he called it—was his passion, so he said—when he could get it.

Everybody who met him immediately remarked upon his exceeding likeableness. Strange that a man so lovable should be sent to prison for a long stretch, five years, for somebody else's crime—his first offence. Once the writer introduced him to a General, also a well-known author, who, of course, liked him immediately. Women fluttered towards him when he was in the room; they discussed him admiringly in his absence. A lady of the nobility met him in the writer's company, and when we were alone, immediately demanded to know more about that handsome friend.

One day we called on a celebrated actress, who spoke more French than English. In Dartmoor, and elsewhere, Patrick had become quite proficient in French, a language which the writer has abandoned hope of learning. So Patrick was taken along as an interpreter. The actress was enjoying an afternoon's siesta when we arrived, and was by no means pleased at the intrusion of strangers upon her sleep.

She flamed into the drawing-room, eyes flashing, demeanour imperious, her artistic temperament having its full fling. It promised to be a stormy interview. Tactfully we thrust Patrick forward, and he began to radiate his own fascinating temperament to counteract hers, while engaging her interest in soothing French. As his soft tones fell on her musical ear, the fire died from her eyes, her attitude became amiable, smiles

rippled towards us. She melted graciously into the atmosphere which he engendered. Taking Patrick along as interpreter was an inspiration.

Afterwards, Patrick displayed a certain diffidence about remaining in that luxury hotel, following a quiet hint from the writer that the management employed private detectives, dressed as waiters, and sprinkled them about the establishment for the protection of their patrons, including their actresses!

Patrick had a little daughter who adored him. She was fairy-like in her young beauty. Her witchery and charm were the feminine counterpart of his engaging masculine qualities. Patrick also possessed a treasure of a wife, who protected his dark secret from the world, while maintaining the three as a woman clerk in a manufactory near London.

Even the dumb world found Patrick fascinating. The writer has been walking along a country path with the ex-convict, when he would see him stop and imitate the whistle of some wild bird in the spring hedgerow. Almost immediately there would come a response, and presently a robin or a sparrow would fly towards him, perhaps to alight on his finger. He said that he used to whistle the birds to his cell in Dartmoor.

Patrick would sometimes discuss religious matters, in which he professed a deep interest. He had a near relative in Holy Orders. At one time he had participated in the Birkenhead street riots, when Catholics and Protestants awhile forgot their Master's command to "Love one another." At that time, neither of us had advanced very far in the religious life, although a stirring had definitely begun in one.

The scramble for extra food, the scramble for the most popular books—of course Patrick had won for himself the coveted job of librarian—provided good prison stories. And there was another, about an old and hardened reprobate's interruption—a sepulchral "Dear! dear! dear!" of assumed horror—when he listened in

Chapel to the Bible story of Sisera and Jael and the way a cold-blooded murder had been enacted in the Jewish national cause, a sardonic interruption which convulsed the prison Chapel.

Sometimes Patrick would describe the tricks of running men on the sports ground: that neat kick to the ankle which spoiled the fastest man's chance, when the race was just about run. We began to suspect him of having more practical knowledge of some of those sly kicks than he claimed. He said he had heard all about these from the others, or from his fellow-sinners in Dartmoor, or seen them done; also the way to open doors when on burglary or house-breaking expeditions.

A jemmy would be carried up the sleeve in the day-time when the caller rang the front-door bell. If there was no answer, the door would be broken open and the house hurriedly ransacked.

Patrick admired great lawyers, professional and lay, including the first Lord Birkenhead, for they were from the same county. Soon he needed all the assistance they could give him.

And now there came to the writer one of those occasional elemental experiences such as described in *For Sinners Only*.

A warning from the supernatural. He had just entered into possession of a flat in Petty France, near St. James's Park Station, and had gone to bed. Relapsing into a semi-doze, he felt a slight crackling and fluttering about his head, again that disturbance of the atmosphere, such as he experienced in his garden when the idea of the "My Religion" Series came to him. Certainly he was not asleep, for with this fluttering there came a clearly-remembered and disconcerting whisper which broke into, rather than arose in, his brain. Here are the exact words that came:

> *Don't believe Patrick when he says he has only been convicted once. He has been convicted three times—once for a very serious offence. Go to —— and find out.*

Henry Ford says that when destiny has a special message for the human race, it takes care that more than one are prepared to receive it. When it was time for the New World to be discovered, destiny saw to it that Columbus was not the only pioneer adventurer inspired to sail Westward Ho. Nor were the Wright Brothers alone in their successful attempts to conquer the air, a feat made possible by the invention of the petrol engine, as the late Sir Hiram Maxim, inventor of the machine gun, once stressed to the writer.

So, too, when one's guide, or guardian angel, has a special message for his charge, he too takes care to deliver it at such time and in such arresting manner that its arrival shall not be missed, nor its purport overlooked. That experience in a flat in Petty France was one of the most uncanny of a lifetime of varied experiences. Who or what had penetrated the darkness of that silent room through a locked door to startle him with a warning about the suffering Patrick he had befriended? Something not of this world, but as awe-inspiring as it was elemental.

Furthermore, the situation must be quite serious to occasion this message, to warn us that Patrick was not the sympathy-deserving fellow suffering for another's fault that he still stoutly affirmed, but just a cunningly plausible rogue with a macabre past and perhaps a still more macabre future. Despite his infinite sadness, and disarming manners and occasional bold impudence!

A free-lance journalist, as the writer was in those days, does not rise at dawn, for the light burns freely at night, but the next morning this one was early astir and calling on an old friend, in a certain town, for an explanation of last night's mysterious message from the spirit world, and this too before his friend had had time to peruse his morning's post. His eyes went up in surprise at the writer's unexpected arrival. Patiently he listened to the story with the emphasis on the disparity between Patrick's statement and what he had since come to know.

"But *how* do you know?"

Fancy a journalist expecting to be believed when daring to describe a psychic experience of that nature to a man in authority! Journalists have done all sorts of extraordinary things to obtain information, but the writer had never met one who claimed to be a walking aerial, gathering his news from flutters in the ether. Yet that was what had happened; if it were necessary, one would be prepared to swear it, with the usual solemnities.

Nevertheless, the experience of the previous night was not described to the Man Who Knew. Why encourage him to tell you to consult a doctor?

The writer was asking for something to which he was not entitled, for when a man is convicted, and has served his punishment, no member of the public has a right to information about his past until he is again found guilty in a court of law.

The Man Who Knew wavered—once we had helped him—and then spoke into a telephone. Papers arrived and he soliloquised:

"Patrick —— says he was once convicted for forging a cheque; you think he has been convicted three times, once for a still more serious offence."

Then his expression changed and his listless voice became suddenly animated.

"Yes, you're right! . . . There have been one, two, yes, three convictions . . . and one is for a very serious offence. . . . I should kick him!"

The information then given by the Man Who Knew was made public later and eagerly read by millions. For his first offence of larceny, Patrick had been leniently treated: bound over. Forgery was his second offence, and for this he had received twelve months' imprisonment, after he had been taken out of a train at Salisbury, when running away from the police and his employer.

One waited eagerly for the third offence. Something really serious. . . .

So *this* was it. Patrick had broken into a Bank at Sunningdale—where the Prince plays golf—but was disturbed by a maid-servant, whom he attacked, and struck on the head with a jemmy, then kissed her as she was coming to; she gave evidence against him at the trial, though it was first thought the charge might have to be amended to murder.

He was lucky not to have been flogged as well as sent to penal servitude for five years.

So here was the *real* truth! Confirmation from the material of what one had received from the spiritual. To say he was surprised would be to lie. Waiting there in the office, the writer had been confident that his friend would confirm what he had received the previous night. Guardian angels, if they are guardian angels, do not waste their warnings or their words.

Rebecca West was just as emphatic on her intuitions when writing her article entitled "My Religion." She said:

> These certainties of mine cannot be proved by any logical process, but I do not find that in the least disturbing, for it is not necessary they should be. I am sure enough of them.
>
> The only use of any logical proof would be to convince other people of their reality, and that I do not want to do; for I am certain that everybody has the same chance of receiving these intuitions that I have.

* * * * *

The setting in which Patrick was asked to answer the accusation of duplicity—a small room in Fleet Street—was not inappropriate for a crime novel. One was confident that Patrick could not wriggle out of his duplicity, except perhaps by violence; yet he made an ingenious attempt.

It was late in the evening. Patrick's face was working—his mental sufferings were so great that one could scarcely refuse him pity.

Yes, he admitted the facts. It was quite true that he had been convicted three times, though he had

hidden the truth for obvious reasons. The first two convictions—well, he would not dispute their justice, although perhaps he was the more sinned against. But the third offence, no, he would never admit that; oh, dear, no. He had *not* broken into that bank at Sunningdale. Nor had he struck the girl on the head.

"But you pleaded guilty?"

A smile of infinite bitterness.

"Listen! You shall hear the whole truth."

We listened. As we knew, his name was Patrick ——, which suggested his Irish ancestry. When he was a young man he left Birkenhead and went to Ireland. And, as we would also know, there were secret societies in that country. He named one, which unfortunately he joined.

One day, lots were drawn for a piece of political work of an especially evil nature; and, of course, the lot fell on Patrick. Instead of obeying the sinister order, he disappeared, and returned to England. Presently he was discovered by the Society and informed that he would have to pay the price of disobedience.

He worked on—waiting for the blow to fall. There came a day when his Liverpool employers sent him south on business. He returned home to hear that the police had called; they wanted to ask a few questions, and so left word that he must look in at the station on his return.

Feeling perfectly innocent, for he had been going straight, he strolled round to the police-station to see what was wrong. That ended his freedom until he left Dartmoor nearly four years later. The inspector said that his name was mentioned in connection with a burglary and assault near London. Completely mystified, he demanded particulars, including the name of the informer. The inspector thought there had been a mistake, and that it would be all right; but meanwhile he must stay in the cells until the papers arrived from London.

Here Patrick attempted self-justification. He would remind us that the police-station was in Liverpool. There were Irish policemen in Liverpool. Furthermore, as we would also know, information sometimes penetrated a police cell, as well as a convict prison, from the outside.

His suffering eyes sought ours.

" You know that ! "

We knew that such " accidents " had happened, and that notes written by prisoners in their cells had before now glided along palm-oiled ways into the Press. Once, from a murderer, into the newspaper, for which production the writer was largely responsible.

" As I sat in my cell, wondering what it all meant," resumed Patrick, " a piece of paper rustled under the door. I picked it up. On it was a number. I knew that number."

That bitter smile again.

" That paper stated I must now pay the penalty of disobedience to the Society. If I pleaded guilty to this charge, it said, the Society would accept my plea, and also the consequences it involved, as an expiation of my offence. If I refused, then they would act as soon as I was liberated."

For two years Patrick disappeared from our ken.

* * * * *

In the Bible a vision is the act of seeing " clear," a supernatural appearance by which God revealed His will.

A dream is usually a vain image of the imagination protecting our minds from strain and worry during sleep.

Thomas Hood comes along and says something very startling :

Unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God.

* * * * *

It was a night in April, 1924.

The writer knows that he was dreaming, and that the dream suddenly parted into an awesome circle disclosing a vision most vivid and realistic. In the centre of the circle stood a policeman, arm outstretched, pointing,

presumably, at Patrick. Simultaneously there came another of those elemental whispers from the supernatural saying :

"DEATH IS COMING TO YOU."

There came with it a strong sense of reassurance, a glowing feeling, expressing without words :

" It's not you."

Such warnings, as rare as disturbing, the writer has discovered may not be disregarded. He discussed it with his wife next morning, seeking an interpretation. It had been so vivid, so alarmingly real, so potent with supernatural force, that we knew something sinister was brewing somewhere. And that we were speeding towards it.

Many times during the next few weeks the writer pondered over that vision, but there was no elucidation until a Sunday morning, three weeks afterwards, when, walking down Kingsway, he espied the news bill of a Sunday newspaper, containing three words only, but startling enough for even that Sunday newspaper.

ANOTHER
CRIPPEN
MURDER !

There was the interpretation !

" That's Patrick —— "

And it was.

The story was a real Sunday shocker. A man had been arrested and charged with murdering a girl in a lonely bungalow at the Crumbles, near Eastbourne. No name appeared in that first report, but on Monday morning the newspapers showed they had been busy over Sunday, and the name was now given, the name of the man against whom the writer had been twice warned from the supernatural—Patrick H. Mahon, the Crumbles murderer, a polished scoundrel, whose cold-blooded crime so revolted the public conscience that there was not even a petition raised for his reprieve, as is done for most murderers.

During the next few months Patrick Mahon was the most discussed and most hated character in England. Stories of his conquests of love-sick women filled the newspapers.

The Counsel retained for his defence was Mr. J. D. Cassels, K.C., M.P. One day before the trial, we met the famous K.C. when passing through the Temple. We stopped, and Mahon's name was mentioned, the writer observing that his new client would give him some histrionic assistance from the dock, for he was a born actor.

The K.C. regarded the writer curiously.

"You seem to know a lot about him."

We did. When the trial came along, Mahon was posing and posturing throughout. He looked his sorrowfullest, sometimes he wept, he gesticulated, always he pleaded that the murder was only an accident.

As he stepped into the dock, his face, in profile, suggested both Byron and the Rev. R. J. Campbell. For one instant it changed—as Counsel rose to prosecute—and became almost the face of a wolf.

When sentenced to death, Mahon, imitating Horatio Bottomley, recently sentenced, whom he openly admired, flung an offensive challenge to the Judge, impugning the fairness of his trial.

Patrick Mahon's remark when arrested is symptomatic of what must be in the mind of the murderer, separated from God, for as he entered Scotland Yard he asked his captors if they knew what it felt like to be so strained mentally that it seemed impossible to go on.

But he was not allowed to rest just then. After a long period of questioning, he gave in :

"You seem to know all about it. I might as well tell everything."

He was told not to talk, but to write. And he wrote a statement.

Even the whereabouts of the bungalow were unknown to the police when they set out to investigate the remains, and so Patrick Mahon was invited to sit beside

the driver so that he could guide him, a stranger to the locality.

So great was the public interest manifested in this criminal during the period before his execution, that his life-story, told by his wife, to raise funds for his defence, increased the circulation of the newspaper that published it by about half a million copies per issue.

* * * * *

Poor Mahon! How he loved the limelight! Before his conviction he took immense delight in reading the flaring headlines and columns of newspaper stories about himself. After his sentence he again demanded the newspapers, but these were refused him. This last check on his vanity sent him into a rage. Conceited, fascinating scoundrel that he was, he had a most devilish nature to combat. More than once he tried, or seemed to try, to go straight. The writer is still uncertain that Mahon was always sane. Had an alienist examined him during one of his black rages, he might have ascribed his evil nature to some other cause than the indwelling beast. For at times he could be most kindly in thought and act.

Although it was now explained why that warning vision brought with it the phrase: "*Death is coming to you,*" the writer was at first puzzled that it came three weeks before the world learned of the crime; but the explanation seems to be that his vision was almost simultaneous with the murder, for it was not until three weeks afterwards that Mahon was arrested.

Or, to repeat Thomas Hood:—

> Unknown facts of guilty acts,
> Are seen in dreams from God.

Biography is plentifully sprinkled with stories of prevision, such as came to the writer in this case. Some psychologists would explain it by thought transference, but one wonders how they would explain the intensity of spiritual quickening which came with

those two experiences but which do not accompany other instances of thought transference? Also the prophecy.

The late Rev. F. W. Bourne, the biographer of Billy Bray, recorded a kindred experience. One night as he was sleeping, his dream developed into a realistic vision, and he saw himself passing along a country road, over a gate, along a footpath into the middle of a wood. There he was suddenly attacked by a mad dog—and awoke immediately, without learning the result of the encounter.

He thought of this vision many times thereafter, and one day he was invited to a strange district to preach. Walking along a country road, he seemed to recognise what he had seen in the vision. He continued along the footpath, until he came to the wood, and was just about to enter, when he became absolutely convinced that he was re-enacting his dream experience. He stopped, took a circuit, and reached his church by another way.

The next morning he heard that a mad dog had been killed during the night in that wood, and ever afterwards believed that he had been protected of God in a vision. The writer holds the same view of his own supernatural experiences in the case of Patrick Mahon.

By the time of Mahon's execution, the writer had returned from the wilderness, undergone a definite experience of conversion, and was sincerely endeavouring to subjugate the Barnum to the Bunyan in him. He endeavoured to arrange an interview with Mahon in the condemned cell, but was informed that the murderer was still raging against everybody, and it would be inadvisable to call, even if permission couldbe obtained.

At the end Mahon affected to believe that Barnum was instrumental in turning the Press against him, so that the jury, the Judge, and the appeal Judges gave him no mercy.

Which seems further evidence that his mind was going. It is easier to stop a glacier than to

influence a newspaper's attitude towards a cold-blooded murderer.

Mahon was executed one morning in the early autumn, and Bunyan remembers praying for him at that time.

Several days after the execution there came a banging at our door. It was half-past seven in the morning. Hurrying downstairs, the writer received a registered letter. It was from Wandsworth Prison, and one of the last letters, perhaps the very last, that Patrick Mahon wrote before he went out.

A different Mahon! yet not very different. Subdued, but still poisonous. He recalled our talks, admitting that at last he had learned the truth of Paul's warning to the Colossians that :—

> If a man doeth wrong, he shall suffer again for the wrong that he hath done, and there is no respect of persons.

The point stressed in our talk two years earlier! Odd that the whirligig of fate should so often impose a punishment identical—measure for measure—with the sin sinned.

The old vindictiveness in Patrick Mahon came out again in his farewell letter; again that sadistic tendency to stab where most pain might result. Estimating that the writer's ambitions were his most vulnerable point—he stabbed!

Mahon predicted that all through life the writer would be successful right to the point of achieving his objective, when something would inevitably intervene and thwart him.

It was a clever thrust! A calculated effort based on shrewd estimation of character.

But what are those two impostors—success or failure —if we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?

* * * * *

Soon after his execution, Patrick Mahon made a final reappearance (says a psychic friend); this time a sinister spirit, now genuinely remorseful, but apparently too late; an unhappy shadow, sorrowing in the Shades.

PART THREE

BUNYAN TAKES COMMAND

To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and a Way,
And the High Soul climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the low;
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro,
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low,
And every man decideth
The Way his Soul should go.

John Oxenham.

CHAPTER I THE LIGHT FLASHED

In Thy light shall we see light.
David.

* * * * *

There are flashes struck from midnights.
Browning.

THE God of our fathers cannot allow His prodigal sons to enjoy peace and calm among the husks and swine.

We drove down the Broad Highway, blind among many blind, to the process of redemption silently beginning within. Years of selfish wandering, deliberate sin, and wilful independence of God's directing hand, were leading us into an inextricable tangle, the common fate of all prodigals, from which only God could extricate us.

Defeated at many points, we now entered into an experience, shared by an army of the ransomed without number, which surprisingly proved the old, old truth—that God really visited this earth to seek and to save that which was lost.

We had lived so long in a street of materialism, among so many who believed only in what they saw, that things of the Spirit were nowadays dismissed as incredible or unknowable. After many investigations, before and behind the scenes of life, we had come to the definite conclusion that behind the altar was—*Nothing*!

For Sinners Only described how the writer's wanderings in the wilderness left him defeated at three important points: his private life, his pocket, and his ambition. Not knowing where to go for consolation, he tried literature. Having lost his Bible, he thought he would look into it again.

Looking back into a life of many small incidents, leading to extraordinary results, how can he believe other than that the inspiration to stop at a bookseller's and buy a cheap red-edged edition of the Holy Bible entered his mind straight from the Holy Spirit?

That purchase unquestionably led to guided results.

Reading through the Gospel according to St. John, when in a state of agnosticism, though with a completely open mind, ready to be convinced if conviction were reasonable from a dispassionate study of the Word, the incredible suddenly happened! Honest inquiry brought light and certain knowledge. A phenomenal light flashed in his brain, a vivid white radiance that swept away all those cobwebs of unbelief which had hung there for years while darkening his understanding. This effulgence was accompanied by a spiritual quickening so wonderful that the experience will be always convincing and memorable. One minute he was a critical, even scoffing, unbeliever; the next HE KNEW. In between those two minutes there had happened within him what some old Christians might designate as " the light flashed," and the Groups of our day would describe as a vital experience of Jesus Christ.

Definitely it was not conversion. As soon as the prodigal turns his face homeward, before he has taken one step forward, conversion begins; he is received into the Kingdom of Heaven, although he may not understand clearly what is happening.

The writer had not turned; he was halted, groping; and almost immediately he found what he then sought —certainty! As he walked down Fleet Street, his gaze lifting from the newspaper offices with their gilded names to the towering dome of St. Paul's, Mother Church of the City—he could at last glimmer the solution of life's stupendous riddle. He had found the key that all are seeking, though it is not far removed from any one of us.

He may have heard arresting stories of agnostics

being changed through reading the Living Word. That their experience should be repeated in his own disillusioned mind he never expected, or that the unreal would become the Eternal Real and the ordinary real the unreal. He saw now that what he had derided were not cunningly devised fables, but the astounding truth, and how there may come a crisis in the life of any unbiassed human being when those few words of Jesus—all His recorded sayings can be spoken in forty minutes—instead of returning unto Him void, will vaporise into spirit and life, developing powers so surprising as to set any doubting, broken-down old crock of a human motor-car on its way rejoicing.

Many years of fog and spiritual darkness were resolved instantaneously through a casual reading of the Gospel according to St. John; a muddy field led into a glorious, golden highway, leading straight up to the Eternal Throne.

Many times since then he has sought to remember those words in St. John's Gospel which brought that clarifying experience, but they are gone from memory. They do not matter; they might not have the same effect on readers of this book. Different minds receive their illumination in different ways; but this is certain: that whatever the theologians may say of the authenticity of St. John's Gospel, and however much they dispute about its differences in narrative, though not in teaching, from the other three Gospels, St. John assuredly contains the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is there for all who seek to find, for it came from one who really walked and talked with the Son of God, the Eternal Word made flesh, Who dwelt amongst us.

"The life upon this planet, and this planet herself," says the Poet Laureate, "are parts or shadows or roots of something intenser or graver. We who are mortals are only partially incarnate, partially sentient, partially spiritual. But invisible, very near us, touching us all, is a real world of divine order and beauty, inhabited by spirits, whose mission it is to bring order and beauty

wherever they go to mortal souls who are struggling for such things; and remote as this world is in many ways, its messengers are constant and its centre is everything. The life of this world is all ecstasy of understanding. It is all that instant perception and lasting rapture which we know as poetry."

It was something from this world of divine order and beauty which came to one mortal soul, struggling for such things, bringing to him that ecstasy of understanding, instant perception, and foretaste of the rapture, common to the Universal life.

After addressing the members of the rural deanery at Sittingbourne, one of the theologians present spoke of the illumination that came to the writer as a *photism*, into which category of religious phenomena some would even place St. Paul's blinding, heavenly vision; for a *photism* is a hallucinatory or pseudo-hallucinatory form of sensory automatism. Presumably some would class as a *photism* what the Poet Laureate describes as this illumination which comes within our beings as sunlight comes within the sea, irrespective of the results that follow such instances of Divine illumination and leading.

" St. Paul's blinding, heavenly vision," says William James in his oft-quoted classic, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, " seems to have been a phenomenon of this sort; so does Constantine's *Cross in the Sky*."

William James mentions one convert who experienced " floods of light and glory." Henry Alleine mentions a light, about whose externality he seems uncertain. Colonel Gardiner sees a blazing light. President Finney writes: " All at once the glory of God shone upon and round about me in a manner almost marvellous. . . . A light perfectly ineffable shone into my soul, that almost prostrated me on the ground. . . . This light seemed like the brightness of the sun in every direction. It was too intense for the eyes. . . . I think I knew then by actual experience something of

that light that prostrated St. Paul on the way to Damascus. It was surely a light such as I could not have endured long."

In the collection of religious experiences given by Professor Starbuck, in his work *Psychology of Religion*, he relates a case of a *photism*, where the light appeared to be external:

> I had attended a series of revival services for about two weeks off and on. Had been invited to the altar several times, all the time becoming more deeply impressed, when finally I decided I must do this or be lost. Realisation of conversion was very vivid, like a ton's weight being lifted from my heart; a strange light which seemed to light up the whole room (for it was dark); a conscious supreme bliss which caused me to repeat "Glory to God" for a long time.

The light that burst so unexpectedly into the writer's consciousness was not the result of any striving to achieve conversion; but spontaneous. However we attempt to explain that experience, whether in major cases like St. Paul or the Emperor Constantine, or with lesser illuminations like those quoted from William James or from one's own experience, it must not be overlooked that results follow; and Christ's test for Christians probably applies with equal force to the *photism* of the psychologist—"By their fruits ye shall know them."

"In other words," says James, "the persons who have passed through conversion, having once taken a stand for the religious life, tend to feel themselves identified with it, no matter how much their religious enthusiasm declines."

When we look at St. Paul's Cathedral, nobly dominating the City of London, and reflect on that vaster church of the Gentiles which Paul founded, it is presumption to explain or apologise for the claim made by the Apostle, who said that on the way to Damascus

suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven and that our Lord appeared unto him, as unto one born out of due time.

One further illuminating quotation from William James, who condenses as follows the amazing experiences of a free-thinking French Jew, converted in 1842:

> The church of St. Andrea was poor, small, and empty; I believe that I found myself there almost alone. No work of art attracted my attention; and I passed my eyes mechanically over its interior without being arrested by any particular thought. . . . In an instant . . . the whole church had vanished, I no longer saw anything . . . or more truly *I saw, O my God, one thing alone.*
>
> Heavens, how can I speak of it? . . . All that I can say is that in an instant the bandage had fallen from my eyes; and not one bandage, but the whole manifold of bandages in which I had been brought up. . . .
>
> *I saw the fullness of the light.* I can explain the change no better than by the simile of a profound sleep or the analogy of one born blind who should suddenly open his eyes to the day.

That was how the light came to a French Jew—a free-thinker!

* * * * *

It was not in William James that the writer discovered what he had long sought—a rational explanation of his phenomenal illumination which psychologists recognise. One day there came into his hands a magazine containing an article by a spiritually-minded writer named Richard Whitwell, entitled "The Script of God," which explained that the treasure is the *Living Word* contained in the written word, which, being superior to time, speaks direct to every soul according to its need, opening a door that the waters of life may get through.

> Words that come to us, and strike true to the innermost, they are the script of God to us, howsoever they come. . . . Such a word may meet us at any moment; that it does come, at the right time for us, yet unanticipated, in our need, indicates a higher concern in our welfare; it may be the smile of a child, it may be in the reaction to some searching experience.
>
> Whatsoever it is, howsoever it comes, it gets through . . . bringing refreshment when the world is pressing heavy upon the soul. We have in ourselves a touchstone by which we may know what is true. A word of intimacy to ourselves meets us . . . in the first person, and it draws from our heart an answering "Yea, it is so." *Whether we know it or not, our real life is close held within the warm embrace of the Infinite. The purpose of experience is to bring us to this realisation.*

And so the light flashes because words would not adequately express the meaning, for it is beyond man's highest thought. Scripture, if it is the script of God, will reveal Divine meaning for us here and now.

"If we come to it intellectually merely, or critically," continues Richard Whitwell, "or, on the other hand, with preconceived opinion or dogma, we will miss the real meaning. But if we come in our real soul-need, earnest for the Truth that will convey life's big meaning to us, we will be tapping at the door *with such spiritual demand that it must open.* For it is written: 'Seek and ye shall find.' . . .

"And here we meet with One Who . . . will lead us to that Place where loss is gain, where Love layeth down her Life, world-redeeming, heaven-winning. This is the travail of the birth of a child of God. *Man emerges from that overturn with the peace of God in his heart.*"

* * * * *

That was why the Light flashed! Not something hallucinatory, catalogued under some psychological name, but the answer from the supernatural to one who approached with an unbiased mind.

Nobody claims that a spiritual door opens the same way at the same hour, releasing the same flashing light to everybody ; nevertheless, the universal answer of Christian experience is that he who seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Our generation can lay hold of the same truths which were revealed to our fathers, and can add another chapter to the Bible from our own experience and pass it down to posterity as they passed their guiding spiritual experiences down to us. There is no time limit for " the open vision " to the seeker after righteousness. God reveals His will and Himself to all who turn from iniquity.

" The word ' Power ' (says that delightful American, Dr. Bickerton of Cliff College) in the Scripture ' you shall receive power ' is the Greek word *dunamis*, which has three meanings—mental illumination, an investiture of influence so that the Christian is never negative, and the word of authority, used in a military sense. The Holy Spirit takes hold of the words of Scripture and gives them a spiritual application to those whose minds are open to the highest."

Obedience to the teaching opens the door wider and ever wider to further illumination, joy, and peace in believing.

* * * * *

Illumination did not turn the writer into a Christian : it merely revealed the path. He was in the position of a treasure-hunting expedition, arrived over the site of the lost galleon whose divers had just returned from their first subterranean investigation wih a piece of the treasure-ship bearing the galleon's name. The treasure-ship was there; the task was now to find the treasure, the pearl of great price. Passing onward from that flashlight of certainty that St. John could be trusted, he now sought proof that he was an accepted son of God.

" The question," says R. N. Carew Hunt in his fine new work *Calvin*, " which in one form or another is as old as religion, ' What must I do to be saved? ' or how, in other words, can man, with his vitiated nature, find peace in this world and happiness in the next? "

To those who have long possessed this certainty, the next step seems easy and simple, even though they have forgotten the initial joy and release which came to them from this realisation, during the passage of time.

When a present is handed to a surprised recipient, joy is immediately expressed, and it is equally natural to express joy at receiving a clean bill of spiritual health: the freedom of the City of God.

The other day a Catholic lady told the writer that when she joined her church she received absolution following confession of her sins, and her priest assured her that she was accepted with God, and her sins forgiven. Since her repentance was genuine, this assurance undoubtedly was true. Nevertheless, she said, it was several weeks before she became convinced of this elementary fact.

" What brought the assurance? "

" I used to lie awake, thinking over my sins, and I could not get peace, until a line from a hymn flashed into my worried brain."

" And that line was? "

" He breaks the power of cancelled sin."

" And do you know who wrote that line? " asked the writer of the Roman Catholic lady.

" Oh, yes, I know."

" And what did the priest say when you told him of the effect on you, a Roman Catholic, of a line from a hymn by Charles Wesley? "

" He said it was a very good line."

Of course he did, if he were a sincere priest or parson, minister or layman. The River of Christian Time has been in spate for nineteen centuries with joyous

Christians, reputed, some of Paul, some of Apollos, who witness to that elementary and eternal truth. For God intends men to know that Christ has power on earth to forgive sins, since, as Dr. Gregory says, "Christianity is not speculative, but spectacular." "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!"

But it was not plain—certainly not spectacularly so, to the writer, who was in that unhappy state which the old theologians called "conviction of sin," a state in which some have ceased to believe, and probably will disbelieve in, until they are convicted themselves. We had reached that phase in which we were quite confident that everyone's sins may be forgiven, washed away, blotted out—except our own. That is to say, we were not far from the Kingdom.

And just as Bunyan's pilgrims found the key of faith wherewith to escape from the Doubting Castle of Giant Despair, so the writer now held the key to more discoveries.

Convinced that St. John was true and dependable, he dug more deeply into its golden message. The more deeply he dug, the more clearly he saw why John was the Beloved Disciple, why he was among the favoured three on the Mount of Transfiguration, the one who leaned on his Lord at the Last Supper, obtained permission from the High Priest to be present at the Mock Trial, became son to the Virgin Mary at the Crucifixion, outran Peter and was first at the sepulchre, and of whom the Master said to Peter: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

If there was truly a man in Palestine at the time of Christ Jesus who possessed something of his Master's temperament and loving nature, he was the Apostle John.

And now we stumbled upon gem after gem which the Beloved Disciple must have written for the especial benefit of men and women of our own temperament.

The three L's—Light, Life, and Love—are the key-

words of this Gospel, and these three are one, for they are God; for God is Life, and God is Light, and God is Love. In his search the writer encountered illuminated sign-posts shining from the different chapters, which clearly pointed the Way, the Truth, and the Life: memorable phrases such as these, which he marked for remembrance:

> I am the Light of the World; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.
>
> If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself.
>
> He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and *manifest myself unto him.*

These gems from the Beloved Disciple declared the blessedness and certainty of those who carried out Christ's golden rules. So Christianity was more than belief—it was belief flowering into fruit; it was continual obedience, true self-development issuing eventually in sanctification.

Having registered immediate dislike of the "Let him deny himself" aspect of Christianity, the writer put that aside while continuing his search for proof that his sins were forgiven, for he had accumulated a pile of sins during the past thirteen unlucky years which needed quite a lot of forgiveness. *Even if there had never been the Atonement, the necessity for it was then proved in his own experience.* What he saw clearly was that his sins had cut the live rail of loving power that had once linked him to a Holy God, and something, or somebody more powerful than he, was needed to repair what he had ruthlessly severed.

Later he saw that it was not forgiveness he had to worry about, since that was immediate on his decision to forsake, but salvation from sin, and that this was certain, too, through boldly adventuring on Christ's

invisible power to keep from falling. It seemed impossible in his case; but preventive power frequently came, and was always available when requested. Sometimes it was not sought.

Passing from St. John into St. Matthew, he found a difference in the narratives, though the teaching was undoubtedly the same. And the central character the same too. There could be no mistaking that He was the real Jesus, speaking as one with authority, and not as we Scribes; we need be no painstaking higher critic to identify that Figure as the same Figure, painted from life, Who dominates the four Gospels; without Whom all history would be meaningless and farcical.

Slightly different in each Gospel, more lovable in Luke and John than in miracle-loving Mark or prophecy-loving Matthew; but always the Christ of God.

St. Matthew dangled a wonderful promise before the searcher's eyes: "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Here was a journalist who had been questing on every topic under the sun for thirteen years or more for some newspaper or magazine, now engaged on the most sincere quest of his life—a thorough-going search for freedom from sin and a hungering and thirsting after righteousness. He read through the Sermon on the Mount—how fresh and strange after all those years!—without pleasure or satisfaction. The Model Sermon appeared inflexibly hard and uncompromising. Christ in some phases was fine! But why not a Sermon on the Mount with a little more consideration for the frailties of human nature?

At that time he would have thought more of Christ if the Sermon on the Mount had been a little easier. The phase passed; he was glad Christ had made no compromise. Had he not learned on the barrack square that nothing less than drill perfection was satisfactory to officer or guardsman?

"Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction."

Yes—but how was one to know that he had entered the strait gate? Here it was in the Sermon on the Mount: Ask—it shall be given; seek—ye shall find; knock—it shall be opened. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

These promises were reasonable and supremely encouraging if they were reliable, and not crude literalism that meant something else. And provable they were, for the biggest discovery the writer made as a Fleet Street journalist was that Jesus Christ spoke literal truth when He promised that those who seek shall find and those who hunger for righteousness shall be filled.

A Rector friend leads an inquirer into the light by quoting Christ's words "It is finished," from the nineteenth chapter of St. John, and then asks the inquirer, What is finished? He then leads him back to chapter seventeen, which shows that it was the work "which Thou hast given me to do"; next he asks what was the work, and then takes the inquirer back into the twelfth chapter, which shows that He came to save sinners. He then asks the inquirer, Since all necessary has been done to open his way to God, has it been done in his case?

Or he quotes the verse: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

"Are you prepared to come unto Him?" asks the Rector, and when the inquirer says "Yes," he asks, "Has He cast you out?"

The inquirer then sees the simplicity of it all, though it may still take him time to understand the majesty of the gift, since "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God."

The condition of becoming a Son of God is merely sorrow for sins and a determination to quit them through His power.

When this light of understanding comes, many persons, released from the depression which their own sin gave,

feel a transport of delight; other natures have no such feeling, though an increasing calm and joy are presently felt, as they begin to realise that the gift of Everlasting Life is here and now.

Apparently Jesus intentionally avoided the future tense. Even His *shalls* were positive and present. He came to awake mankind out of sleep, that each of us might realise and utilise this Kingdom of Spiritual Reality which was and is and always has been around and within us, waiting to be recognised. The task of all authentic spiritual Christian movements is to awaken men from sleep, that they may rise up, and *here and now*, in the present, claim their heritage as children of the one God, pure, perfect, and free from all discord and sin. The future tense has to be abolished so that the mystery and joy and beauty of the Eternal now may begin to manifest.

Sometimes it takes the inquirer a long time to understand, because sin-stained human beings cannot believe there is no wrath towards them in God our Father, that God has been unchanging all the time, although we have stepped from His flood of love and power and harmony into a state of life where we were continually breaking laws made for our benefit and damaging ourselves physically and spiritually thereby. Immediately we turn back again we are welcomed into that flood of love and joy and beauty.

Sundar Singh, modern mystic and saint, likens the body and soul of man to a couple of sheets of typescript with a carbon in between; a slight touch on the upper sheet makes a deep mark underneath. Man's physical body is the top paper, and underneath is the soul. When we die, the upper sheet dies—that physical body that here on earth may have endured many of the consequences of wrong-doing, though the sins may not be blotted out. The carbon copy—the soul—ascends to the world of spirits, and unless those stains and heavy blots made through sin in the body are erased, that soul dare not come to the all-penetrating light of Paradise,

where its stains will be exposed, but must seek refuge in outer darkness remote from the Throne.*

At this time conviction of sin in the writer had meant an active awareness of those stains on the carbon copy of his human life. Though there was none of the fear of hell or damnation which accompanied old-fashioned conversions, physical results of his sins continued to find their unerring way homewards; and they were accepted —stoically, we hope—as the fruits of folly. For there was now a calm and joy, a certainty that none could dispute, a peace which passeth all understanding, unshakeable confidence that all the marks had gone from the carbon copy, all the indentations made by sin ironed out of his troubled spirit, washed out, wrung out through Calvary's Cross.

The inherent need of the soul, said the old psychologists, was the secret of the universality of religion. In the writer's experience, he was often conscious of a hunger, a longing, a dissatisfaction, an ache, of the spirit, which had an unpleasant habit of obtruding itself at awkward times, when feeling smugly complacent, comfortably seated with an expensive cigar, or ruminating complacently upon some piece of journalistic success—Barnum in full sail.

That recurrent ache would upset his thoughts. What was the good of it all since "all flesh is grass"? Perhaps Wordsworth felt similarly when he produced his rather feminine distich:

> In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
> Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

From the time of turning right-about-face there has been no recurrence of that ache of the soul! That has gone completely, although some thirteen years have passed. Here, it seemed, was confirmation, negative perhaps, of the eternal truth which St. Augustine epitomised when he said: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until we find rest in Thee."

* * * * *

* *The Sadhu*, Streeter and Appasamy (Macmillan).

And now there began another strange adventure for this journalist re-born. Barnum vanquished, if not finally defeated, now voluntarily retired, and gave the wheel of life to Bunyan, who immediately called upon his pilgrim to begin a new Pilgrim's Progress.

It was a long time before he fully understood that the changes taking place within were not his own unaided doings, but part of a regenerative process fitting into the Divine plan, and leading him into new and unsuspected fields of effort and enjoyment. He was re-discovering in practical experience that every generation needs regeneration!

Of course he should have gone to a clergyman or minister or a spiritually-minded friend for information and guidance at this time; but that way did not appeal at first, though later he joined a church. The explanation is that, although he now believed in St. John, and through him in Jesus Christ, he had still to escape from the aftermath of agnosticism which had long filled him with dislike for, and unbelief in the modern Church, a dislike which is general among non-Christians.

He had returned to his God before he returned to Christ's Church, and was now working out his new-found faith in secret fear and some trembling.

Impatient of intermediaries—the journalist always interviews the man on the top—he went direct to the Corner-Stone, when laying his new spiritual foundations.

Thirteen years away from the Bible had made it a new book—strangely new, for he had forgotten so much; and fascinatingly interesting.

Now he read a Gospel through at a sitting, not laboriously as a duty, but eagerly, as when browsing in a September orchard with a boyish appetite.

One night the Epistle to the Ephesians was discovered. Was ever hungry soul filled more bountifully than from that loaded table of spiritual delicacies?

When the little Apostle, with his mighty courage and mightier message, first descended on Ephesus, accom-

panied by a travelling team of Life-Changers, whose fearless witness set the whole city chanting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," the impressions of those pioneer experiences must have been so stimulating and ennobling to Paul, the preacher, as to call forth presently from Paul, the writer and theologian, a spiritual wonder of the world.

How eagerly we listened-in to Paul telling former worshippers of Diana, Goddess of the Ephesians, of his prayers: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints. And what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places."

Kindred joy from the Letters to the Philippians (including perhaps the Philippian jailer, saved from suicide by Paul's timely intervention), and from those uncompromising Epistles to the Corinthians, including the Love Chapter (thirteen) in the first, favourite of the saints for nineteen centuries; the Letter to the Romans, a book of great profundity, dry and deep and legal at the start, presently full-flowering into that inspiring, "For I am persuaded that neither life nor death" peroration of Chapter eight and the reverberating power of the amazing twelfth chapter.

All Paul's epistles were read through, many times, until presently their author assumed in the writer's mind the place occupied by Napoleon in the admiration of the French. Yet no one has ever written a book about St. Paul to capture the popular imagination.

The long epistles of Paul, the shorter letters of Peter, James, and John, revealed the wide gap between the disciples and their Hero, and seared through the

writer's life of futility in Fleet Street, compelling drastic readjustments. Here Christ had put His foot down on lying; so that had to go, even if it meant losing a good story, or refraining from written exaggeration or deliberate inaccuracy. "Wine, women, and song" came under review, though they did not take their rightful places immediately. Yet Paul's inescapable dictum, "Whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, any praise, think on these things"—was thought upon, and after much thinking, Bunyan insisted that Barnum should act on these things. But there were many slips, for the new path seemed uncomfortably narrow, though often brightly lit, for "the path of the just is as a shining light."

* * * * *

The Scriptures were silent about gambling, and for a long time the only sin that we could trace in chancing our luck was—the sin of losing. And that sin was repeatedly committed, though but the cloak of a still graver sin—refusing to gamble on God's promises to guide and provide.

The Metal Market was booming; we entered the boom, and soon had both feet in the Kingdom of Mammon. The Metal Market crashed—while we were talking to a friend in the office. Before the conversation began, the writer was fairly well-to-do; a newspaper came into his hands, and the conversation continued, although one glance told him that thousands of his pounds had been swept away, carrying him far down the road to ruin. It took him eight years of ceaseless journalistic labour to repay those losses. But he discovered during those few minutes of conversation more bitter truths about the sin of gambling than he had ever learned before.

Gambling is a challenge thrown in the face of God! It affirms that we know the future which God has purposely hidden from us, except when He reveals that something which His servants need to know.

Yet man seems born to gamble as the sparks fly upward. We know of two men who were dying side by side in a London hospital, two hardened old pagans, who during their last few days alive were making bets as to who would die first !

More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.
Tennyson.

* * * * *

Oh, Sabbath rest by Galilee—
Oh, calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of Eternity,
Interpreted by love.
Whittier.

* * * * *

He prayeth well, who loveth well,
Both man and bird and beast,
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.
Coleridge.

HOURS of searching through the New Testament convinced the writer of his folly in spending thirteen years without prayer.

He started to pray again because the New Testament prescribed it and Christ practised it. And though his prayers were usually selfish importuning of the Eternal, results were their justification. The tangles in his life began to straighten; the fears and the uncertainties disappeared in great measure; he was conscious of an inner harmony, often with thronging duties pressed.

Threatening troubles sometimes rolled right to his doorstep and were mysteriously deflected at the threshold. Most remarkable was the protection that frequently came to him—sometimes there were plots; sometimes there were individual attempts to harm;

but there was always an invisible Guiding Hand leading him away from threatened dangers. Once or twice the protection was strangely withdrawn—the Guide seemed to have deserted—but subsequent events made it abundantly clear that He had merely gone before to prepare a more useful field of service elsewhere.

* * * * *

The gunmen were busy in Ireland.

The writer had spent a week with a celebrity in the centre of trouble. Every day for six days he had interviewed this man and drawn from the rich store of reminiscences enough material to keep his newspaper supplied for two months; some of the articles were transcribed, approved, and signed. To have repeated that effort with this elderly gentleman would have been practically impossible, even had time permitted, which it did not.

Arrived back at Holyhead, he handed his travelling bags, containing the precious manuscripts, to an importuning porter. He entered the sleeper; the porter opened the door and the portmanteaux were thrust into the carriage. A sound sleep to Euston, so sound that the writer was still rubbing his eyes in the taxicab rattling him through central London. Presently, he was rubbing them with extra vigour, as his dazed brain strove to understand why the initials on his bags did not correspond with his own; or the contents, lady's wearing apparel, appear at all familiar.

A feeling of despair accompanied him into his apartment; probably his own bags, containing all those articles and priceless notes, were now on their way to Monte Carlo, Helsingfors, or Timbuctoo, along with Lady Angela Eagerly and her pet pekingese.

And to-morrow was publishing day. What was the use of prayers if they allowed a new exponent to lose the star articles for his newspaper, when he was not gambling, just as he lost his own money when he was?

There was yet one chance. Perhaps that mysterious

guardian Protector was still invisibly working while the writer slept.

The Lost Property Clerk at Euston answered the telephone. Yes, a lady had reported a lost travelling-case. What were the initials?

Those unfamiliar initials went quickly over the wire. But what about the lost bag containing the article a million readers needed for to-morrow's breakfast? A more important matter!

A pause. Yes, a new bag had been handed in.

A flying dash to Euston. A happy exchange of travelling bags, of lady's clothing for a man's outfit and many pages of priceless MS.

So the Invisible Guardian had again watched and guided! There was no break in the publication of a certain series of reminiscences about which England had been excitedly talking. The next article appeared to time with the morning porridge.

Only rarely has a feeling of inspiration accompanied our prayers, although we have been conscious of exercising faith in the Divine Intercessor, who takes our needs and translates them into effectual service.

One day an inquirer asked the writer if he believed in "wrestling in prayer," and was told that he preferred the rhythm of supplication, perhaps silent supplication, to wrestling. This is a universe of rhythms; the prayer life should be as rhythmic as a golf-swing—asking, believing, receiving, thanking, even though what we have received in the spiritual may not yet have borne fruit upon the material plane. We may not get our answer in the form expected; but we shall get an answer and it will be the best. Sometimes we ask for stones and are given bread; sometimes we ask for serpents—perhaps when praying over the choice of a partner for life—and are wisely given fish instead; more nourishing, less poisonous.

It seems that God is creating ninety-five per cent. of His Kingdom and entrusting us with the other five per cent. as a parent entrusts her child with a tiny

share of the housework. God loves, God wills, God works; but purposely waits for our creative five per cent. to complete His Kingdom of Joy.

We must remember, when praying in His name, that the secret of answered prayer is the same secret as knowledge of the doctrine—Obedience.

God delights more in obedience than in burnt offerings and, says the Beloved Disciple, " Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, *because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.*"

Those who protest there is nothing in prayer because they have tried it and their prayers have gone unanswered, can always be challenged to say if they have fulfilled the conditions of answered prayer, which are obedience to Christ's teaching, including believing importunity; and also being led of the Spirit when in prayer as in preaching.

We came to understand that it matters not a whit how we feel when praying so long as we are praying; and that asking is not the whole of prayer, for listening is prayer too. Furthermore, that worship exercises the finest part of the mechanism of the brain and makes us physically healthier in consequence. That was why persons who went to church on Sundays, even if they were no better than they should be, were healthier in body as well as in spirit than those apostles of the open air who neglected that exercise of their highest mentality; and that was also one reason why clergymen lived longer than other people, for their lives are no more sheltered than the rest, but are often exposed to infection and contagion by day and night.

One day a wife appealed for help to induce her drunken husband to leave his sins. Discovered in a saloon-bar, drunk before eleven in the morning, he accompanied the writer for a long country walk, which brought him back to sobriety, and later to a home so distressed that it produced unusual fervency in prayer to meet the desperate situation. Striking results

followed from what seemed to be praying "in the spirit."

Was it Bishop Wilberforce who described three forms of achievement in the spiritual life: self-endeavour; fervent prayer to God; and the midway course—that quiet trust in Almighty power to achieve through non-resistance—confident faith in the Everlasting Arms?

When staying with Dr. Wishard in Indianapolis, the writer heard the story of one of those sturdy Puritan ancestors—a pioneer who, having reached a great old age, made what seemed to those gathered about him a final inspired prayer just before passing into the world of spirits:

"The last time his voice led in the family worship, not long before the gates of pearl swung open to receive his spirit, was a time never to be forgotten, one of the experiences in life difficult to describe through the medium of words, yet never to be erased from memory by those present. For several weeks he had been unable to leave his bed, frequently too weak to see friends who called. One evening the family assembled around the bed with one of the members who had returned for a visit. Before the son, who was leading the devotions, had an opportunity to offer prayer, the voice of him who was thought too feeble to participate was raised in tones slow and measured, but surprisingly clear and strong; the aid of pad and pencil that chanced to be in the hand of one present, facilitated its record:

> Our Father which art in heaven, Thou upon whom we are dependent for every blessing, mercy, and privilege of life, we come to Thee this night to offer our evening thanks. Thou hast been good and gracious to us, and hast dealt with us not according to our sins, but according to Thy loving-kindness and tender mercy. Be Thou near to all for whom duty and privilege require us to pray. Enable us, O God, to live humbly in Thy fear, striving to do Thy will;

enable us to fix our affections upon the things of eternity and not upon this world. Help us, O Lord, to be Thy faithful followers, *to stop and consider where we are going, and so to lay hold of Thy promises* that we will never forget Thee, nor the privileges and blessings with which Thou hast crowned our days. Bless the poor, the needy, and the sick. Look in mercy upon those who are now suffering, and ease their afflictions. Hasten the day when peace, righteousness, and the love of God shall reign from the rivers to the ends of the earth.

Remember Thy people of every nation. May the day soon come when those of every land shall know Thee, when knowledge of Thee shall spread as the waters cover the deep; when Thy righteousness shall shine as the noonday sun. Forgive our offences, for we have sinned against Thee; our hearts have gone out too often to lay hold upon the perishable things of the earth.

Make us more devout, more zealous, and loving in Thy service, more faithful, that we may honour Thee in the future as we have often failed to do in the past. Prepare us now for every duty and responsibility that awaits us. Help us so to live from day to day that when night comes and the work of life is over we may make sure of an eternal entrance into the fullness of Thy joy. We ask all these blessings in the name of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

A truly remarkable prayer (slightly edited) from a man so weak that no words were expected from him, almost at the time of his passing.

Sometimes prayers are too long, as Moody realised one evening during his mission in London. The clergyman praying seemed to be wearying the congregation. Moody jumped up and announced that while his brother was finishing his prayer the rest of the congregation would sing. And a young man who had dropped in out of curiosity said to himself that a man who had the ready sense to act thus was worth staying to hear. He stayed, and the course of his life

was changed, for he became Sir Wilfrid Grenfell of Labrador.

* * * * *

New light on prayer came from a talk with Dr. Murray, formerly Head of Selwyn College, Cambridge, and through reading his inspiring book *Asking God*, a jewel which should be in every Christian home. Dr. Murray warns us that in our prayer life we must beware of taking the lead into our own hands, for the goal of the Holy Spirit's working *is to help us to live Christ*, and it is no longer we that live and work and pray, but Christ living and working and praying in us. We must give careful heed to the vision of God's purpose for the whole world, and especially to that part for which we are responsible, and must face the need with the Living Christ, and try to see what He is asking the Father to do about it before putting our own petition into words. We must link our intercession with the intercession of our Lord. *Every prayer is answered*, Dr. Murray emphasises, *either in the affirmative or by help to bear the wise refusal*, which is the lesson of Gethsemane.

When man lays hold on the forces of the spiritual universe, he receives, says Evelyn Underhill in *The Golden Sequence*, " not perhaps the expected answer . . . but a disclosure and gift of Spirit, penetrating and transforming our situation with all its needs and desires. Therefore what matters here is not the thing demanded, the poor range of our asking, but the trustful, child-like temper of the soul; its straightforward relation to God.

" When this relation is set up, a new factor enters human experience. Man is in personal and filial touch with that Transcendent Life which penetrates and engulfs him; and because of his acknowledged dependence and confident expectation, *he becomes capable of its gifts.*"

* * * * *

Prefacing the day's interviewing with a solemn and sincere attempt to interview God seemed strange at

first, though presently it became a habit and passed from the stage of hesitant " I wonder " to necessity and pleasure. Often the day was broken with a luncheon-hour retreat for quiet prayer.

There is a church in Red Lion Square, a quarter of an hour's walk from Fleet Street, which is always cool and quiet on a warm and noisy day in London.

A journalist, seeking quiet in Fleet Street, as the writer found, will think a thousand times before turning into St. Dunstan's and meditating undisturbed within its octagonal interior. Yet rest and peace are there, actually on the Fleet Street side-walk. There is another City church outside the Old Bailey where absolute silence can be obtained; it is sunny within and always light enough by day to see one of its grim relics, the old bell which used to toll for the Newgate executions!

Cross Holborn Circus, and you enter Ely Place, where the night watchman still rings his bell (or did until recently); and you find on the left a church—Catholic this time—where there is always a coming and going during the day, unlike the more numerous Anglican churches, which are generally deserted except during service hours. The glory of that large stained-glass window behind the altar in Ely Place is a haunting memory.

One can often spend meditative hours alone among the fine carvings by Grinling Gibbons in St. Clement's Danes, where Fleet Street passes into the Strand and the bells peal their " Oranges and Lemons."

Some of the churches farther afield were not so pleasant. There was a musty tang in the atmosphere of one or two not far from Gray's Inn Road and another near London Wall. St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Martin's were always too popular for peace, but there is a little-known Chapel in Kingsway Hall, a rarity in Nonconformity, that can be used for meditation and private prayer during weekdays.

Seeing the churches were so empty at midday, the

writer organised a newspaper correspondence, and watched the results. For some little time afterwards there were more persons worshipping during the luncheon hour in the churches he was wont to frequent.

Another theme for newspaper correspondence which he ran about that time produced many interesting letters from neighbours who had lived for years without a quarrel, thus rebutting the allegation that most neighbours never speak without speaking all their mind!

* * * * *

Answers came to prayer: sometimes unexpected answers in unexpected ways.

Thinking he was growing in grace, the writer's spiritual pride had a set-back when there called on him a young woman whose accent was Cockney-tinged. She was an expert stenographer, and he asked her if she would be prepared to do secretarial work for him, assuming that he was proffering a favour with becoming condescension.

"I should have to pray about that before I accepted," she said and pointedly added:

"And so would you"!

Why strive to answer the unanswerable?

The best answer was to pray, when the time came for a new secretary.

But before that potential secretary with the Cockney accent had left, the writer's superiority complex had gone for a season, for he had listened to a story of simple faith and constant prayer that would have humiliated an archbishop.

She was twenty-six.

For the past thirteen years—the same period as that which he had spent in the prayerless Wilderness—she had been walking hand in hand with her Maker. Everything that interested her in life, small and big, she referred automatically to her God in prayer; a daily, hourly, almost continuous habit; hence the mention of a new job immediately drew the exclamation that she must first pray about it.

Questions, always questions—the journalistic habit.

"Do you get answers to prayer?"

"Of course I do."

"Always?"

"Oh yes."

"How do they come?"

"They come into my mind as I pray."

"Do you always get what you want?"

"Not always."

And then she told a story which, after its repetition at a public meeting, sent to the writer one so impressed that he declared it was the most astonishing story of prayer he had heard.

One day the girl discovered her love for a fellow-clerk in her London office. He was young, presumably attractive, and in every way eligible.

Such natural affinities were they, that, when he entered the room where she was working, she knew of his presence without looking up. Following her unalterable habit, she referred her sudden and reciprocated love for this man to her Lord.

To her bewilderment, the answer came clear:

"No!"

Here was an *impasse*. Accustomed to receiving many things for which she asked, and never before denied anything for which she was so eager, this inexplicable negative upset her prayer-life completely for awhile. She ceased to pray, and continued her daily work feeling like an unpiloted ship in a fog. Why should she surrender her dearest desire for what seemed an inexplicable caprice of Providence? Yet she did not allow the courtship to proceed, though declining to terminate it finally.

Time jerked on. Feeling completely out of step with life, she sometimes believed the devil was dogging her footsteps as she moved about London. One day, being fond of the river, she stood pensively watching the Thames. Something spoke:

"You must pray."

The day passed on. She returned home to the

suburbs, went to her room, still unwilling to surrender her new interest in life, though she had decided to pray again. She knelt and uttered one sentence:

"O God, take me as I am."

Unable to surrender her love for the man, she had surrendered herself, plus her love for him, to her Lord.

"And then——?"

Her earnest reply compelled conviction.

"At that very minute every vestige of love for the man completely vanished! In its place came a wonderful peace and contentment. The next day I went to the office and saw him again without feeling a tremor of interest. Days passed, and there came no return of love for this man. Months passed; years. He married, and I heard of the wedding and was completely undisturbed."

"But why were you warned against him?"

She shook her head.

"I can't say, except that I'm positive it was right. From the moment I prayed 'Take me as I am' I have been absolutely certain."

Nevertheless, that experience is not a representative answer to prayer in such cases. Often permission is withheld, but the ache and the yearning continue. Better these than illicit love, which is never complete unless God's presence approves and sanctifies.

The wife of a certain preacher told the writer that she was nursing a dissatisfaction with her husband because of incompatibility—not uncommon between preachers and their wives—and when told that instead of nursing her grievance, her duty was to thank God that she had this cross, and to ask Him every day how best to bear it in His honour, she saw light; for a cross refused is always two crosses, and a cross accepted is hardly a cross because there are two bearing it, one of whom is All-powerful.

Christians are commanded to follow Jesus. They cannot follow Him without being ready, like Him, to carry a cross; and whether they are ready or not,

Christians or not, a cross has usually to be borne. They are all sizes, but inescapable!

The Christian attitude, therefore, must be to despise the cross, not to resent it,—rather assent to it—for it cannot come to us when we are in tune with the Infinite unless it is right for us to bear it. The preliminary to reigning with Christ, as we *shall* reign, is usually to suffer with Him. The Apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the NAME. Better to thank God for the opportunity to serve while suffering than to be resentful against our own cross. Sometimes our joy in Him is three-parts pain. But there is joy.

The average English sportsman welcomes a spice of the devil in horse or hound, man or maid; the writer began to look forward to an encounter with the same devil every day of the Christian life. Catching the darts of Apollyon is good spiritual exercise: the "physical jerks" of Christian progress.

> Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough.

Without these daily encounters our Christian life becomes cloying and flabby, our spirits remain stunted and our spiritual pride becomes insufferable. Far better to awake expectant of, and reconciled to, an encounter at some time of the day with the ENEMY, who can always be beaten; for the skirmish is developing our powers.

A woman whose home had gone to pieces through her husband's wilfulness, complained to the writer that prayer was useless; she had ceased to believe in God, in humanity, in everything and everybody, including the writer.

"Did you pray for leading before deciding to marry?"

"Yes."

"Did you get an answer?"

"No."

And then she checked herself, because an answer had come; for it had been shown her that the silence meant:

"Wait."

And she suddenly realised that her marriage failed because of her refusal to accept that as God's leading.

It was suggested to her that her husband might be ninety-nine per cent. to blame for the failure of that marriage, but it was conceivable that she was one per cent. at fault. She readily admitted that she might be even two per cent. to blame, but whether she went further, and apologised for that two per cent. as the overture for righting that home, the writer does not know. Perhaps she did. It would have been an inspiring start.

* * * * *

At the close of a Mission meeting in an English provincial town a young woman, tall and attractive, came forward and asked for an autograph. In return, she was invited to participate in the team witness. She looked confused, and evaded.

"Why?"

"Because I am a backslider."

"Well, I know as much about that as anybody, having done such a lot. Let's talk."

Her fall from grace came through quarrelling with her sister. Only that morning there had been a big eruption.

"Supposing you go back this evening and tell your pagan sister you are sorry for your end of the bother."

"That would be no good. She said she would like to see me——"

"Never mind! You apologise for your part, and get it off your mind before you sleep to-night."

The next evening she looked graver still.

"Did you apologise to your sister?"

"Yes—but it was no use."

The girl looked quite forlorn as she explained:

"She told me it was just like me to go up to those meetings and talk about her."

Which seemed quite a sisterly retort in such circumstances, if not very spiritual or conciliatory.

"Never mind! You did the courageous thing. Leave the rest to the Holy Spirit."

Next evening she was there again, and smiling.

"Something's happening to my sister. She's starting to apologise."

We left the town before the situation fully developed, but that week-end, in a meeting of a thousand people, the "autograph-collector" stood up boldly, gave her name, and witnessed to her full surrender to Christ that week.

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That fine preacher and evangelist, the Rev. C. H. Hulbert, told the writer of a backslider who had been a magnificent Christian for a quarter of a century. The rum ration caught him during the War, and he developed into a drink-sodden worldling. It took him fourteen years to recapture the life of Christian joy which he lost in a single hour. Yet during those fourteen years in the Wilderness he was conscious every time that a friend was praying for him.

* * * * *

Three women missionaries, attached to the China Inland Mission—a Faith and Prayer Mission—were resting in London, after their amazing experiences in the heart of Asia (which included a guided escape from bandits) when the writer called.

Their leader, Miss A. Mildred Cable, had been severely kicked by a donkey. Her head was gashed open and filled with mud, when she was discovered unconscious. The nearest doctor was a month's ride away. Her two companions prayed the prayer of faith, and within a fortnight she was well. And no trace of the fracture was visible to the caller.

She has some wonderful stories of answers to prayer to tell in her books *Through Jade Gate* and *The Fulfil-*

ment of a Dream, including the astonishing one she told us of victory over demon-possession through prayer, and now quoted by permission from the *Fulfilment of a Dream* (R.T.S.):

> Our first woman patient in Hwochow Opium Refuge became interested in the Gospel, and on her return home destroyed her idols, reserving, however, the beautifully carved idol shrines, which she placed in her son's room. Her daughter-in-law, who occupied this room, a comely young woman, desired to become a Christian, and gave us a warm welcome whenever we could go to the house.
>
> About six months later we were fetched by special messenger from a village where we were staying, to see this girl who was said to be demon-possessed. We found crowds of men and women gathered to see and to hear. The girl was chanting the weird minor chant of the possessed, *the voice, as in every case I have seen, clearly distinguishing it from madness.* This can perhaps best be described as a voice distinct from the personality of the one under possession. It seemed as though the demon used the organs of speech of the victim for the conveyance of its own voice.
>
> She refused to wear clothes or to take food, and by her violence terrorised the community. Immediately upon our entering the room with the Chinese woman evangelist, she ceased her chanting, and slowly pointed the finger at us, remaining in this posture for some time.
>
> As we knelt upon the *kang* to pray, she trembled and said: "The room is full of *gwei*; as soon as one goes another comes." We endeavoured to calm her, and to make her join us in repeating the sentence, "Lord Jesus, save me."
>
> After considerable effort, she succeeded in pronouncing these words, and when she had done so we commanded the demon to leave her, whereupon her body trembled and she sneezed some fifty or sixty times, then suddenly came to herself, asked for her clothes and some food, and, seemingly perfectly well, resumed her work.
>
> So persistently did she reiterate the statement that

the demons were using the idol shrines for a refuge, that during the proceedings just mentioned her parents willingly handed over to the Christians present these valuable carvings and joined with them in their destruction. From this time onwards she was perfectly well, a normal healthy young woman. Only when, years later, she was induced to return to a temple for worship, did she again suffer from demon-possession.

* * * * *

Cases of demon-possession are less common in the West; possibly because the tempter gets better results through practising more civilised devices, even to appearing as an angel of light. But those who have gone out East readily agree that they feel in the brooding atmosphere of those countries mysterious presences which are not always soothing, but sometimes sinister.

Perhaps the ideal prayer, other than the Lord's Prayer, for all countries, East and West, and all days is that one which pleases the ear and refreshes the spirit every time it ascends to the Throne:

> O Lord, support us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over and our work is done. Then, Lord, in Thy mercy, grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

One of the most remarkable stories of spontaneous inspired prayer was told to us by the Rev. Lionel Fletcher of Mildmay, across a luncheon-table in London. It appears in that able evangelist's book *Mighty Moments* (R.T.S.), which should be enjoyed by everybody.

He was conducting an important service, and had just turned to a friend, the Rev. Frank De Lisle, intending to ask him to pray, when he felt an impelling power to turn to the left and ask a stranger standing there to lead in prayer. He did not even

know if the man could pray, or whether he was a Christian.

But the influence upon him was so great that he leaned over the platform and asked the stranger if he would do so. He seemed deeply moved, but refused.

Mr. Fletcher was turning to Mr. De Lisle, when he felt a touch on his arm, and the stranger said: "I will pray"; and he did. Rarely had he heard such an inspired utterance as from this Cornishman, greatly beloved for his piety, and known to everybody in the church.

He was like a child talking to his Father, then he pleaded for his own children, then for his neighbours and their children, and asked that that night the Holy Spirit might be poured out upon the congregation.

The evangelist heard a sound of many feet; it seemed like the whole congregation moving. The aisles were filled with people coming forward to the Communion-rail, and the old man's voice was hushed into silence as the vibrant voice of a young man, who towered head and shoulders above everyone else, rang out, "God has answered your prayer, Uncle; I have come to surrender to Christ."

He was one of a hundred and twenty-one young men who had made the same decision at the same moment.

* * * * *

The latest piece of good counsel about prayer came to the writer this year from a new convert, a chemist—he has had a remarkable right-about-turn—who started immediately to apply the legend on his own bottles to his prayer life:

"To be taken three times daily."

I to the church the liveing call,
And to the grave I summonds all.
The Tenor Bell at Watford.

* * * * *

I never weary of great churches. It is my favourite kind of mountain scenery. Mankind was never so happily inspired as when it made a cathedral.—*R. L. Stevenson.*

* * * * *

Dear bells ! how sweet the sounds of village bells
When on the undulating air they swim !
Now loud as welcomes ! faint, now, as farewells !
Now trembling all about the breezy dells
As fluttered by the wings of Cherubim.
Hood.

UNLIKE Gipsy Smith, who aroused the whole gipsy encampment at night to announce his decision to follow Jesus Christ, the writer told nobody of his decision.

He met an old journalist colleague in " The Street," who said something disparaging of another who professed Christianity; and allowed the remark to pass unchallenged; though his conscience got busy swiftly. It was a fine chance to witness, but he missed it, as he missed many opportunities of witnessing before he was first introduced to the Oxford Group ten years later.

Said Frank :

" It takes A. J. a long time to witness, but *when* he does—— ! "

In New York the Groupers described him as " cagey," which meant, they said, that he looked like a suspicious lion in a cage; caught, but not to be caught again.

Trained to be suspicious of everything and everybody, and learning to wear a different mask in different

situations, and knowing that Christianity was no less discounted in Fleet Street now than thirteen years ago, he felt silence was wiser, in case something went wrong again with his own experience, and his friends declined to accept his new sense of values.

The old absurd fears! Of course something had to go wrong with his new life as a Christian. It always does. There is a transatlantic road which goes straight for about eighty miles, linking two towns. Who expects a monotonous pilgrimage like that? The hills and the hollows; the ravines and the torrents; the doubting castles and the vanity fairs; the sloughs of despond and the Delectable Mountains are still all essential to the pilgrim's progress.

James and John always quarrel for the first place in the Kingdom at some stage of the pilgrimage; Peter always denies while the fire burns; Judas always betrays for a handful of silver, and the rest of us are rarely in complete unity except when we all forsake Him and flee.

But He is accustomed to that sort of loyalty, and refuses to allow the quarrellers, the disclaimers, the forsakers, the betrayers, and the wanderers, to lose their Guide.

It took some time to discover that telling another of one's decision to follow Jesus Christ is not a risk, but a security. It plants a supporting stake. A clerk in a City office went to another clerk, and began to tell a *risqué* story, but was immediately stopped with:

"I don't want to hurt your feelings. If this is one of *that* sort of story, let me say that Jesus Christ is against it. And I'm making a shot to follow Him."

This was to save his fellow-clerk from thinking him a prig for refusing to laugh, though giving the other an opportunity to laugh at his scruples.

Later that day, the clerk returned and admitted his admiration for the perfectly reasonable stand the other had made for his principles.

Announcing a decision to follow Jesus Christ may cause one initial laugh in modern England; but that is about all the penalty. It usually produces respect for the person who witnesses. There are still Christians who would prefer the martyrdom of early Christianity among the lions in the Coliseum to witnessing to their next-door neighbour.

Yet bold witness is the best protection. You must stand by your colours afterwards, or you will be more ridiculed than at the start.

* * * * *

"Do these converts join churches?"

This question is often being asked. The answer is: "Of course, and if they don't, they should."

One, who claimed to be a spiritual son, complained that we neglected frequent inquiry as to his progress. There could be only one reply:

"You should join a church. They need you, and you need them."

After his right-about-turn it became clear to the writer that he must, as an experimental Christian, join a Christian church. London was full of half-empty churches, and it was to be assumed that a suitable church would be easy to find: one mid-way between the extremes of the High Anglicans and the Fundamentalists, with intellect, education, kindly tolerance, and spirituality in the pulpit. Moreover, one that would appeal to others in his family, because of earlier associations, from which his agnosticism had separated them in later life.

When a journalist requires an address in a hurry, he consults the Post Office London Directory; and there the writer found his church—a large edifice off the Edgware Road. Dr. Gillie welcomed him with kindness, and looked interested to hear that the Post Office London Directory had sent him a new member. They didn't usually come that way. There was a large membership roll, and the preacher surprised one new member by calling on every one of his flock that

quarter. Already the writer's opinion of the Church —if he had a right to an opinion—was mounting.

Then illness drove him into a new suburb for country air. The electric railway was just extending to the village, and there was an insufficiency of churches for the spiritual needs of the rapidly-growing population.

Again a new experience for a journalist. Sunday morning services in an uninspiring committee-room of the Village Hall; sometimes church meetings in private houses. During the week the hectic rush of circulation-raising—Royal Christmas puddings for all readers, children's supplements, racing competitions, love-stories of the Great, life-stories of murderers, wrecks, and disasters and public festivals. Then home to interminable committee meetings—for building a new church!

Tame and tepid those meetings after the red-blooded rush and dash, cut, parry, and twist of the newspaper war in the Street of Adventure. An express train had crashed, and while all England, aghast, read the grim details of smash and tragedy, we placidly scanned the list of dead and injured, as in duty bound, in the expectation that some were among our registered readers, hoping that rivals would not secure all the advertisement which accrued from paying one, two, five, or ten thousand pounds to the next of kin.

Those milk-and-water church meetings—incessant talk about minor points which would be left to assistants, clerks, and accountants in the office. And always a half-shamed sense of pseudo-piety, an unexpressed hope that the old, hard-boiled gang never looked in to witness our off-duty hobbies.

That evening we spent site-prospecting in the open air, our Committee looked a lost contingent of one of those treasure-hunts which Fleet Street had espoused for The Bright Young Things—a forlorn contingent that had lost its clues.

How soft our Christianity had become to some of us! In the old days, to serve the God of our Fathers,

our Christian ancestors faced the stake, the lions, the torturers. And here was a new convert with a sense of shame because he was appearing publicly as prospector for the site of a Christian church in an age when Christ's name was universally honoured, if His religion was not practised, and when the average man could not look you straight in the eyes if you spoke naturally of Him, provided there was no cant in your voice.

But our Committee did its work leisurely and well. The right site was found and generally agreed upon; our reverend chairman invited someone to propose its name; and the largening congregation have yet to be informed that the mysterious reason why their church is known as St. John's was because of that effulgent illumination that once came to one of its members, an agnostic, when reading the Beloved disciple with an open mind!

* * * * *

An early discovery on returning to the fold was that our fellow-Christians had not made extraordinary strides towards complete sanctification during our thirteen years' absence. In fact, although we had strange and hardly respectable knowledge of such places as Kempton Park Race-course, and of such institutions as the St. Leger and the Two Thousand Guineas, and more disreputable places still, the gulf dividing us did not seem so terribly wide, after all; although we were nevertheless grateful for the kindly welcome received. When we spoke of the old days we spoke what was to most a foreign language, though some of our members had secret hopes for the Irish Sweep.

Moreover, we found the taboo against speaking about Jesus Christ and spiritual things in drawing-rooms extended to some Christians in some churches; there seemed an awkward silence at the mention of our Lord.

One dear and ageing church member, who used to arrive at all times of the service, sometimes about the end of the sermon, interested us very much. At one period he was so progressively behind-times that one

Sunday morning when he arrived before the service began, we were encouraged to the belief that he was merely late from last Sunday.

There was social work proceeding, but additions to Church membership were not so numerous through conversion as before we left. People grew up into Church membership, or were transferred from other churches, but they rarely broke into a congregation from the Wilderness. We heard good sermons, we liked our minister and the other preachers who came, and we liked each other, some more than others. Occasionally a dog barked and a cat scratched. Sometimes we snapped back, forgetting the dictum of our patron saint: "Beloved, let us love one another . . . he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." So far as we could see, very few of us did any Life-Changing, leaving that to our preacher, who was perhaps over-worked and certainly under-paid.

* * * * *

One day an invitation came to speak on the South Coast, and a minister there, discussing his congregation with the writer, made the admission:

"Unfortunately, mine is not a Christian church!"

And yet it was a unit of one of the biggest churches in Christendom.

An invitation came to speak somewhere north, and we suggested to the minister's wife that her husband should invite each person in the congregation to bring a non-Christian to the services. Her cynical retort confirmed the remark heard down South:

"No need for that; most members of my husband's church are *not* Christians!"

So there is a law of compensation even in un-Christian congregations; the preacher is not wasting his energies on the unconverted!

The vicar of one parish church told the writer that he objected to every Christian thinking he was called to be a Life-Changer.

"We could not have the whole congregation busy changing each other's lives," he complained.

"How many Life-Changers in your church?"

He was an honest vicar. He laughed, and admitted there was none, not excepting himself.

And it has been computed that if every Christian became a witnessing Life-Changer and won only one person for his Lord a year, the population of the earth could be conquered for Christianity in less than thirty years. Probably the conquests would not be so easy in the last ten years as during the first twenty.

* * * * *

There is further consolation in the knowledge that even if some Christians are not Life-Changers, they are not so harmful as some Christians who have backslidden. One of the most unpleasant men the writer ever met in Fleet Street had been a local preacher before he became a sub-editor with a swinish disposition, ever seeking to cause trouble. Another—a renegade Sunday School teacher—delighted in criticising publicly the Lord he had deserted. And to come closer home, Bunyan remembers when Barnum was similarly engaged.

"But the unclean spirit when he has gone out of a man . . . then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits . . . and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."

Having worked as one renegade Christian among other renegade Christians, one is grateful to the churches for keeping so many houses from being left desolate, swept and garnished, ready for workers of evil.

"Saints and Scoundrels I Have Met" was the title of a lecture which the writer gave in his own church. At the end of the meeting, several ladies asked him to indicate their category.

But it was up to them to discover this for themselves. Christ laid down certain principles of life, and those who follow those principles are on the way to the

canon of saints. A scoundrel is a person with no principle, and in so far as a Christian is defective in any one of Christ's principles, he is that much a scoundrel.

A man who deliberately quarrels with his neighbour, insomuch as he is unloving, is in that proportion a scoundrel. A woman who looks glassily into her neighbour's eyes—right through her, in fact—when meeting in the street, being devoid of that principle of love that Christ enjoined, is that much a scoundrel, although she may be returning from Holy Communion.

* * * * *

It was Sam Shoemaker's aim, when he went to Calvary Church, New York, to teach Life-Changing to all his congregation, and, though everybody had not become a Life-Changer when the writer was there, an astonishingly high proportion of the members of Calvary Episcopal Church was engaged on this exhilarating work. The staff of clergy comprised the Rector, the Assistant Rector, and a curate, but if all these were away, the work of Life-Changing proceeded rhythmically when callers came in spiritual need.

An American lady read *For Sinners Only* and wrote to the author explaining her predicament. She had eloped, and married in her youth, and was alienated from her parents. Her marriage had failed, and she was separated from her husband, whom she hated. Her daughter's wedding had also gone wrong. What was she to do? Why advise her to surrender to Christ? How could a Unitarian worship Jesus Christ when she did not believe in His Divinity?

She was told that she was not a Unitarian because the Unitarians did not teach hatred between husbands and wives; nor between parents and children; and she was advised to apologise for her share of the trouble to those from whom she was estranged.

But a correspondence course is not the best form of Life-Changing, although it sometimes achieves wonderful results. The writer gave his correspondent the

names of two ladies in Calvary House on whom she might call, if she were ever in New York. She called, and wrote again, saying that although she was unprepared to " let go " and trust Jesus Christ to direct her life, she had been very deeply impressed by her long conversation with the lady who had received her, for, said she :

" I do recognise *real goodness* when I meet it."

The point of the message was that the lady she saw had not been named in the writer's letter advising her to call at Calvary. The ladies whose names were given were both out when the stranger called; nevertheless the Life-Changing Department of Calvary Church was ready to receive her, and functioning effectively.

The time must come when every Christian church has its corps of Life-Changers, generating spiritual power and aiding the clergyman or minister, in season and out of season, ready to advise the spiritually needy and capable of leading any lost prodigals to the foot of the Cross; and thereafter of guiding them into Church membership.

Before that happens there must be a good deal of Life-Changing done in the churches, as was done in Calvary Church before she attained her present state of spiritual quality.

Churches teach a great deal about religion, and much about everything else, but the writer has yet to hear a sermon on Life-Changing. Every sales organisation of a large business teaches its salesmen how to sell. The late Lord Leverhulme used to send sales supervisors to observe his travellers while they sold their soaps. There are classes for tuition in selling cash registers and gramophones; and, between meals in a New York restaurant, the writer listened while a floor-manageress taught her waitresses how to sell soup, fish, and *entrées,* and the apple pie *à la mode* and other sweets appearing on American menu-cards under the strange classification " Dessert."

Yet the Church has its great army of potential can-

vassers for Christ, but no instruction classes in spiritual salesmanship.

The revival that is coming is coming through individual witness, and the key to that revival is the training and the cleansing and the vitalising of the witnesses. The writer spent a week-end in a Christian home—father an elder, mother a strong evangelical and very proud of her grown-up daughter, the Sunday School teacher. But the Sunday School teacher told the writer something that would have upset her mother's Christian complacency—that she taught the children just to please her parents, though she believed those stories of Jesus were just fairy-tales.

* * * * *

A young man spoke to us at the close of a religious meeting and confessed that he obtained no exhilaration from his Christianity. He was young and single, and it seemed plain that he was vacillating on the sex question. So the conversation was led into the subject of purity.

Once or twice this man—also a Sunday School teacher—mentioned, in an aside, that he sometimes picked up little things. But he said it so casually that its purport escaped the writer, who should have recognised that the casual method of reference was deliberately used to minimise the sin. Presently he asked what these little things were. Then it came out that the Sunday School teacher was working for a Christian employer, in a shop, participating with the other three assistants in taking some of his master's goods without payment, or in receiving twice as much as shown on the " chits " charged to him. And he wondered why there was no feeling of exhilaration in his Christianity! He went back pledged to cease this practice and to tell his fellow-assistants so; and, when the time came that unity was achieved among the four, to apologise and restore.

So it was not advice on purity, but just a repetition of the commandment " Thou shalt not steal," which he needed.

At the close of another meeting, a question about restitution was asked of a Methodist superintendent minister. For reply, he told of a lay preacher, who came down from the pulpit, and asked him to listen while he made a confession. He was in a position of responsibility in an emporium, but had been systematically robbing his employer, the church steward.

The superintendent listened, and told him he must confess. The lay preacher agreed to do so if the minister would accompany him. It was Sunday evening and late. They proceeded to the church steward's comfortable home. He had retired, but came down to hear the confession. When it was over, he looked very grave, and said that the worst feature of the admission was the lay preacher's past zeal in detecting petty thieving among the rest of the staff, who, when found out, had suffered dismissal in consequence. Nevertheless, the preacher was forgiven on condition that he made good his thefts as opportunities arose.

These true stories show that Life-Changing must begin at home, and that only the spiritually clean need expect to be greatly successful in the work.

This is not to say that God does not sometimes use unclean vessels for His ministry, for history shows otherwise. There is a story from one of the British dominions of a worldling who undertook to pose as an evangelist, and call for decisions for Christ among his congregation.

He preached, and decisions were registered. The Word is independent of its human vehicle, though God still prefers to honour those who are co-workers together with Him.

* * * * *

A clergyman decided that his ministry had been unsatisfactory, and after long consideration stood up in his pulpit and confessed the fact to his congregation; he then proceeded to the Communion rail and re-dedicated his life completely to the Lord. To his

amazed bewilderment, he found the Communion rail was crowded with men and women in his congregation inspired by his action to follow suit.

The writer attended a big church near London where a revival spontaneously broke out largely through the minister's admission of failure to live up to the ideals he preached.

From Africa there came last June a letter from a missionary, saying that eight years ago he experienced a great change in his life at a revival meeting, but had found himself beaten constantly while endeavouring to crucify the flesh. Nevertheless, he was sent out to Africa to lead the blind heathen to the Light, and had been failing grandly. People seemed to get nothing, though he worked like a trooper. Recently he remarked to a fellow-missionary that he might not be returning after furlough, for he had reached the end of his rope.

For Sinners Only showed that complete victory was possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. He knew it would be mighty embarrassing if his own evil thoughts could have been flashed upon the screen. Before he had half finished the book, the Light came. His mistake was running his own life, fighting sin in his own strength, instead of turning it over to Christ. It was hard to do the confessing. He had to apologise to a native he had assaulted; he had to confess before other missionaries and the Church that he had been a deceiver, but was through with that kind of life because he had turned things over to Jesus.

Full peace and victory came immediately he consented to whole-hearted confession and surrender. Never in all his years of struggle had he known the victory as he knew it now. The struggle had ceased. Like the man who was possessed with devils and dwelt in the tombs, he had tormented himself until Jesus brought peace. He could now sit at His feet clothed and in his right mind.

Two days after his surrender, he calmly told his

experience at a meeting for Christian workers. When he had finished they began praying instantly, and then others arose and admitted their sins, and almost every person present received a blessing. They were led to closing the school for one week, as the pupils were clamouring for permission to return to their heathen kraals and preach the Way of Life.

From a minister in Western Australia there came a letter thanking the writer for the challenge in *For Sinners Only*, and saying that it had brought about a transformation in his life. He was just about to undertake his first act of restitution.

Another minister confessed publicly that he was not entitled to his Arts Degree, and this admission brought a wonderful transformation in his life and work.

From the Far East there came a remarkable letter from two missionaries which said :

> Years ago my wife and I had the same fellowship with men and God that you describe. I knew the complete joy of dedication to Christ and the fellowship and sharing of similar souls. I married, and my wife and I came out here as missionaries, and we have very gradually drifted apart, and become self-centred, irritable, and unlovely.
>
> We have both been thoroughly unhappy for over a year, and we blamed the country and lack of friends and amusements and nervous strain.
>
> Your book brought back to me the joy of the past, and completely convinced me that the cause of our trouble was in ourselves and was SIN.
>
> Last night we talked everything over and confessed to each other and God. We prayed for forgiveness and strength; we re-dedicated our lives to His service, and found a wonderful joy.
>
> We spent about four hours sharing as we have never done before. To-day we have been like new people, and we know it will last because we have the secret of our past—separation from God.

Some lay preachers are complaining that little work is given them to do, as they have very few appoint-

ments per quarter. Too many lay preachers! A change from those days when they were so scarce that some left the workhouse on Sundays to preach in village pulpits, returning in the evening to their parish home for the remainder of the week.

A lay preacher living in London, wrote suggesting sectional meetings for teams of lay preachers who could give united witness, thereby varying the church service and giving practised speakers the desired extra work. Surely this suggestion is a spiritual brain-wave, for the writer knows from much experience how the interest is quickened and the spirituality of the congregation heightened and deepened by team witness from trained speakers. When lay preachers get together in travelling bands, revivals will begin again as they did when Paul took his first tonic team of Life-Changers adventurously across pagan Europe. But some elders and church stewards may need changing before this can become general.

A minister told the writer he had tabulated and docketed a pile of six hundred sermons which, if he preached two a Sunday in a new church, would keep him supplied for six years. A lay preacher wrote saying his eyes had been opened, and that he had spent half an hour the other Sunday in burning eleven and a half years' sermons.

"And they blazed up wonderfully," he added. "I have been a conventional Christian all my life, and absolutely self-centred, till Christ revealed my own life to me through the fellowship of the Group." The late Samuel Chadwick also destroyed a pile of his own sermons so that he could preach in the power of the Spirit.

The writer took a team into the West country, and one member, recently a pagan, changed through reading *For Sinners Only*, said to a gathering of clergy and ministers that if they wished to lead another to the foot of the Cross, they must be prepared to go there with him

Several days afterwards the Secretary of a Y.M.C.A. stood up in a men's Group, not ten miles distant, and confessed that the challenge made by the changed pagan had inspired him to return books, and some money for other books, that he had stolen.

A few days later there came a delightful letter from that Y.M.C.A. Secretary, with permission to use the information in whatever way one wished:

> This morning I awoke feeling happier than I have ever felt before. I tried a time of quiet, and experienced a glowing warmth within me that in the past I had only felt on very rare occasions.
>
> I was not conscious of receiving any guidance, but I did feel that in those moments I was very near to God; all the time now I seem to be walking in the Light, even as He is in the Light.
>
> I thank God for having sent you and your team into our midst. I thank Him particularly for —— (the changed pagan), who was guided to say that "If we want to get men to the foot of the Cross, we must go there with them."
>
> This I have never been prepared to do; I had felt (how ridiculous it sounds now!) that by virtue of my position and my calling I was privileged to set my own standards of life.

But we need not go to Australasia or China or the North or the West country to seek illustrations proving that spiritual cleansing among Christians is necessary to revive the Church.

The writer listened attentively to a Methodist minister telling his story of eighteen years in the ministry without leading one person to Christ Jesus. One day the minister read *For Sinners Only*, and saw the reason. He there and then made a solemn re-dedication of himself, a complete surrender of his time, his possessions, his ambitions, all he was and all he hoped to be, to his Master. With that dedication, there came to him a clear message, "The promise is to you," that promise of which Peter spoke con-

cerning the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.

That text, the theme of his next sermon, brought two church officials forward, asking eagerly what new experience had come to their minister? The next morning a lay preacher was in his house, sharing his sins, and seeking spiritual consolation for his troubles. From then onwards, not a day had passed but that someone, worldling or Christian, had come to him in spiritual distress. And that new life had persisted for six months, and was still continuing, through the elixir of the Spirit, following complete and continuous surrender of himself and all that he had and hoped to be.

Outstanding among those daily experiences was the amazing fact that all but two of the spiritually needy persons he had interviewed, had admitted they were compromising with impurity; worldlings and Christians alike. He did not wonder there was no revival in most of the churches; what surprised him was that God, Who knew what was proceeding behind so many Christian masks, permitted His churches to remain open. *He* said it, and not the writer!

Yet the minister of a church on the south coast replied that he would be astonished to find five per cent. of his congregation defaulting over purity. The answer must be, "Wait until you have fully shared your spiritual experiences with your congregation, and discovered where they are living, before you form a judgment."

The Master's teaching is that impurity first takes place in thought. "As a man thinketh within himself, so is he." The old challenge and the new challenge are just the same challenge:

"What would you say if all your thoughts were reproduced on a screen in the presence of a mixed assembly, including your husband or wife, parents, and children?"

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The tares must always grow with the wheat until the harvest; yet we Christians need not take each other too much for granted. For though the wheat may become tares, the tares may also become wheat. Brotherly love, enjoined by St. John, precludes fault-finding, but checks lapses with loving sincerity, while endeavouring to hold all men to the highest plane of life in Christ.

A man may be mean, disloyal, conceited, love his own voice more than his neighbour's, be overbearing and over-critical, and be allowed to remain ignorant of these and kindred sins, unless he is lovingly checked. The desire for office in churches for the sake of office may become as keen as in the world.

The writer knows public singers who pray in private that they sing only the guided songs in the guided way in public; and that no organ-blower does his job worse after prayer; and many a consecrated door-keeper has first led newcomers into the right seats and then into the Kingdom of Heaven!

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Sin is always the enemy to success in religion, sometimes the sin of success. The weeds always flourish around the Word.

Often has one asked Church leaders their secret remedy for conquering sin, but has never received any better answer than Frank's: "The demand of both worlds is identical—the whole heart! All success demands the whole will at the back of it. A man cannot be happy in a life of vice so long as he is conscious of moral scruples; conversely, he cannot be happy in a life of virtue so long as he compromises with vice."

Until we cleanse our minds from any desire to indulge a sin that pleases us, we never attain freedom from sin. Secretly nearly everybody cherishes a desire to sin a pet sin occasionally because he trusts forgiveness will follow. The writer has found the

battle must be fought and won in the field of desire. "As a man thinketh." Not until he is willing to cut out every pleasing thing that is plainly contrary to God's will can he enjoy the fulness of life in Christ.

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The minister's wife in a certain town is in love with another man, and although she does not see him often, she is unprepared to make the great sacrifice. Some people carry illicit loves in their minds for years, although they do not sin in the flesh. It may be impossible to cease loving another, but it is always possible to enlarge that love so that it embraces everyone else, including the person whose existence or conduct precludes the human development of that love. Separation is essential in these cases; sometimes the anguish may take a year or more to go. But the Holy Spirit can be trusted to uphold. "If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye," said Peter.

What is best for us in this life will always come to us so long as we are ready to put God's laws of righteousness in place of our wills. The way seems hard, but He is always nearer than hands or feet to the person who treads it. Nothing can so delight the heart of our Father-God as one who, resisting his human aspirations, seeks light and true service along the high levels.

These fights against natural inclination may seem unreasonable to those who cannot see what is being achieved thereby, as they did to us until we saw that the substance is not being lost for the shadow, but the shadow lost for the only reality. The aches and pains of conflict between what is right and what is attractive are but the birth-pangs of entry into the Kingdom of glory. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"Deliver us from evil" is a line to be stressed in the Lord's Prayer, for there are cases innumerable in which

that plea has been answered. Temptation is necessary and deliverance is sure. The writer knows of instances, some indeed in his own life, in which it seemed clear that the Holy Spirit was encircling a follower of Jesus with a protecting ring of power when every indication pointed to the triumph of evil. God did tempt Abraham, but gave him a mighty blessing through overcoming.

"Are there some sins which Christians are unable to conquer?"

Two well-known preachers, each eminent in his own Church, were asked this question by the writer. In each case the answer was the same, startling and disconcerting. Neither of these, in his long experience, had encountered one adult instance of addiction to homosexuality that had been cured by Christianity. The sins of the fathers seem to be inescapable by some of their children. Yet numerous instances are quotable in which young folk have been cured through surrender to Christ, and although cases of cure in adults are so rare that two prominently placed clerics in London had never known of any, it is still true that Christ is able to save, and does save to the uttermost, even to this.

The writer knows at least one adult, now at the head of a large undertaking, who has won through in Christ's strength, while showing many others the same path to victory, and Gipsy Smith told him he has known of adult cases of this kind which were cured. Those who do not conquer their vice are either unwilling to allow Christ to win through them, or they are insane.

To defeat a particular sin we must recognise it and refuse to be afraid of it. Fear of the sin develops an inferiority complex, ending in defeat. Smoking is not sin unless it becomes an excess. At one time we were smoking eight or ten cigars a day. Smoking was becoming the master. There were two ways to defeat it, openly and furtively. Acting on the principle of looking the enemy in the face, the last packet of smokes

was exposed temptingly on the table, with a box of matches lying conveniently by their side. During half-hourly intervals of writing we would stroll across the room and address the enemy on this wise :

" I may be nobody else's boss just now, but you can take it from me I'm yours."

Years of defeat now issued in victory. Surrender was not loss, but gain. We are now applying the same practice to other temptations, setting our vanity against other types of sin. The homœpathic way of curing sin with itself.

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We have not to surrender every sin in one category, but merely the next one. The writer saw that if he committed a sin once, he repeated it a thousand times; and so by deciding to-day against that once, the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine times could be postponed until to-morrow. One does not trust God now for power to fight to-morrow's sins, but assists Christ to fight in oneself some of the sin of the world during the next ten minutes. Sufficient unto the day is the sin thereof.

" First the look, then the thought, then the fascination of the thought, then the fall."

The look is not harmful, if it is deliberate, and not a furtive look, and followed by an equally deliberate turn-away in look and thought. Sin happens when the thought begins to dwell pleasantly on the sin. However pleasant the sin may look, it is always the snake in God's garden. When you see a snake, crush it, even though it masquerades as an apple of Eden.

What we think of long enough, we do when the opportunity comes. Unless we defeat the thought on the threshold, it will upset the house if it enters. There is no sin in the thought of temptation; the most devilish thoughts come to the saintliest minds. When sin settles into a welcomed thought, then the trouble begins. The writer found that the best way

to eject sinful thoughts was to think of something else—of goodness, of victory, of Jesus Christ. And never to be frightened of the sin, as only he could give it power.

Sometimes a change of surroundings or position brings the right thoughts. Rolling in the snow might be good for St. Francis, but a game of snowballs might have been better for him; and for all his friars. Too much time alone is not good for young, social, human animals; or too much time spent in gay company. Only rarely do we leave a social gathering uplifted.

The temptations of the flesh disappear completely during periods spent in fasting. Sensualists who plead their human nature as an excuse for sin can improve their health and their spiritual qualities and keep themselves from falling into temptation by giving their cook a week's holiday! Try it and see. We speak that we do know.

Can a man be absolutely honest, loving, unselfish, pure? No, he cannot! The more he thinks of it, the more certain he becomes that these are the impossible ideal. Yet the standards were not invented by human beings, but commanded by Christ, Who insisted that we should be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.

To those who feel that the ideal is unattainable, the writer offers his congratulations. We are one. Just at the moment when we know that we, being the weakest of all flesh, are certain of falling, that is the moment for rejoicing. For here is literal truth—when we are weak, then we are strong. Time after time have Christ's weakest followers found they can fulfil all His Royal laws. For man's extremity is always God's opportunity. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me." As Emerson says: "We lose angels to find archangels."

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but

will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Thus Paul to the Corinthians, while Peter in his general Epistle said: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." And he whose "eyes were as a flame of fire . . . and his voice as the voice of many waters," said to the angel of the church in Philadelphia—the one church against which there was no complaint—"Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

"At my first answer no man stood with me," laments Paul to Timothy, "but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." And James, in his general Epistle, commended, not only the Life-Changer, and the still tongue, but said: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

And there is always that reassuring statement to the Jews in Hebrews: "For in that He, Himself, has suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. . . . For we have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help us in time of need."

With these promises sparkling from the pages of Holy Writ, the writer saw that he must lay hold upon them as our fathers did; and that there is no need for anyone to fear temptation, for "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong. . . . For we rejoice, when we are weak and ye are strong; this we also pray for, even your perfecting." "And," says Isaiah, "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Therefore: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience."

How, then, shall one fight one's besetting sin? Be not afraid of it, but do not dwell on it. And when it comes, say: "Here, Lord, take it; it's too big for me." The burden, thus cast upon the Lord, enters God's waggon and disappears for the time, perhaps for always. The besetting sins of a lifetime begin to fall away like raindrops from one's umbrella; for God's strength is most realised in weakness.

One further word on sin. We discovered that the hard way is not *always* the right way, though it often is. There is a cross at every crossways, and another down every highway.

"Would Christ do that?" is the best way to find out what is sin.

A lady told the writer that she took one step which seemed easy, and she thought it must be wrong because the other way was the hard way. She then felt that "God is our refuge and strength," but He is not "a very present help in trouble." Yet, as time revealed, she had been led by the right way after all.

A man who had been a white-slave trafficker, a drug-fiend, and most else that is evil has been completely reclaimed in a street meeting, and is doing glorious work for Christ the all-conquering.

The longer one spends on God's highway, the easier is the road. It becomes increasingly difficult for an

experienced Christian to sin, although "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

"Sir!" said Samuel Johnson, "the chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken."

CHAPTER IV MENDING MEN

He that winneth souls is wise.
Solomon.

* * * * *

A Christian is God Almighty's gentleman.
J. C. Hare.

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And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.—*Daniel.*

WHEN The Stranger passed through the Third Floor Back in Jerome K. Jerome's play, ordinary human beings in an apartment-house all underwent a radical change for the better.

When true followers of The Stranger pass through a third floor back, or down Fifth Avenue or Petticoat Lane or the New Cut, or into Mayfair drawing-rooms, or nursing-homes and hospitals, lives begin to change.

Strong characters everywhere influence other characters. Secretaries take on the characteristics and sometimes the facial appearance of their employers. "No man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself." Not only monkeys imitate. We are an imitative race. Even weak people become strong in the Spirit, and impress others; sometimes they move mountains. Every regenerated man should regenerate others. He must teach somebody something, why not regeneration?

This was the challenge constantly presented to the writer. He expostulated and evaded. All persons had not the same gifts. Some were teachers, some were

evangelists; some hewed wood, some drew water. Moreover, no one had been instrumental in leading him back to the fold. He who had begun a good work within us was surely ready and able to repeat His workings within others.

We made inquiries and discovered Scriptural challenges to personal evangelism; challenges to be His witness. We tackled a Roman Catholic priest, and were told that a Catholic's duty is "to convert the sinner." Anglo-Catholics said the same.

Evangelicals believe in personal evangelism, and the great united Methodist Church sometimes allude to themselves as "The Royal and Ancient Order of Life-Changers." Every Salvation Army soldier is promoted to a recruiting-sergeant at his conversion. In fact, almost every organisation, political or social, trade or provident, undertakes personal propaganda for "the cause"; "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Nothing truer was ever said about Christianity than that the only way to keep it is to give it away. Inflow can only come from overflow; where there is stillness, there is stagnation.

The best way to edify saints is to convert the sinner, said Wesley, who, one is beginning to think, knew all things worth knowing about the spiritual life, including the fact that in heaven there are no Methodists or Anglicans or Catholics or Presbyterians or Baptists, but only those who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

Though the writer had now become convinced that personal evangelism was everybody's duty, he stood aside from it as long as he could. Eliciting a murder story from an unwilling official was one unpleasant task, but inviting a sinner to pray with him was far more unpleasant.

Yet the Master went about changing lives, cleansing them through the Word He spoke, and concluding with "Follow Me." Following Christ meant witnessing

with the Word; and even as Christ prayed with those men whose lives He changed, so there could be no avoidance of the challenge to be willing to do likewise. "He that would come after Me, let him deny himself." Not that it is always right to offer to pray with another; it is often wrong. "There is a time for everything," says Solomon.

And on his first attempt at Life-Changing as an act of self-denial, the writer made another surprise discovery —that to lose one's life is truly to find it.

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The pages of *For Sinners Only* were still damp from the press, when a vicar telephoned to say that he was just off for an enjoyable holiday, and was now honouring the writer by entrusting him with the spiritual direction of the most difficult case in his parish. Never write a religious book if you are unprepared for personal evangelism on behalf of a vicar seeking temporary escape from it.

The unfortunate was down and out; he had played with life, and life had played ducks and drakes with him. He had faced homelessness and the Thames Embankment; yet he had been the leading man in his profession in his town. We walked and talked. He could not beat his sin—drunkenness—which led him into worse depths. When he was sober again the challenge was given in the accepted and oft-acceptable formula:

"You feel yourself helpless to defeat your sin of drunkenness?"

A feeble "Yes."

"Well, I can't do it for you."

"I know."

"Since you can't and I can't, shall we let God have a try?"

He looked very dubious; and the challenger felt dubious too, although he did not show it.

Can one ever forget that first serio-comic prayer

uttered by the man in misery whose life he asked God to change? It must be remembered he is a professional man of good education. He prayed:

"O God! Queen Victoria wanted to be good, and I want to be good! And now may the peace and blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be with us for evermore. Amen."

Biting his lip, and feeling as flat as a pancake, the writer rose and talked matters over with the supposedly "changed man."

The convert had not been able to stop drinking for a long time until that prayer; it was nine months later before he had his next drink. In between those drinks he had escaped from the rut, re-entered his old profession and had become a trusted servant of a big undertaking.

A letter had come from him saying that when he was in the depths of degradation, he was secretly yearning for someone to take a Good Samaritan interest in him and assist him back to self-respect and the unified life. A testimony to the great need for Life-Changers.

That story of a long period of victory over his vicious habits by a simple prayer was told at a largely-attended meeting in the provinces, and was heard by a lady in middle life—Lady M.—a descendant of two royal houses who applied the challenge to her own life. We met after the service, and the flush of conviction came into her face as she was challenged to surrender her own sins to the all-conquering power of the living Christ. She told a harrowing story of her past life and gave permission for its re-telling.

Lady M. is cultured, and attractive. She describes herself as a woman who has sinned much and often deliberately, but God, in His infinite love and patience, has guided her to the light after many wanderings in darkness, and much tribulation. Her childhood was completely happy, for she was loved and sheltered by devoted parents in a wonderful and even luxurious home. Girlhood was a time of continuous joy, with the world at her feet—the joy of life in everything:

hunting, dancing, homage from young men, subalterns, naval men, some among the highest in the land.

She had friendships with other girls, than whom none had a more care-free life; money was not so plentiful as expanding needs, but that made life the more exciting—never being quite sure if one could afford to do what one had determined to do.

Several times she thought herself in love; all very disturbing, thrilling, and even amusing. When still in her teens she met *the* man; he seemed to be perfect; she fell deeply in love, and he with her. There was nothing to wait for, and so they married. Poor Lady M.! The happy girl-bride did not know that her marriage was to be the end of her happiness for many years; for otherwise, when her father, on the way to St. Margaret's, seeing how white she looked, asked her to return home, she would have agreed.

But everybody was there, everybody who was somebody, and to go on was easier than to run away. She thought men more romantic than real, as girls do, and her husband's nature was complex. From the beginning she was disillusioned and miserable; the blight had suddenly descended on her girlhood, instead of married life being the radiant joy she had expected.

God had never been very near to Lady M., though she had been accustomed to attending church and saying her prayers, and had been vaguely disappointed when, at her confirmation, no definite change took place spiritually. She often yearned to feel really fervent and satisfied, but God always seemed so remote. Looking back, she realised that the chief feeling of those early married days was that her husband was "such a superior being" and so disappointed in her, thinking her young and silly.

She had always received so much understanding at home, and now she was away from England, and feeling terribly alone. It took a long time to realise that her husband did not love her, and that he felt he had made a disastrous mistake in marrying. Without meaning

to be unkind, he was too busy with his own misery to understand hers. A dead weight of depression and unhappiness blanketed both; and there seemed no way out.

They turned to others for the love and understanding they could not share. Jealousy and estrangement followed. Lady M. became very angry in those early days with one girl who came to live in the house. The climax of that flirtation came when the girl sat on the husband's knee in her presence. This incident precipitated a quarrel in which some bitter things were said on both sides. The girl visitor precipitately departed, fell in love, and married.

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Lady M.'s children were a great joy and consolation, but they brought no unity; the father was soon bored. She did her best not to make them a barrier from her husband, but she felt that he was so aloof. He seemed to shut her out of his thoughts, and after years of marriage, she felt he was still a stranger. When the shock of war came, the wife hoped for a happier understanding.

There was anxious waiting for news, feverish war-work amongst the soldiers and sailors, and their wives, in canteens and hospitals; all working hard to keep their minds off the horror; men rushing home on leave, theatres, dances, something to occupy every exciting minute, and then the wrench of parting.

Lady M.'s faith wore very thin. It all seemed cruel and unnecessary. And then several unpleasant things happened to make married life impossible; the home was broken up. Failure and defeat were difficult to bear. She sought refuge in war-work—work in the open-air where her quivering nerves and wounded spirit gradually found rest and health. God came no nearer. Sometimes she would catch a wonderful glimpse of the Light, as though round a corner there was a wonderful life awaiting her, if only she would really believe in Christ as her personal

Friend and lay all her troubles at His feet. *As yet, there was no will behind her wish.* She was too selfish, and still thought she could manage her own life, although she had made a tangle of her past.

Several years of separation were followed by reunion in yet another effort to make a success of married life for the sake of the children. The experiment proved unhappy, doomed to failure from the beginning through circumstances over which Lady M. thought she had no control. So, after twenty odd years of marriage, the attempt to make it a success was definitely abandoned. In a measure, she felt relieved, but her nerves had nearly given way under the strain; and her health had gone too. She was unhappy, just living from day to day, not thinking of the future, concentrating only on her children and their careers.

A few years before she had come to a cross-road, and had then deliberately decided to leave religion out of her life in favour of another influence which she felt was more necessary to her than God, only to discover again what a lot of suffering she might have saved herself and others if she had sought God and abandoned "the Influence."

And then she heard the story of the man who had come up from the depths of degradation through a simple prayer. Her spirit turned in fright at the thought of those four standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love! It would mean surrendering so much in life which had seemed so necessary for so long. But as she sat in her seat thinking of her sins and listening to the story of sin conquered, she asked: "Why should not that happen to Lady M.?"

"I tried it and it worked—like a miracle," said Lady M. afterwards to the writer. "Sins that had been beating me for years just seemed to fall away. The relief was intense. Happiness began to flood into my life. Prayer came very haltingly at first, after so many years' disuse, but the power of Christ started working in me from the first minute that I really asked

for it. And God was so kind to let me down so gently, not allowing temptation to come in my way too much at first.

"Yet, although I had, as I thought, surrendered myself to God, the weight of all my past hung exceedingly heavy. I felt there would not be any real peace till I could share it all with some trustworthy person. At first, I shrank terribly from sharing all those intimate details with another human being. But God seemed telling me to do so, and eventually I took the plunge. The relief was immediate and miraculous. The load was lifted at once and a sense of peace came.

"The person with whom I shared gave me all the sympathy and understanding help that I had craved for, and set my feet straight towards Christ and His Atonement, Whose love is always with us.

"Life now is quite new and most exciting. Something that was hard and critical has melted inside me, and love to God and to my fellow-creatures has come pouring in to take its place.

"A more unselfish love for my family has come too, and real happiness from helping anyone and everyone I come across. And no matter what happens in the future, or what troubles may come, I have the love of Christ to lean on, and His Cross to cling to for strength to carry my own cross, whatever it may be."

It was impossible at this stage to make restitution or another attempt to mend the broken home; for the husband had re-married. But Lady M. is unquestionably a new woman in Christ Jesus, and already a long way towards achieving fulness of life.

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In both those stories the prodigals were captured when disillusioned. Only by intense suffering are the majority brought home to God. Calvary must always precede the resurrection of every human soul.

The churches should train their Life-Changers to catch the prodigals when the devil has left them

stranded. There is a devoted Christian minister who now labours in the pork-pie country at Melton Mowbray—the Rev. Percy W. Hassam, who put that slogan into practice when in charge of a church at Carcroft, near Doncaster. He decided on a number of midnight services which gathered a fruitful harvest from the dregs of the mining town. Just before the public-houses closed, his church lights went up, the doors flew wide open, and the organ began a-pealing. As the drunken, semi-drunken, and besotted men stumbled past his church, they saw the minister on the steps, hat doffed, politely extending an invitation.

"What's up here?"

"A sing-song. Come in and sing."

"What do you sing?"

"Anything you like."

And in they would stumble, the poor, the wretched, the drunken, the disillusioned, the broken-hearted, sin-stained wanderers from the fold. The writer was shown an enlarged photograph of some who had so stumbled into that meeting, lured there by light and song, but who afterwards saw the True Light shining brightly through the mists and fumes of drink; and have followed it ever since.

One of them had carried for days a loaded revolver, which he intended to use on his runaway wife and her lover at the next meeting. He surrendered his revolver, his hate for his wife and her lover, and himself to Jesus Christ.

But that midnight mission produced still better stories. One happy miner sidled towards the preacher and whispered:

"Say, guvnor, can a bloke be a Christian and 'ave 'is 'alf-a-pint?"

"Of course," said the preacher.

The merry miner entered, and a week later was invited to give his witness to the new life in Christ. He stood up with determination and with not a particle of stage-fright:

" Waal, friends, I've 'ad all the beer I've wanted this week; *and I 'aven't wanted any.*"

The quaintest scene ever seen at those midnight sing-songs was when a poacher, who had just " won " a couple of rabbits, entered, followed by his dog. The rabbits were placed under the seat and the dog sat by the poacher's side. The service developed and the spiritual temperature went up.

During an interval in the music, Mr. Hassam rose and gave his new friends a few home-truths about their old enemy SIN, and more home-truths about themselves for allowing SIN to dominate them. Then he cheerily extended an invitation to all who wished to quit sin to kneel at the Communion rail and register their decision in the sight of Almighty God and their fellows.

Those heart-to-heart appeals in the mission at midnight rarely went unanswered. Almost always someone staggered along, knelt to pray while still drunk, but arose sobered and surrendered. This night, who should stumble out but the poacher, leaving his rabbits and, as he thought, his faithful dog behind.

He knelt at the Communion rail and solemnly prayed, still in a drunken stupor. Some of those in the congregation began to nudge each other and smile, for there were now two at the Communion rail, where there had only been one: the poacher plus his faithful dog. Seeing his master kneeling, the dog had passed inside the Communion rail, and was now displaying a fair imitation of his master's attitude as he sat up to beg, as though the dog had been taught at home to pray.

What became of dog or rabbit must go unrecorded—restitution may have been made, and it may not; but the poacher gave up his poaching and his drink and became as good and sober a Christian as he once was a good but drunken poacher.

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A stranger spoke across the long-distance telephone wire. Did the writer know of Group meetings in his neighbourhood? He had been telephoning to a certain

city, recently stirred by that kind of meeting; he had spoken to a Church dignitary, also on the long-distance wire, and several others, but had received no satisfaction, save the writer's Orpington address.

In the old days we should have supplied the bare information; nowadays necessity is laid upon us to do a little more. When a stranger engages the long-distance telephone to inquire about the date and place of a religious meeting, you need not be a psychologist to realise that the Spirit of God is working within that man.

Catch your fisherman when he is fishing. Would he come to tea and be one of a Group of two? A gulp of surprise. The reception was rather different from his last inquiry. A sixty-mile journey brought him to tea that afternoon. He had left his businesses in the care of the staff. He wanted to talk Groups, but we talked about himself.

To him religion was the supreme joke. He had believed in Jesu's name only as the perfect swear-word. His resentment against religion was personified in a smouldering dislike of his father, who never did anything wrong, and who was the typical Christian, so he thought. Happily married, the long-distance caller was indulging a too familiar friendship with a woman friend. He believed in nothing except in one or two persons who (he knew) were praying for him; he disbelieved entirely in his father's Christianity and in himself.

By omitting to record all the takings, he had hidden a pound a week from His Majesty's Commissioners of Income Tax for the past four years. Before he left he agreed that his chief problem had been not resentment against Christianity, but hatred of his father, who had not been so generous in some respects to him as his friends, the Commissioners of Income Tax.

He had no intention of starting as a disciple of Jesus when he arrived, but before he left he was on his knees offering his life to the King of Heaven. He returned

and shared his new decision with his father, who rejoiced; he told his woman friend that Christ had commanded him to keep His standards and she understood; he wrote a letter confessing the amount owed in Income Tax and explained why he did so—he was following the Lord.

The night before this story was written, he attended his first Group meeting, to see what it was like; and, to his bewilderment, was invited to witness among a Group of celebrities, including a General. His witness was short and delivered with great difficulty, in which the only thing he stressed was that a word which had been a joke had now become a reality. Peace within had followed a long period of separation and spiritual drought.

He thought what a mess he had made of his first public testimony; and the writer, feeling that the new convert required a little tuition before his next performance, was once more instructed and humiliated to discover that one of the listeners specially sought out this man for help, because he was the only speaker who had mirrored her internal state, for she too had come believing that religion was a joke. She now felt that religion was a "leap in the dark." We agreed, and said that it had been a leap in the dark for everyone who tried it, but everyone who had leapt towards Christ from the darkness had landed safely in the light. She went home meditating on "the leap."

The "long-distance" stranger sent a remarkable letter soon after his turn towards the Light and gives permission for its reproduction:

> You asked me to let you know how things are working out. The answer is very much better than I expected, although there are difficulties which *will* persist in getting in the way. (Curse 'em!)
>
> But I'm making progress, definitely, and beginning to live, and the feeling of being more alive every day after being stone dead is so good that one wants everyone to get the same experience.
>
> Even I, with so little experience, get quite unexpected

thrills when I find that some effort of mine in trying to pass on what I feel has been of help to someone.

My wife (who is also taking an interest and starting to put Group principles into practice) is amused at the number of people I get to read *For Sinners Only* and *God in the Shadows*. As I tell her, they helped me, and you never know if the reading won't help them. Anyway, after they have read them, I try and talk it over with them.

I think I have discovered one thing: one can't have Christianity and be miserable at the same time. If anyone is miserable, he hasn't got the real thing. Which reminds me of what Lord Wolseley said, "A man without hope makes an indifferent soldier; one without cheerfulness is worse than useless."

And as old General Booth used to say, "There is no occasion to put off the old man and put on the old woman."

It seems so extraordinary to me what pleasure there is in prayer and reading the Bible. A little while ago I was wondering why it had not appealed to me before; it was not long before I read the answer: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."

The words in your letter, "Behind you is all the power that reposes in all the Universes," contain a truth that is seldom so expressed. People believe in wireless waves, etc., but do not trouble to investigate a Power that will help them in every incident of their lives, a Power that is always at hand.

* * * * *

One of the biggest undertakings in this country, whose products are used in nearly every home, felt the time was ripe for their customers to read in their daily newspaper a description of their factory in action.

There was advertising behind the news; and money talks even in a news room. As the special correspondent detailed to spend five tiring hours investigating that factory, we made friends with the assistant managing-director, who took charge of the trip. That factory

was written up glowingly as the train sped back to St. Pancras. Seated during the whole journey with his back to the engine, the writer staggered out of the train feeling uncomfortable within; but his duck-green features received no sympathy, possibly because the organisers assumed that their own rich commodity was to blame.

Before parting, the assistant managing-director intimated that he was due to propose the toast of his chief at a forthcoming annual banquet, and hoped to shine in the process. He was so flattering as to suggest that the speech should be recited by him, but written by us.

A bargain was struck, the speech was written, and recited with fine histrionic effect. An M.P. present was so struck by the flowing toast that he came to the speaker to borrow his notes. Three guineas were received by the writer, for being ghost of the toast. Modest pay.

Eleven years afterwards there came into our hands a letter from our old friend, saying: "I am reading Russell's book—do you realise he is the man I took to —— to write an article on —— in 1922!!! All he writes is true, but I have not traversed much farther yet than the desire to do the right thing."

During the intervening eleven years this man had become Manager of an important branch of another undertaking; he had left his wife; he was living elsewhere with a woman friend. He came to dinner, and he told how his son's reference to a departed friend being happy with Christ had pulled him up with a jerk, though he had not yet decided to forsake all and follow Him. Why should he? For several hours we talked. Where was the harm in the life he lived? Why should he do otherwise?

For answer he was referred to Paul's letter to the Colossians, which warns against inordinate affection, telling us to mortify our members; which tells of the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience

and enjoins mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. . . .

Why should he do these things? he demanded.

The answer was writ bold in the context.

Because you are "the elect of God."

He stood up and meditated; then he took out his watch absent-mindedly, as men do when drawn two ways. Presently he said:

"This is Friday, January 27th," as though to impress the date on his memory. He had charm and fine manners, though the world had set its impress on his handsome features.

"May I use your telephone?"

"Of course."

"You know who I'm going to ring up?"

We knew.

The Manager telephoned to his wife.

* * * * *

"You will not be surprised, I know," he wrote later, "to learn that, after our chat on Friday—in fact, during our time together—I found myself surrendering my whole heart to the Living God. The quietness of my room gave me the surroundings I required for that outpouring of remorse which such a surrender demanded, and already I am a changed being. *You will know something of the pang repentance brings, and the sweetness too.* I have no doubt you know also the loathing that springs up when the memories of the past begin to shape themselves.

"I am trying to drive in the stakes and to be guarded against the return of the devil's hordes—I do not think they will let me go too easily.

"I am praying for guidance all the time. I do not know what is ahead, but of one thing I am sure: I am God's elect, and whatever is to be will fit in with His plan."

And later:

"I am fast gaining my grip of those tenets I held so

dear in my younger days, and which I have divorced myself from by trying to split the fundamentals. I have held two forms of truth—one, 'truth,' and the other a half-way house to deceit; and I realise that it is this that has prevented God from working through me.

"You know, I believe, that I lived several years in —— and held several religious offices there: leader of debates and chairman of a 'Royal Commission' appointed by one of the churches to diagnose the causes of non-attendance at service, etc.; and if my state of life then were known I believe it would shake the faith of many.

"But there is no reason why you should not make whatever use you think fit of my recovery. I am proud to be one of God's elect, and my testimony is His, whenever He desires it."

* * * * *

He returned to his wife and welcoming family.

* * * * *

Sometimes the question is hurled:

"You are only interested in those who are 'up and out.' What of the 'down and out'?"

A hospital porter spoke the other day at one of the writer's meetings, and described his work in carrying people to and from the operating-room, and added that one of us had recently performed a major spiritual operation on him.

We were invited to speak in one of our prisons, and some time afterwards we opened a letter beginning:

> I am a resident in —— Prison, nearing the completion of my last, and first, term of imprisonment, one of twenty months, awarded for obtaining money by false pretences.

The letter continued:

> Some very scorching, almost debasing remarks have been offered by fellow-prisoners when asked for 'an

opinion on your book, but you anticipated that in your first few lines. (" You may even hate it, as some are sure to do.")

From others there comes, in no uncertain language, a recommendation to read it, and having read and re-read it, I can assure you that to one at least your message has gone home, and at last I realise the futility of trying to run my own life.

I thank you for your part in bringing the fact home to me, and I thank God for the power to recognise it.

I believe that God has a plan in every man's life, and that when through sin we spoil that plan, God is always ready with another, and if you are part of His plan in my life, no direction of mine can affect His guidance.

Having replied to that letter, there came the following from the same English prison :

Your letter has been a great comfort to another in here, besides myself. I will not venture on giving you details, but I asked one who, at the time of the arrival of your letter was in great need of solace, to read it.

A week passed, and I thought he had laid it aside and forgotten it, but, " No," he said, " I have been reading it every night, and it has been a great help to me."

In my heart I know that the cares of to-morrow should be left until that day, but it is so difficult to put the thought into practice.

I know that there is a stern fight before me, a fight to live down the past, and I realise too well what an uphill fight it may be, but, thank God, the future will not find me wholly unprepared and unarmed, as I might have been but for the realisation of the providence of God.

The happiest life is not that which is always in the sunshine, but rather that over which a dark cloud has once hovered and lifted, and I pray that the cloud which has been and is over my life, may soon be lifted.

I have lately come to a new realisation of the meaning of prayer. Until then my prayers have been merely an expostulation against suffering, now I know that suffer-

ing is necessary to the appreciation of spiritual happiness.

We cry out against our sufferings, our temptations, we think we can stand no more, we protest that we have been tried to the utmost, but God alone knows what we cannot bear until we try.

Many have been the influences that have prepared me for the realisation, but . . . when the time comes that I shall cease to be indicated by a numerical cognomen, I, like the man you wrote of in Pretoria, shall thank my stars that I have been to prison (where I found God).

* * * * *

Many picturesque characters have passed across one's horizon recently.

One of the most picturesque is Stuart Wood, author of *Shades of the Prison House,* which describes, in language rich and fearless, his sixteen years as a convict in the prisons of England. Stuart Wood is the man who told the story of his call on Lord Justice Phillimore, whom he (as he said) " touched for a tenner."

He must have been a broth of a boy, for he is that still, in middle life. See him at the close of our week of witness in Dorchester, after our chat with two young men who had just decided to take the high-road with Christ.

Stuart Wood's face was beaming :

" Well, did you put them on the spot ? "

One had heard the great change called by various names—conversion, decision, surrender, and the like; but this was the first time one had heard the phraseology of gangsterdom introduced into evangelism.

There is humour in Life-Changing.

But before those days there had been battle.

Stuart Wood was first introduced to us by a lady of title as one whom we might help.

He had gone straight for six years, but he sprang the surprise of his criminal past after a few minutes in the house. He was told that one's past made no difference. The writer had seen black pasts become gold presents.

Of course we talked religion and disagreed. He took a copy of our book, but declined his railway fare. Then he wrote :

> I have read your book with much interest, but with small personal profit. Probably I am too unregenerate ever to experience any deep or vital interest in religion or what passes for it. In my opinion, practical social service counts for far more than spiritual snobbery.

Later he told the writer : " I be a plain, blunt man, I be " ; and so it seemed when he wrote about spiritual snobbery in his first sentence of thanks for a gift book. Moreover, he continued to be a plain, blunt man, saying :

> It is a significant fact, which most religionists prefer to ignore, that all real and enduring spiritual progress has been achieved *in the teeth of religion—not through it.* However, that is neither here nor there. We should never reach any point of agreement on the subject of religion.

The plain, blunt man received a plain, blunt reply, especially contradicting that statement about all real progress being made in " the teeth of religion."

That brought some more pungent phrases in the next letter :

> I think it only right . . . to tell you that, as far as I can gather, your outlook on religion and mine are fundamentally different. In no case can I ever profess that the synoptic Gospels reflect my views on Christianity. . . .
>
> For me there can be no question of belief in a " Risen Lord." Indeed, I am devoid of the religious temperament.

The general tenor of our reply was not so languid as usual. It occupied fourteen folios; and a journalist does not write fourteen folios for nothing readily. Having written them, we tore them up; and wrote

fourteen more. And the second letter contained, among many forgotten things, this challenge :

> The man who is prepared to step out of the dug-out of honest doubt into the no-man's land of experimental following of our Lord in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount will *not* have to wait long for supernatural knowledge to confirm his faith.

Before sending that letter we prayed that it would accomplish its purpose. A few days later the answer came.

" You may be right, but I am only concerned in making my new book better than my last."

And when he had read that, the writer said to himself, " Why waste any more time with that fellow, or in trying to be a Life-Changer? "

The answer to that query came with the next morning's post. It was so different from the blunt language of the " plain blunt man I be " that we had to do something about it immediately. Here is the surprising letter :

> I hope you will not suspect ulterior motives in what I have to say. It is that I have been thinking very seriously about what you have said in various letters, and that I believe you are right.
>
> That being so, it is up to me to tell you so. Both I and my book are dead, because neither I nor it are inspired by faith nor by any high spiritual purpose. Ever since I saw you at Orpington I have been obsessed by a sense of utter futility—though, as you know, I have kicked hard against confessing it.
>
> But there it is. I have failed in all things because my values were false and therefore useless. My other book remains unwritten for the same reason. A dozen false starts, reams of paper wasted, and a deep and abiding sense of futility. I am up against a brick wall. But I realise the trouble, and am going to do what you suggested at our first meeting—accept Guidance.
>
> Out of your own experience you say it will come. I

welcome it with all my heart and soul! Without faith ye can do nothing. That is my trouble—lack of faith. Well, I will have faith and seek inspiration where it can be found. I am convinced that only so can I ever realise whatever purpose God has for me.

After the tone of my previous letters, it is not easy to say this. But it has to be. I have been frustrated at every point, because I have been inspired by conceit and selfishness. The fixed idea is fatal to progress in any shape or form. I abandon it, and accept whatever guidance will come.

The only hope that buoys me up with courage for the future is that God will use me and whatever experience I have garnered for His Purpose. Not that I am worthy. Yet I feel within me a conviction that a course will be set. I do not know what. I will patiently wait and see.

Is it not awful to look back over the wasted years and realise that Guidance has been given again and again only to be ignored? Well, old friend, I will not turn a blind eye to it in the future. This ever-abiding sense of waste, of futility, was slowly destroying me.

For years I persisted in taking one side of the shield for both sides. This, I fear, is somewhat inchoate. But I think you will take my sincerity for granted. You may.

Not mine, but Thine, O Lord! Forgive me for my blindness of heart,

STUART WOOD.

How many readers of this book who have not been to prison could write from the depths of their soul a letter like that?

"Take him to a religious House-Party in Manchester," seemed to be the guidance.

We went, the ex-convict taking the suggestion as guidance too. So far he had not come to belief in the Atonement of Jesus Christ for him or the certainty of his salvation. But he had put himself dead in line for God's revelation.

Says Schweitzer of the African Forest, who gave up

everything—position, fame, comforts—to bury himself as a medical missionary among the neglected negroes in the heart of Africa :

> He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the suffering which they shall pass through in His Fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

We were in the middle of the Manchester House-Party, and several re-vitalised men and women had told of their escape from some of those petty sins which tempt and conquer us all. At the psychological moment, when the meeting was at its height, Stuart Wood, his past unknown to the gathering, was invited to come forward and enlighten everybody out of his own experience on What Real Sin Is.

Eyes opened and attention was rivetted when he informed everybody that he had lived a life of crime; and they realised they were being addressed by an ex-convict with a picturesque past, including sixteen years behind prison bars, Maidstone, Dartmoor, Reading, Dorchester, etc., for numerous crimes. He was one of those knowledgeable convicts who knew all the prison rules better than anybody else inside, including the Governor; and in practice the prison officials never exceed their duties with men like him, who can be so truculent over their few rights as to see they get them in the face of all authority.

He made a deep impression !

Several days later we received a copy of the *Manchester City News*, a literary paper, in which the new recruit to Jesus Christ had written an inspiring article, entitled " What Manchester Did for Me."

Here are a few quotations from Stuart Wood's article written by the man who, a fortnight before, had declared : " For me there can be no question of belief in a ' Risen Lord.' Indeed, I am devoid of the religious temperament : "

I had reached the ultimate point of sterility.

Had not I studied religion from almost every angle of modern research and scholarship? At any rate, I was no hypocrite. The line was dead, and I said so.

Then came a fourteen-page barrage in which A. J. really took his coat off and got busy. I milled what he said over in my mind and felt small. One sentence in particular hit me in the eye:

"The man who is prepared to step out of the dug-out of honest doubt into the no-man's land of experimental following of our Lord in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount will not have to wait long for supernatural knowledge to confirm his faith."

What a true prophecy!

What a new orientation it gave me! All the barriers swept away, all the sick fears and self-induced phantoms, all the bitterness and cynicism of thirty years swept away in the mighty rush of a new revelation.

The spontaneous friendliness and loving-kindness . . . had done what nearly twenty years of punishment failed to do—swept me to my knees to thank God for His goodness and loving mercy to me.

And those who would read more from the same able pen may find it in a new book, about to be published under the unusual title *Dartmoor to Calvary*, by Stuart Wood (Hodder & Stoughton).

* * * * *

These are a few of the adventures that followed one man's attempt to be used as a Life-Changer; most of them happened during a brief period of not more than about three months; and, of course, were a consequence of writing a book dealing with Life-Changing. Nevertheless, ten years of his Christian life had gone without any serious or successful attempt to direct others into Christ's Kingdom of Heaven, whilst others with less opportunity were being constantly used for the privileged work. Because they knew the way.

One of the writer's latest discoveries—it should have

been the first—was the practical value of isolating the main obstacle, the sin, which kept a man out of the Kingdom.

In his own case, many sins had produced genuine unbelief. Yet often there is much faith among "unbelievers."

People will argue for hours on points of doctrine and selfishly waste the Life-Changer's time unless he realises the need for isolating the main sin. If a man is known to be a drunkard, a Christian worker talks on that aspect of the contact's experience and shows him how Christ's power can work through him to victory.

But there are many hidden sins that have to be talked about and shared if others, seemingly perfectly respectable, are to be won. The earnest evangelist for Jesus will be led to discover the weak spot and be guided to say the right thing to strengthen it. For He who inspires the Life-Changer is also at the same moment working within the contact, since "every thought of holiness is His alone."

But do not waste time proving the whole Bible, defending every renegade rector, or every Christian hypocrite. Time is too short, even to defend yourself. Admit your own mistakes rather, and then both stand face to face with Christ Jesus.

Soon you will be hearing which of Christ's four standards of purity, honesty, love, or unselfishness the other is breaking. Then challenge!

It is a practical way. It works.

Once we wasted several hours urging a youth to surrender, but we were held up because we did not know his problem. Some days later, when he revealed it after we had gained his confidence by admitting that we had once been beaten by the same sin, he made his full decision in a few minutes, and witnessed boldly that night to a thousand people.

And if you hear a critic—like a certain kindly Canon the writer knows—saying that every priest, parson, or minister could tell stories of changed lives similar

to those herein recorded but for the secret of the confessional, you may retort, as he did:

"Why don't *you* get permission to publish, since such publication leads to more changes?"

Where should we be but for similar stories of those early converts, which St. Luke frankly tells without pleading the confessional's secrecy?

Is there any need for further secrecy when the changed life is prepared "to tell his rapture all abroad"?

One way to influence another to follow Jesus Christ is by a patient and persistent series of kindnesses, often without saying a word about religion.

Thus, instead of truculently tackling your neighbour at breakfast with the challenge, "Why aren't you a Christian?" forestall his appetite by passing the marmalade. The Church Militant must never be the Church Truculent.

The key to successful Life-Changing was found early in life by Samuel Chadwick, as his able biographer, the Rev. Norman G. Dunning, reveals. Sam said:

"In the conversion of sinners, it is not according to our culture and natural talent, but according to our consecration and faith. I have seen it everywhere. In Leeds an unlettered woman in one year led twenty-six grown-up people to Jesus Christ. She couldn't read, write, or argue, but she could make gruel for the sick, and she could pray and tell others the wonderful things Jesus had done for her."

Sam Chadwick observed that people came to see Jesus, not for His sake only, "but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead." Lazarus fetched the crowd, and Sam Chadwick in his missions inspired his supporters to pray for a Lazarus. That Christ would raise some well-known sinner from the dead. And Lazarus came: a man whose brutality and wickedness were a byword. It was talked of as a miracle. They hadn't long to wait for the crowd. The largest building in Stacksteads Valley would not hold the people who came, not to hear Sam preach,

but that they might see Lazarus. Hundreds of great, big, rough fellows were changed, and many godless women too.

Sam's Lazarus had been guilty of every brutal crime in the calendar except murder, and the exception was of grace. He had fought a fierce bulldog, with his hands tied behind his back, worried rats with his teeth, eaten glass, swallowed knives, smashed furniture, wrecked public-house bars, mauled policemen, and fought all comers. He was a terror. His presence in a religious meeting was a sensation. Next morning he was first at the quarry, and very quietly he told every man who came what had happened.

"Then hell was let loose. Men who a week before dare hardly have looked at him, sneered and taunted, tempted and teased the great giant. He bore it meekly until Friday. Then, as they were moving a huge piece of rock, it caught his finger, and before he knew it he swore a great oath. Then they laughed with a great laughter, and asked what had happened to his religion. They released his finger and helped him to bind it up. To their surprise, he dropped on his knees, clasped his hands, and while the blood dripped off his elbow, he cried to God in a great agony of soul. When peace came, he rose quietly, and every man of them was standing with his cap in his hand. Next Sunday morning the town turned out to see Bob go to chapel. One would have thought the Mayor and Corporation were going. . . . The common people, the disreputable people, the scoffing people, the praying people—all sorts of people came that they might see Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead. The revival went on for months."

"Do you want to know how to fill empty churches?" asked Samuel Chadwick. "Here is the answer: Get your Lazarus." And get *Samuel Chadwick* by Norman G. Dunning as well.

A clergyman asked the writer if all the changed lives continued changed. Canon Green estimated

that sixty per cent. of confirmed persons relapsed. The casualties in Nonconformity are also heavy. Christ says: "Will ye also go away?" How many followers of Jesus were there on the morning of the first Good Friday? Even if all whose lives are changed to-day forsake Him and flee, as they did in Gethsemane, there is always the probability of their return. Many prodigal sons now being admitted to the churches are but homing backsliders.

When the disciples lost their cowardice and returned to their high calling, they found that their training under the Master was still invaluable. (Peter said, "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how He said . . .") Just as the backslider, his mind swept and garnished, may be the medium of seven devils when he becomes a worldling, so, when he returns to the fold, his sinful past and his previous piety can be capitalised for unlimited good through the regenerative workings of the Holy Spirit. Even murderers are potential martyrs.

There is no work so ennobling as mending men; there is no joy like the joy of being a co-worker together with God out among the prodigals in the Wilderness. And if no results are ever seen, there is no need to despair. The task is set and its accomplishment is sure. Jesus came to this earth under orders which are being carried out and will be executed to the uttermost.

Somebody said of Paul that the reason why he, one of the few, had never backslidden was because his first prayer after he recognised the Master was:

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

He was given a roving commission as Life-Changer among Gentile prodigals.

* * * * *

When a man's spiritual needs have been fully met, he is then qualified to meet the needs of others, though his call may not be so startling, or his commission so sweeping as St. Paul's. But he may be assured that opportunities will arise to forthtell the news,

opportunities natural and unforced, provided he is constantly surrendered, spiritually clean and ever-ready.

God has been continually throwing the spiritually needy across the path of consecrated people all down the Christian era; and now in our own time and our own experience He continues to do so. Sometimes He does the opposite thing, and directs the consecrated out of his course on to the path of the spiritually needy as He directed Philip. There are no boundaries to God's plans and no details overlooked.

For God is the Great Life-Changer.

* * * * *

Always remember that "Without Me, ye can do nothing." Feeble illiterates in the Welsh Revival achieved results which confounded the worldlings and theologians. "The Breath of God" is available to those who resolutely seek it.

Live in daily expectation of its coming in power:

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me,
Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me,
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

CHAPTER V DOES GOD GUIDE?

I will guide thee with mine eye.
David.

* * * * *

In all thy ways acknowledge Him
And He shall direct thy paths.
Solomon.

* * * * *

The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
Milton.

A CONTROVERSY is proceeding in the religious world about Guidance—is it a guided or an unguided controversy?—an almost forgotten essential of Christianity, until re-emphasised by the Oxford Group Movement.

The controversy is not so much as to whether God guides, but whether He guides in the secular as well as in the spiritual, in a particular as well as in a general way. And *how* He guides?

* * * * *

Much misunderstanding might have been avoided if some of those claiming Guidance had remembered that we are finite beings and cannot therefore claim infallibility. Yet no Christian can deny the fact and the necessity for Guidance without representing the work of the Holy Spirit in individuals as of no practical value. The best way to answer those who doubt the fact of Guidance is to ask what other criterion is to be accepted? If a person in union with God arrives at a decision, is he more likely or less likely to be right? Is not that the final question?

This does not mean, as many Illuminist mystics have

thought, that all actions are so inspired as to be infallibly right. Rather is it as the Contemplative mystics say, that the action taken, though perhaps poor and foolish, is the best possible in the circumstances. After everything physically and spiritually has been done to ascertain the right course, it is then overruled by God for His ends. We cannot be infallible, for we are not God. But if we really seek counsel from Him we are more likely to be right than if we toss a coin, or try any other way of ascertaining which is the right thing to do.

Then, does God guide?

A frank answer is given by one who ought to know out of his own experience, for the Archbishop of York says in *Christus Veritas*:

> I have found that . . . when I have been taking due trouble about my own devotional life, *I have frequently felt an unreasoned impulse* to go and see someone whom (as it turned out) I was able to help considerably. I have also noticed that if I get slack about my prayers, such coincidences cease.

The Archbishop receives Guidance through unreasoned impulses; so do some of the clergy. A rector in a country parish told the writer a fascinating story concerning one of those "unreasoned impulses."

His wife and son were residing with him in Switzerland. One day the Rector took his small boy to the top of a slight incline, put the lad on a toboggan and was about to seat himself when a warning message was formed in his mind as distinct and clear-cut as though it had been spoken:

"*If you go down there you will break your leg.*"

The message seemed farcical, for the declivity was so gentle. He pushed off and the toboggan glided down the slope; then it came to a ridge, dropped more steeply, and overturned.

* * * * *

That afternoon a Swiss boy, who could not speak English, dashed into the peaceful chalet, where the Rector's wife waited and wondered. The pencilled message he delivered begged her to come as soon as she could, as there had been an accident.

In a ramshackle café on the hillside she found her husband, lying in great agony, his leg broken in several places, with her son crying helplessly at his side. Guidance had come swiftly—and been disregarded.

But here is the strangest part of this extraordinary and true story. The leg was set and bandaged, but it was clumsily done. When the broken pieces had grown together, examination showed the damaged leg to be one inch longer than the other.

The Rector was friendly with a Swiss prayer circle, led by a humble peasant woman who had achieved miraculous results through prayer and laying-on of hands. She visited her sick friend, and when the doctor insisted that his leg must be broken and re-set, so that it would grow level with the other, she begged the Rector not to agree.

He replied that he had no faith in a miracle being performed apart from medical skill; but because of her faith, her reputation, and her insistence, he would trust himself to her prayers. One of the prayer circle was a Swiss engine-driver on the Alpine railways, a nerve-straining vocation, surely needing the support of faith and prayer. The woman of faith and the engine-driver knelt by the Rector's bedside and prayed. Then the woman "laid hands on" the injured leg. Prayers continued to be offered. After a time the doctor made a fresh examination to compare the leg with the X-ray photograph.

As the bandages were removed, the doctor stepped backwards, incredulous of what he saw. Both legs were now the same length.

The Rector treasures the X-ray photographic evidence of what prayer achieved after Guidance had been disobeyed.

It can be seen in his own home in Dorset. His wife corroborated this strange narrative.

* * * * *

The same Rector told the writer another remarkable experience of a clear voice heard in his mind, this time not of warning, but of command. There had been a revival of religion in Perth, N.B., where he was Rector of the Episcopal Church. His own religious experience had deepened considerably, but the man who had undergone the most startling quickening was a Sergeant-major, whose life was completely transformed. For a time he lived in a joyous state. Always his thoughts were in the higher realm of the Spirit, and consequently he entered into real power. His marvellous transformation from the old life of cursing and intemperance astonished everybody.

Then, as sometimes happens with new converts, he was seen no more at the church. One evening the Rector returned home exhausted with the day's activities. Seated comfortably in his armchair, a clear message was formed in his mind:

"Go and see the Sergeant-major."

The night was uninviting: a night of wind and storm. The Rector had no car and no inclination to trudge three miles through drenching rain to see someone who might have no desire to see him even were he at home. But this time the mystic voice was obeyed. At the end of a three-mile trudge he was welcomed by the Sergeant-major's wife, who told him she was delighted he had come, for his arrival was most opportune. Had he come before, it would not have been, for only ten minutes ago, her husband, after suffering concussion from an accident, had now returned to consciousness—indeed, those few minutes were the only lucid and sober period during the past six weeks of intoxication and sullenness to which he had given himself.

The Sergeant-major had backslidden into his old wild life; he had thrown away his religious experience; he

was more intemperate than ever; he cursed constantly, and ill-treated her brutally.

The Rector and the Sergeant-major prayed together for a time. Presently the sick man called to his wife and apologised for his wild behaviour during the past month. He had determined on a fresh attempt to follow the Lord. For him restitution had to be made immediately; and at home, to his forgiving wife; although death-bed repentance rarely extends to restitution.

"Before I left that house," said the Rector, "the Sergeant-major recovered the old peace and joy that had distinguished him during our special services."

Refreshed in his own spirit, because the Light had returned to the backslider, the Rector stepped lightly homeward, indifferent now to those three miles which had seemed so unattractive when the command came to go forth into the night. For when God guides, He too provides strength for the journey.

Two days later, the Sergeant-major died in hospital.

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That story illustrates what the Archbishop of York defined as an "unreasoned impulse" prompting a call upon one needing ministrations; only here words were formed in the brain and seemed to come from without. Thought transference, or telepathy, would be advanced by some as an explanation, although, as it takes more than ten minutes to walk three miles, even if one is a University blue, that explanation may not fit the case of the Sergeant-major; and it certainly could not apply to the former story of the broken leg. If his leg had possessed a brain, it had no subtler means of knowing it was going to be broken than the rest of the Rector.

And where was the thought-transference in the following incident?

The writer's two sons were playing as children in a small conservatory. They had a right to play there,

and often did so. Their parents were out, and there was no need for them to be disturbed.

But a maid, working in the kitchen, felt an "unreasoned impulse" to stop her work, enter the conservatory, and tell the two children to go out and play in the garden. Having done this without rhyme or reason, she returned to her kitchen.

Soon afterwards part of the conservatory roof crashed in!

* * * * *

Nevertheless, the writer has had more difficulty with Guidance than with any other Christian essential, although time after time he has seen things happen in his own life, often tiny things, which suggested that all were but pieces in a vast pattern, planned for him without any relation to what he would have planned for himself. Tall oaks from little acorns grow. The smallest things lead to big happenings.

He has spent a long time seeking direction concerning the message to be delivered to a large congregation; and there has been no answer. Then, just as he was entering the pulpit, someone whispered a word, which changed immediately the tenor of the address; the answer had come at the last moment.

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In August 1931, a casual word, so spoken, turned his mind and his steps westwards. Hardly realising why he went, he found himself a few days later on board the *Aquitania*, bound for New York. He would see the United States for the first time; but why was he really going? There were several ostensible motives, but of the real motive he was himself unaware until some time after he arrived. He intended to write a novel, a tale of two cities, London and New York; but it was never written. Nevertheless, his journey was conceived in Guidance given long before, as became evident within the first few weeks.

Before leaving England, he was made acquainted psychically with two persons he had never seen, of

whom he had never heard until he reached America, though he was not told their names supernaturally. He came to know of one through the vivid dream of a relative, who described the man and the encounter which subsequently took place. The man's motive was sinister enough. One evening, the writer strolled down Broadway, then in the full blaze of electric glory. Suddenly the "psychic contact" appeared, and told an alluring story, conceived to catch the stranger within the gates. It meant only a short walk to investigate. But the evil purpose was too apparent in his eyes, though he was not immediately recognised as the man seen in the vision and described.

A converted crook explained later to the writer what would have followed obedience to that surprise call in Broadway.

"You would have been caught in a gyp-joint."

"What's a gyp-joint?"

"A place where you lose your money, your clothes, and perhaps your life."

* * * * *

But there was another person to be encountered in New York, whom the writer had already met in a vision three thousand miles away in space and at least three years before in time; though in the exact place where the meeting occurred—in a New York skyscraper.

The features were clearly remembered and were identical; details of dress and colouring were the same, although three years had elapsed between the vision and the reality.

Following the meeting, recollection of that vision in England rushed back with frightening force. For a long time he puzzled over the phenomenon. Why that foreshowing of this apparently harmless person? For time showed that harmless was the correct word. Also that the evil to be feared was not in the stranger. Yet without that foreshowing the writer would have crashed as surely and completely as though he had leapt from the balustrading of the skyscraper in which they

met. Neither the last book nor the present one could have been written but for that guided prevision.

Then why *had* he gone to New York?

For the first few months he assumed that his own haphazard purposes, following his own directing intelligence, had impelled him there. Soon after landing, England left the Gold Standard, and nearly a third of his ready money disappeared in an autumn night.

By now America had caught the depression. American journals, formerly gold-mines, accustomed to pay what seemed fabulous sums to English journalists for stories and articles, began to rely almost exclusively on the office staff, and to accept few outside contributions. Through the fall in advertising, and consequent reduction in size of newspapers and magazines, many American journalists became redundant, and were being discharged freely from all the offices. What could be the objective of an English journalist in this unpromising situation?

He was invited to join a flying team of the Oxford Group, touring a dozen states of the Union. Members of the team were living on faith and prayer. They practised entire dependence upon God, while energetically doing the next best thing, the thing they believed to be right and guided. Through their dependence upon God for life, health, supplies, protection, they professed independence of man, since the Divine life and power nourished and supported them; and guided them in all their ways.

Fine!

But over in England were wife, family, and home establishment: these had to be maintained, and faith and prayer would not do that on this team tour, for the "income" was all out-go.

"God will guide and God will provide. Pray for both," said the Team.

What time could be spared from packing and unpacking at unearthly hours of day or night, when not

addressing meetings or admiring American scenery, or African piccaninnies, or sleeping in a new motor-car, which maintained an average speed honourable to those long, deserted roads of Indiana—indeed, the writer has spent hours sleeping as the car raced along at 60 m.p.h.—that time could be spent quietly seeking Guidance. Yet nothing ever came but some old text, floating up from Sunday School days, which urged one, with aggravating insistence, to " Go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do." An old-fashioned text, a will-o'-the-wisp to be chased by the Guidance-mad, thought the writer, who did not then understand that God sometimes Guided as Peter, when he remembered the words of the Lord, was Guided.

We chased that will-o'-the-wisp into the capital of Kentucky. We conversed with newspaper editors and with policemen wearing bandoliers charged with ball cartridge. We saw negroes travelling in their own sections of public carriages; and we missed the local horse-race, proudly described by sporting Americans as " the Kentucky Derby—the greatest race on earth." One day we entered a hatter's to buy a new bowler. The shopkeeper was sorry, but he didn't sell bowlers. We pointed to some in a show-case. " Oh, you mean Durrby ! "

The writer entered a barber's shop and was taken in hand by an assistant, when there entered a Louisville police officer, who seemed to have come straight from Hollywood. He swung his club, he stared authoritatively around; presently he surveyed us helpless in the barber's chair, strode across, and extended a powerful hand. What on earth had this greeting to do with Guidance?

American ways dawned slowly on the writer. At last he grasped the meaning of that strong, official hand; grasped the hand too, and shook it !

In Louisville, Kentucky, he had met a friendly cop, who took to an Englishman on sight and wanted to

talk. We talked for ten minutes or so, just long enough for the writer to obtain a "gramophone" record of his new friend's life story, through force of habit.

Yes, the officer had twice found it necessary to fire his gun at a human being while on duty, that aggressive-looking revolver now in readiness at his hip. It was like this. He was conveying a negro to prison, and that darned negro had taken it into his contrary head to jump clear and bolt as they sped along. He fired six shots without hurting anybody, not even the escaping negro, who vanished.

The next time he used his gun was in a coloured apartment-house where there was some quarrelling. He felt he must take no risk with a negro who looked so dangerous. So he blazed away! And missed again! We breathed freely. There would have been no real danger had we not shaken that policeman's hand.

One of the quaintest sights was seen below our bedroom when a green armoured car, with narrow slits instead of windows, through which armed guards could fire, stopped outside a bank to deliver and receive gold, silver, notes, and valuables required for the day.

Sometimes, when leaving one of the chain restaurants in New York, we would pass several armed men who had just arrived for the takings, which they transferred, under revolver guard, to their armoured car outside. Once we entered a New York bank and were surprised *not* to see a man with a revolver standing on duty immediately inside. It being a fashionable bank, we presumed that it was too polite to vaunt an armed guard who might be hidden somewhere. We accosted the smart grey-coated attendant:

"Why no revolver?"

The attendant smiled.

Then thrust back his coat, ever so slightly. There was the ever-ready gun!

Over at Brooklyn at the time of our visit, the gangsters were demanding a rake-off from garage proprietors, who, in turn, had to charge more to car owners to meet

the tribute. One garage proprietor declined to pay these illegal dues; his *clientèle* enlarged, for his prices were more reasonable, until the night of the raid, when a gang of toughs, suitably armed, damaged every exterior and slashed through every cushion inside the garaged cars.

One other cheerful idea of the gangster fraternity was to levy tribute on those strong-nerved "steeplejack" window-cleaners, who, supported by ropes, earned their daily bread a thousand feet above the city. Unless they contributed, they were threatened with a fall; grim stories were told of acids eating through supports when men were at work.

Consequently a law-abiding Englishman can understand the need for he-men in the New York police force; though he was surprised when that Sing Sing team of footballers, composed of convicts, who had won everywhere, were matched against their old enemies, the pick of the New York Police. Result—the police walked through them, like a machine-gun corps through a horde of dervishes.

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But this journalistic digression does not solve the problem of Guidance.

Although we sought leading in Louisville, none came. We glided from the city, out through Kentucky, then between those great shoulders of the Cumberland Gap, discovered by Daniel Boone, intrepid pioneer of the troubled days when Red Indians used red war-paint and collected white men's scalps. The leader of our party was a University graduate and a Presbyterian minister; but he had learned an Indian war-whoop, which he occasionally released to chill our spines in the tropical heat of the lone spaces. He declined the suggestion that his echoing whoop would make a stirring opening for a Group meeting.

Asheville, ringed with mountain beauty, was bankrupt—no scope just then for big business or big journalism in that majestic city. On to Richmond,

Virginia, through shimmering level fields of fragrant tobacco, ripe sugar-canes, and fairy cotton—fluffy snowballs dangling from tiny currant-bushes.

Visit America in September, slip down into Tennessee or old Virginia and see the beauty of the cotton-fields, for when you return to New York you will probably meet no one who has seen cotton growing; and Americans will be as enviably interested in your stories of their own cotton-fields as the New Zealander in the Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's.

No guidance in Asheville, none in Richmond, none in Baltimore. ("I'm off to Philadelphia in the morning.") On to Washington, the capital, with its fine avenues reaching outwards from the centre, as spokes from a graceful wheel; out to its wide blue rim, the lovely Potomac, flowing through green parks, under a glorious bridge, down to Mount Vernon, where Washington lived, and died on that four-poster bedstead, which is bigger than it looks, for Washington was tall. Here he lies buried with his wife in an open vault, for all to see.

Mount Vernon, set on a hill above the river, is pure delight. Washington knew where to choose his place of rest; his eye was as true for a beauty spot as for a battlefield.

One even accepted the presence, and the position, of the slaves' quarters—for the slaves had gone.

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Before leaving the capital, we discovered a "toe" in the river that flows around Washington; Potomac is not pronounced Pot-o-Mac, but P-toe-Mac, on which it was of course "all quiet."

The Capitol at Washington may soon need re-decorating; the impressive Lincoln Memorial does credit both to the city and the immortal President; there is a thrill in ascending that five-hundred-feet-high obelisk which is the Washington Memorial. But the War Memorial outside Washington, with its grave of the Unknown Warrior and its majestic marbles, is worth a transatlantic journey.

The spirit of George Washington will not feel uneasy over his country's ingratitude. Pass down any avenue of the capital, and if you do not see the name Washington appearing and reappearing often, it will not be the fault of American sign-writers.

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No definite Guidance came in the city of Washington, nor for a time in the city of New York.

Many weeks alone in New York, moodily wondering. What could Manhattan Island have been like before Empire State thrust upwards from its centre with the speed of Jonah's gourd? Wherever we went in and around New York, our eyes were always drawn back to that dominating skyscraper—a mountain-and-a-quarter in height—one thousand two hundred and fifty feet, carrying one hundred and two floors.

Many hours were given to observing Empire State in all its changing phases; for both Barnum and Bunyan delighted in this monarch of Fifth Avenue. Once, in the afternoon, we saw a sickle moon drifting across its observation tower; both impressed us by their elevated remoteness as they met and passed.

We have seen the sun go blazing down over the mile-wide Hudson River, changing the aluminium sides of Empire State into quivering gold. Presently, as the sun deepened, the monarch's flanks became a burning orange; then changed to a warm purple; and presently donned an evening gown of gleaming black velvet, from which came a myriad twinkling lights, the massive monument, clad in jewels, slipped from the starry firmament above.

As the sun melted behind the artificial mountains, Empire State and its smaller progeny began to build new skyscrapers across New York with ever-lengthening shadows, climbing each other's slopes; negro skyscrapers these, contrasting sharply with those platinum blondes, the permanent pyramids, as the Africans of Harlem contrast with the white dictators of New York.

Aeroplanes circle and pass by day and sometimes by night; Akron, the world's largest airship, salutes and passes down Broadway to her ultimate fate in the Atlantic. A baby airship hovers and is moored to the tower of Empire State; though she does not stay long—just long enough to record the achievement—and there is no need of those who stand ready equipped to cut away; just in case the law of gravity resents too much trifling with its age-long dignity.

At Christmas all the lights but one row vertically and one row horizontally will be turned out in a sky-scraper, heralding Christmas with the Sign of the Cross.

One night the lights of Empire State are turned off suddenly; and others follow, though not simultaneously, for there has been no rehearsal—a city's respect to the memory of Edison.

Sometimes we have looked down on flights of pigeons sweeping around our skyscraper, though far below.

Smoothly and swiftly we ascend the monarch of Fifth Avenue; eighty floors non-stop; at the top the air seems to press our ears. Discharged on to a vast concourse, on Labour Day, the American Bank Holiday, we mingle with some five hundred or more holidaying Americans, walking admiringly around the pyramid's open collar, proudly enjoying their inheritance for a radius of perhaps a hundred miles to the circular horizon.

You look down, over the shoulders of other artificial mountains, until you see, not New York—but an architect's plan of the city of pyramids; ten or eleven long avenues dividing the Island lengthwise for miles; and on to short cross-town streets joining East River with the Hudson, rivers hardly more than a mile apart.

A vast square of green, with stunted trees, to the north is Central Park. Their roots cannot penetrate far into Manhattan Rock.

You lean over—there is nothing to stop you; you can jump over—there is nothing to stop you, for about a thousand feet sheer.

Involuntarily one recoils from the sheer drop. Over there is an Italian, accompanied by his small schoolgirl daughter. They have no nerves. He lifts her up so that she can see straight down to Broadway, running diagonally across the city from south-east to north-west. Another twenty floors or so up, and the top of the observation tower is reached. Aluminium everywhere. From this tower, the one hundred and second floor, down to where we were on the eighty-sixth, there is sufficient drop for the man who recently tried it, to kill himself, without taking the second plunge of a thousand feet below.

At night, when illuminated, this observation tower reminded us of Eddystone Lighthouse; flame-colour at first, afterwards silver, it suggested nothing so much as a colossal night-light; in fact, Empire State at night is the free nightlight for the million babes of Li'l ol' New York.

Empire State is a noble tower; a sermon in aluminium; inspiring us to soar to its own nobility. He is indeed a monarch at all times of the day and night, in sunlight and shadow; with the rain sweeping down his silvered length; with the clouds curling into smoke-rings around his powerful neck. Such varying climate is encountered down those geometric sides that we may perhaps be forgiven for expecting a handkerchief, dropped from the top, after passing through fog, sunshine, and shadow, to be picked up at the base washed and ironed—in this country so wonderfully up to date. Anyway, the joke can be no worse than the one Americans were making during this time of slump and crisis! It was so silent on Wall Street that you could hear the dividends pass.

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The astutest of many astute devices seen in that country of big buildings and big business was the method of traffic acceleration under the Hudson River.

In that long one-way traffic tunnel, above which

giant Cunarders pass to dock, down into which one pictures the *Mauretania's* bows suddenly penetrating, there is an installation of running electric lights timed to twenty-five miles an hour. There is no order to speed up, although cops on the platform know how to give an order; but no motor-driver worth his Statue of Liberty ever allows those running lights to overtake him!

So the traffic moves swift under the Hudson. English motorists passing through Blackwall Tunnel might also enjoy chasing moving electric lights, especially those who dislike petrol fumes and suffer from claustrophobia, a word our psychologists use for those who dread confined spaces.

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And as this book was leaving for the press we were told a new story about that same famous Blackwall Tunnel, new because it has taken fifty years to get into print, but nevertheless true. Bunyan and Barnum quarrelled over its admission, and in a weak moment, Bunyan lost the round.

The tunnel was just about finished when there were shown into its vast depths nine or ten councillors, mighty proud of their achievement, though the engineers were under the impression that they had done it. Silk hats, aldermanic waistlines, and bottles of champagne floated into the central section, made buoyant for everybody and everything by a liberal use of compressed air which kept the water from entering.

Of course the councillors decided to drink to the success of their wonderful achievement, and generously invited the staff to join in. (It may have been rate-aided champagne.) The staff declined and advised the councillors against drinking, explaining that champagne does not mix with compressed air. The visitors disregarded the warning, although neither froth nor bubbles came from their wine.

Presently they left. When they entered the air-lock, one of the engineers began decompressing the

air, whereupon the compressed bubbles in the champagne did their work, to the visitors' general distress. All had abdominal pains, one was foaming at the lips, another was rolling in agony on the floor of the new Blackwall Tunnel.

Hustled back into the compressed air again, their pains ceased at once. A doctor was sent for, and he ordered them to rest on some benches. One by one the councillors submitted to the indignity of being relieved of their champagne with a stomach-pump, while the staff looked on, some with sympathy, all with amusement. Thus was Blackwall Tunnel christened with champagne.

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The American custom that makes the least appeal to an Englishman's heart relates, of course, to his head, and was happily epitomised by Cleve Hicks, when he greeted the writer with:

"How do you like paying three shillings for a hair-cut?" Which was an under-statement, for, having replied to the hairdresser's query, that he could rub on brilliantine if he liked, he found himself charged another sixpence for hair-oil. It was encouraging to remember that a barbers' training school was on the floor above, where prices were graded according to the performer's experience, until at the far end a newcomer with no money could have his hair cut and be shaved for nothing—by an absolute novice. New York is a hard place for the stoney-broke, but if you can take a few knocks and have small ears—it has its compensations. And though its streets are not paved with gold, they *are* paved, some with chewing-gum.

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But to admire Americans, admirable though many are, or American cities, inspiring though some are, was not the reason why the writer was guided to New York; so he at last discovered.

One evening, when lying in his bed at the top of a New York skyscraper, inspiration came suddenly to

write *For Sinners Only*. At one moment, he had no idea what his future plans would be. He prayed, and within half an hour he found the theme of that book—lying on his brain! Immediately the thought came he had no doubt but that it was Guided; no need to argue; it was something different; placed there assuredly by a Power that answers prayer, after he had been led across the world to receive it. He saw now that the book could not have been written in London, without visiting America, nor perhaps anywhere but in the place where it originated. Whatever its faults, errors maybe of emphasis, though not of fact, he has still no doubt that it was a Guided book, one which has been freely discussed among religious people of most countries, and by worldlings as well, translated (or being translated) into about ten languages, and made use of to turn numbers to Christianity. Obviously it had to be written by somebody; and so, alone in a skyscraper in New York:

> Anybody might have found it but—
> His whisper came to me.

Clear Guidance of that intensity does not come to order. Though he looks back on many instances of special Guidance, the writer only remembers two brightly luminous flashes coming at the moment he sought them, passing across his brain with a luminosity that could be felt; compared with other thoughts, they resembled a shooting star, harpooning down the still heavens.

Unquestionably they do not always come on demand, unless the urgency is imperative. Sometimes not then—as luminous thoughts; for there are many expressions of God's plan for us. Guidance may come by post, or by a newspaper paragraph. (Perhaps these luminous flashes were permitted to come, but only occasionally, as signposts to beckon us forward.)

We must beware of asking God to stand and deliver just to satisfy a passing caprice for special Guidance,

or because we have not the faith to trust God for yet another twenty minutes. Though we may ever hear the inner voice saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

St. Paul did not always get the direct or special Guidance he sought. He would write, "The Spirit speaketh expressly," at one time; but another time, after giving his common-sense view of Christian discipline, to suit the "present distress," he would qualify his ruling by adding, "I speak this, not by commandment, but by permission," or, "I *think* I have the Spirit of God."

So then Paul would receive direct commands, and sometimes direct permission, but sometimes his only Guidance was his native common-sense, of which he had an ample stock, and which he felt was not contrary to the Holy Spirit's leading, although the Holy Spirit gave him no special sign. But that was Guidance too. He was moving in the circle of God's will.

Sometimes St. Paul was directed to others for Guidance. After fourteen years, he was Guided by special revelation to go up to Jerusalem to lay before those who were of repute the Gospel which he had preached, "Lest by any means I should be running, or have run in vain."

A consecrated friend, who always looks for Guidance, says, "The following came to me in the train this morning."

It arrived the day the book was finished:

The real problem of divine Guidance reaches its acute stage when the choice is between many pathways, each one of which seems sacred, and each one of which would seem to lead to God. "For I am in a strait betwixt two," said St. Paul.

Here you have St. Paul writing, "What I shall choose for myself I do not know. I am held fast from two sides, having my desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, but to abide in the flesh is more necessary because of you."

Get right down to the Apostle's thinking. He admits this compulsion from two directions. He frankly acknowledges that his desire goes in one direction rather than another. There is a way which to him is far better. Against this desire and this sense of compulsion there arises in his mind a new consideration—the need of others. One compulsion is strengthened by his own personal preference. The other compulsion is strengthened by the urgency and necessity of the people round him. To put the case in our own speech, where we are in anxious perplexity is not when we can see thirty on one side and seventy on the other, but when we can see what we call fifty-fifty.

We must always remember that Divine Guidance has significance only to those who are living the Christian life. This does not mean, of course, that the Divine Spirit never visits those who are not Christians, that holy voices do not arrest the evil in their sinful enticements, and that if a man be ever so evil and cries for Guidance he will not be directed. It simply means that these are cases where, generally speaking, the pathway is clear, the issue is plain. The direct commands of God admit of no compromise, or rather they should not admit of any compromise.

It is to be feared, however, that the interpretation which we give even to direct commands is very largely governed by the inner secret ends and thoughts. It is quite a common thing for a man to hear the voices of God that he wants to obey, and not hear the voices that he ought to obey. This is not a discussion as to whether we should obey the clear and the emphatic and the decisive. It is a word of guidance and comfort for those souls who have to choose not between the better and the best, but from a number of voices, all equally excellent.

What is really to guide us? I have a friend who at such times has but one test. He always chooses the hardest thing, the course which will make the most exacting demands upon his faith and upon his exper-

ience. That is the course he follows. This, perhaps, may seem an approximation to the Apostle's phrase "Nevertheless, it is more necessary that I should abide." Paul's health was frail. The limits of his earthly course were nearly reached. He had endured much. One catches the tone of weariness in his voice. To depart and be with Christ would indeed be far better, but to abide in the flesh, that is the harder thing, and one can feel that it is the harder thing which his devoted nature embraces.

Is this an infallible guide? I am not sure. Here again perhaps temperament plays a great part. There are some very good people who naturally want to do the easiest thing. After all, these thoughts lead on to the ultimate question, and this ultimate question of Divine Guidance is, in the end, the spiritual illumination of the human mind by constant fellowship with God.

Guidance comes to the rescue of the upright in heart. The final questions of Divine Guidance must be settled by the mind instructed by the manifold illuminations of sacred communions. We become qualified to judge by the perfection of our thinking, and that is reached when we learn to think in the presence of God, and in the light of the holiest. If at such a time the hardest course involves the greatest constraint, let it be followed. Experience teaches us that such decisions hold within them the highest satisfaction.

There is a saying, "When in doubt do nothing." I confess, with something like penitence, that I have often found this course a solution. Sometimes a crisis is of our own creating. The problems which we think so imperative are made so because of impatience, or selfishness, or self-seeking. The very fact that we cannot decide is significant. It may be that sometimes the better nature almost unconsciously is just neutralising the lower. Time is a great revealer. It seems a strange thing to say that time is a great solvent.

There are chapters in every devout Christian's life when, simply because he has waited, difficulties have seemed to pass away, perplexities have disappeared, and the way has become plain. Here again what has been written applies. The ear trained to the holy voice, and the mind instructed in the teaching and example of Jesus, will, in waiting upon God, find a solution. Let it ever be remembered that God has always honoured the human mind. He does not regard us as automatons. The dignity and liberty of a reasonable being are expressed in all His revelations to men. We live in the age of the New Testament, and not of the Old. God calls us into His service, He allows us to share the mystery and the glory of His redeeming purpose. He gives to us the rich assurances of our forgiveness and our sonship, and then says to us, " I will not leave you, I will abide with you until the end of the ages."

You see, Divine Guidance has within it many factors. There is the human side as well as the Divine side. Of course, they are inseparable, but the point is this—if we want to follow the mind of God, we must have our mind disciplined by God's voice and teaching and experience. As I write these words, I am haunted by the memory of that tragic hour in the Garden, in which we see our Saviour as though shrinking from the bitter cup of which He knew He had to drink. It is almost too sacred for words, and I would be the last to claim to expound those momentous utterances. But can we feel in the phrase, " Not My will, but Thine be done," just the very plea which expresses the final cry of the soul in doubt and the soul confronted with the tragic issue? Is it conceivable that in any garden in which any penitent kneels and says, " Not my will but Thine be done," that God is not going to give to him the guiding hand and the enriching strength?

There is just one other word that I would like to write. You will recall that Jesus said that He must needs go through Samaria. We have heard many

sermons from this text. We are told that the sense of obligation arose because there was holy work to be done. I cannot bring my mind to admit that vague and indefinite constraints are necessarily indications of Divine leading. I remember a story of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. One day a young man came to him and said, "I have had a Divine revelation—that I should pass through that doorway into Pastor's College." The great preacher replied, "All right, I have not had that revelation yet, but you don't pass through that doorway till I do."

Divine Guidance is not a question of mere emotion or intangible constraint, or of vague thinking, or a dwelling upon our own desires until they become so strong that we endue them with Divine approval. It is something holier and nobler altogether: it is the human mind exercising its highest qualities as they have been illumined and instructed by the ever-gracious fellowship of the soul with God.

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If we always ask for God's Guidance, expect God's Guidance, and are sensitive to its coming, then we walk fearlessly forward without making a slip. Knowingly or unknowingly, we have done the right thing, though for a time it may have seemed to be hopelessly wrong.

Who brought me thither
Will bring me hence: no other guide I seek.
Milton.

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Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth.—*Jesus.*

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And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in dry places, and make strong thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.—*Isaiah.*

ONCE there came to the writer a most reassuring message, seemingly from the air, telling him that all was well, and followed by a supernatural whisper:

"Give up gambling."

One of the most beneficial pieces of clear Guidance that has ever come to him. It came when he was awake, and thinking of other things, and unsolicited by prayer. Of course, the Guidance was not consistently followed until many further losses had succeeded heavy losses already borne with difficulty.

Some interesting experiences of Guidance are also narrated by his brother William, who lives a deeply spiritual life, always ready to pass on the Master's message.

The Rev. Hugh W. Tegart, Rector of All Saints', Dorchester, says, "I am often guided only to fan the Lord's flame, and to do that I must be behind it." And again: "I am happy when I watch another person doing work for Christ that I should like to do myself."

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A business man (director of a well-known firm) told

the writer some remarkable instances of special leading —" signposts to the ever-present Guidance of God," he called them. His company had just withdrawn from a heavy action in France in 1917, when he felt a strange compulsion to return—he knew not why. His superior officer, although surprised, granted permission.

Returning under fire, he found two lost comrades wounded and needing his help, whom he assisted back to safety.

On a long journey their car lost an irreplaceable nut at a crucial moment; he prayed and then went straight to the spot where the lost nut lay in a ditch—half a mile away—another sign-post.

* * * * *

He sat comfortably at home late one Christmas Eve when there came the compulsion to leave his fireside and walk out into the snow.

Up the street he found an itinerant greengrocer in distress; his pony had little strength left to draw the load, and had lost its nerve on the slippery road. They had been out since dawn. There were two miles to go, and there seemed little chance of getting to stable that night. The greengrocer was attempting to sweep a path with an old broom, and to cajole the pony along a few feet at a time.

Here was another sign-post of Guidance. The business man took the broom, risked recognition by respectable friends, and warmed to his job as an amateur road-sweeper. After much effort, the two-mile-path in the snow was swept and three warm hearts rejoiced that night.

* * * * *

He was once guided to pray with a man (in a place where business and not prayer is the rule) that his friend should surrender even his desire to be cured of a serious nervous breakdown, and should await God's good time.

Ten weeks of medical treatment up to that time had

had apparently little effect; with the man's complete relaxation of his will to God's will, health rapidly returned, and work was resumed within another three weeks.

* * * * *

One Friday evening at 9 p.m. insistent thought in love and pity for an elderly friend who was chronically ill brought the suggestion that a bottle of spirits might be required. None was normally kept in his home, but his wife remembered a half-bottle unopened in the medicine cupboard, and this was immediately taken round.

During the following Sunday night a choking fit was alleviated by that brandy and a life saved.

This experience of Guidance is best summed up in the words of a friend of his who wrote recently of his experiences :—

> Although God definitely does guide in our individual perplexities, I believe that the main part of His Guidance consists in showing us work *outside ourselves* which He would have us do. There are so many folks who need Guidance and help; and I find that in the daily quiet time, all sorts of ideas have come—of kindnesses to be shown to others, and so on—and these, when carried into effect, have had the most delightful results.

The writer is a barrister.

* * * * *

Here is a pretty problem, needing very clear Guidance.

One regenerated man, caught through a midnight mission in the north, had a difficult life-tangle to unravel. He was living with a married woman whose husband would not divorce her or receive her back. The husband too was living with another woman. The convert and the unwanted wife were the parents of two illegitimate children, living with them. The unwanted wife did not wish to leave the convert, nor the convert the

unwanted wife (now also a convert), nor the illegitimate children their parents. What were they to do?

It sounds like a problem in rule-of-three. The only Guidance the minister could get he passed on to the convert, although he was not very sure of it: they should carry on as they were until the Lord straightened out their tangle for them.

The writer asked certain theologians to elucidate the same problem. One of the most distinguished—he declines to be quoted; but you may guess his name—thought they should cease co-habitation until they were married.

A case resembling this was once handled by the Salvation Army. The woman and the children were placed in a home until a divorce had been obtained, and then they were married. Does there come a time in a life of sin when it would be more sinful, because of the children, to break into a situation that has become accepted, though not legalised, than to leave it alone to right itself? For "God can make His purpose out of our choice, whether we choose right or wrong."

* * * * *

The old theologians said that, if they ventured everything on God, they engaged Him to take care of all their concerns.

Stanley, after his journey across the dark continent, when the writer was aged two, said in his first message to the world:

"This has certainly been the most extraordinary expedition that I have ever led into Africa. A veritable Divinity seems to have hedged us as we journeyed. I say it with all reverence. It has impelled us whither it would, effected its own will, but, nevertheless, guided and protected us." He proceeds to give instances of what he calls this "unaccountable influence at the helm."

> There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we will.

Describing his escape from the Boers, Winston Churchill said he saw a row of houses and prayed for Guidance as to which of the five to enter. Then he walked straight to one house, and was received by a person friendly to the British; the occupants of the other houses were all enemies.

* * * * *

God's purpose is continually being achieved, and ultimately will be achieved for us all. Submission to God's will and a state of constant submission are the common-sense of Guidance. The writer took his new dog—a sensitive golden retriever, eight weeks old—to the nearest letter-box, and invited four baby legs of fawn fluff to join in the walk home.

Looking lost and infinitely pathetic, he insisted on going the other way, trying every gateway, refusing every call, following every rival footstep, and then sat down lamenting his evil fate to a million universes. Presently he had to be carried home, the summary end of all his troubles. That's how most of us respond to God's Guidance; and how most of us come home.

Some play chess and some play chequers—draughts is the common name. Those who think six moves ahead, triumph over those who think five moves ahead. If one could think a hundred moves ahead, one could win anything.

What fools we mortals be!

There is a Great Intelligence Who has already seen every act we have ever acted, every step we have ever taken, heard every word we have ever uttered, read every thought we have ever thought; Who knows every act, every step, every word, every thought we shall do, say, or think; Who knew every minutest thing that must take place in the Universes before any one of them was created, from the beginning of time to the end of time—and we still live in that state of sublime folly which boasts:

> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul.

Jonah hears His call, and refuses the commission to go to Nineveh, but is caught by a gangster of the deep and taken for a ride; and so off he goes to Nineveh. Hugh Redwood doffs his Salvation Army regimentals, goes to Fleet Street for a ride, and presently the Salvation Army recapture him; and so he delivers his delayed and daily message to Nineveh. The Most High has a chart for the life of each of His children created unto those "good works which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them."

Because a call is not obeyed in early youth, it is none the less from God. We have merely dropped our rifle on church parade and returned to the awkward squad for more drilling: presently we come back to the Army of the Lord.

* * * * *

The next witness to Guidance has many distinctive features. It came by chance—if anything does happen by chance to those who are seeking the Highest and who listen to the Holy Voice.

Quite unexpectedly we came across a minister of religion who had been in active service for thirty-five years. We spoke of this section on Divine Guidance, and in a moment affinities were discovered which banished all strangeness. At once we were intimate friends. His name cannot be disclosed: he does not wish it; but as someone said the other day of him, he has a wonderful treasury of experience and trained Christian thinking. Truly that is what we want in this difficult matter of Divine Guidance—"trained Christian thinking."

He told the story of his life, referred to the hostility of his friends and his family to his wish to enter the Christian ministry, and to the exceptional commercial prospects which were spread before him. He found that the Divine imperative could not be suppressed. We were not surprised to hear him say how he had, with distinction, passed all examinations.

Intensity of purpose is a motive power which con-

quers all. He firmly believed up to this point that he had been Divinely Guided, but unexpectedly physical weakness asserted itself, and for many years all his ministry seemed broken and disappointing; when he made a call for physical strength or perseverance, the response disappointed himself and everyone else. Not only were there physical hindrances, but other kinds of disappointment came. Men who had been trusted failed in a moment of personal crisis. Those who had promised help excused themselves when it was sought. It seemed hard to believe that the Divinely Guided way had been followed.

In periods of sickness and waiting, said the minister, he felt that certain temperamental and natural tendencies had obtained too much domination over his judgment and his thoughts and his personal relationships. He spoke of his devotion to art, and the joy, unlike any other, which came through beauty of form and colour, the excitement of discovering some new art treasure. The wonder of these was unfitting him rather than helping him, and so the day came when he felt that these interests, if not banished altogether, must be pushed out on to the circumference.

A new sense of dedication came, the enriching sense of Divine Guidance gave strength to every sacrifice. He seemed no longer his own, and rejoiced in a new liberty and in a richer fellowship. And then, apparently without sign, a sacred hand came out which seemed to reassure him that the Divine path was being followed. A new and exceptional sphere of labour opened. He was asked to fill a unique position. He has filled that position for nearly twenty years, bearing great burdens, the centre of a large organisation, exceptional activities, occasions demanding unusual judgment, and to-day his life is filled up with the holy joy of the friendship and service of the Kingdom.

When he told this story he said, " We must take long views and not short ones in this matter of Divine Guidance. He who gives his life to God will one day

find that, however broken it may seem to him, the Divine Guidance unites the apparently separate and broken pieces into beautiful symmetry. He who follows Divine Guidance," said the minister, " will find that God makes each life a Holy Year; however long the winter, there is the spring and the summer and the golden fruit of autumn."

And he said further, " Surely it is a nobler conception of Divine Guidance to feel that it unifies human life even than to regard it as ready at hand to direct at every moment." He quoted these texts : " I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight : I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron." " And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel." " I am the Lord, there is none else. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

We had a glimpse of the busy life this minister led, and thought of a doctor seeing many patients every day; here was a man in personal dealings with the souls of men, the tragedies and pains of human life. We wondered what was his method, and asked him to tell. This is what he said :

" When I rise in the morning I say in my prayers. ' O God, I shall have to meet all sorts of people. What am I to say? What am I to do? Will you guide my word? If I have to pray with the troubled ones, move my heart to prayer. Guide me every moment and let me rest in Thy Guidance.' "

We asked him how this worked out. He said :

" I find I have flashes and illuminations. Sometimes I pray with the sick, sometimes I don't. In either case I feel I have done the right thing. I sometimes have to speak severely, I sometimes speak with great tenderness; I feel that both are from God. At the end of the day I have peace. I don't say I wish I had done this or that, and I don't worry myself with lame regrets. I

believe that a life of fellowship with God moves my hands and shapes my words."

By this time the interview had become very rich and very wonderful. The minister afterwards said that it would abide with him always. Here is one other thing he said: "Ponder the words of St. Paul, 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.'" He said that surely one of the many meanings must be this, that if our mind is instructed and enriched with all the teaching and example of Jesus, it is not our mind that is acting alone, but our mind illumined and guided by the consciousness of Christ in us—that consciousness of Christ gives us eyes to see and a heart to understand, and the spirit of Christ works through us. No man can start his life any day with a set of rules as to how he will carry out every detail. We have to live every moment in a state of response to Divine intimations, whisperings, leadings. The mind that was in Christ can be our guide; what would He have done?

We felt we must put this question:

"How do you check your Guidance?"

"With the mystics, I believe that the earth is part of God's holy temple. I believe that Divine Guidance must be in perfect harmony with the revealed character of God. No holy voice ever contradicts what we know of God revealed in Christ. Then, again, we all know *the voice* among the voices. I believe we know what He wants us to do, if we are ready to do it. We must try to stop silly people with ill-balanced minds thinking that every stray impulse or thought that comes to them is necessarily the will of God. Where the life is fully dedicated, the difficulty is not very great. The trouble comes with the lives that have only imperfectly interpreted their dedication."

"One of the astonishments of my life," he added, "is that when we are in a state of sensitiveness to the Holy Presence, surprising opportunities of service come in our way which bring us marvellous joy; as, for instance,

when I had to take that child out of the brothel—I will tell you about it some day."

We had to end the interview here, though we felt there was something of permanent value in it.

> But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.
>
> But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.
>
> For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

* * * * *

At Cliff College on Whit-Sunday the Rev. N. G. Dunning told the writer that his mother had always prayed that he would forsake the law to become an evangelist. He did so, and has been richly used. When he made his decision he felt strongly guided several times during vacation to tell his mother of his decision, but resisted, waiting until he passed his exams. Then he returned to Cambridge and received almost immediately news that his mother was dead.

Nevertheless, his mother now knows of his remarkable change.

Another evangelist at Cliff College, Mr. H. H. Roberts, had been asked by the late Rev. Samuel Chadwick, the Principal, to undertake the catering for supplying teas to a little party, five thousand strong, every Whit-Monday; and he declined, for the task appalled him.

But as he was crossing the terrace of the College, he was arrested by a voice which spoke commandingly, although there was no other present:

"You take on the tea. I'll undertake for you."

Mr. Roberts' confidence that this was a direct command from the Lord is unshakeable. He went back to his Principal and took on the herculean task. For the past thirteen years, he has done this. The first year showed a jump in profits of over fifty pounds, the next

year of over a hundred pounds; and during the last thirteen years the College, which is a training home for poor lads and a mission run on faith, has received over three thousand pounds from these teas, apart from a free plant of tables, crockery, etc., worth another four hundred pounds.

And every year the newspapers carry large headings about this guided caterer, feeding his five thousand. "And," says the glowing little Evangelist, "although we have served all those teas in the open air, we have never yet had enough rain to spoil a slice of cake."

* * * * *

George Müller used to trust God implicitly for everything; even when he lost a key, he would pray and listen for Guidance; and presently he was led to the lost key.

The Rev. J. T. Henwood, one of the most spiritual men the writer has ever met, says, "I have sought Guidance habitually in a general way all my life. When I lie awake, I thank God for watching over me when I was asleep, and ask Him to deepen that consciousness of the presence of Christ and keep the flame of devotion alive. I can well understand George Müller seeking Guidance for a lost key, for I remember a similar experience of my own after being asked to supervise the examination of a candidate for the ministry. I received a copy of the questions and put them in my pocket, intending to place them where they could be found. The night before the examination I went to the place where the questions should have been, but to my consternation, they were gone. I felt very humiliated and excited, and then pulled myself up by saying this was a test of my religion. 'Now you must go and pray about it.'

"I knelt by my bedside, and a minute afterwards my mind was guided to a little-used shelf where I keep my blank stationery—the very last place where I should have looked. And there was the envelope containing the questions. I felt certain I had been

guided direct to that spot, and then I began to think back as to how the envelope had got there. . . . I regarded this as intended to encourage me in the life of prayer. So if I lose anything, I now say, 'I'll ask God to guide me,' and I get Guidance, even to the discovery the other day of a lost pen-knife, which had cost four shillings.

"The great thing is to be always in the Spirit. A week or two ago, I felt tired and unfit, though I had shortly to take a service. Responding to the impulse to pray, I prayed earnestly, and God gave me a realisation of His nearness. It was some time before I felt any physical benefit, and nearly an hour passed before a very great blessing came. Then I arose, no longer weary, and quite prepared for my work."

Mr. Henwood was conducting a service for children in Cardiff, when a crowd of rough lads dashed in. Feeling utterly helpless and unable to cope with the situation, his first guided instinct was to pray. The situation cleared, and one of those lads, now in the ministry, said that Mr. Henwood praying made such an impression on him that it was the first memory to return when he thought seriously of religion.

The same minister reminded the writer of a successful mission conducted by Miss Beaumont, in which both of us had participated. Miss Beaumont's method was to pray for her subject, but never to prepare addresses. She would stand up utterly unprepared, and in a voice as clear as a bell deliver a new message each evening. How that message went right home to sinners present!

And the writer has seen Brigadier-General Forster begin to address a meeting, hesitate for words, presently stop, and turn to the leader, asking him to pray that he be given utterance. Immediately there was a change both in the flow of speech and the spiritual temperature of the meeting.

One young man was so impressed with this incident that he determined on the spot to entrust his life to God. Later he witnessed to the change in his life

which this courageous witness and act of faith on the part of the Brigadier had brought about.

* * * * *

Some amazing stories are still told and re-told of the Cornish miner-evangelist, Billy Bray, and his experiences of Guidance. Who has not laughed over the story of Billy building his own chapel with no money and trying to buy, for six shillings, a three-cornered cupboard at an auction sale to use as a pulpit? It was bought over his head for seven shillings, Billy having tendered all he possessed.

Billy said he was guided to follow that big cupboard to its new home, where he watched, with growing eagerness, the vain efforts of the new owner to take it inside his narrow doorway. When the new owner expressed his anger at having bought it, Billy strode up with his six shillings and offered to buy, on condition that the seller had it conveyed to the chapel.

And Billy's confidence that the sale was over-ruled in this way because his Heavenly Father knew he had no means of transport was unshakeable.

* * * * *

Our pagan thoughts may tend to reproduce themselves in our spiritual life.

Among those who try to follow Guidance there are, of course, those who once loved ordering other people about, who may think themselves "Guided" in that dominating pastime; now they are following Him Who pleased not Himself. A man is just leaving a house-party with his golf-clubs to enjoy a game, when up darts another with "Guidance" that he should stay.

He stays; but one feels the Guidance which needs most checking is "Guidance" to restrain or constrain our neighbours' free-will when it suits our convenience.

Guidance must be self-determined. After we have taken everybody's advice that is necessary, we must always pronounce the final decision ourselves; and sometimes it may be to go dead against the united

views of others; for God sometimes says, "Get thee from thy country and from thy kindred"; though not often. Usually the advice of others greatly benefits; but there is a danger of "too many cooks"; and the old story in Æsop's Fables of taking the donkey over the bridge may be repeated in the "Guided" life.

Having addressed a gathering of clergy, the writer was once asked what he thought of a curate who excused his absence from duty by telling his vicar he was Guided elsewhere. The assembled clergy seemed satisfied with the answer. When Jonah ran away from duty and took ship for Tarshish, he endured an uncomfortable cruise. So in time, curate or layman who pleads Guidance as an excuse for being "slothful in business," must learn to become loyal to duty as well as "fervent in spirit."

Abraham Lincoln asked certain ministers who came to him, saying they had a message from God, if they did not think the Almighty capable of transmitting His commands direct? We all know that our Heavenly Father, like an earthly monarch, or newspaper proprietor, reserves for Himself the right of direct approach to any one in His domain, yet He does sometimes send representatives.

Guidance which orders us to sweep away the snow from our own door and from the one next door rings much truer than Guidance which tells us to put our neighbour on to our job. Many who would live the Guided life feel led to ask another to change a pagan friend or relative. The best Guided reply to that is Frank's—"That's your job."

Canon Grensted says warningly that "to go up to another man who is not a Christian and say 'The Holy Spirit says, Do this,' is to invite being knocked down and to deserve it!"

One minister's telephone was kept fairly busy while friends, believing they were Guided, rang up to give him orders. On the day that a well-known speaker

was due to take services at a certain church in Lancashire, someone telephoned to affirm "special Guidance" that a minister from a distant church must be put in the pulpit. This gratuitous "Guidance" was disregarded, the original speaker took the services, and a revival broke out in the church that day.

Nevertheless, because somebody oversteps discretion we are not to abandon a great and heartening spiritual principle, which has been too long overlooked by the majority of Christians. Every day one becomes more certain that a loving Master Mind is fashioning a pattern—with our help. Just now we are a little puzzled, for we survey God's magic carpet from the reverse side. As we watch, one, and then another steps forth and weaves awhile, and then disappears to the front to survey his handiwork and to receive his pay; and we who remain here continue our efforts.

From our side the design always looks ragged and shapeless; almost without form and void. But it will be finished one day, and that incomparable pattern will unroll, revealing our work and our true selves woven into the Divine design. For our share in the pattern is assured, because it has been fore-ordained; but there is much pattern-weaving still to be done, before God's Magic Carpet is woven complete, and it still depends on our response to the Master Designer what part we occupy in the finished work—some sparkling facet of the great design or an indistinct unit in the background, only by contrast enhancing the glory of the whole.

* * * * *

The Oxford Group speak of the seven-fold test of Guidance, testing what comes by—prayer; Bible principles; wise friends; Guided friends; Christ's moral standards (is it honest, pure, unselfish or loving?); the test of circumstances, knowing all available facts; reason and common-sense. Since Guidance has to filter through the human medium, it may not always be clear. We read a book, and our views of that book are a combination of author and reader.

Public speakers are sometimes amazed at what is reported of their speeches. Passing their thoughts through another's brain sometimes changes them beyond recognition. Perhaps this is so with Guidance. "For the Holy Spirit cannot reveal Himself to us directly. He is known only through His working, and His power," says Dr. Murray, "is conditioned by the material through which He works."

Amy Carmichael says in *Gold Cord* that Guidance comes because God first plans, then stimulates our desires, then asks us to pray for it, and then confers. She quotes as beacons warning off shoals the words of Madame Guyon: "He who sighs for a particular inspiration, or direction in common matters, which his own reason and judgment can determine, is liable to deception."

Guidance came to the Dohnavur Fellowship through circumstances, sometimes disturbing, sometimes helpful; after thinking things over; after prayer and fasting; through the general feeling made known by a show of hands, a unanimous decision after hearing all the facts; by the strong lead of an impelling sense of duty; by a word of the Lord remembered and quoted (the Lord quickens our memories and our inward ear too, so that we may not be deaf to the Comforter when He comes to bring familiar words to our remembrance).

The Fellowship had not seen the angels who companioned them, but they had known Guidance in all the other ways mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. Often they were allowed to ask for some sure token, which their ignorance could not mistake, and were not refused; sometimes they had to begin to do the impossible, before they saw how it could be made possible. Here obedience could be costly, and when the Word of the Lord came to one whose dearest friends did not hear; but they found the secret of Guidance in Psalm cxliii, verses 8, 10, and 11:

> Cause me to hear Thy loving-kindness in the morning.
> Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; . . .

> Teach me to do Thy will; lead me into the land of uprightness. . . . Quicken me, O Lord, for Thy name's sake, for Thy righteousness sake, bring my soul out of trouble.

It was all there—cause me to hear and to know; teach me to do; quicken me. This spiritual quickening is a definite experience at times when being specially Guided, as the writer knows by experience.

And anyone who chooses to read that exquisite story of the Lord's dealings with the Dohnavur Fellowship, as told by Amy Carmichael, of the way God guided them to build and to enlarge, to trust and receive, to pray for a specific gift of a thousand pounds, that came twice, how the unguided prayer for the gift of healing went unanswered, and many other acts of these Holy-Spirit-filled women, will never again doubt the Guidance of God.

* * * * *

Asking for a sign or a token, as Gideon did with the wet and dry fleece, recorded in the Book of Judges, is regarded as legitimate among Christians, but a practice not to be over-indulged.

The first answer to be given to those who ask how they shall know is that they *do* know, says Professor J. Rendel Harris in *The Guiding Hand of God.* If not, a slight change in the terms of the understanding between them and their Lord will enable them to know, because " My sheep *hear* My voice," and " The stranger they will *not* follow."

A closed door may be providential Guidance and an open door a direct call, as the writer knows from many experiences in two hemispheres. Ill-disposed persons, thinking to injure, have been used to shape our course in the Guided way. Money has been whisked away Guidedly, just when it would have frustrated our true development and made us take a course prejudicial to others. Unseen dangers have been glided over; temptations which would have ruined us have been thrust away by the Guiding Hand; help has been given

or refused, both rightly, as it proved; books and messages have flown towards us at the opportune moment, as though impelled by an Invisible Hand, always restraining and constraining.

The difference between conscience and Guidance was best expressed by the child who said that conscience told the difference between right and wrong, but Guidance told which of several right things had to be done, says Sam Shoemaker in *The Conversion of the Church* (Oliphants), a book which everybody should read. While Sam reaffirms that open and closed doors may be Guidance, he also gives a warning against being overwhelmed by unreal obstacles, which should be crashed through. One night in Princetown, he was Guided to ask to visit him a certain undergraduate, who was won for Christianity, and who in turn won a girl, who is now Mrs. Shoemaker.

S. D. Gordon in his *Quiet Talks on Personal Problems* was emphasising nearly thirty years ago that God has a plan for every life: if we fall heartily in with His plan, we will understand what He has been doing, and when the thing that hurts has done its work, it will probably be taken away. Gordon gives meekness, obedience, and listening as essentials for knowing God's plan, and calls the twenty-fifth Psalm the Guidance Psalm, in which meekness, according to Moffatt, is translated as humility.

* * * * *

Unquestionably pride is the great barrier to Guidance, the self-made man attitude.

Or, as Moffatt says it,

> Kind and upright is the Eternal
> He teaches any who go astray,
> Guiding humble souls aright,
> Teaching humble souls His way.

The Bible is crowded with examples of Guidance, beginning with the Voice in the Garden, right down to Revelation, showing that God's leading, whether of a

people or an individual, is conditioned by humble obedience.

When Guidance is indistinct, it may be that we have withdrawn from our Guide. Continued prayer will show us what to do; we shall lean presently in the right direction; a closed door in front of us may continue closed, but another will perhaps open suddenly in the south-east corner; a chance word or a postcard, an impulse or a " still small voice " may at any time point the way.

* * * * *

Groupers should be helped to examine critically the thoughts that come to them in their Quiet Times, and the first point to which attention should be called is the origin of our thoughts. We generally credit ourselves with a far greater capacity for generating thoughts than we possess. Thoughts " come into our minds," and it is important to make them give an account of themselves before we encourage them to stay there. We know where our thoughts come to, but we do not know where they come from. In the simplest case, in talking with a friend, his words suggest fresh thoughts—but new thoughts also come to us when we imagine ourselves alone.

We hear voices, though not with our physical ear. We have no difficulty in understanding what Isaiah meant when he said, " Thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; " or the words of the hymn to the Holy Spirit :

> His that gentle voice we hear,
> Soft as the breath of even,

or " the still small voice " that spoke to Elijah at Horeb. In some cases we may be sure that God Himself is speaking to us either directly or by some ministering spirit. An angel it may be—or, as to St. John on Patmos, through one of our brethren who have passed on.

At the same time, we must remember that these

spiritual influences to which we are exposed are not all good. Even a friend's advice may be misleading. So we are bidden to " try the spirits, whether they be of God." In some cases, the suggestions come from hidden depths in our own nature—passions, appetites, instincts that are excited by the world of men and things that is about us; and yet in a strange way can tempt us to be untrue to our real selves. We have to learn that these also must be brought to an inner test before we follow their dictates. We must learn to master them, if we are not to be their slaves.

This is where the importance of attention comes in. Any thought or feeling that we harbour in our hearts will find expression in our lives. We must be careful, therefore, what reception we give them. We can choose between them—but when we have chosen, they mould us. Here comes in the importance of the four tests suggested for the Guidance of Groupers that the Bishop of Durham criticises. None of us has a perfect standard, but we all have some standard, and one which it must be fatal to disregard.

There is a strong tendency to stand before facts and attempt to make them fit into a pattern in our minds. The time was when men assumed that stars must move in circles because the circle was the one perfect figure, and that there must be ten planets because ten was the perfect number. We have taken a long time to look at the facts and let them speak for themselves. From time to time as the man of science faces them, a thought comes to him which shows a relation between the facts which approves itself as true because it brings order out of chaos. It suggests a law—which was at work before he perceived it. He feels that it gives him insight into God's plan. He is learning to think God's thoughts. But he recognises that he did not create that thought.

The most practical direction in which we are all called to think after God relates to God's thoughts of us, to discover the kind of man He means us to be, in order that we may each fit into a place in His plan

The vision of what we want to be or to become is our ideal for ourselves. We all have such a vision—though we are not always aware of it. It is the ruling passion in our lives, and in the end it determines our character. It is a terrible shock to discover, when we are left to ourselves, what that ruling passion is. It is anything but ideal. It is self in one form or another, self that refuses to be in subjection to the Law of God, and is all the while a slave.

Deliverance from that slavery can come only when we realise that Christ, by His surrender to the will of God, revealed the true life for each and all of us, and made it possible for us to obey it, and to live as the true sons of God in Him, being little by little transformed after His own likeness—at the same time taking a real share in carrying on the work that has still to be done in bringing the world back to Him. These are the results which we are enabled to produce when we act and pray in His Name.

"When we are under God's hand," says Canon Grensted, "our thought is, so far, one with His. But it is still our thought. We do not create thought, though we (and God) are creative *in* thought. Thought is one aspect of our response to the impact of experience. If it is one with God's thought, it is creative in the highest degree."

"Man does not originate any thoughts; he simply receives, combines, and transmits thoughts," says Major W. Tudor Pole, Editor of "The Deeper Life" series. "There are two sources from which the human mind can receive ideas or impressions—from the Divine, or universal Christ Mind, pure, holy, and good ideas can be received and reflected by man; or man can receive, accept, and reflect (or pass on) ideas from the carnal or mundane mind, either through other people thinking such thoughts, or from the general reservoir of this order of materialistic and sensual thoughts and ideas. To whatever wave-length you key your mind, you will receive thoughts in answer.

If the wave-length is right, you will receive God's Guidance. But some people will insist on listening only for what they want to hear; they call that Guidance, though it is only the human will or desire. Spiritual power comes from God's generating station, but the human mind is often a distorted instrument and receives something different and even discordant.

"That is why some complain they do not get Guidance. The spiritual law never fails except through insufficient understanding or improper use of His wireless instrument by the one concerned.

"In practice you cannot have a vacuum, for it is against nature. So, instead of thinking evil or negative thoughts, it is good to express in your mind one of the great fundamental truths—the ever-presence of Divine Love, the Omnipotence of the Divine Mind, God Guides and Provides; and the clear and constant fact of the indwelling Presence of Christ's Holy Spirit, ready to lead in every human need."

* * * * *

We had spent a busy Whitsuntide; on returning, our desk was laden with correspondence. There was revision of a new book to do. A day or two passed, and we cleared off much of the correspondence, and felt we could do no more that evening. Exhausted, we picked up a letter which had come in some days before. The writer seemed in need of spiritual encouragement. Instead of waiting until the next day, we put through a long-distance telephone call—sixty miles—and spoke to him. His manner seemed strange, explained by the fact that a quarter of an hour before he had been praying earnestly that we would telephone to him. Yet there had been no strong impulse to do this. We had merely done the next right thing. Surely God was guiding both.

At the close of a service at Bexley, a lady came to us and said she had been frightened to live alone in her house. One night when she was very fearful a voice spoke to her and said: "You call yourself a Christian, and yet you are afraid!"

That was years ago. Since then she has never been afraid, although she returns alone at night to a darkened house.

* * * * *

Surely the right attitude is not a state of constant questioning whether this or that is Guidance, but a going straight forward, doing what we believe is God's will while constantly sensitive to His special leading should it be forthcoming.

And, as Solomon says:

"The integrity of the upright shall guide them."

Over-feeding has destroyed many more than hunger.—*Latin Proverb.*

* * * * *

Many feel dejected, after pleasures, banquets, and public holidays.—*Latin Proverb.*

* * * * *

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me.—*Hebrews.*

GOD guides, but does He provide?

Can God be trusted to provide all that is needful for those who follow Jesus Christ? The writer pondered on this problem a long time. He asked this question many times of bishops, deans, canons, clergy, ministers, with varying answers. A few said "Yes"; the majority said "No."

Yet, if the answer is "Yes," then the riddle of life is solved for most of us.

And the answer *is* "Yes"!

* * * * *

One cynical ecclesiastic advised:

"Don't tell the people to trust in Providence, when they mean to trust in improvidence."

Answering our written query, the Bishop of Durham said bluntly:

> I have no reason for thinking that Christians, as such, enjoy any exemption from starvation; but I see nothing in this to authorise any doubt as to the truth of our Saviour's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.
>
> The crude literalism which would find in that sermon a promise that Christ's disciples could be guaranteed

against the general misfortunes which befall men, seems to me irrational, mischievous, and ultimately profane.

Obviously Dr. Henson believes that Christians sometimes starve.

A letter was sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury, asking, if a Christian did everything humanly possible, could he then rely upon Christ's teaching that those who sought first the Kingdom might be assured of food and clothes in 1933? Archbishops have to be careful. Doubtless they are bombarded with letters from religious fanatics; and, as Sam Chadwick said, "The devil gets more help from fanatics than fools." Here is the reply:

Lambeth Palace, S.E. 1.

DEAR SIR,

. . . I am afraid that the questions which you ask cannot be answered in a few words, for they involve the whole question of the interpretation of our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount, and I fear that the Archbishop of Canterbury has not the time to give for such an undertaking.

Personally, I should say that while the profession of Christianity is no guarantee against the possibility of starvation, our Lord's words about 'seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness' are, broadly speaking, transparently true.

For example, the present distress in which the world finds itself is directly due to the fact that the nations of the world have not sought God's Kingdom and His righteousness. If they did, material prosperity would certainly follow as a consequence, though not necessarily for you or me as individuals.

ALAN C. DON,
Chaplain.

June 23rd, 1933.

The Archbishop's Chaplain is in a position to know the mind of the Church, and he also seems to think that

Christians sometimes starve, unless he means by " the profession of Christianity," that it is sometimes different from real Christianity, and that some professing Christians, being without the hidden manna, may, in consequence, go naked and hungry. The degree of one's consecration to our Lord may be the degree of one's immunity from want. This does not mean that the prosperous are living the surrendered life, though it does mean that the prosperity of the wicked is but temporary, that evil living tends to penury.

We sent a note to Canon Grensted for further enlightenment on this and other points. The Professor replied :

" What an examination paper !

" Nobody must ever say that the ' Law of Supplies ' is infallible. What is infallible is God's purpose—and God's purpose is bigger than our convenience. He may sometimes require martyrs.

" Alan Gardiner is perhaps the best-known example of a missionary who set out on that basis and died of starvation. On the whole question, see Amy Carmichael's books on the Dohnavur Mission, which is run entirely on faith, and faces the question through."

And when our supplementary question arrived, the Professor wrote from Oriel College, Oxford :

" God does not require hunger-martyrs, but man's sin may—just as it requires a Cross."

* * * * *

Seeking from various sources a complete answer to the question : " Does God always provide? " we passed from the theologian to ordinary practising Christians, to find the pages of Christian history gemmed with stories of believers who have been fed and clothed through trusting in God.

The Rev. Lionel Fletcher told the writer a delightful modern story of an elderly woman, an old-age pensioner living in Wales—" the Angel of the Slums "—who has more than a local reputation as one of God's saints. Her pension had been exhausted, and several days more

had to elapse before the next payment. Trusting confidently in her Heavenly Father, she walked prayerfully along the street, when she saw a small package near her feet. It contained half a pound of butter, obviously dropped by a purchaser leaving the dairy shop near by. She shuffled into the shop, but was told to keep her find, for if the owner returned, another half pound would be supplied.

A little farther on, she saw some boys playing; and also a sixpenny piece lying in the road, which their sharp young eyes had missed. Certain it belonged to one of the boys, she called their attention to the coin. Then a miracle happened; none of the boys claimed the sixpence! She had now enough to buy bread and sufficient butter to supply her needs until old-age-pension day.

* * * * *

Standing in the vestry of Camberwell Green Congregational Church one evening last winter, the writer listened while the Rev. Nicholas Oliver told another characteristic and unpublished story of Billy Bray, the famous Cornish miner, who lived mostly on faith and prayer a hundred years ago, while he preached and built his chapels (referred to in the opening chapters).

This was the same Billy Bray who was present at Redruth when John Gutteridge, the famous preacher of the U.M.F.C., told the story of the martyrs who died for Christ and asked his congregation:

"Are you willing to die for Christ?"

The preacher paused a moment, when Billy's voice rang through the silence of the vast and crowded church:

"Iss, maister praycher! *I be; but be you?*"

The preacher attempted to go on, but "No," said Billy, "you bain't goin' on till you've told this congregation whether you'd die for Jesus or no."

And the famous preacher had to yield, with "Yes, my friend, yes, I would," to the accompaniment of

Billy's triumphant "Hallelujah!" says the Rev. Arthur Hancock.

What a test question Billy's would be for a theological examination!

This same Billy had well learned the lesson of humility, although his reputation was beginning to spread round the world. Someone at St. Cleer lent Billy a horse to ride to Liskeard, where he had to preach, when, without any invitation, "the devil got up behind him on the horse's back." "Billy," said he, "thee'rt some great man now, riding into Liskeard like this; thee'rt got to a gentleman now." "So," said Billy, "I turned round 'pon en. I said, 'Thee lost thy place through pride, and now thee wants me to folla suit.' Bless-ee," said Billy in telling the story, "he slipped down over the horse's tail and was gone like a star-shot."

* * * * *

The following hitherto unpublished story of how God provided for Billy Bray, told to the writer by the Rev. Nicholas Oliver, came from a Cornish fisherman, a local pilot, named Moses Dunn, who encountered the miner-evangelist one day when his faith in God's providence was being well tested.

Said Mr. Oliver:

"Moses Dunn, the fisherman pilot, put out from Mevagissey in answer to a signal for a pilot. As he approached the signalling vessel, he very naturally sized her up, because pilots were paid according to the draft of the craft—half-a-crown per foot. He appraised her as worth a pound—*i.e.* drawing eight feet.

"When he had brought her safely into Fowey Harbour, he found that she drew ten feet, and so his remuneration was twenty-five shillings. He had sent his fishing-boat on to do a night's fishing, and therefore had to return home by land. He walked to Par and, entering the station, saw Billy Bray, pacing up and down, praising the Lord as was his custom. They hailed one another as fellow-workers for Christ, and as

they had some time to wait for a train, walked up and down the platform conversing.

" ' As we did so,' said Moses, ' something seemed to be saying to me: " You have got five shillings more than you expected to-day. Billy is doing the Lord's work. Hand that five over to he, for to carry on wi "; but the stubborn old mule in me kicked against that. I had a wife and a big family at home, and every penny was badly wanted for they. But the inward call would not let me rest. At last I had to speak out.

" ' " Billy," I said—" I don't know what it is, but something is telling me that I've got to give you five shillings," and I handed over the money to him.

" ' " Praise the Lord!" says Billy, " I knawed it would come from somewheer and come in time. And here it is."

" ' He then went on to tell me that he had been conducting a mission in Devonshire. Just as it closed, he received a message that his wife was ill, and asking him to return at once to Camborne, then the centre of the tin-mining industry. He only had a few shillings, but he went to the railway-station and asked the booking-clerk how far that would take him.

" ' " To Par, in Cornwall!" was the reply.

" ' " Then give me a ticket for Par," he said ; " by the time I get there, my Heavenly Father will have the rest of the fare ready for me." '

" Moses told me that story when I was a boy. I asked him to repeat it after I had become a minister. He did so, and went on to say, ' You must not think that's the only experience of Divine leading I have had, you know.

" ' I remember once, when we were in the North Sea, fishing for herrings, I went aft while the nets were out, and I heard a voice say to me quite distinctly—" Moses, send ten shillings to Mrs. ——, the preacher woman at St. Ives!" That was all. But as soon as I got ashore, I went to my salesman and drew ten shillings and sent it off. In the early days of the Bible

Christian Movement, they had women preachers, like the modern Salvation Army, and she was one of them.

"'When I returned to Cornwall, I met her. She told me that she came back from a country appointment, where she had been conducting services far into the evening, and had to go to bed supperless. She had only a little milk in a jug and a mere dust of tea, not even a crust besides. Woman-like, she could do with a cup of tea in the morning. But the postman came early, and by the time she was downstairs, there was my order for ten shillings.'"

* * * * *

"I once heard an equally interesting testimony from Matthias Dunn, a brother of Moses," continued the Rev. Nicholas Oliver.

"In temperament and habit, he was quite different from his brother. Although he began life as a fisherman, he had a passion for ichthyology, and as he was so well placed for study of fishes, he became a fount of information for scientists.

"The famous Dr. Couch of Polperro, himself a lay preacher, became attracted by this intellectual fisher-youth and lent him books. Very soon he became one of the greatest authorities on marine life, and the close personal friend of Dean Buckland, Sir John Lubbock, and other famous naturalists. It was he who first showed that all the flat fishes, when hatched, swim upright like the dory and have eyes on each side of the head. They gradually assume the horizontal position, and the eye travels upward as they do so. He proved this, and had specimens of all the flat fishes in every stage of mutation. I mention this to show that the habit of mind was severely rational and scientific. He soon became a merchant, and by inventing new processes of fish-curing, made money. He had a fine Bible-class of fisher-lads. He told me this story the very week the thing happened:

"'I had a peculiar experience this week and I began by calling myself all the superlative idiots that ever

walked. An over-weening idea got into my silly old brain that I must go down into the meadows and give two sovereigns to the Salvation Army officer. Of course it was preposterous, and I told myself so. But it worried me and worried me morning, noon, and night.

" ' I didn't mind the two sovereigns, or twice two; it was the idiocy of the situation which at once amused and exasperated me. Imagine me, by a mere mental querk, going to an utter stranger, and giving him a definite sum, without any kind of introduction. But at last I could stand it no longer. I went down to the meadow (this was a sunless spot under a high hill, which utterly belied its name. The dwellings where the Salvation Army officers lived were surrounded by pilchard vats; a house, built across the narrow street, shut out sun and air).

" ' I knocked at the door, and a man in a red jersey opened it. Feeling terribly small, I put two sovereigns into his palm. " Something tells me I have got to give you this," I said, and I was about to run away like a guilty schoolboy.

" ' " Sir—Sir—stop a moment ! " the man cried. " You don't know what this means. My wife and I are natives of Wales, and we come from the mountains. Ever since we have been here, my dear one has been ill, and the doctor says her only hope is to go back to Wales. We have been praying and praying for assistance to do this, and now here it is ! " ' "

* * * * *

" I have had many instances of God's care over me, and providing money at just the right time, as all of us who have lived on faith are bound to have," says the Rev. D. Kirkland West from the American Presbyterian Mission, China, in a letter which came recently to the writer.

" About how God guides and provides there is a little snag. It is how to express the subjective factors back of each case. Example—I was definitely guided to go

to England; I had no money, nor knew anyone in England, but I was guided, and then the money came, passport, ticket, luggage, everything, and I arrived in England just about fifteen days after the guidance came.

" Now, by subjective factors, I mean my fear of the unknown, my lack of a haven in England, my insuperable difficulty of no money; the appeal of the trip was there, but the pull of home and the going alone would hold me back. So with these factors pulling and straining at me, the situation was a momentous one. The narrated facts lose that inner conflict, they can only represent the forces our cold-blooded reason can handle, they miss the warmth of the emotion and the inner and real self.

" But I'll add two more items that have affected me, and made me at least believe that God guides and provides.

" In England; a definitely guided trip to the country, to see a man, and just two coppers in my pocket, and the train-fare several shillings; it might just as well have been pounds. No hopes. But on the day of the trip, and in time to catch the train selected, a letter came from a person who said, ' Use this money which I am guided to give you.' It was a cheque for five pounds. God not only worked on my heart, He had worked on someone else to send me that money. His plan has no dropped stitches.

" Perhaps one example of how not obeying Guidance resulted, might help. A friend was a senior at Princeton, and Guidance came one day: ' Go to see B., he needs you.' I delayed. I was busy about many things. For three days the Guidance came, and I did not go. Then my Guidance stopped. For over a month I waited, and then I went down to see B. He was glad to see me, for he evidently had something preying on his mind.

" I said: ' B., did you need me just a month ago? '

" He looked surprised and said, ' Why, yes. How did you know? '

"Then I told him my story. He looked at me and said, 'Why didn't you come?' And then he related how at that very time he was in terrible need and wanted help. He had not received it, and as a result his desires had led him into a terrible situation, and it meant a broken heart and home. I looked at B., and I knew that I had failed him in failing God. I had missed my chance, by not following clear guidance. I feel that God can justly lay that boy's sin to my charge. It is not pleasant to relate."

* * * * *

From all corners there have come to the writer up-to-date evidences that God does provide for those who trust Him. Here is one from a lady who has brought up a large family by her own efforts and is now spending the evening of her life in comfort through her own exertions:

"As I look back on a long life, full of ups and down," she says, "I recall one event which changed my course and that of seven others because I was led to depend on the inspiration of the Spirit of God. By a series of domestic misfortunes, my family of six young children and myself were reduced to absolute penury in a few months—there seemed to be no prospect of relief, and that day I had been unable to pay the baker's bill.

"That night I remember vividly yet. All the week bush fires had been raging around the little Australian town in which we lived. It was the hottest month of the year, February. The moon was a hot, round, satanic face peering through a cloud of smoke from an inverted cauldron; the mosquitoes buzzed deliriously in the stifling heat.

"I was prostrate—too tired in body and mind to think or pray. To whom could I turn for help or sympathy? Suddenly the proverb came—Man's extremity is God's opportunity! and I said aloud: 'Dear Lord, help me, for I cannot help myself.'

Immediately a Voice spoke distinctly to me:

"'*Why not go back to England? There is plenty of work for you there.*'

"I sat up excited, galvanised into life again. Who had spoken? Why had I not thought of this myself? I shook my husband and told him the news, but got no help.

"'Go to sleep, and don't be a silly woman,' he said. 'How can you take a family across the world with no money?'

"However, I now had a motive power which I did not possess before, and I worked with that adventure in view for another three years before I was able to accomplish my aim. The most remarkable answer came when at last, having reached England safely with all my children, I applied for three posts as a schoolmistress—and was accepted by all three.

"That is now over thirty years ago, and I have never come to an empty cruse of oil since. To-day my life is one song of thanksgiving to God, for I feel that I have been divinely led by wisdom far greater than my own feeble variety. It depends greatly, indeed entirely, on dropping self and looking to God with no obstacle between."

* * * * *

This correspondent added a story which does not specially relate to this chapter, but which is too helpful to omit, especially as the writer can guarantee its authenticity:

"'My eldest daughter, a girl of fourteen years,' a dear friend of mine relates, 'who had always been more of a sister and companion to her mother than just a child, was suddenly stricken with rapid phthisis, and died almost before anyone realised that the illness was serious.

"'I was numbed with the blow. I could neither weep nor think clearly. Instead of bending to God's will, I conceived a violent dislike for both my husband and children. I performed my duties during the day, only longing for the evening to come. Then, after

inventing some pretext for going out, I went straight into the churchyard, which was just opposite my home, and sat on my loved child's grave, dumb with misery and rebellious in spirit.

" ' Why should she have been taken from me? I would give up trying. There was a deep pool lower down in the burn. If I drowned myself, I should be laid in the same grave, and we should be together always.

" ' Ever since that terrible time I have been sorry for and sympathetic with would-be suicides. If the mind harps on one string only, it wears that string out and it suddenly snaps, for no person in his senses would " to dumb forgetfulness a prey," willingly resign " this pleasing, anxious being." For eight successive evenings I had sat on my darling's grave, now covered in snow, and only felt worse in body and more dejected in mind than ever.

" ' The ninth evening, as I was about to open the churchyard gate, *my dead girl stood inside the gate with her hand on the latch.*

" ' " You must not come in here, Mother," she said. " Remember you are the mother of the living, not of the dead. Now go back at once to the poor little children."

" ' " But you ! " I gasped, " how are you ? "

" ' " Quite all right," she added, with a bright smile.

" ' I turned and walked back into the house at once, and resolutely directed my attention to the living—and took steps to leave the locality as soon as possible.

" ' I never visited her grave again, in case I should disobey her and lose courage—for I realised that she was not senseless clay, but a living, feeling personality.

" ' Even now, I long for her love and companionship, but I have never since rebelled or fretted over her loss.

> She is not dead, the child of our affection
> But gone unto that school
> Where Christ Himself doth rule.

" ' I think Longfellow must have had a similar vision when he wrote of his late wife :

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger Divine—
Takes the vacant chair beside me
Lays her gentle hand in mine.' "

* * * * *

Early this year, there came to the writer's home another letter from a correspondent in Australia, also in the teaching profession—Mrs. Randell of Bridgetown, who says:

"In the year 1899, I lived in Adelaide (South Australia). It was a time of great financial depression, and my father, who was extremely delicate, had been obliged to seek employment in Perth (West Australia). I owned and conducted a small private school. I was twenty-two years of age, and the eldest of the family. My responsibilities and work were very heavy. One brother and sister had joined my father. My mother and four younger ones lived with me. I began to feel that the strain of things was too great—that I should not long be able to carry on. The thought came to me to sell the goodwill of my school and thus provide money to meet our obligations and move to West Australia. It would be better to be all together.

"My mother agreed to this plan, and preliminary arrangements were made. A certain Saturday morning came when a lady who seemed likely to buy the school was to call. Then my mother became anxious and nervous, and urged me not to sell. It seemed to her a very serious matter to break up our comfortable home, and the most serious aspect was the uncertainty of my finding suitable employment in the unknown West.

"My qualifications and experience were very slight and the family was largely dependent on my efforts! I remember going to my room and asking God to tell me what was the right thing to do. I hated to disregard my mother's wishes, and I knew her arguments were sound, but the inner voice insistently said, 'Sell.'

"The interview was ended, my little school and all its

appurtenances were sold, and the date fixed when we should vacate our home. I went to the front door to show my visitor out, and as I closed it, I said to myself, 'And now what next?' Turning away from the door, a letter on the hall-stand caught my eye. It was a definite offer of the position of assistant in a good secondary school in Perth, exactly the kind of work I was qualified to do, yet the writer was unknown to me and I had not applied to her for employment.

"A few days previously she had been discussing her plans for the coming school year with a very intimate friend, who happened at one time to have been a classmate of mine. The friend had said: 'I know a girl in Adelaide who would give you just the help you need, if she would come. Why not write and ask her?' The letter which I found awaiting me, and which I could only regard as a definite answer to prayer, was the outcome of that suggestion.

* * * * *

"The other little story is of a much more recent date. Towards the end of last April, I was sitting in church feeling very weary. I prayed for strength to carry on. The thought came—'Go to England this year.' I had never left my native land, and a trip to England was a life-long dream. It seemed possible to arrange everything except the money.

"Four or five children are at boarding-school or university, and it did not seem right even to suggest to my husband an added financial burden. I resolutely put the thought aside. Next Sunday morning the thought returned with added insistence. I earnestly asked for Guidance, and the thought came that if I was to go, some monetary help would come without imposing an additional strain on my husband. I would tell no one of my thoughts, but trust to be clearly and definitely led. Two days later I received a letter from a sister in Perth (200 miles away) in which she mentioned that one hundred pounds was lying in a Perth Bank (the result of the sale of a block of land), which was available

for my use! Here was my answer. The one hundred pounds paid my return fare. The rest was easy.

"My trip was a very delightful one. At every step I was guided, protected, strengthened. All the rest of my life will be the richer for the experience of the last six months."

* * * * *

Every mother who has given her utmost that her children may start well in life will be inspired by the following true story sent to the writer by the mother of a friend occupying an official position of considerable authority:

"It was about two years before the War—we were living in Bristol at the time. An invitation had come from New Zealand for us to go there for an evangelistic tour, and having accepted this, it meant that we would be away from England for nearly a year. A very happy and suitable arrangement was made for the care of the two youngest children; they were to live with some ladies who would both mother and educate them. The eldest was to go with us on our tour, but the second boy, Dick, had to be arranged for.

"I very much wanted him to go to a school where he would be cared for just in the particular way I felt was necessary. He was backward and delicate. It was most terribly hard having to leave him at all. If only he could go to this school, the headmaster's wife would understand him, she was so kind and gentle, and the long separation would lose its bitterness if the laddie might be left in her care.

"But the expense was far beyond us. We could never pay the fees of a school of that kind! Yet the idea kept on coming to me that it was *the place* Dick must go to. How?

"I talked to God about it again and again. Nothing seemed to happen, and the time of our departure drew nearer. I must go to the school myself and see the headmaster and his wife and ask what the fees would be. If they knew the circumstances, they might make

a difference. So I prayed that if that was the right thing to do, I might know.

" The next day a letter came from my husband, who was conducting services in a Midland town, asking me to come and speak at the Friday evening service. In travelling there I should pass the place where the school was. I would go earlier, miss a train at that place, see the people I wanted, and get to the evening service by the train by which I had been told to arrive.

" They were sympathetic, and promised to write me about terms, and Dick should be cared for, and I must not be anxious about him while away! That was splendid; but alas! when their letter came the terms seemed beyond us. They would take the boy at the greatly reduced fee of seventy-five pounds. Could it possibly be arranged? Oh, how I prayed about that seventy-five pounds! Times were very hard just then. A minister's salary was so small, and that was all we had. Surely God would help us if He meant this thing to be!

" One morning I had gone upstairs, and was standing by the dressing-table doing my hair, when my husband came in and said, ' I've been thinking it over about Dick. I can see my way to forty pounds if you can give the other thirty-five pounds.' I looked at him and said, ' You know I haven't got anything. How can I give it? ' Then he replied, ' We'll have to make another arrangement; he cannot go.'

" I finished dressing and went out and called to see my father and mother. They were having tea in the dining-room, and I sat down to have it with them. Soon my father rose from the table and went into the library; he said he had found some new specimens of wild flowers, and asked me to come and see them; he was a great botanist. After tea I followed him, but as I entered the room he said, ' That's the wild flower I want to give you,' and he pointed to a piece of paper on the table. I took it up, and found it was a cheque for *thirty-five pounds*, made out to me.

" For a moment I scarcely spoke, then said, ' Who told you about it? How did you know? '

" No one had told him, and he did not seem to understand my emotion at all. It appears a relative had been in to see him and told him that after her accounts had been balanced, an amount she had regarded as a bad debt had *come in unexpectedly*, and asked him what she should do with it, and he had replied, ' If you have no use for it, give it to Alice; she has as much as she can do with those children.' And so the cheque was written out for me and left. An hour after I called in and found it.

" Whether the relation concerned ever knew my story I don't know. I do not think my father even understood the situation. However, I got the money! How I hurried home that afternoon! Bursting into the study, I laid the cheque on the table before my husband, saying, ' I've got the thirty-five pounds for Dick's school.'

" ' You didn't ask for it, did you? ' he said.

" ' No, of course not,' I said. ' You know I wouldn't —but I *did* ask God, and *He has given it to us*! ' "

* * * * *

The life story of Hudson Taylor and the story of the China Inland Mission are a gold mine of nuggets, proving that God guides and provides. So is the life story of William Quarrier, *A Romance of Faith.* Sometimes the provision is not money or kind, but renewed health, as is shown in the following remarkable letter which came to the writer from a minister in North Devon.

" Going back about thirty years, I was brought into touch with a small group of people who met in a room in the Boro'. The folk, with the leader, gave themselves to definite prayer, Bible readings, and taught Guidance by listening to the Voice of the Spirit. When led, they practised *Divine* healing, stressing *Divine* because it was faith in the Person who accomplished the work. I was also in touch with a large London church (Dr. Meyer's), where I entered into all general activities.

"During that period I came into touch with my wife. A few years previously she had suffered from a very severe attack of gastric ulcers, and was on the danger list of a London hospital for about a fortnight. There came a time when she had a return of this, and with so much retching became very weak and ill, especially in chest and throat. One day I was very distressed to see how she was suffering, and naturally it was always a matter of prayer.

"On reaching home, I went to my room, retiring to bed after the usual period spent in prayer and Bible reading. I could not sleep, and then a Voice said distinctly, 'Go up and lay hands on ——'

"Very sensitive to undertaking the responsibility of such a task (not having done such a thing before), I made the excuse of not having any oil. But the word came again just as distinctly; when I answered I would go, I went to sleep quite quickly and peacefully.

"The next afternoon, after talking on spiritual matters generally, I put the definite question, 'Are you willing to trust God to heal you?' At once the reply came, 'Yes, I am.' Accordingly, we both knelt down and prayed. Then I arose and laid my hands on her head, definitely claiming the promise for healing with utter committal into God's hands.

"As our custom was, the one concerned should definitely accept healing and give thanks for the deliverance. I left soon after, and before eight o'clock that evening she was quite well and enjoying fellowship with others at the meeting. Friends were astonished at the fact accomplished, and we simply witnessed that God had answered prayer."

* * * * *

Apropos the gift of healing as part of God's provision for those who trust Him, Sundar Singh (who said his shattered arm was touched and healed by our Lord when he was miraculously rescued from death in a Tibetan well) claimed, when seeing his visions, to have received counsel on this subject from the Saints.

Said the Apostle of India:

"'The Saints in Heaven, though they help men spiritually on earth, are not allowed to come down and work directly, but only indirectly through other men. The angels could easily convert the world in ten minutes. Some of them have asked for the privilege of being allowed to suffer in this world, but God refused their request, because He did not wish to interfere with men's freedom by such an exercise of miraculous power.

"'*The Apostles were allowed to work miracles in order to prove that they, as well as Christ, had authority behind their word, and miracles are still occasionally allowed, but not often.*'

"We asked him once whether he had ever tried spiritual healing. 'Yes,' he said, 'but I gave it up because I found it made people look to me and not to Christ, and that is a cross I cannot bear!'" *

Those who have enjoyed *The Christ of the Indian Road* will never forget that page in which Stanley Jones described the restoration of shattered health which came in answer to prayer.

Which seems to show that despite a loss of healing power, it is possible nowadays, as of old, to achieve miracles of healing. But these happen only occasionally, after prayer for healing has first been inspired by the Great Healer.

Knowing that Hugh Redwood had gone thoroughly into this subject for very special reasons, the writer asked him for his conclusions. And here they are:

"I hold that the ministry of healing was at one time an essential function of the Church. Clearly there has been a loss of power, and equally clearly the Church, on the whole, is afraid to lay claim to that ministry now. But I am satisfied that, just as surely as in St. Paul's day, there *are* those who have gifts of healing. They are probably far more numerous than we suspect.

"I have never practised healing, for the reason that I have never had any reason to suppose that I possessed

* *The Sadhu* (Streeter and Appasamy).

the gift. I don't think I am worthy to wield such an instrument. But undoubtedly I know people who possess healing powers, and I could name at least three —one of them the son of an intimate friend—who have been cured of supposedly incurable disease.

" In one of these cases only was there any laying on of hands; the other two are cases of cure through prayer."

* * * * *

In July 1933 we met a Father of the Eastern Church, whose monastery was near the Black Sea. He was once an officer in the Russian Imperial Guard, retiring with the rank of " General." He had conversed with the late Czar on a number of occasions, and found him a man of great force of character, contrary to the popular idea of that unfortunate monarch.

" The General " lived the true ascetical life in his monastery. He retired soon after 8 p.m., slept in his clothes on planks, rose at midnight, prayed from 2 a.m. until 8 a.m., and did manual work until about 5 p.m., while existing on a slim vegetarian diet, mostly stale bread, and not much of that.

His monastery sank into a low state financially, and all the money that could be raised—some five pounds—was given to him to finance a round-the-world pilgrimage to obtain help. For four and a half years he circled the world, his total receipts from faith and prayer being about £1,000, of which two-thirds had been forwarded to his brothers, to buy bread. At first he would worry, but presently his faith lifted him to complete indifference as to what was in his purse.

" Does God always provide? " we asked him.

" The General's " face became radiant.

" Of course He does."

I have been young and I am old
But never have I seen good men forsaken;
They always have something to give away,
Something wherewith to bless their families.
Psalms (*Moffatt*).

* * * * *

Be not therefore anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or, what shall we drink, or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?

But seek ye first His Kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—*Jesus.*

IN his early days, George Müller of Bristol was a bad lot.

He told his father a series of lies, robbed him, and lived riotously and fraudulently in hotels; and went to prison.

He seemed to have some peculiar criminal tendency which must assuredly send him to a felon's grave. Yet George Müller was changed, and he became the outstanding example of the life of entire dependence upon God.

He proved in his own long experience that it was possible to trust God, and God only, to supply the needs of himself and a family of some two thousand orphans, in the days when a family was a family, and the average home a human warren. During his long life he maintained the famous Bristol Orphanages, and raised nearly one and a half million pounds without asking anyone for a penny, just to prove that our God and Father is the same faithful God that He ever was.

* * * * *

He did his life work in secret on his knees and at his desk.

To one who asked him the secret of his achievements, he said:

" There was a day when I died, utterly died " ; and as he spoke, he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor. " I died to George Müller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will—died to the world, its approval or censure—died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends—and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

He found three texts, which were the secret of his prosperity :

" This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success " (Joshua i. 8).

" Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper " (Psalm i).

" Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein . . . this man shall be blessed in his deed " (James i. 25).

These texts, says Dr. Pierson, were George Müller's secret of true prosperity and unmixed blessing.

Said the immortal George :

" Greater and more manifest nearness of the Lord's presence I have never had than when, after breakfast, there were no means for dinner, or when, after dinner, there were no means for tea, and yet the Lord provided the tea; and all this without one single person being informed about our need.

" Through grace, my mind is so fully assured of the faithfulness of the Lord, that in the midst of the greatest need I am enabled, in peace, to go about my other work. Indeed, did not the Lord give me this, which

is the result of trusting in Him, I should scarcely be able to work at all; for it is now comparatively a rare thing that a day comes when I am not in need for one or another part of the work."

When travelling on that team of the Oxford Group in America, one of the catch-phrases often used by the leader, Sciff Wishard, and one which caused the writer more than a little annoyance, was, "We must get away from dependence on bank balances."

Most of his life the writer had depended on the hope of a bank balance, when it was usually an overdraft, had he but known it. But even an overdraft seemed more tangible than depending on God only. Yet these fellows meant it, and so depended, even though sometimes their dependents were not so confident as they. But George Müller lived that dependent life for sixty years.

Müller's father wished him to become a clergyman with a well-paid living; George had no desire for that life; and so he cut himself off from his father's allowance when at the University, thus casting himself adrift, penniless and helpless. He believed that if his motive were pure, as it was, then God would not fail him.

If he had done as his father wished him to do, he would probably have sunk into obscurity. "God was leading His servant in his youth to cast himself upon Him for temporal supplies," says Dr. Pierson. God works through His servants, guiding and training them, and if their motives continue to be pure, He uses them. What they need for their work comes at the right moment, and all necessary health, strength, and length of days are given to them.

"Not once, or five times, or five hundred times, but *thousands of times, in these three-score years have we had in hand not enough for one meal, either in food or in funds; but not once has God failed us; not once have we or the orphans gone hungry or lacked any good thing,*" said George Müller to Dr. Pierson.

He believed that Divine bounty and provision could never fail, that God would grant them if he hung on and trusted, without trusting himself.

Sometimes supplies were on the way a long time before they were needed; but that did not mean they were not dispatched in answer to George Müller's prayers; his prayers were foreseen and answered before his needs were known to him. "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

George Müller's faith and trust in the invisible and inexhaustible supplies of God brought what he needed automatically. He found, however, that there must be no waste, that he must be a careful steward; in the words of the modern theologian, his faith was in Providence, not in improvidence.

George Müller not only believed, but he acted on his belief. He made no auxiliary arrangement in case supplies did not arrive. He had no friend to whom he could say, "God has let me down to-day; you must be His understudy." Apparently that attitude would have been a barrier to the effective working of his faith.

He had no bolt-hole; while confident he was going to be victorious, he kept no reserve of supplies; nor did he dig second-line trenches. George Müller believed that we get from God what we expect; and he proved that in practice. He knew the law governing temporal supply; he was acquainted with the principle behind it, and he without deviation worked in harmony with this law and principle.

His mission was not to start and maintain the largest orphanage in the world, but to demonstrate to weaker people that God is a living God, and that our temporal supply and prosperity come from the Lord, as a result of faith and prayer.

Believing that the Lord was his one and only source of supply, unfailing and inexhaustible, he tested and proved the truth of his belief.

He maintained his faith through prayer, while refus-

ing to rely on man (the arm of flesh) and to make appeals to the public.

He never went into debt, nor did he allow it to be known that circumstances were straitened; he went courageously forward to fresh adventures, not knowing where the money would come from to maintain the new enterprises.

He gave all his substance to the Lord, except what was necessary for his modest and frugal mode of life.

Always was he ready to render service.

An observer who has deduced the foregoing principles on which George Müller based his life, wisely says that we must possess the right motive in service. "The man who works for self, or who thinks that his business is being run for his personal benefit, or who expects other people to help him, can never become a real success. His very attitude towards life keeps away all possibility of such a thing; it dams up the channel through which good and abundance can flow.

"The same applies to those who call themselves Christians, yet stoop to all the mean tricks of the world. If a man takes advantage of a brother by beating him down below a fair and remunerative price, how can he be blest and prospered? There are those who try to buy everything they possibly can below its true market value. They are ready to take advantage of another's loss and difficulty to secure for themselves a bargain, some advantage for themselves. But this is *not* the case.

"They commit a crime, similar to pocket-picking and burglary, and because of this they suffer from the evils which wickedness brings, for evil comes to them through their own evil. Through acting evilly, they lay themselves open to evil happenings. Actually, it is much better to pay too high a price than too low a price; what we have to make sure of is that we pay enough. *If we find that we are being charged too little we should insist upon paying more.*"

* * * * *

But can God be trusted always to provide for those who obey Him? Or do Christians sometimes starve?

The writer is convinced that according to our faith, so shall it be done unto us. God never deserts anyone. He is always the same unchanging God, He is a God of undeviating principle, and His principle cannot change. If Christians die of hunger, it is because they have not exercised the faith which moves mountains. To quote a correspondent, who asks to be anonymous:

"Deliverance comes through human channels; but, if necessary, God is able to deliver us by what, to the carnal mind, appear to be more wonderful ways." As He delivered Sundar Singh from the decomposing matter at the bottom of the Tibetan well. It is possible for a man to be alone on a raft a thousand miles from anywhere or anybody, without food or drink, and yet his needs can be supplied through trusting prayer, even in this year of our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty-three, just as it was when ravens fed Elijah in the days of Ahab and Jezebel.

Our Lord's teaching on the subject of trust in God for supplies is too clear and definite to be upset by any incredulous dignitaries of the Church. Missionaries need not die of starvation if they only believe, for their experience would be akin to that of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness; but that experience is not likely to be theirs until they create it by faith. Yet unless they have faith in God Who has called them, and in the message they preach, missionaries have more prospect of being eaten by cannibals than being fed by manna, ravens or even seagulls.

Down in the south-west of England there lived a Christian couple, grandparents of a friend. Times were hard, and one day when the husband left for work in the fields there was no food in the house. His wife told him not to worry. She promised him that she would bring him his lunch as usual.

When he had gone she went to her little prayer-cupboard and prayed. Presently a friend dropped in

with a gift of provisions which he had suddenly thought to bring along. At midday the little believing housewife (said her grandson to the writer) was seen walking across the fields to time as usual—carrying the promised lunch, her answer to prayer.

God often does wonderful things for us, even when we only half believe that He can do them; but when we really believe, then they become possible at any time.

* * * * *

Every conceivable remedy for the woes of the world and of each one of us has been tried and tried all down the centuries without avail (says Major Tudor Pole); that is, every remedy but one. And that one has been constantly overlooked or denied efficiency, for two reasons: *the materialistic outlook of the average man, and the simplicity of the remedy itself.*

The peoples of the world, the nations and the individuals in the nations, have regarded Christ's message, the Sermon on the Mount, and His teaching generally, as an entirely unpractical and other-worldly code or system, which by no stretch of the imagination could be utilised as a safe and successful guide to daily life and conduct under modern conditions.

In other words, Christianity itself has never been tried out as a practical method for guiding the destinies of the race.

If a man is ill, poor or unhappy, the remedy lies within himself, not outside. He can start to mend matters by changing his thought processes, and through prayer and meditation he can at once begin to reflect the Christ-consciousness.

The man who is absolutely down and out is quite satisfied to think that his circumstances are not his fault, but the fault of heredity and of other people.

The first lesson he has to learn is that he is in the position into which he has thought himself. Now, the carnal mind does not like that. The man who is down and out has often no love and no spiritual health,

and often no supply, because he is railing against circumstances. He is personally responsible for his condition (although others may have caused it) because of his thought attitude, which he must change at once.

That is why a changed, or a converted man often gets work immediately afterwards. The writer has seen men who had tramped the streets of New York when they were down and out and embittered, but who turned into Calvary Mission and were encouraged to change their attitude of embittered hostility to love for God and their fellow-men. Then they went out and were guided into work; and presently they stood up with glowing faces, proclaiming these twin miracles in their own lives.

The first thing to remember is, there is no power apart from God, as expressed through Christ, and that power is absolutely omnipotent here and now. If a man opens his mind to receive it and reflect it, to the extent that he carries out that operation will he find himself in health, happiness, and general well-being, even if the whole world is against him. For this is a dream-world, and he has clutched a spark of reality that drives all darkness away. Children often suffer because they reflect the thoughts of their parents.

A friend who affirms and practises the foregoing principle writes:

"One day there came to see me a professional man whose life-work depended on his maintaining the consulting-room in which he practised. If he left, his *clientèle* would fall to pieces. He was in great distress, for he had been given a final date to pay a quarter's rent of fifty pounds, or he would be sold up.

"He walked up and down in great agitation. What should he do? Only three more days. I said it was time to begin to perplex his mind a minute to noon three days from now. 'If you are going to fill your mind with fear-thoughts, you are going to make it impossible for what you need to reach you, since to receive God's power you must express faith and not

fear. You are endowing evil and discord with powers they do not possess apart from your thinking.

"'Just turn your thinking right round. Clear out wrong thoughts. They are not your own. Begin now to think that, as a child of God, you have all love, truth, and the supply you need. *Be careful in your thinking not to outline how your need shall be met, but know that your need will be met in the best way for yourself.*'

"I said to the man, 'If I had fifty pounds, I would not give it to you, for it would be of no real value to you.' I had not fifty pounds, but to stimulate his faith, I gave him ten pounds towards it.

"He brooded and went back to his office. As nothing fresh had happened, he was once again in the depth of depression. He told his wife what transpired during our talk—nothing any good. But the feminine intuition is stronger than masculine reason. She saw something good in it. She caught a glimpse of the light. They prayed together that they might receive the Light, which is understanding of truth. Next day the man felt quite different in his office. Two clients turned up unexpectedly, whom he had not seen for five years. Then came another unexpected client. By five minutes to noon on the third day he had forty pounds out of the fifty he needed. Then he started to perplex his mind: Will the landlord be satisfied with forty pounds, or will he turn me out because I haven't the fifty pounds?

"Then he remembered that he must not perplex himself until one minute to noon. And at twelve o'clock a messenger boy arrived with a packet containing ten pounds, sent anonymously, wherewith he paid his debt, and changed his course of life. Never did he find out from whom that ten pounds came. It did not come from me. Nor do I know the donor.

"The real moral of this true story—we must stop fearing, since God will always succour if our attitude of mind is right, which says, 'Thy will be done.'

"If the money had not arrived, the man should not

have reviled God, for then it would have been quite right for the landlord to have taken possession, for the professional man would have been needed elsewhere. Our danger always is the outlining of what we want to happen—security, safe positions, human desires, sometimes wrong desires, abundantly gratified. Then we try by human thought to make God's purposes to square with our human aspirations, while we have no belief in God. We have not laid down our life as a willing sacrifice.

"When we realise the truth, we must be careful not to use the new spiritual power that comes to us to serve the purpose of our human will. If we take this power and exploit it, we come a cropper."

If we become entirely unselfed, we always get our needs supplied, and are freed from reliance on bank balances. But we must remember to take the "£" out of gold.

* * * * *

In the foregoing instances the writer has given, in a discursive way, an affirmative answer to the question —Does God provide?

Looking back on his own past, he now sees how often the Invisible Hand has opened doors and brought supplies in ways at which he can only marvel. Time after time he has been so near ruin that seemingly almost the next step must send him over the precipice on to the rocks below.

Yet every time he has reached the edge, instead of stepping out on to nothing, and falling down the cliffs to disaster, he has gone buoyantly forward, treading on air.

PART FOUR

A DISTINGUISHED TEAM OF CANDID FRIENDS

Bishop of gold, staff of wood; staff of gold, bishop of wood.—French Proverb.

* * * * *

A bishop that was somewhat a delicate person, bathed twice a day.

A friend of his said to him: "My Lord, why do you bathe twice a day?"

The bishop answered: "Because I cannot conveniently bathe thrice."—Bacon.

CHAPTER I THE BISHOP OF LONDON

A child may say Amen
To a bishop's prayer, and feel the way it goes.
Browning.

CONTINUING our researches in the realm of God's Guidance and God's Providence, we called on several outstanding spiritual men, and asked questions to check up our own experiences.

When a journalist enters the religious world, with a book that immediately sky-rockets, he must expect to be received with a mixture of curiosity, caution, and cordiality. The first Father in God to be approached was the Bishop of London. By the next post there came from Fulham Palace the following reply :

DEAR RUSSELL,

I am glad that your book *For Sinners Only* has had so large a sale. I do not think you had really better come down to me for an interview unless, I should say, you are ready to include some very outspoken criticisms on the Groups' ideas of Guidance.

I think I explained at St. Ermin's Hotel that I believe absolutely in Guidance by the Holy Spirit, without which belief I could not be for five minutes Bishop of London.

But instances have been brought before me of mistaken views of Guidance on the part of the Group, which lead me to suppose that many of them leave out the light of reason (also a lamp given us for our Guidance) and what might be called sanctified common-sense. Already my association with the

Group has led to more correspondence than I bargained for, but you know, from my address, how much I wish them well.

A. F. LONDON.

Now, a key-word of the Oxford Group is Challenge. Innumerable lives have been transformed by God through their instrumentality because they challenge people to cut out sin and to follow Jesus Christ.

But if you are a challenger, you must expect to be challenged, and to receive such with as good grace as you give it. The Bishop of London had challenged; there could be only one answer—to accept the challenge. For if the Bishop of London cannot give Guidance on Guidance . . .?

* * * * *

Having nosed into nearly every interesting place in London during twenty-five years of journalism, we assumed we knew the capital as well as most; for we had visited palaces and prisons, sombre police-courts and the grass-courts at Wimbledon. Several times our duties had taken us into Buckingham Palace, Lambeth Palace, and occasionally a people's palace; but never into Fulham Palace, the traditional home of the Lord Bishops of London.

The policeman near Putney Bridge stiffened respectfully when asked the whereabouts of Fulham Palace, and indicated the tram-lines to Bishop's Avenue. This ended in a public recreation ground. Bewildered we looked around, and presently spotted—here in the middle of London—what seemed a disused country lane, needing fresh gravel, inadequately guarded by a white notice-board, once perpendicular, marked "Private."

Perhaps this country lane would lead to the elusive Fulham Palace. Strolling between iron railings, black-painted, and under flowering chestnuts, past what might have been a few farm buildings in the remote

country, but was probably a garage, we came presently on the arched entrance to a large building of mellowed brick, that for sombre loneliness and silent mystery was, of course, the original ogre's castle.

Some layers of bricks in the purpling walls were sagging with age, and the flowering creepers adorning the courtyard's interior were also very old and thickly gnarled. The ancient stone well in the centre had no fountain playing. Two heavy oaken doors, iron studded, stood wide open at the courtyard entrance; they must have been built a great while; they completely filled the Gothic archway, and probably had protected many a sleeping Lord Bishop of London for centuries.

Deserted and silent was the solemn courtyard. Not a dog, cat, or pigeon. Not a sign, not a name-plate. These mysterious occupants—could they neither read nor write? Even when the bell was rung and we had peered through the clear-glass door into remote depths of a long and mysterious corridor, we were not quite certain that this was Fulham Palace. Perhaps it *was* an ogre's castle, after all. Fine! Even if there were no interview, it would make an excellent opening for a good mystery story—or Elstree film.

"Richard Giles had come to London for the day. Tiring of the sights, he sought rest and recreation at Fulham, when he espied a country lane. Richard Giles had never resisted a country lane. Nor could he do so when he found one in the middle of London. Sauntering along it, vainly searching for a wisp of straw to aid his meditation, he presently espied a deserted palace. . . ."

* * * * *

At first there was no answer to our ring, for we overlooked the great length of that corridor, which the trim parlour-maid had to traverse. So we tried the door just to see if the place were occupied. The door opened. One was free to wander around

and investigate. In the far depths a diminutive figure was moving towards us, as we rang again; the figure enlarged and the door was officially opened.

Old muskets, wainscotting in old oak, old swords and scabbards, caught our eye as we penetrated the solemn depths. Then the sombre aspect of the Palace abruptly changed. We were now in a large, light drawing-room; the far side of its full length was all window space, and giving on to wide lawns. A pleasant sight on a fine morning in Fulham. At the far end a large picture of the Bishop, and many books to hand to beguile visitors awaiting an interview, among them our old friends *God in the Slums* and *God in the Shadows*, by Hugh Redwood.

The appointment was for eleven-thirty. The writer knew something of the Bishop's punctuality, and that, with all his engagements, he never allows one to overlap another, that his life runs to schedule from seven a.m. almost to midnight, although the Bishop has reached and passed his three-score-years-and-ten.

Exactly at eleven-thirty that door over in the far corner opens and we see two figures standing, one in a purple cassock, beckoning:

"Here's Russell! On time again. Come along."

The writer is introduced to the parting guest, and then we are in a small room, uncomfortably small by contrast with the great drawing-room without. In the Bishop's study are a prayer desk, a few chairs, books, and a little fire. In this heart of the ogre's castle everything is small and bright, and the brightest of all is the Bishop's bright purple cassock.

Dr. Winnington-Ingram is slender, erect, and stately. He has a pleasant and almost perpetual smile, though very different from the honeysuckle product of Hollywood, as it is unlike the well-rounded "laugh and grow fat" countenance of the jolly landlord. He has the be-dimpled, perennially smiling face of one who seeks

another's happiness, silver hair and blue-grey eyes that twinkle with kindness and sagacity; refined yet clearly marked cheek-bones, balancing the equally noticeable chin; and a moderate-sized nose, with an expansive upper lip, curling good-humouredly at the corners of the mouth.

His one essential article of faith is the living Christ, Who vitalises his whole being. A friend of the first Roosevelt, he was hailed in America as a golfer and right good fellow; and Wall Street gave him an ovation worthy the President himself.

In his little study, he is both the lovable Englishman and the impressive Bishop of London; the golden cross with a ruby centre dangling from his neck seems to match that long purple cassock and that bright little room.

"How long can you spare?"

The Bishop glances casually at the clock.

"Oh, some time."

As though no one else mattered, and that he had not a full day's diary to work through. We found later that some time meant exactly half an hour, for the next appointment (with a clergyman, with whom we presently shook hands) was for twelve o'clock.

At the outset the Bishop wished us to understand that he was thoroughly in sympathy with the aims and ideals of the Groups, but they must realise they were only one among many fine spiritual movements of our time. When this elementary fact was overlooked—as he saw a danger of it being overlooked—it made him feel anxious.

"Take that appeal just in from the Hyelm Hostels," said the Bishop, lifting a letter from a mass of correspondence. "The man who sends that out is a splendid fellow! He is looking after the spiritual welfare of young men in his hostels in a way that excites my greatest admiration. There are hundreds in touch with him. And numerous kindred institutions are doing a great spiritual work everywhere."

The Bishop stood meditating for a moment.

"And now another point. One member of the Group said to me, 'They don't join us, because they don't want to forsake their sins'; yet there are many people who are just as anxious to forsake their sins as those in the Group, though the Group formulas for doing so do not appeal to them. Nevertheless, I think the Group slogans are splendid. I have tried to preach them all my life in my mission sermons (once the Bishop was urged to resign his Bishopric and become the Bishop Evangelist of the Church of England).

"'I surrender myself to Jesus Christ.' What is better than that? It is quite thrilling to me to see fine, athletic-looking fellows stand up and, careless of anyone else's views, signify boldly their determination to live the wholly-surrendered life. Of course the Group are right in their insistence on absolute surrender, and I admire them for it.

"Then again, I believe in the slogan, 'My sins are acknowledged, confessed, forgiven, and *done with.*' One does not like to see them hanging round one's neck for ever afterwards. It is quite true most of us desperately need forgiveness, and when we are forgiven we are happy. One greatly rejoices to see those happy countenances of young men and women, touched by the Groups, who know their sins are forgiven, and one also rejoices to know that those sins are *done with*, and the less said about them afterwards, perhaps the better. Forgiven, they can now go on in Christ's power, strengthened against the temptation to repeat them."

The Bishop stood awhile, pondering carefully his words:

"The Group ideal of a Christian Fellowship is also splendid. It is, of course, the Christian ideal to live as one happy Christian family, and not unto oneself. But that is also the basis of the whole Christian Church. I shall come back to Guidance presently, but I would say now that of course we Christians rely on Guidance.

'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God.' We take one day at a time, and we trust the Holy Spirit to see us through, and so He does. That has been my slogan for years.

"Then, too, underneath the Group idea of Life-Changing, there lies a great truth. As you go through the world, you leave behind a trail of light or darkness. Such ideals as Life-Changing attract me. Of course they do. Also the clear fact that before my eyes men and women are reaching a degree of happiness and reality, in and through religion, which they have never reached before. Something has woken them up. That is obvious to us all. What has happened to them is something like what happened to the young man when the prophet prayed that his eyes should be opened, and he saw the protecting horses and chariots round about Elisha."

The Bishop had been standing by the little fireplace, looking towards the window. Now he came and sat beside the writer. Presently, absorbed, he knelt and continued talking, although he seemed unconscious that he was kneeling.

"Yet frankly I have seen dangers and foresee dangers. For instance, in the matter of Guidance, we must remember that the Lamp of Reason was given us by God to guide us. Therefore, we must do nothing against reason. This will save us from mistaking a mere whim or desire as Guidance by the Holy Spirit. I illustrated that point when giving a farewell charge to the thirty-three Groupers who left England in 1932, as a team to visit Canada and the United States. I told them a very unhappy story of misguidance, which I knew to be true, for it was given me by the father of the girl who was the victim of it. Because of the behaviour of a young man in the Group towards my informant's daughter, the father was completely put off the movement. His attitude was understandable, if not quite logical.

"*The young man had written a love-letter to his*

daughter on the Friday, but on the Monday he had been 'guided' to propose to another girl.

"The father said he wanted horse-whipping, for his sense of decency should have come in to check such ungentlemanly conduct. The Group should insist upon such safeguards as the Lamp of Reason, and the observance of good taste and decency when interpreting Guidance. When I told my story at the Group meeting, it raised a laugh; but it is a serious objection, none the less, for the story is true.

"Several other instances have come to me of misguidance being mistaken for guidance, and this is because those who practise it leave out the Lamp of Reason, and thus do a number of unwise and eccentric things. Yet I still believe in Guidance, and am certain that God does guide, and will always guide, the surrendered soul.

"I always look for God to guide me when I am engaged in the responsible work of choosing men for important posts in the London Diocese. I pray to God, and look for the Finger of God to point out the right man, but I use all the help that reason dictates to enable me to reach the right judgment. I take the opinion of the suffragan bishops and archdeacons; I go into the record of the man proposed; I look to see what the parish wants; and I ask the churchwardens and the parochial church council; and when I have got all my information together, I pray over it earnestly and believingly; and I believe I have been guided by the Holy Spirit to make the right selection.

"But if I left reason out of account and expected Divine help to be given to light my path, I should go terribly wrong. And I am trying to insist upon that point to save my young friends from making mistakes.

"After I had said in one of my sermons something on these lines, one lady in the Group came to see me, and, remonstrating, quoted Abraham as going out, against all reason, not knowing whither he went. Of course I do not mean that we are not driven by the

Holy Spirit to do things *beyond* what a worldly wisdom would dictate, but then Abraham was not acting *unreasonably* in obeying the commandment of God, and pioneering a new country, as the subsequent history of the human race clearly showed.

"Many things in the Christian faith are *above* reason, and *not against* reason. I have always held that the light of revelation will show us many things our reason would not otherwise discover, though nothing unreasonable. For instance, belief in miracles is not unreasonable if you believe in a living God, Who is Master in His own world."

Still kneeling, the Bishop proceeded:

"That's my point about Guidance and reason. Another danger I see is the habit of talking too much about themselves. Jokingly, I reminded them at St. Ermin's that the best definition of a bore was 'A man who wants to talk about himself when you want to talk about yourself.' However interesting it may be to hear a man tell once how his belief in Christ has helped him against certain temptations, it can be most boring when told over and over again. And, moreover, it is not too good for the man himself. In religion we want to get away from ourselves, and fix our minds on God.

"And this brings me to the hour in the morning—the hour of silence—and I believe this to be the stronghold of the whole Group Movement. It is very important to use that hour aright. It has long been my own practice to have an hour with God every day from eight a.m. to nine, but I try first to get beautiful thoughts about God and the Love of God into my mind for the day; applying these, of course, to my private life, though not dwelling too much on myself. For the last half-hour I call the servants into chapel, and, after prayer, I read them out something, and then we all think it over together, and pray over it. There should be meditation, praise, thanksgiving, and intercession for others in that morning hour with God."

A purple arm was then extended to the prayer desk.

"I have here sometimes two hundred letters, which have been answered. I take twenty a day and pray over them. They are from all over the world. I am a great believer in using letters for intercession. This morning I took three letters from Japan, New Zealand, and Zululand off my desk to pray over. We should all pray over the letters we receive, and pray intelligently for our friends who are in special danger or difficulty at the moment.

"So, you see, it seems that we all want a little instruction in how to use that hour with God, for fear it becomes mere self-absorption.

"Again I perceive another danger—in misunderstanding the word Life-Changer. There is a grave danger of becoming a prig. My experience shows that those persons who have the most influence in the world are the quiet people who, if asked, would say they are doing very little good; and who don't talk too much about religion.

"For instance, the man who influenced me most in my life at my old school (Marlborough) over forty years ago, and the boys who came after me, was a lay master who rarely spoke to us about religion, but who affected our lives by his own unselfish life and fine character.

"If you decided to influence any special person *directly*, quite often you might influence him adversely, or make a bad job of it. While if you are courteous and tactful and unselfish, and watch, of course, for any opportunity for saying a word in season, you find perhaps you've done far more good by unconscious influence than if you set out consciously to do it.

"I hope in saying these things I shall not be thought unfriendly to a movement I believe is doing a great deal of good to many young people and even old people uninfluenced before. I wish it all success from the bottom of my heart.

"But I have one last warning with regard to Sharing. At the beginning of the Groups there was danger, through young men and women sharing their past

experiences too openly, especially on sexual matters. But that danger I *know* has now been avoided. Still, I do think there is something in what an excellent woman said to me, 'I do like a little reticence in my religion.'

"I think it quite possible that Sharing, good if rightly done, may be *over*done; and as a candid critic, I know of cases where it has been carried to an extent that it hurt people rather than helped them. I am not sure the Church was not rightly guided when she saw the danger of this outspoken confession, and made some representative of herself hear the confession and give absolution and advice in private.

"With these words of caution, I commend the Group Movement to all those whom it is fittest to help."

* * * * *

It was noon, and the writer's time was up. Habitually punctual, the Lord Bishop of London now had his eye on the clock. Yet there were many questions to ask, arising out of what had been said.

"Can I have two more minutes?"

And here the Bishop broke a precedent—his absolute rule of absolute punctuality.

"Two only," he said.

Of course the writer was stealing another's time, and stealing is not absolutely honest.

"Have you ever had an outstanding experience of Guidance—Super-Guidance?"

The Bishop shook his head.

Though deeply spiritual and a reputed saint, he is no mystic, for mystics are scarce, even in Fulham Palace.

"No," said he solemnly.

"But I review my life, and I believe I have been guided step by step.

"When I was a young man, working in a comfortable post, I was guided to plunge into the depths of East London, when all worldly considerations would have induced me to remain where I was, since there I had certainty of preferment. Nevertheless, I was sure I

was guided to go down East, where, after some years of labour among the poorest of East London, to my utter surprise, I was made Bishop of Stepney, and then I was asked to become the Bishop of London.

"I had made no move whatsoever to secure the appointment. Yet when the offer was made, I began to make a few moves. Following the principles I have just been enunciating, I consulted those who could give me the best advice—the Archbishop of Canterbury, the then Bishop of Winchester, and others.

"When I had taken every possible opinion to guide me, I prayed God to show me what the answer should be. And, as the call had come unsought, I felt it must have come from God, and that the answer to my prayer must be 'Yes.'

"So I accepted. And I could not have carried on ever since, but for my belief in the slogan 'Take one day at a time and trust the Holy Spirit to see you through that day.'"

* * * * *

There were more questions to be asked.

But the next visitor had arrived, and the formality of introduction and farewell was repeated, after the Bishop had placed his hands on the writer's head and given his blessing on his work.

* * * * *

The fair challenge of the Bishop of London having been accepted and the criticisms of this candid friend taken down for publication, it is now only fair to give the answers. The Oxford Group discourage arguments and religious wrangling; otherwise all their time would have been occupied lately with controversy instead of conversions.

One of their customary answers to critics is: "When did God last use you to win another for Christ?"

The writer asked several opponents of the Group this question, only to receive the assurance that God had recently used them in Life-Changing.

Whilst reticence about one's religion is on occasion

wise, the simple truth is that only once during thirteen years in the Wilderness did anyone—the writer's brother Harry—approach him with the claims of Christ; and it was not until he had been back for ten years in the Christian fold that he himself began to be used for Life-Changing, following contact with the Oxford Group, who showed him the " how " of personal evangelism and challenged him to undertake the greatest of all undertakings.

" Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Listen carefully to what a person talks about, and you will know where his treasure is; but remember to listen for the asides in his conversation. If he has much treasure laid up in Heaven, he will not be too reticent about his Bank Manager.

With regard to the Bishop's fear that the Groups may think themselves the only pebbles in Paradise, there is, of course, a tendency for everybody to concentrate and expatiate on his own experience and technique; but the Groups do not, and should not, claim to be the only movement of the Spirit in our time; but they urge all to strive for fulness of life in Christ, and constantly encounter men and movements that are not being held, or holding others, to the highest, through complete surrender to our Lord and unceasing attentiveness to His leading.

Furthermore, whilst it is perfectly true that some who wish to forsake their sins may not associate with the Groups, and may feel entirely justified in their attitude, nevertheless the desire to cherish certain pet sins is still the main objection of many opponents.

The Groups recognise that their sins are *done with* when they are acknowledged and forgiven; and they are referred to again only when such reference will be helpful to somebody, chiefly to unforgiven sinners, seeking forgiveness and victory over sin. Experience continues to show that such witness is still useful in changing lives, and also in raising greatly the spiritual atmosphere of a meeting, whilst unguided and

often selfish reticence retards the expansion of Christ's Kingdom. If the Apostles had been reticent, how would Christianity have conquered Europe?

True sharing is always up to date and therefore should never be boring, like the old class meetings, and should never hurt anything but sin, if uttered in the Spirit, and for the cause of Christ. Even if some person has felt hurt by true, but ruthless public sharing, many others have been simultaneously helped; and so the slight suffering for the Kingdom of one is general gain. It will not hurt a Christian to feel occasionally uncomfortable.

Sometimes, too, our taste may be hurt when someone talks unguidedly; but it must be remembered that this is still the shadowy and imperfect world. Over there is bliss;—here something is ever amiss.

Again, Groups neither advocate nor oppose private confessions to a priest; but they find sharing reciprocally beneficial. "Confess your faults one to another."

Nor do they oppose meditation and intercession as part of the Quiet Hour; but they *stress* listening, which is waiting on God, and that is prayer; and they believe there is less danger of a man becoming a spiritual prig who is led by the Spirit of God, than one who declines that leading. Since the true Grouper is also advised to be unselfish, he should be neither prig nor pig.

Nevertheless, the Groups do not defend the young ass who acts unguidedly, or without consideration, any more than the Church defends a disgraced priest or minister.

The Bishop's advice to give heed to the Lamp of Reason is echoed by Sam Shoemaker in his forceful book *The Conversion of the Church* (Oliphants). Says the Rector of Calvary:

> But real, honest, dispassionate thinking should precede Guidance. It must come in and do all that it can. Then it must retire, and leave the final decision to God. For the reason is seldom adequate to make those synthetic judgments, which are the most important judgments in life.

> We all know that intuition is far better than reason in such cases; and some of us know that Guidance far exceeds intuition. Reason, then, goes as far as it can. God is greater than reason, and makes the final decision and reveals it to us through Guidance.

* * * * *

The writer adds the hope that one day the Bishop of London may be guided to appoint a deeply spiritual man like the Rev. Howard Rose, now doing a glorious work in the suburbs as Vicar of Christ Church, Penge, to a living in Central London, which he could run on Group lines, meeting the needs of many passing through the metropolis, as Calvary Episcopal Church meets the needs of visitors to New York. Howard Rose's consecrated zeal and ability in dealing with men are definitely needed in the heart of London.

Despise not a rustic orator.—*Greek Proverb.*

* * * * *

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forespent, forespent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forespent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little grey leaves were kind to Him,
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.
Lanier.

* * * * *

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night
Scourged to his dungeon. . . .
Bryant.

THE Guided Life is not a new thought to Gipsy Smith, who, from the days when the first General Booth discovered him, has been preaching the Gospel to mass gatherings and also to gatherings of two—one under conviction of sin—in many parts of the round earth for over fifty years. William Booth could not help liking the sturdily-built, dark-haired, swarthy and youthful evangelist, with his shrewd look, his kindly smile, his melodious voice—afterwards to sound the message of Christ to countless millions; yet a direct, bluff fellow withal, giving and inviting whole-hearted truth, always confident in his Lord.

Shall we ever again produce such a man, a gipsy

from the woods and hills whose speech can trace the pearling of the morning dew with a zephyr's sibilant magic, or thrill an audience of ten thousand, almost to the point of spiritual frenzy, with his clarion message of salvation? A man of smiles, a man of tears, strong in the Lord, and rejoicing in His call. His stocky, powerful figure, and that soul-penetrating inflexion of his robust tenor voice, have arrested the spellbound interest and been instrumental in changing the lives of an army that no man can number since that amazing evening, more than half a century ago, when a wondering gipsy boy first responded to the call to be his Master's chosen vessel.

One sometimes asks if there is a person left in the Anglo-Saxon world who has not sat enthralled while Gipsy Smith unfolded his incomparable life-story. The writer, for one, has never felt his emotions so stirred in any gathering of people, at wedding or funeral, police-court or assize, comedy or Shakespearean tragedy, as when listening to Gipsy Smith describe his boyhood in a gipsy's gaudy caravan and that tall ladder up which he climbed to become the world's most famous evangelist.

The writer has seen him stir to the depths a congregation of prosaic and stolid Londoners; and he has seen him prominent in the middle of a black and white congregation in America, with a coloured choir, shading from cream through chocolate to a shining ebony, gleefully supporting him. Shining faces, radiating holy joy, spontaneously bursting into negro spirituals, and the Gipsy, stepping lightly about the platform with the elasticity of Kipling's "buck in spring," though he had already passed his three-score years and ten.

No Hollywood actress can more rightfully claim the artistic temperament than Gipsy Smith. He feels deeply, for he is the born artist; he is easily pleased and swiftly hurt; and he makes others respond to his own depths of feeling. Had he taken to the stage, he

could have been a film idol; had he gone into politics, he might have reached the top.

We asked the Gipsy to estimate the number of persons whose lives had been changed through his witness. Of course he found it difficult, impossible! There must have been many thousands. Perhaps hundreds of thousands. But there was something he *did* know—he spoke with elation—that large numbers of his converts were not vain hearers, but doers of the Word as well.

"Some ask me if they stand," he laughed. "I reply, they not only stand, but walk." Some run the race set before them. Many of them prosper. Some are to-day in very big positions—and still following the Lord. One is an ex-Cabinet Minister. He has held one of the highest positions in the Government, and the highest in his Party. Another is a bishop; another the head of a Government department—the most popular Government department—and many others in responsible positions, including a number of clergymen and ministers, were first led into the light at one of his meetings.

We looked into the Gipsy's young-looking face, noted his thick, iron-grey moustache, his short, curly hair, his vibrant spirituality, and waited for him to become reminiscent.

"Several years ago," said the Gipsy, "I was preaching in Darlington, when I received a note signed by a local vicar, saying he was in my congregation when I was speaking at Liverpool some thirty years before. His note said I had stood at the door as he came out, looked into his face, touched his shoulder, and said: 'Son, God can do lots of things for you if you let Him.'

"From which you will gather that I was stressing God's Guidance even in those far-away days. Those words went home to that lad. He walked the streets of Liverpool, meditating on what must have been a guided remark. The same night he went home, knelt

at his bedside, and asked God to do for him what Gipsy Smith said He would do. As the result of that surrender to God's leading, the young man entered the Church, became a clergyman, and was a vicar in Darlington when I was speaking in that town."

A proud father brought his son, a lad of twelve, to Gipsy Smith after the services at a recent national festival, so that the boy might meet the Evangelist who had led his father into the Way of Life. And recently two of Gipsy's chairmen at Handley both proclaimed they had been led from darkness to light at Gipsy's meetings many years before.

A Roman Catholic priest, Father Jerome, had once called on the Gipsy in America to tell him that every morning of his stay in that city he had, at the High Altar, prayed for Gipsy Smith, because he was preaching the same Lord whom he served.

"So," said the Gipsy, "God has allowed me to live to reap my own harvest."

Ask Gipsy Smith about God's Guidance in his own life, and watch his face become radiant and hear his confident answers. Listen to his flowing description of his wild life as a gipsy boy around New Barnet, where (he says) "I used to be a timber-merchant. I sold clothes-pegs from door to door."

Listen as he describes his father and mother and brothers and sisters, and the roving life they led on the roads of East Anglia seventy years ago. They would never be seen at Fairs. Oh, dear no! The true gipsy never descended to that level of life. Hear his description of that little clearing in Epping Forest, where his parents' caravan rested the day he was born, and of his recent pilgrimage to that same romantic spot, where he stood awhile in silence, his mind wandering over that wonderful trail down which his own caravan had been guided by the Hand of his Heavenly Father since his natal day in this spot seventy-two years ago.

And as he stood there in grateful silence, a baby rabbit hopped from the long grass into the clearing and conned him prettily, as baby rabbits had conned him when a gipsy mite playing in Epping Forest seventy years ago. And this little one seemed to know all about it, and to be saying to him :

" Hullo, Gipsy boy ! Why have you been away so long ? "

You can almost scent the sweet perfume of the woods in Spring, as the Gipsy tells that story. But your heart throbs for a different reason, as he describes that tragic episode of his youth, when the gipsy boy watched his father erect a tent in which his mother and the rest of the children would have to live a hundred yards away while his father remained in the caravan yonder with his sister, who (said the doctor back in the town) *was suffering from small-pox.*

Gipsy's picture of a caravan smitten with small-pox, the divided family, that stretch of greensward separating father and sick daughter from mother and the other children, is vividly drawn. He pictures his mother, taking the necessities of life half-way across that stretch of dividing green, and father coming half-way to receive them, neither daring to be there until the other was away, for fear the disease might spread to the rest of the family. How that graphic story harrows the emotions as Gipsy goes on to say that one day the mother, in reckless mother-love, went too near the caravan, became infected, and had to join her sick daughter inside !

The girl recovered, but his mother worsened. Presently she died, remembering as she passed over some forgotten hymn of childhood relating to a religion, known as Christianity, of which neither father nor mother knew anything more, for there had never been a mission to gipsies, although there were some three millions in the world, all speaking the same Romany language. The day their mother's body was taken away for burial, their father returned from the funeral

to find that all the children had disobeyed orders and were huddled together in the infected caravan.

* * * * *

That Gipsy Smith realised the necessity of being a Life-Changer for our Lord, when he was changed himself as a boy, he showed immediately he returned to his gipsy encampment. For he awoke nearly everybody in all the caravans by proclaiming loudly the news of his conversion. Doubtless some of the gipsies in that encampment, like the candid critics of the Groups, sensed danger in Gipsy's conversion. But the changed lad kept it up.

The new flame was not quenched by morning, though it was a lucky morning for him, for when, carrying his first basket of pegs, he strode into the grounds of a fine mansion, he was greeted by the lady herself, who bought the lot! "I thought she was going to buy the basket as well," adds the Gipsy.

The Guidance—early Guidance to witness for his Lord to the lady and her daughter—was immediately blessed by the Holy Spirit. Gipsy began to sing a hymn, a song of joy for selling his first lot of pegs at one shot. And when he had finished, the lady's eyes were moist; and her daughter's too. Tears are not unknown in some of Gipsy's congregations, but they did not frighten the Evangelist afterwards as they did at his first open-air meeting. Not knowing what else to do, he turned and ran as only a newly-enlightened (and lightened) gipsy boy can run. But when, many years after, he was the guest at the seaside home of that same lady, he learned that his morning witness of song had been used to change her daughter's life. His early witness had borne immediate fruit in a family whose name is well known in every English home.

"Can we get Guidance from God in every emergency?" the writer asked the veteran Evangelist.

The Gipsy replied with several stories from his crowded past, showing that when we are in urgent

need we may be sure of His Guidance. He had been addressing large meetings of English-speaking people in Paris, and was awaiting the arrival of an Armenian visitor in the central lobby of his hotel, when a beautifully dressed Parisienne, speaking prettily in broken English, came up and said:

"Aire you Meester Geepsy Smeeth?"

The Gipsy bowed gallantly.

"I would like to serve your Jesus."

Gipsy explained that he would be most glad to pray with her if his wife were present, but she was out shopping, and so he could not ask her to his room.

"But why not 'ere in zis place?"

Gipsy looked around. There were many people coming and going. The usual busy scene in the lobby of a Paris hotel. Some were gazing curiously at the fashionably dressed Parisienne standing talking about Jesus to the swarthy Evangelist. Gipsy took a breath, prayed silently, and said:

"Well, Madame, if you are willing to kneel here and pray with me, God will give me the grace to do the same."

"Eh, bien."

Completely nonchalant as to the sight-seers, the French lady knelt with Gipsy Smith, and there dedicated herself to a Christian life.

But that was not the story the Gipsy meant to quote to illustrate immediate Guidance in emergency. As the Parisienne left, the Armenian entered, a tall, determined-looking man, who, after taking off his gloves, showed his hands to the Evangelist, and dramatically said:

"These hands are stained with blood."

He was encouraged to go on, and said that in his native town the Turks had been carrying through one of their sporadic killings of Armenians. One night he saw two bloodthirsty-looking Ottomans outside the home of his mother and beautiful sisters. Believing

they meant murder, he stepped in first and killed them both.

"But I have not come to you, sir, because I killed those Turks," said the Armenian, "for in the same circumstances I might have to do the same thing to protect the women. But now something has happened which seems to change the situation."

The Armenian looked steadily at the Evangelist and continued:

"In Armenia it is the custom, when a person is killed, to arrest his known enemy, for he is the most likely murderer. These two Turks were known to have enemies—two other Turks. Probably both these arrested Turks are scoundrels, but they did not murder those two men I killed. Yet they are still under arrest. Now, Mr. Gipsy Smith, if I become a Christian, as you say I should, what must I do about those two Turks under arrest?"

At this moment the Gipsy felt strongly in need of Guidance. Says he:

"When Nehemiah was waiting on the king Artaxerxes, the king said to him, 'For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of Heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant hath found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres that I may build it. . . . So it pleased the king to send me.'

"Nehemiah," says Gipsy Smith, "was able to flash a message to the most High and to get immediate Guidance what to ask for. I believe that God will guide anyone at such times to do right, if he is living close to Him. When the Armenian put that difficult question to me, I prayed, and asked God to show me the answer. And I think He did. I said:

"'Are you prepared to accept God's forgiveness of your sins through Jesus Christ and to follow Him irrespective of where He leads you?'

"The Armenian bowed and said he was."

They knelt and both prayed to that effect. As they arose Gipsy said to him :

" The answer that I have received to my prayer for Guidance is that I must neither tell you to go back, nor to stay away. All that I am allowed to tell you is this : ' When God wishes you to go back and give yourself up, He will let you know. Until He does, my advice to you is to await His orders.' "

" And what happened ? "

Gipsy Smith ran a hand through his grizzled hair.

" So far as I know, nothing has happened. A year after that meeting, I was in Paris again. And one of the most enthusiastic workers in the mission meeting I was holding was this same Armenian. He came up to me and reminded me of our first meeting. I asked him when he was going back to Armenia. He replied :

" ' I'm still waiting for orders ! ' "

The writer has told that story of the Gipsy's to several theologians. Most of them agree that Gipsy's advice was right. All agree that he was right in first getting the Armenian to surrender to our Lord, before advising him what our Lord's leading might be. One of the finest brains in the Church of England, after weighing the story carefully, said : " The law in Armenia might not be so fairly executed as in this country. For myself, I should not have been too severe in my advice to the Armenian."

The common-sense view of the situation seems to be that the Armenian was right in protecting his womenfolk from murder, and therefore not to blame for the detention of others; in a country where good law and order prevailed he would be right in stating those facts publicly, but in a country where there was little justice, to give himself up for what was not an offence, to save others, might endanger his own womenfolk again, as well as himself; and the situation, therefore, was one in which it was essential to look to God only for Guidance.

"How do you recognise Guidance?" the writer asked the Gipsy.

He replied that it was his daily endeavour to keep so near to God and so sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading that he might instantly respond to God's Guidance at any moment. When entering a pulpit at Highbury in North London one evening, he felt an insistent urge to change his text from the one selected to a couple of texts relating to the Holy Ghost: "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit," and "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."

To him that unprepared address sounded feeble, and somebody observed afterwards that it was not so good a sermon as he was accustomed to hear from Gipsy Smith. But the results were far more noticeable, for many were led by that one simple talk to follow Christ.

"The Holy Spirit," explains the Gipsy, "knows far better than we do exactly what the man in the pew needs. We preachers especially must be ever on the *qui vive* for Holy Spirit Guidance, if we are to do any good. How otherwise can we achieve our maximum effect? We may preach a rattling good sermon which just fits the man down there—in that empty pew! But we need the Holy Spirit's aid to say the right thing to the right person in the occupied pew, because he has been led there by the working within him of the same Holy Spirit of God.

"Let me give you another example of how the Holy Spirit guides in emergency, if you are doing His work and asking His help," exclaimed the Gipsy, as our talk disclosed further avenues of his past. It related, he said, to one of his most remarkable missions.

"Collier, of Manchester, and I started a special series of midnight meetings to get at those unable to come at ordinary times: theatre attendants, barmen, barmaids, restaurant-keepers, shop assistants—in those days shops did not close so early as now—and all sorts of stragglers. We got the lights blazing and a brass band playing through the town, just as the public

houses closed. Stragglers will always follow a band, and presently we would have the whole motley procession, some ragged, some well-dressed, nearly all hilarious, and most of them drunk, perhaps a thousand of them, a picturesque company of revellers, inside our mission doors, with myself thrust forward to address them.

"From that motley assembly one did not expect perfect order or an uninterrupted hearing. I have seen twenty or thirty of them all on their feet together, and wanting to say or do something quite desperate, to ask unseemly questions, to sing a solo, to fight the speaker or their neighbour, or to throw somebody out. When I arose there would start a hullaballoo of yelling and booing and drunken choruses. Not that I was greatly disturbed, for I had primed my choir to support me in anything I chose to do. Usually I began to sing myself, and there would follow a volume of organised singing that overwhelmed the disturbance below.

"One evening, however, the disturbance was so clamorous that a hearing seemed impossible. After three-quarters of an hour of effort, I was still at the beginning, although fortunately my temper was as calm as ever. One of the first lessons I learned was never to lose my temper, especially on a public platform. Always keep a sweet nature if you want to win your public. The more they shouted the more I sang. Then, during a slight lull, I managed to interject:

"'God loves you in spite of yourselves.'

"At this an elderly man rose and protested vigorously. He had a long grey beard outside and more than one long drink inside. He was a long way from sober, while I, who had taken no drink during a hectic three-quarters of an hour, was only just sober. He wanted to know, 'How can God love us, if we are so wicked as you preacher fellows say?'

"For the minute I was stumped for the answer.

Then I did as Nehemiah did when before the King, and as I have constantly done while preaching during the last fifty years—as I was on my feet I prayed for Guidance to say exactly the right thing. By now the others had seized on my hesitation as an excuse for more execration.

" ' Why don't you answer? ' came from all parts of the noisy hall.

" So I began a reply, though I had no idea how I should finish it. I was just inside myself, leaning on the Holy Spirit's Guidance. My first leap in the dark was :

" ' Are you a father? '

" ' Yes,' he replied.

" ' That's good! so am I. Have you any children? '

" ' Yes, three.'

" ' Fine! So have I.'

" By now the audience were getting interested in the coincidence. So I asked him what they were, never dreaming that again we should be the same.

" ' Two boys and a girl,' said he.

" ' Why, isn't that strange? I've got two boys and a girl too.'

" There was a laugh.

" ' And are your children all good children? '

" The grey-bearded man thought for a moment, then from his muddled brain came the reply, ' The girl's a good little thing.'

" Again I was able to keep pace with him. ' Same as mine,' I said. ' This is remarkable! Now what about the others? '

" By now there was absolute silence, everybody interested in the outcome of the unusual dialogue between pulpit and pew. Presently the man said that his younger son was a good lad, but the elder one was rather wild, and had nearly broken his mother's heart. Whereupon I replied with something interesting about my own children. And then I threw him a challenging question.

" 'Now, that bad lad of yours—of course you don't love him?'

" And here it was his turn for silence—absolutely bowled over. He dared not answer. So his own crowd turned against him.

" 'Come on,' they urged. 'Answer him. He's answered you.'

" 'Do you love that boy?' I repeated.

" Presently he said rather brokenly: 'You *know* I love him.'

" 'Then,' said I, 'if *you* can love a wayward son, why not allow God the same privilege?' "

The artistic temperament in Gipsy Smith knows how to get the utmost from a dramatic situation. He called on everybody to follow him in prayer for all erring sons, erring daughters, erring fathers and erring mothers present; and the next evening he had supporting him on the platform most of the interrupters of the night before, including the grey-bearded heckler, who still loved his wandering boy.

" And yet," insists the Gipsy, " when I started that dialogue, I had no idea how I should come out. That is how the Holy Spirit sometimes guides in an emergency."

* * * * *

Though he is a professional Evangelist, the Gipsy declines to waste his pearls. Ready to speak the Word to anyone in season, friend or stranger, he does so only when he feels the guided opportunity has come. Witness his story of the beautiful daughter in a luxurious home where he was once a guest.

All the other children had married save this charming daughter of twenty. She was studiously polite and even friendly, but with that intuition, which often tells him what is passing through another's mind, which is both gipsy and feminine, he was conscious that the daughter was definitely afraid of him, though intrigued at entertaining a real, live gipsy in her magnificent home. When her father or mother was present, she was

affable and natural, but she became uneasy and unnatural directly she was left alone with the Evangelist.

"I had not been sensing situations of all kinds for many years without knowing something was wrong, and I guessed what it was," said the Gipsy. "Her attitude, to one of my sensibilities, hurt exceedingly. One Tuesday morning, as the mistress, the daughter, and I sat over our breakfast cups, the maid entered and announced that my hostess was wanted. The mother hurried out and left the two of us together. Again I felt that barrier suddenly rise between the daughter and myself. At the earliest possible moment she rose to follow her mother. Something within me said it was the guided time to speak.

"'Annie,' I said, 'I want to speak to you.'

She dropped her head.

"'Annie,' I said, 'it hurts me to observe that you are afraid of me.'

"She looked nonplussed.

"'Now, this is your own house, and I am your guest. It is unseemly that I should make you uneasy, and equally so that I should feel something of a monster for doing so. You must excuse my saying it, but I wish to put you at your ease. Of course I know that you are afraid I am going to preach to you. Well, I'm not. I promise I won't speak to you about Jesus Christ or even hint about Him to you until the last day of my stay here, if that will please you and put you at your ease in my presence. Now, shall we make a bargain on that?'

"She looked away, perplexed. Presently she said it would not do. Whereupon I modified the offer. Instead of waiting until the last day, I was prepared to speak to her about my Lord, say, at half-time. Again she demurred.

"'Then,' said I, 'if it pleases you, I will say nothing more to you on the subject, save that I shall be thinking of you and praying that you will join Christ's army of pilgrims. Will that put you at your ease?'

" ' No,' she said.

" I saw tears.

" ' Then what shall I do about it? '

" ' I should like you to kneel here with me.'

" When her mother came in," says the Gipsy, " Annie threw her arms round her neck, exclaiming, ' I've settled it.' And in place of that furtive look of fear of me so evident during the first part of my stay in her home, there was now an expression of release and happiness which intensified her own radiant beauty."

" And that was a guided interview? "

" I am sure of it ! " said the Gipsy. " For I know that when we are living just where we should live, we are all led by God's Holy Spirit, often to lead others into the Kingdom.

" You remember that passage in the Acts, where it says it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. Those early disciples lived, walked, talked, preached, suffered, did everything in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, so different from the atmosphere in which the Word is so often preached nowadays. But it was that atmosphere created by the Holy Spirit which disturbed this young woman and led her to follow the Master during my stay in her mother's home.

" Things happen where the Holy Spirit has full sway. It is that Pentecostal power which still achieves results. We still have plenty of Apostles, we want more Acts. And these can only be written through the daily presence in us of God's Holy Guiding Spirit. This Guidance I have continually sought all through life, and the only victories I have won on my pilgrimage have been through the ever-victorious Holy Spirit. I have looked for His Guidance, lived for it, prayed for it, sacrificed for it, and seen my family do the same. They have allowed me to go away when I was wanted at home and wanted to be at home; but the Holy Spirit has led me to go time after time, and encouraged me to look for His support, while proclaiming the New

Testament plan of salvation, and constantly observing how richly He blesses those who seek His leading and speak in His name."

The writer put the same question to the Gipsy that he has been constantly asking:

"Does God provide as well as guide? Or does God allow some who serve Him to die of starvation?"

The Gipsy had no doubts. He was confident that we could live on faith and prayer, though he did not believe that God would necessarily keep those who followed the Lord in the same state of comfort to which they were accustomed. Why should He, when even St. Paul sometimes went hungry? Sometimes Paul fasted. It was a false state of mind to assume that those who followed our Lord must continue prosperous, for it assumed that those who were poor were more sinful than those who were wealthy, an assumption which did not agree with Christ's teaching about the difficulties of the rich in entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Wealth often dulled spiritual perception.

At first both Job and Joseph lost all, though they received more later in consequence. But it was wrong to put the emphasis on physical prosperity as indicating spiritual quality, for one could tell what God thought of money by the kind of person He gave money to.

The Gipsy mentioned one of his converts, a Frenchwoman, who had actually died of starvation, though in the midst of plenty. She came to one of his meetings, underwent the great transformation, and settled down to the spiritual life, but later she was taken ill, and was unable to eat, and although there was plenty of money for food, and food for money, she starved to death. Sometimes God allows His children to go home that way, but the promise to feed and clothe those who seek first His Kingdom is not thereby invalidated.

The Gipsy let the writer into one of his secrets—a little skeleton in his spiritual cupboard. Incidentally in his physical larder as well.

"Once I came to the end of my resources," he confesses, as his mind wanders up the stream of time. "That year I spent a bread-and-butter Christmas. Many friends who thronged my meetings and my neighbours might have been surprised, perhaps hurt, had they known there was no turkey and no pudding on my Christmas table, only bread and butter for Christmas dinner, and not too much of that. And little prospect of any more for the future."

For nine months the Gipsy had suffered from a breakdown. His splendid tenor voice had given way. All his engagements were cancelled because he could not speak above a whisper, and no money had come to him for nearly a year. Having strained to speak above his powers, following quinsy, he had strained his vocal cords. And it seemed that he would never be a public speaker again.

A friend advised him to call on a certain vicar, an elocutionist, and an expert in voice control. Gipsy asked the vicar how much he would charge, and the reply came back:

"Ten guineas."

"I wrote and told him I had only ten pounds in the world. Would he take that?"

"And of course he did?"

* * * * *

As soon as the Gipsy reached the vicarage, he was told to start work at once, although he had a sore throat. The vicar put him off his false note, and speedily helped him back to confidence. Says the Gipsy:

"My voice has never failed since. Nor have I ever wanted for a shilling. Although the Lord allowed me to get right down to my last pound, someone was guided to show me where I could get my voice put right.

"So you see I have had experience of God's Guidance and Providence in cases of desperate need.

Many Christians who are most sceptical about God's Providence have never been within a year of starvation. The time for Christian scepticism about God providing is not when your bank is full, but when you have gone hungry for a day or two—and so far I have never met a Christian whom God has allowed to go one day without a meal except through his own choice, or through illness."

So much for the Gipsy's views on Guidance and Providence.

"What about living with people you dislike—and loving them?"

The writer mentioned a minister friend, who thought he was most happily married, but whose wife was deeply in love with another man, and regarded her husband's embraces with horror. Not an isolated case, as the Gipsy well knew. There was another in nearly every street; at one time in our life, we might have written in nearly every house.

Gipsy Smith had made up his mind about this problem long before we were born. He stoutly contended that the difficult problem of physical aversion was capable of solution. He had seen the problem solved in a number of clearly remembered cases. The minister's wife in question was blameworthy, though perhaps she was not altogether so: of course, her life was not surrendered to the will of God; if it had been, she would have surrendered her longing until the time when she entered the true bliss into which her Heavenly Father would ultimately lead her. However strong her aversion from her husband, however compelling her love for the other man, it was still her privilege and duty to surrender both to God and accept His certain help in solving that tremendous problem, and solve it He surely would, for He had done so with many such to the Gipsy's own personal knowledge.

Many times had he seen the tiger of hate slink away from the home, and love return, through the grace and power of the Living Jesus. God was always doing

those miracles; He was doing them now, making impossible situations possible, reuniting discontented man and disillusioned wife, and saving both from divorce.

Said Gipsy Smith:

"I know a case now, where undoubtedly the man was to blame entirely; the woman carried far more than she felt capable of bearing; and to ease her cross, she obtained a divorce. Then she was attracted to the Cross of our Lord, for Whose sake and the sake of her child she then re-married her divorced husband, though he is still unworthy of her sacrifices. She does not even love him beyond the love she has for all mankind, through her love for God. She regards her life as cross-bearing, and hopes by copying her Master she may induce her husband to do likewise.

"For some this might seem an impossible life, as it would be for her, only the Holy Spirit provides the inspiration, the grace, the courage, the endurance, the love; and God will assuredly give her more in this life, in return for her devoted sacrifice, and in the world to come the bliss she deserves. It's the hard road for her just now, but the only safe road to peace of mind and heart. In Ezekiel's vision there was a river under the steps of the Throne, and the river flowed but one way, down to the Dead Sea, but wherever it flowed it gave life. And so one cannot change the course of God's river, as this noble woman has discovered, and some day she will be glad one cannot change it."

And then Gipsy Smith told one of his most heart-stirring stories—for married readers only. He said:

"During the War I went to France to address the troops and spoke at a good many meetings. After one big meeting I said that I should be about the hall for some time after the service if there was anyone needing advice or help. Many Tommies remained behind. I saw them sitting on the ends of the forms, making a lane of the central aisle; and I walked down between them. There were so many interviews that

the time slipped by. And still they waited. Presently I called to the men at the far end, saying, it looked as though I should be two hours reaching them, so they could go, and return later if they chose, and I should still be glad to see them. They stayed on.

"At last I reached the last two, who said they were chums, and would talk to me together. One of these told me a heart-breaking story. He had been up at the front on active service in France for over a year without leave. After thirteen months' absence from home, he received the eagerly-awaited pass for Blighty. He said I could well imagine the eagerness of his home-coming, how his heart throbbed expectantly at the thought of meeting his wife at Victoria. He searched the platform eagerly for her, but she was not there. He thought this curious, for he had been in continuous communication with her by post ever since he went to France. Arrived home, he learned the reason—his wife was to have a baby!

"The man said he loved his wife, and so was more distressed by this discovery than when going over the top. He pulled himself together, told her he could not be cruel, but that he was unable to live with her again. He helped her pack and sent her off to her mother. Taking his own child, he returned to his people. In a day or two he began to feel wretched, partly ashamed of himself for not forgiving his wife, who seemed bitterly repentant, and he felt regretful that he had not been killed at the front. Hoping he would never see England again, he rejoined his regiment before his leave had expired, telling his officer why, and receiving a much-needed word of sympathy."

The disillusioned Tommy now reminded Gipsy Smith of a statement in his sermon that an unforgiving spirit could bar one from the Kingdom of Heaven, like any other sin. He had stayed behind to tell the Gipsy his decision to forgive his wife. That night he would write and ask her to collect her things, call at his mother's for the keys of their home, and return

there. Furthermore, he proposed to be a good husband on his return from the War and would be willing to be a father to her baby.

"And," says the Gipsy, "I am not ashamed to tell you, I was just staggered. I put my hand on his shoulder and said:

"'Son, are you really going to do this?'

"He said, 'Yes.'

"And I replied:

"'Well, I don't know if I could do it. But I can tell you now what will happen to you if you do. God will surely bless you richly, and fill your heart with a joy that very few people who have lived in this world have ever known.'"

And who shall say the Gipsy did not say the Guided thing?

* * * * *

Gipsy Smith has an amazing repertoire of stories of this kind, in one of which Dr. Gonsaulus, a famous American divine, figured prominently.

The young wife of a wealthy husband attended the Gipsy's services, and heard the advice that they should find Christ where they had lost Him—sound advice for the backsliding Christian with a good memory. This wife called on the doctor and confessed how she had lost touch with God before her marriage. She had grown up in a beautiful home and been sent to an exclusive school.

She played with fire; her baby was hidden in a home.

She married without admitting her early folly, as many women have done. She was passionately fond of her husband, but mother-love yearned for her baby in her own lovely home. Occasionally she saw the child, but continued desperately unhappy because she could not have the infant always with her. She feared to tell her husband, for she might lose him too. If she found Christ where she lost Him, she must be absolutely honest about that baby.

The Doctor of Divinity listened attentively. Where

was her husband? He had gone West on a business deal.

"Is he a good man?"

"Yes, a good husband. Too good. I am afraid to disturb his splendid life."

"Why not telegraph him and ask him home at once?"

The telegram was sent, and the husband arrived in time to hear Gipsy Smith preach on Sunday morning. The Gipsy stresses this story as one of his experiences of definite Guidance. He knew nothing of what was happening in this home until long afterwards. Yet he felt that morning one of the Archbishop of York's "unreasoned urges" to preach from the fifth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, which narrates three remarkable cases—a man in the tombs, a woman deceased, and a child dead. The Gipsy announced his theme:

MAN—WOMAN—CHILD

He spoke of the Man-Saviour, the Woman-Saviour, and the Baby-Saviour, and when he returned to that city for his second mission he heard from Dr. Gonsaulus the inside story. They were sitting round a table, and the American Doctor of Divinity was telling of changed lives, when the story of this wealthy young couple was related. Having listened to the Gipsy's talk about placing the child in the home, beating the devil with the cradle, all becoming as little children, the wife accompanied her husband home, placed him in his easy-chair, and confessed.

"If ever a woman had her Calvary," says the Gipsy, "she had it that morning. Only women understand what it means to confess as she confessed to the only man she had loved. He raised her up, kissed her, and replying to her request for forgiveness said:

"'I need forgiveness too. . . . Only, my sin hasn't found me out.'

"Then he said:

"'And now we're going out to get that baby.'

" Yes, God guides and provides, and repairs broken lives and straightens tangled homes."

* * * * *

And listen to another of the Gipsy's stories :

" In a certain American city there was a successful lawyer, who kept two establishments. The unofficial wife was the mother of the lawyer's only child.

" The legal wife was greatly distressed at her husband's mode of life, and cherished a deep hatred for the other woman. She came to one of my meetings, and the Holy Spirit led her to Jesus Christ. The change in her was so radical that even her hate for the rival wife disappeared, and she felt constrained to call on her. She called, and told her how the Lord Jesus had taken the hatred away from her. The other woman was astonished by this friendly approach, and so they both attended my meetings. Later, the unofficial wife invited the legal wife to call on the following day. She did so, and discovered the other woman dressed and ready to go out.

" ' Where are you going ? '

" ' To see your husband.'

" The unofficial wife asked that all conversation be left to her.

" Together they were shown into the office of the surprised lawyer. Legal men see odd sights; but he was certainly flabbergasted to receive his two ' wives ' at his office.

" The other woman came straight to her point. She had decided on the Christian life, and that he must not come to her house again. Turning to the real wife, she said :

" ' I cannot atone for the wrong I have done you, but I can show in this way my appreciation for the beautiful spirit you displayed.'

" With that she walked out, leaving the wife and husband together. Only the watching angels know the rest of that scene. But I do know the man came

to my meeting the same night, and that he also undertook by his life to be counsel for the Lord, and later his wife came to see me, her face radiant, to tell of a transformed home. I also heard that, because the other woman was unable to give sufficient care to her husband's child, she had adopted the infant and was bringing it up as her own.

"And," says the Gipsy, "who shall deny that the Spirit of God was actively guiding the lives of those four persons, the three adults, and the infant as well, and leading them in the new and pleasant paths of peace and righteousness?"

* * * * *

When he settled at Romany Tan, Cambridge, the Gipsy became friendly with a retired brewer, whom he met at cottage garden shows, for both were interested in country life. The brewer won nearly all the prizes that were going: his were the biggest potatoes, the largest peas, the finest eggs. This unusual couple saw much of each other, and the brewer would ask Gipsy home and show him over his farm; and sometimes the Gipsy would talk of garden produce and sometimes of Gethsemane. But the brewer preferred farming to religion; it was just right for some, but not for him. Gipsy would retort that the same God made both and cared for both; but the brewer still preferred horticulture to soul-culture.

One day the brewer took Gipsy into the chicken-run, where he placed a sitting hen on some Rhode Island Reds. Unknown to his host, the Gipsy slipped the egg of a Black Minorca under the same hen. He was preparing a spiritual illustration for the brewer in his own farmyard.

When the eggs were hatched, Gipsy pointed the moral by showing that, although there was one black chicken among the golden balls of fluff, they were all covered by the same wing. But the brewer would have none of Gipsy's illustrated religion until a long time after-

wards, when the Evangelist was suddenly called to the bedside of his friend, who was dying. Though fast sinking into unconsciousness, the retired brewer recognised his visitor, and recalled the incident of the Black Minorca chicken.

"Good-bye, Gipsy," he whispered, just before he died, "*I'm under the wing!*"

You should have heard Gipsy Smith tell that story by word and action to a black and white congregation ranging from coffee-cream to a shining ebony, as the writer heard it told to the coloured population of Brooklyn, New York.

"I'm under the wing" was the peroration of his afternoon address to at least a couple of thousand. The impression made was tremendous.

* * * * *

Gipsy Smith is sound on the Atonement; but he is quite alive to the necessity of human beings doing a little atoning on their own account, while accepting the Atonement of our Lord for breaking God's law of righteousness.

"Do you believe in restitution?"

"Of course I do."

One of his new converts met an old friend who demanded if it were true George was now a Christian.

"Yes, Bill, that's true."

So far, it was good witness, but the witness broke down soon after.

"Well, George," said Bill the worldling, "do you remember that when you were a sinner like me, you borrowed a sovereign from me?"

"Yes, Bill, I remember borrowing that sovereign."

So far, George was honest, but no further.

"Well, George," pursued Bill, "now you are a Christian, don't you think you should pay back that sovereign?"

George shook his head and said a stubborn "No."

"But why not?"

" When God forgave me my sins, He also forgave me that sovereign ! "

That is Gipsy Smith's case for Christians making restitution.

But he has another story, one more serious, showing that converts must do their part to atone for their own sinful past.

A former church-worker came to Gipsy Smith one day in great distress; for he was under deep conviction of sin. They prayed together, but the man doubted if God would give him another chance. The Gipsy said that his prayer was proof that God was giving him the chance. Afterwards he told the Gipsy a story of dishonesty; that he was a foreman, in charge of a number of men, whom he systematically robbed. Would God forgive him such dishonesty?

" Of course He will," replied the Gipsy. " Only——"

" Only what? "

" Only the convert must make restitution for his dishonesty."

He agreed, and went back to his employer to say that he was one of Gipsy Smith's converts. Then he described how he had robbed the men under him.

The employer listened gravely, and then asked the foreman if he knew the amounts stolen. The dishonest foreman was methodical in his dishonesty; he produced a detailed list. Well, then, had he any money? Yes, he had saved some, and his brother offered sufficient to make up the balance.

The employer thought for a moment.

" I'm not going to discharge you; for you've been too good a foreman, although you have abused your position."

He told the foreman to hand him the amounts stolen, and he would see that the men received their due without anyone else being the wiser.

" But the foreman was not satisfied," said the Gipsy. " He said he would devote himself to winning those men he had robbed for his Lord. And the next time I was

in that city, I saw him bring to one of my meetings one of those ten men—and he was the seventh that he had won for his Lord. Seven out of ten. Not a bad effort at life-changing by one who had been robbing them all a year ago."

* * * * *

Before leaving the Gipsy, the writer asked his view of the Group practice of apologising to the person wronged, if guided to do so.

"Would you, in every case, advise a person who had been unfaithful, to confess infidelity to the married partner?"

The Gipsy shook his head. He was definitely against it.

"What are you going to gain by doing so?" he asked.

"In those stories I have told you, it was necessary for a specific reason—to straighten out a situation—for one to tell the other the truth about his or her past life. But that is not always a necessity. Sometimes the real reason why one desires to confess infidelity is that conscience is pricking. Well, let conscience continue to make you suffer in this way. That is often the penalty of wrong-doing.

"Confess your sin to a spiritually-minded minister, or friend if you like, as well as to God, and so get what release you can. But if you confess to your wife or husband, you may only increase the other's sufferings. It may, in some cases, upset the whole family. Why make others suffer through some unguided disclosures of your buried past? It is buried, let it stay buried, and let the Lord Jesus cover it by His Blood, and show your gratitude by leading all the others concerned, if you can, into the same state of forgiveness."

Unanswerable!

* * * * *

"When people ask you to explain pain, what do you say?"

The Gipsy had no complete answer to the problem of pain, but he knew there was an answer, and that we should know the answer one day, for our Lord knew it—He, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame. . . .

"I believe," said the Gipsy, "that the Son of God would be a stranger to some of the joys He has now in the glory, but for the pains of Calvary. The more we suffer, the more capacity we have for enjoyment. I am positive that for every pang of pain we shall receive overwhelming compensation."

* * * * *

Later we met the Gipsy at Cliff College, where he was addressing a congregation five thousand strong. Early that June morning he had been out birds'-nesting; the call of the wild is still in his blood.

"Can you find them as well as ever?" we asked.

"I can smell 'em!" he laughed. And then he told us that this year a thrush and a blackbird had each raised one brood in his garden, and were sitting again in the same nests. Last spring he hung out a coco-nut shell, hoping that a robin would nest in it. The robin arrived, made her nest in the shell, raised her brood, and was sitting again, on four more eggs.

And we asked the Gipsy our last questions:

"When people tell you they are in love with another whom they have no right to be in love with, what do you say?"

The Gipsy answered:

"If they come to me, as they sometimes do, telling me they love someone when they have no right to do so, I probe till I find out whether *it is love* or passion. If it is love, and they are helpless, I advise separation absolutely. No letters, no meetings. If they are helpless, God is Almighty, and if they want to do right, and will at all costs, He will not let them down. He will surely see them through. But there must be no playing with weakness."

"And what is your secret of Life-Changing?"

"So to live that through the Holy Spirit I can sense a situation and speak with such unforced naturalness that my Lord's words achieve their purpose."

"And when the life is changed——?"

"I advise continuance in private prayer, Bible-reading, and witnessing to others."

The pilgrim's three-fold path of progress.

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"When a young man comes to you and says his employer tells him to lie in business, or lose his job, what do you say?"

"No one can lie and keep a clear conscience. Absolute truth is the only motto."

At that same Cliff College conference, *apropos* absolute truth, a woman speaker said she declined her employer's order to give short weight when serving in a green-grocery store.

She lost her position, and it seemed that she would also lose her unemployment allowance for deserting her post. But she explained the facts, and the greengrocer was summoned before a tribunal and censured.

She did not suffer for her honesty. Employers who insist on their staff being dishonest run the greater risk. The law is against them, whilst a spiritual law upholds the righteous.

The manager of a big store, speaking at a Group meeting the other day in the South-West, said he had prayed for Guidance, but none came, until he met a Salvationist, who told how he had lost his job, delivering coal, because he refused his master's order to give short weight. But God had guided and supported him.

The manager called his men together next morning to say that his store must in future be run on an absolute honesty basis. No short weight or over-charging to make up for possible deficits at the end of

the week; and the results were marvellous for all concerned.

When a man decides that his business motto is service to his fellows and not self-enrichment, he touches a spiritual law that turns even loss into gain.

CHAPTER III FATHER WOODLOCK

" Ye may not sit in Rome and strive with the Pope."
Proverb.

* * * * *

Go thou to Rome—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness.
Shelley.

* * * * *

Youth means love;
Vows can't change nature; Priests are only men.
Browning.

* * * * *

He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;
Exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading.
Shakespeare.

NEARLY thirty years ago the writer met Father Bernard Vaughan when that outspoken Catholic orator was stirring England with his declamations against the Sins of Society. At that time we were Father Vaughan's secret admirer, and continued so although a certain Catholic Viscount whom we knew very well said that those attacks on sinful society resulted in crowding the Roman Catholic church in Farm Street with vast congregations of Nonconformist servant girls (he said it, and not the writer).

Father Bernard Vaughan was corpulent, Italian-looking, with large, fierce eyes and a powerful presence. Father Woodlock, who has succeeded him at Farm Street, is taller than his predecessor, slim, with arched brows, and large pupils to his steel-blue eyes, which are guarded with horn-rimmed spectacles. Father Woodlock possesses a fine head, which could have placed him among the chief statesmen of the land. He has a

quick tongue and a quicker brain—one of the acutest brains in the country.

He has written a few controversial and theological books and pamphlets, mainly dealing with Anglo-Catholicism and Modernism, and, for a wider public, has contributed to the Sunday press articles on the Decay of Faith and Morality in England.

Father Woodlock meets you in a small waiting-room, and observes that you are tall, like all in his own family. He, too, is six feet high, and one of a family of nine whose total height was fifty-four feet. His eldest brother was for thirteen years editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, an American financial paper with a world-wide reputation. This journalistic brother, Father Woodlock describes as a spiritual sky-scraper in a street of skyscrapers, and one whose Christianity has been unsullied by his mammon-worshipping environment.

"God guides by inspiration, but He also guides through environment and education," says Father Woodlock. "I can never thank God enough for the environment in which I grew up at home in my family, and for my Catholic education at Beaumont College. All four of my sisters became nuns, my youngest brother as well as myself became a priest, and my mother and father only thanked God for the call to service that came to us.

"Our 'vocations' were due to very definite 'Guidance' which led us early to complete dedication of our lives to God's work as we saw it. Among Catholics, every 'vocation' is regarded as a 'call'; but it is tested in various ways before the final dedication by vows of religion is permitted by the Church.

"My father was the best man I have ever met: though a business man on the Stock Exchange, his Christian faith was the biggest controlling interest in his life. The last words he uttered on his death-bed are engraved with a text of Holy Scripture on his tomb-stone; they summed up his philosophy of life as he had lived it for four-score years: 'If you want to be

happy in this life, try to make other people happy,' was the sentence he whispered with his failing breath, just before he died.

"For the last thirty years of his life he attended Mass, and received Holy Communion daily before breaking his fast. His eldest son in New York has walked in his footsteps. Though there was, in my family, I hope, steady progress towards an unattainable ideal of perfection, there was no need of any catastrophic 'Life-Changing' in the lives of its members."

Sit in Father Woodlock's sparsely furnished and rather untidy room—almost a monkish cell—and listen to this brilliant Irishman speaking (as we listened to him for six hours) and endeavour to write a fair summary of his sayings. You have to be a far abler journalist to reveal him as he naturally is.

Two hundred or more words a minute stream at you from a master of logic, philosophy, and English; every word carries its exact shade of meaning and no more. Rome does *train* its men. Accept his premises, and then everything he says seems logically indisputable. Even though you happen to be, like the writer, a Presbyterian elder, fed and spiritually fattened on the three Johns, St. John, John Calvin, and John Knox, you soon begin to forget many old prejudices while absorbing the scholarly charm of this amazing Catholic giant, who talks so frankly about all he seems to believe so ardently.

Father Bernard Vaughan surprised and fascinated Anglican and Nonconformist England with his strictures on society. Perhaps quite as many more may be equally surprised by the outspoken replies his successor gave to the writer's pertinent questions. Father Woodlock told of the change that came over his mentality during four years' service in France. Before the War he had hardly ever spoken to a parson, and had met but few Protestants, for in pre-war days, and especially in Ireland, said he, priests and the clergy of other denominations seldom met each other socially.

In certain surroundings a growing intimacy between a priest and a parson would have led to foolish anticipations that the parson was unstable, and thinking of 'verting' to Rome!

"Those barriers fell down in the War, when chaplains of all denominations met and worked together like brothers," said Father Woodlock, "and they have not been re-erected in post-war time."

In speaking of war work, Father Woodlock told how often he prayed with dying soldiers of many other denominations beside his own.

"It was always my aim to lead the dying man to a prayer expressing the love of God and trust in the death and merits of Jesus Christ, and also *sorrow for sin*, which offends God our Father. *I never tried to 'make a Roman Catholic' of a dying Protestant, as I knew that if God's Grace led him to true sorrow for his sins, I should meet that soul later on in Heaven if I got there, whether the man bore 'C. of E.', 'Pres.,' 'Wesl.,' or 'Jew,' on his identity disk.*"

One case was still vivid in his memory—that of a young Wesleyan lad who had lain in agony for three weeks from a terrible shell wound which had poisoned his whole system and was slowly, inevitably, killing him.

"We became great friends within that time," said Father Woodlock. "*But it was not through me that the thought came* which transformed his outlook before death. I had never ventured higher than 'patience' as the ideal I put before him.

"One night—I had been away all day—I crept round the Casino at Boulogne, where to-day men gamble at cards, but where some eighty 'danger cases' were then lying. My boy, awake with a red lamp danger signal by his bedside, beckoned me up. His face was damp with the sweat of death and drawn and grey with his pain. He whispered shyly:

"'Where were you to-day? I wanted you to tell you. It has been in my mind all day long: I

never thought of it before to-day. It is a *grand* thing to die of wounds. *My Saviour died of wounds.'*

"And the boy murmured at intervals: 'Grand . . . my Saviour's wounds,' till with the chill of dawn he too died of wounds that had in those last few hours of life become precious to this Wesleyan lad through his great love of his Saviour.

"There was no preternatural light of Heaven on the boy's face, but there was an exultant triumph, an eager trust in his eyes that made his death glorious. The 'thought' which came to the boy came as truly and surely from Christ to his soul as did the revelation which dazzled Saul on the Damascus road in the moment of his conversion."

This story of Father Woodlock's reminded the writer of a similar one told by his own Padre (the Rev. J. G. Morton), who ministered to a dying German suffering from bayonet wounds in a base hospital. The German had been long in great agony, but at the end, he half raised himself, suddenly threw up his arms, while his face took on an amazingly beatific expression:

"*Ach! Lieber Herr Jesu!*" (Oh! dear Lord Jesus!) he exclaimed, and fell back dead.

Nurse and Padre looked into each other's eyes.

"Did you see that?"

Of course both had seen. The nurse recalled that she had seen that same supernatural light once before, though only once, in her long experience of war hospitals and dying soldiers. The light on this dying German's face had seemed to emanate from within, as though radiated from the soul, suggesting to the onlookers the brightness of welcome shining through a lighted window to a traveller on a tempestuous night.

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We asked Father Woodlock if the Methodist lad befriended by him had gone to Paradise.

"*Of course he is in Heaven.*"

"Yet you had not tried to make him a Roman Catholic?"

The Catholic professor regarded the writer with pained surprise, and observed that it was the first unintelligent question he had put to him.

Nevertheless, there was method in his unintelligence, for he was leading a famous philosopher along the pathway where he would be closely observed by all readers of this book. Father Woodlock made a gesture of emphasis :

" If you think that I, as a Catholic, believe I shall only meet Catholics in Heaven, let me plainly say that :

> *" I hope to meet in the beatific vision in Paradise immense numbers of devout Jews who have known God and loved Him by the help of His Grace, and who, through no fault of their own, have never known Christ and never rejected Him.*
>
> *" I expect to meet Anglicans and Nonconformists, Unitarians and Presbyterians, Arians and Plymouth Brethren, and all those who through no fault of their own have never known and never rejected Christ and have been helped by grace to love God and repent of sin.*
>
> *" In fact, I expect to meet all those who through God's Grace have come to repent of their sins under the impulse of the Divine grace of repentance from the saving motive of God's love."*

After this comprehensive declaration Father Woodlock continued :

" No soul gets into Heaven without the help of Divine Grace. It is the conscious and final rejection of Divine Grace, whether offered through the Church Visible or in the Church Invisible, by God's immediate impulse on the soul, which keeps men and women from Paradise."

" And do some Catholics reject Divine Grace? For instance, *is every dead Pope in Paradise?* "

It was a daring question to ask a famous Jesuit. But the reply was quite affable.

" As far as I know, there were only about half a

dozen really bad Popes, and they all may be in hell. Nobody can say, or has a right to say, that any particular individual is in hell. We don't know what God's Grace may be doing in the last moments of a man's life.

"We don't even say for certain that Judas is in hell, though the Scriptures may be more easily interpreted in that sense.

> Between the saddle and the ground
> He mercy sought and mercy found,

may apply to many souls. We simply don't know.

"But I think that a bad Pope has a greater chance of reaching hell than—say—a bad Archbishop of Canterbury. He had so many more supernatural, sacramental helps close at hand through life and must have habitually rejected and despised Grace as a bad Pope. *Corruptio optimi pessima*! (the corruption of the best is the worst of all) has its application here.

"Many difficulties are solved by the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory—God's 'convalescent hospital' for sick souls which have still a spark of the supernatural life of Grace in them at the moment of death in spite of many venial sins and much 'earthliness' in their general outlook. Such souls are not eternally lost, like those who die in mortal sin and final rebellion against God.

"For the damned, our Lord's teaching is clear: damnation is eternal. That is a great mystery—insoluble by human reason. One day we shall understand, but for the present it suffices us to remember that it was the tender, merciful Christ Himself Who affirmed the terrible truth. I do not believe that a soul is finally lost before God has, as it were, held it in His arms and pleaded with it by His Grace and it has deliberately turned from Him.

"This choice, according to Catholic theology, must be made before death comes, for after death there is immediate Judgment. We must remember, however, that many difficulties come from our attempting to

visualise the unimaginable conditions of the life of a disembodied soul."

Father Woodlock's teaching about hell and a universal hope recalled the famous "showing" to Mother Julian of Norwich, the English mystic, who said, "For he beholdeth us so tenderly that He seeth all our living a penance . . ." "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

And there is the equally remarkable message which Sundar Singh received in Ecstasy: "Those in hell will ultimately be brought to heaven like the prodigal son, but with regard to the ultimate fate of a certain number you must not ask. Once I said, 'So many people will be lost because they have not heard of Christ.' They said, 'The contrary will be the case; very few will be lost.' There is a kind of heavenly joke—no, joke is not a good word for it. 'Very few will be lost, but many will be saved. It is so, but don't tell,' they said, as it were in jest, 'because it will make men careless, and we want them to enjoy the first heaven—that is, the heaven on earth—as well.'

"If there were no hope for all the non-Christians in the world, and all the Christians who die in sin, God would stop creating man. We must do our part here on earth to save sinners, but if they refuse, we need not be without hope for them." *

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We pressed Father Woodlock for his views on Divine Grace, working in the Protestant body—the sects, as Catholics call them. He was quite frank.

"Of course I don't believe that God's Grace is only at work among Catholics," he replied. "A devout Anglo-Catholic may receive greater Grace when confessing his sins to a parson, than some Catholics may get confessing to a priest in Farm Street Church. But we would distinguish what theologians call technically 'Sacramental' Grace. We may deny the 'validity' of Anglican absolution, and yet freely admit that a

* *The Sadhu*, Streeter and Appasamy.

sincere Anglo-Catholic's devotion, bringing great faith and contrition to his confession, may win for his soul a greater outpouring of Grace from God than a less devout Catholic receives from his 'valid' absolution. The same is true of Protestants who confess 'to God alone' without the intermediary of parson or priest. They may receive the greater Grace."

"Would you sooner a man worshipped in an Anglican or a Nonconformist Church than that he did not worship at all?"

"Of course I would," said Father Woodlock enthusiastically.

We wondered how many Protestants would have answered so readily in the affirmative if this question reversed were asked of them!

"How could one ever smile again," continued the priest, "if, in a country like this, I thought God's Grace came only to our three million Catholics in a total population of nearly fifty millions?"

"Then why not unite with Anglicans and Nonconformists?"

The age-old difficulty! The Catholic Church could not join in public prayer with Churches that had broken away. It would be an external act approving something set up in denial of Catholic claims.

"But God forbid," said Father Woodlock, "that I should say the prayers are not as devoutly uttered, or the prayers of sincere believers are less pleasing to God, or that the meeting—Oxford Group, or any other—is quite wrong because it is held outside the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, if the Oxford Group were not a formal religious body, and there was no formal religious service held, a Catholic might perhaps attend it, if there was no danger to his faith or seeming approval of doctrinal indifference by his attendance. But if there were prayers, a Catholic should not participate."

Father Woodlock began to review the Oxford Group Movement.

He had, he said, read most of what had been written about it. He had read and been immensely interested in *For Sinners Only*, and saw no reason for resisting the writer's statement that he had been inspired to write it by the Holy Spirit in a message which came to him at the top of a New York skyscraper. When a Roman Catholic priest makes this admission to a Presbyterian elder, we seem to be getting on. Surely the rift between the Churches is not so wide as we think.

" The book has done, and will do, so much good, that you were probably ' guided ' to write it. Results are often the test of alleged ' guidance,' " added Father Woodlock.

And again :

" I can quite understand and believe that," said he, referring to the writer's experience when reading St. John's Gospel. " You had a religious experience, and reason flowed up into it afterwards to prove its truth."

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" What do you think of the restitution side of Group teaching? " was the next query.

" Of course there must be restitution, where injury has been done. But it must be guided by common-sense and prudence. If apologising for a wrong that you cannot put right means adding more pain, perhaps where you have already caused pain, then it is better to leave things as they are. But if you have maligned a person, taken away his good name, and done him harm, you are bound to make restitution. You must weigh it up and see if your effort to put things right will help the wronged person. If it won't, better make restitution by giving to the poor or some other person in need.

" If you go into a company of women, and speak of another who is absent as a ' most beastly selfish woman,' you may do her a lot of mischief, and it is your duty to put that wrong right. But it is terribly hard to undo such a wrong."

Speaking of the importance and the difficulty of acquiring perfect self-knowledge, Father Woodlock

recalled how a certain old Father, of long experience as a guide of souls in the confessional, said that one valuable way of securing self-knowledge was by remembering what people said to you when they were out of temper and "let fly at you." "They may come back and apologise, 'kiss and be friends'; but don't forget what they said to you in that sin of temper. It doubtless contains much truth about some of your real faults to which perhaps self-love has closed your eyes."

The Four Standards of the Oxford Group came under review. Father Woodlock agreed that they were the essence of Christ's moral teaching. Absolute love he would put first, with absolute unselfishness as the outcome of absolute love. Purity was one of the essentials of Christ's teaching, but purity in its widest sense included not merely sex purity, but freedom from pride, and other sins that besmirch the soul.

"I do not believe that 'absolute love' of all our fellow-men is possible, save through absolute love of God and Christ as its motive. Only thus can 'love' be recognised as something which is in man's *will* essentially, and only 'accidentally' in the emotions. Our emotions are not under our control and command, as is our will. 'Likes and dislikes' are normally matters of our taste and our emotions. Nothing but the love of God will enable us to love those we naturally 'dislike.'"

Father Woodlock wondered how far this was grasped by Groupers who pledged themselves to strive after "absolute love of all." "I think the most wonderful examples of this supernatural love may be found among the Little Sisters of the Poor, who vow themselves to the service of aged and indigent men and women. Many of these old folk are crabbed and cranky and ungrateful. I have seen an angry old woman slap the face of a young nun who was washing her feet, and the nun showed no sign of impatience or resentment. The secret of such love is that these nuns see Christ disguised, as it were—and so well disguised at times!—in

the persons of the old people. 'What ye do to the least of My brethren—it is to Me ye are doing it.' 'I was hungry and ye gave Me to eat, homeless and ye gave shelter to Me'—these words have sunk into their hearts, and 'motive' their whole lives. It is a triumph of faith and charity.

"No grouper who lacks a great love of Christ will succeed in the 'absolute love' ideal, and only such love will exorcise self-love from the human heart. Such love, if once acquired, brings radiant peace and happiness into the soul.

"As for absolute honesty, that, too, is one of Christ's standards, since lying and stealing are sins. And honesty includes honesty with self—perhaps its most difficult sphere."

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The early quiet time of the Groupers appealed strongly to Father Woodlock, though he saw the need for great prudence; and one must remember that God does not work against nature. We must realise how the mind and imagination work. Nearly always there is a psychologic explanation of some special impulse, which we may at first think to be supernatural.

"Though I believe there are great dangers in psycho-analysis, as practised by many psycho-analysts, and a great deal of dangerous quackery, which gets across under the name of 'the New Psychology,' the Science has done a good deal to reveal to us the secret springs of impulse and 'instinctive urges,' which an inexperienced Grouper may imprudently interpret as 'Divine Guidance.' Often the source of the impulse may only be revealed in the effect resulting when we follow it out into action.

"St. Ignatius, who had deep experiences, has laid down laws in his *Spiritual Exercises* which are full of wisdom and give practical guidance in the 'testing of the Spirits, to see if they be of God.' The devil's intervention has to be watched for, and often what is good in the beginning gets spoiled by his mixing of evil

with the good. He tells us to watch and weigh the beginning, middle, and end of a train of thought—and to judge its origin by its final stage."

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We asked Father Woodlock if he personally had experience of God's guidance in his work, and he replied:

"Every priest will recognise his absolute dependence on God in his ministry. Sometimes he will be so convinced that he has been guided that he cannot be content with mere 'coincidence' as an explanation. God's Providence is always at work, and surely it is most in evidence in connection with the salvation of souls.

"I remember, for example, when preaching a mission in a big Liverpool church, ending a sermon on the death of Christ, and then, just as I was leaving the pulpit, I almost thoughtlessly and certainly impulsively turned back and said: 'Do not be a Judas, be a good thief and come back to God.'

"Shortly after, as I sat in the Confessional, a man entered and said: 'I'm going to be the good thief.' He had neglected religion and repentance for many years. He explained that six years before he went to a mission, hoping to make his peace with God, and he heard a preacher say—no doubt thinking of the young who had life before them—'God does not want the butt-end of an ill-spent life.' The poor man interpreted this as God's rejection of an old sinner; there seemed no hope for him, till my chance words reached his heart as a message for himself and gave him back hope. I have not the slightest doubt but that God 'guided' my impulse.

"Again, I remember impulsively changing the subject of my sermon, after the short, silent prayer at the Altar, which is customary before entering the pulpit. I preached on 'Christ, the Good Shepherd,' though I had prepared another subject, and immediately after a woman came to speak to me, who had definitely planned to leave her husband and go away with another man, but who altered her plans after the sermon, because she

could not find it in her heart to grieve Christ, Who was seeking to save her, a 'lost sheep.'

"Again in a few days the temptation gripped and conquered her. 'I would sooner be in hell with my lover than separated from him,' was what she wrote when telling me her fixed plan to go away with the man. I had just time to make one more appeal by letter, successfully urging the thought of the Good Shepherd's love and disappointment, and at the last moment, on the very morning when the man came to take her away. Her conversion became a permanent 'Life-Change.' Surely no one can doubt but that I was there 'guided' in my sudden change of topic for my sermon."

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While admitting that God does guide souls by impulses of His Grace in our mind and will, Father Woodlock laid great stress on prudence, a well-informed and trained conscience, and the saving gift of common-sense, as a check on impulse. He repeated his warning against sudden impulses of unknown origin, and the probably natural origin of many vivid impressions, which one who is habitually seeking Guidance may confidently attribute to direct Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

"As a Jesuit," he said, "all my long ascetical training leaves me an incurable rationalist; as an old Professor of Psychology, I can never forget the mysterious workings of the mind of man—that wonderful mixture of angel and animal, of sense and spirit.

"I know that Groupers test their Guidance by their 'tests,' detailed in the leaflet on *The Quiet Time*, but I find a snag in the third test: 'Is it absolutely honest, pure, unselfish, loving?' This test will keep a Grouper from doing what is patently wrong; but it will not necessarily give sure Guidance as to God's will in matters that are morally indifferent. And the final decision of the 'Inner Group,' with 'Frank' as a last Court of Appeal, seems to me not unlike a claim to even wider infallibility than is claimed for the Pope of Rome!

Anyway, this Court of Appeal should make Groupers tolerant of the practice of Catholics who submit their spiritual problems to the judgment of an experienced confessor.

"My great interest in the Movement was roused by its reported success in 'Life-Changing,' and, above all, by, I believe, the 'first step'—the absolute self-surrender to God. This surrender can only take place by God's Grace. The wonderful *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola, which are said to have changed by God's Grace many times more lives than there are letters in the book, lays down the surrender to God as a 'Foundation' of all that follows on the way to perfection. The 'Quiet Time' of prayer, seeking light and guidance, and strength to follow the Guidance, was also so valued by Ignatius Loyola that the Jesuits are by rule bound to an hour's meditation and two quarters of an hour of self-examination every day.

"Nothing but good can come from the 'self-surrender' and the approach to God through prayer and meditation of the Gospel, to know Christ. St. Ignatius also noted the utility of keeping a record of 'lights' received in prayer—a practice which, I hear, is recommended to Group Members."

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We put to Father Woodlock this query:

"When I desire only God's will and my neighbour's benefit, can I then assume that my acts are guided?"

"Yes—assuming that you are completely unselfed. The trouble is that none but the most finished saints are ever completely unselfed, and they are the least likely people to proclaim or to claim their perfect selflessness. The desire to be absolutely surrendered is commendable, but we must be very suspicious about being satisfied as to its achievement. Always must we watch for the old Adam in ourselves.

"I have heard, probably, over forty thousand confessions, and in that way I suppose I have acquired a working knowledge of the human heart, apart from

what I have learned from my own heart. Perhaps, too, the literature and lives of many of the saints are unknown to most in the Oxford Groups, although we Catholic priests have studied them very thoroughly. In them we find a complete analysis of the surrendered life and of the progress made by steady toil and self-denial in the translation of Christ's teaching into the lives of some of the greatest followers. Study these, and see how long it takes before even the best of saints is brought perfectly into tune with His Infinite Will.

" Catholics are also told to begin the day by making the Sign of the Cross and by saying some short prayer, such as ' O, my God, I offer my heart and soul to Thee,' which means that they must start their day fully surrendered to God. But, as we all know, it takes a long time for the Christian to develop all virtues and truly to say he is utterly unselfed and Christ-like, and therefore absolutely sure of being Guided to God's will in all things that he does.

" Saying you are surrendered is one thing; being absolutely surrendered on all points of the Christian life is a vastly different thing. And that is why I say you are being very daring, when you claim to be in receipt all the time of the Guidance of God."

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" So many of those in the Oxford Groups have, I fear, no definite religious background guiding their surrender. To say they have given themselves over to God's will is splendid ! But how many of them realise what His will is ? How can they expect God's Guidance to flood into their minds, telling them all that is necessary to do, when they are uninstructed in the Christian teaching ? The average Public-schoolboy, who goes up to Oxford, is appallingly ignorant of Christianity, compared with the Catholic boy of his own age and social class.

" Of course their Guidance—if it is God's guidance—would be to obtain instruction. But probably in the meantime they do things they think to be Guidance, and yet things contrary to sound doctrine. Claiming

to be fully surrendered does not make one a fully surrendered Christian. The surrender has to be renewed many times a day.

"We know by experience that the ordinary process of sanctification is something like conversion to start with, though this is not necessary in all cases. For a period we may be carried along by the joy and fervour of it. After that begins the time of testing. *All the great saints have had long stretches of dreary trudging over sand, and this was the time of greatest progress.* Then may come a period of intense suffering, and then the soul that is being truly sanctified learns to welcome and clasp the Cross. Here the numbers drop off. But those who survive climb by God's grace to the great heights of sanctity, and are then less likely to be deluded in their interpretation of Guiding Graces.

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"You have a number of people coming into the Groups who imagine things are easy now they have admitted their sins and made restitution, but things are not going to remain easy. The Groups will have to link up with the Churches, and that is going to be difficult. The Modernist will not help them much. Modernist interpretation of the Bible will put them back. The Anglo-Catholics do not seem to view the Movement at all kindly. They, like us Catholics, emphasise the need of the Sacraments and Absolution. Groupers like to be helped by Group clergy and ministers, but not many clergy are likely to come in on the ground-floor as men whose lives have to be changed. If the Group develops into a sect, it will become an absurdity; it will fade out like emotional revivalism. In my view, the Methodists are the nearest body to be warmed up by contact with the Groups. But the entry of these Groups to any Church will need a lot of tact. If any come into the Catholic Church—as a few are doing—they will find a great outlet for social helpfulness.

"The members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which has branches in most Catholic parishes,

have their own sanctification as a primary aim, while they are pledged to exercise regularly the corporal and spiritual ' works of mercy ' which are enumerated in the Catechism. But no member would approach his work with a narrative of his own ' Life-Change.'

" There is a very strong Catholic instinct against this type of witness—though it is so fundamental in the methods of the Salvation Army and the Groups. A sinner would feel rather discouraged if he used that method of converting ' a sinner ' after becoming a Catholic; ' selflessness among us encourages great reticence about the state of our individual souls.'

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" Now let's get back to Guidance. The Catholic Church does look for the inspiration of God's grace at all times of necessity. But we have always the precautionary framework of doctrine and instructed conscience for checking what may come to us,—checking by our faith and principles, irrespective of what may be our peculiar religious experiences. There is a precautionary attitude in the Guidance of a Father Confessor. ' That's delusion,' ' That's self '; or ' This is shown to be sound in the writings of the ascetics and mystical theology,' he may often say to a penitent who says he ' is called ' to do something."

Father Woodlock, too, was very emphatic about the Lamp of Reason :

" We lay a great deal of stress on human reason and the cultivation of the cardinal virtue of prudence, when checking sudden inspiration. We realise that it is very exceptional indeed for sudden inspiration to be needed. Yet I know that inspiration does come at times, that men and women living to-day do get the Graces, whereby God communicates Himself to their minds and souls.

" In my experience I have met three cases of souls so united to God that His near Presence and the thought of Him were *continually* before them. All three were *selfless* to a degree that I find it hard to believe Groupers

of a few years' membership can have attained. Yet these souls humbly submit their illumination to their Father Confessor, and their great fear is of self-delusion, though they are the least likely to be deluded. Humility and readiness to obey are their safeguard, and the presence of that attitude of soul is the first test applied in ascetical theology to try the genuineness of mystical experiences.

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"Priests hearing confession for many hours a day are in constant need of Guidance; they must be praying, almost always praying, for help when doing this work, so as to find the Will of God in difficult cases that may be submitted to their judgment.

"A great many practical problems are solved under Guidance. Our doctrine of conscience is God's voice in us—a stirring up of what we know already. We regard the Guidance of a clear dictate of conscience as *supreme*. If the Christian is convinced that something is wrong or sinful, no authority, not even that of the Pope, should move him. Jesuits' vow of obedience includes this express proviso in their rule. Supposing a person is convinced he is right in being an Anglican or a Nonconformist, and not a Catholic, *the Catholic teaching is that he should remain Anglican or Nonconformist until he is more enlightened.*

"Nearly a thousand Anglican clergy have gone over to Rome since the days of Newman. Such men had 'surrendered to God' in conscience. Once conviction came to their minds that the Catholic Church was the Church of Christ, nothing else weighed with them, and they made the great sacrifices involved in the change. Such men were 'guided,' after much prayer and preliminary intellectual study of the question. If a man just came and said he felt 'guided' to become a Catholic, no priest would receive him into the Church until intellectual conviction had been reached, through perhaps long weeks of instructions.

"But what about the Inquisition?" we asked,

reverting to the subject of the supremacy of conscience.

Father Woodlock took the question without offence.

"The Inquisition was part of the mentality of an age when everybody persecuted, when it was thought that you could change a man's mind and its convictions by doing violence to his body. That age and its practices are gone for good.

"To-day people are indifferent to doctrine, and there is so much 'broad-mindedness' that it is difficult to visualise the mental atmosphere of Catholic Europe in bygone days. Yet, in spite of this 'broad-mindedness,' I believe that most people who have any beliefs to-day are perfectly sincere. There are few 'merely conventional' Church-goers to-day; in that we differ from Victorians."

And here Father Woodlock turned upon some converts to Rome by saying:

"A sincere Anglican is much better than a man who pretends to become a Catholic to please a Catholic fiancée."

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We sounded Father Woodlock on the mystical side. Whilst he admitted that visions and supernatural appearances were part of exceptional religious experience, they must not be taken too seriously, and must never be sought. When they did come, if they really came, they would be sent for a very special reason. Before giving final judgment, he must know, as always, the incidents which came after; since true manifestations were usually followed by some very significant event in the life of the person who received them; and a growth in *spiritual humility* was the first sign to be looked for.

"We look with suspicion on these vivid experiences," he explained, "because they are not God's ordinary methods; particularly are we suspicious with young Christians who have not made great progress towards being unselfed. Only after the most intense suffering

do some saints reach the higher stages of mysticism, which fits them to receive real visions and manifestations. There are grades of mystical perfection as there are grades of perfection in other spheres. There may come a time in the life of the finest type of Christian when he will welcome suffering with his will so that he may be like his Lord, although human nature naturally shrinks from suffering. When we get to that stage, we may expect the real mystical experience and higher guidance, though even then a Catholic saint will humbly submit it to the director's judgment.

"But few there be who attain to that stage. The average Christian is so remote from it that he can scarcely perceive it, hardly understand it even theoretically, let alone *achieve* it. God compensates Himself, so it would seem, for the sins and waywardness of others by picking out certain *élite* souls for 'victimisation' alongside Himself on the Cross, for the good and salvation of the world. 'Fill ye up what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ.'

"Crosses are all sizes. When the Christian shows he has nothing of self-love left, he has indeed become very abnormal, and his life is completely supernaturalised. The grace of God only can do this. I have known a priest who prayed that with everything he did he might find something go wrong, perhaps only a little humiliation, so that he might always be reminded of his dependent humanity and that Christ is the real, active 'Life-Changer' in every conversion. A little shadow on every sunny day is good for us all. It helps us to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before our God. There should be some Cross, if only a tiny one, carried daily by every true Christian."

Remembering some of the stern-faced questioners who had approached the writer about the Atonement, and knowing that no Protestant Church had ever promulgated a complete doctrine for its members, Father Woodlock was probed for his view.

"We don't define the theological nature of the

Atonement," he answered. "We say our sins are washed white by the Precious Blood of Christ: they are gone if we have repented. Anyone who is truly sorry for his sins from the motive of the Love of God is forgiven his sins at once. Sincere repentance for the Love of God, and not for fear of the consequence of sins, wins forgiveness of sins from God. Were a Mohammedan to be stirred up by God's grace to repent of his sins, he can have his sins forgiven. Directly the prodigal turns from his sins to God, by the help of grace *he is received and forgiven through the Atonement of our Lord, whether he is aware of that Atonement or not.*"

* * * * *

And now Father Woodlock was led along that prickly pathway of Pain. What was the answer of his Church to that thorny problem? The writer had just spoken to a woman who refused any further interest or confidence in God because her father had died terribly from cancer.

"We Catholics," said Father Woodlock, "never get away from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. We cannot regard life as a short span from cradle to grave, but as an ever-lengthening arc, starting from the cradle, rising slightly to the grave, and then ascending for ever and ever in the majestic sweep of Eternity. To look to this life for finality in anything is absolutely wrong. Many Anglicans to-day say that sickness is never God's will. This is not true. The wounds of Christ's Passion were in the Will of God. Sickness is not willed for itself, but for what we get out of it. Most sickness is because of sin; but not all. Adam and Eve lost grace and health through sin. Yes, we believe in Adam and Eve. Evolution may have taken two hundred and fifty million years preparing a body to receive a human soul, but when God breathed the Breath of Life and the first human soul appeared on this earth, then *man* began to live.

"Those who reject belief in God's love because of suffering in God's world are unfair to God. Let them

have faith and wait until the whole history is complete. What seems a hopeless tragedy in the second act may end happily before the curtain falls on the fifth. Give God time, and His love will be seen to have been at work in each life. Remember the boy in the casino ward, who 'died of wounds.' Through all eternity he will be flooded with happiness he would have been incapable of receiving but for those hours of sanctified pain."

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Of course we asked Father Woodlock if we can be absolutely sure that God always provides as well as guides. He replied:

"We can be sure that God provides enough for everybody, but not that God ensures that human beings will distribute that provision rightly. There is over-production of food in the world to-day, yet through maldistribution, owing to man's greed, many are on the verge of starvation. God does not work miracles in these cases. If Christian principles ruled the world it would be a Garden of Eden.

"But the world, through sin, is not a Garden of Eden. Toil and much suffering are the lot of man to-day. Sin has much to do with the suffering, but suffering can be sublimated and sanctified and can be the greatest source of the spiritual development of the soul, and can increase *that measure of capacity for God's beatific vision which will be the measure of each one's eternal bliss.* The soul that dies in mortal sin has no capacity for enjoying God—it has rejected Him by its own free will, and God will not force the will."

* * * * *

The writer had expressed the hope in *For Sinners Only* that the Group Movement might accelerate the reunion of Christendom, even Catholics and Protestants. He asked Father Woodlock if that might be accomplished, say, within fifty years, or in Anno Domini 2000.

The Father of Farm Street shook his head. He felt that vision would not come true. He prophesied that

fifty years hence there would be just two big Churches —Catholic and Anglican. The Catholic Church could not change its doctrine, for dogmas once defined as part of Catholic faith never change.

"We believe that the Holy Spirit of Truth has been guiding the Church in all those Councils which fixed unalterably its doctrines. We believe that infallibility is involved in the promise of Christ: 'Go and teach; he that hears you is listening to Me. I will be with you all days to the end of the world.' If the Church 'unsays' its creed, if it changes its doctrine as time goes on, it is implicitly confessing its fallibility, and its authority is gone. All the Protestant Churches to-day in practice repudiate infallible teaching. So they can and do change their faith.

"There is less reason to keep them apart from each other to-day than there was in the past, as they have few, if any, fundamental doctrines which are to-day essential to any one of them and rejected by the others. The necessity of Episcopal ordination for a valid ministry is to-day held only by Anglo-Catholics; and in some few years that obstacle will probably be removed between Anglicans and Free Churchmen. But in all these denominations Modernism grows apace. That is an impassable barrier to union with Rome. Rome can never make a doctrinal compromise for the sake of reunion without committing suicide and abandoning its belief in itself, as Christ's infallible Messenger to the world.

"Perhaps," said Father Woodlock, "some Groupers may be guided to the Catholic Church through their prayerful study of the Gospel. They will find a Church still resting on Peter, through his successors, the Popes; a Church in which there is 'forgiveness of sins' by absolution after sincere confession and contrition, and also a Church which teaches authoritatively and dogmatically, claiming that whosoever listens to her teaching is hearing the teaching of Christ.

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" I am very interested in the active ' Life-Changing ' and ' witness ' work of the Groups—but I am also very anxious about it. If these young converts are not utterly ' selfless ' in their aims—and how hard it is, even for the mature, mortified, and illumined soul to be quite selfless!—then there will be grave danger to the ' changer,' and probably superficiality in the change."

In conclusion, Father Woodlock said that he had looked for all that inspired hope in the Group Movement. " Who could fail to be interested in this first sign of a ' swingback ' of youth from the wild post-war paganism, which up to about five years ago filled us middle-aged folk with apprehension for the future?

" I see things I can criticise in the Movement, but I see other things on which I base my hope. That ' surrender to God ' and the prayerful ' Quiet Times,' the frank effort to be ' life-changed ' and ' Life-changer ' are all signs of God's grace at work. May nothing human spoil His Divine activity, and may His Kingdom come and reign in these souls permanently, is my prayer and my sincere wish for the Movement.

" It is exposed, so it seems to me, to grave dangers. There is the possibility that the constant, cheery confession of sins that have been put away may lead to a less heartfelt appreciation of the evil and horror of sin. Publicity is again a danger to true humility, and the ' Groupers ' frankly advertise and seek publicity for their ' witness.' The very loyalty to the Movement may turn it into a short-lived sect. The confident, expectant attitude of ' listening-in ' for God's voice must often ' auto-suggestively ' create a voice. These and other dangers are visible at first glance.

" Can ill results be averted? We must wait and see, and hope and pray. Experience may teach the Movement where danger lies, and God's Guidance may come to guide the Movement itself, as it is believed to guide the individual members of the Groups.

" To me it is the most interesting religious phenom-

enon of the day, and I shall watch its development, hoping that it will be a means of advancing the cause of Christ and the coming of His Kingdom to a rapidly paganising England."

* * * * *

Father Woodlock is still the brilliant Father of Farm Street, and the writer is still a Presbyterian elder and believer in the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Oxford Group.

The religious views of neither priest nor writer were changed by their friendly discussion of ' Life-changing '; but whilst in *For Sinners Only* an Anglo-Catholic said the Groups had made a Presbyterian tolerable without his becoming any the less an Anglo-Catholic, the writer would now put it that though he is not ' verting to Rome ' because of his visit to Farm Street, yet should Father Woodlock ever join his own Presbyterian Church, he would be delighted to see him the next Moderator—that is, the Presbyterian Pope!

What need of help? He knew how types were set,
He had a dauntless spirit and a Press.
Lowell.

* * * * *

May I not write in such a style as this?
In such a method, too, and yet not miss
My end—Thy good.
Bunyan.

* * * * *

It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight,
Once in a century;

But better far it is to speak
One simple word, which now and then
Shall waken their free nature in the weak
And friendless sons of men.
Lowell.

PERHAPS the two stories about journalists that have most tickled the writer's comic sense are:

The one of the reporter who always began his expenses bill with "To account rendered 5s.," and received payment for that first item until its esoteric meaning was discovered—exactly what it said, the labour of rendering the account. The reporter who thus dared lived to become a newspaper director.

The other story is told autobiographically by Hugh Redwood in *God in the Shadows.*

He described the tumult raging within him during one whole week of his youth until he drew his pay envelope on Friday, and cashed his weekly expenses bill; then Hugh Redwood, "the converted reporter," went to the local depot, purchased a Salvation Army cap and jersey, and had himself measured for a tunic.

But his mother declared that never should child of hers come into the house as the wearer of trash like that, meaning the peak cap and scarlet jersey. His father concurring, "the converted reporter," with flaming face, but temper in check by a miracle, took himself off to lodgings and stayed for a fortnight beneath the roof of a Roman Catholic couple, who "fed him, and slept him" for next to nothing, because they thought him a hero. Young Hugh Redwood, in two or three nights, reached a like conclusion.

Forbidden to wear uniform in his home, he carried the war across the border, and to mark his disapproval of Sunday labour, appeared at the office for Sunday night late duty wearing his full regimentals. His father (the chief reporter) called him a fool, but he had a surprise from another quarter, for the assistant editor came quietly into the room, when all the others had gone, and clapped a hand on his shoulder. "Good luck to you, sonny. God bless you," he said. "And I wish I had half your pluck."

The writer has seen some amusing things in newspaper offices, but knowing the spiritual atmosphere of the average reporter's room, he can appreciate the humour of young Hugh Redwood's début, wearing Salvation Army regimentals.

He remembers seeing the same look that Hugh Redwood's colleagues must have given him come into the unbelieving eyes of a sceptical reporter, interviewing him on spiritual things as he (the reporter) carelessly balanced himself cross-legged on his editor's desk, his trilby hat on the back of his neck, a cigarette between his lips, and that air of condescension to all the Universe characteristic of the race of Pressmen—in an evening newspaper office in Indianapolis.

Almost equally amusing is Hugh Redwood's story of the quarrel with his Adjutant over smoking, and the latter's illogical and unoriginal remark that if God wanted a man to smoke He would have put a chimney in his head. An argument, says Hugh Redwood, that

applied to his own bowler hat or the Adjutant's glasses; the incident ending in Hugh's mother selling his cap, tunic, and red jersey to another Salvationist, who was a boot-repairer.

The writer met Hugh Redwood after his return to the Salvation Army, when he was turning out one of our big daily newspapers, but he was not wearing the peaked cap, blue uniform, or the familiar red jersey, marked Blood and Fire—a fact the visitor regretted.

* * * * *

If you were to call in Bouverie Street to see the deputy-Editor of the *News Chronicle*, and the author of those popular best sellers *God in the Slums* and *God in the Shadows*, not to mention other literary contributions to the religious life of the nation; a man who has secured a rapidly-growing reputation as one of our most effective platform speakers upon Christian sociology, as an adjunct to his weekly 'lay sermon' from Bouverie Street, and his daily "Parable" of potted wisdom—all these achievements and qualifications would keep your inferiority complex in its place while awaiting an audience.

Hugh Redwood might pass in and out of the waiting-room a dozen times, and you might not waste ten seconds on his personality.

The fact is that Hugh Redwood hates "side," just as much as he hates cant and make-believe. He has no oddities of dress or person, no physical posturings, facial acrobatics, or vocal whimsicalities. You might, at the first blush, describe him as Mark Antony describes himself in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*—"a plain blunt man." Picture an active middle-aged man of five feet eight, weighing about fourteen stone; a clean-shaven, but bespectacled, rubicund face with the suggestion of a double chin, matching a fairly broad, square-shouldered figure, a very slight editorial stoop, and just a hint of abdominal expansiveness—small hands and shapely feet, an energetic gait, with a quaint knack of plunging both hands simultaneously into his

trouser-pockets, crumpling up the short jacket of an unpretentious grey work-a-day suit, as if cogitating some fresh mental view-point with focussed energy: unmistakably a "he-man," but a great journalist and a great Christian.

But the head! a good full *seven and a half* size, a spacious forehead, sagacious brow, ridging slightly over darkish grey-blue, busy eyes, "never hasting, never resting"; a voice of middle register, not at all sing-song, and a small, full-lipped, good-humoured mouth.

There is an agreeable raciness about Hugh Redwood's conversation and style, which suggests it was developed in sporting circles, though he has a linguistic purity of speech, and caresses his theme dexterously with facile grace of expression. He focusses on a series of disconnected facts, sorts out their relationships promptly with a clear-seeing faculty of analysis, fortified by a powerful memory, which, at fifty years of age, has woven countless experiences into a vivid texture of practical wisdom.

* * * * *

He would call the foregoing description of himself something in the nature of "an ordnance-survey map," which perhaps it is. He was delighted to talk on the subject that all the religious world is discussing—Guidance.

"I accept," said he, "the doctrine of the Guidance of God in individual life as a fact established in my own experience beyond any question whatsoever; but I am equally convinced that it is conditional.

"You see, in asking for Guidance, we must be on our guard against preconceived ideas as to its nature, and we must be ready, without any sort of qualification, to accept such guidance when it comes. Guidance is given daily to myself and others, as I know positively; but, at the same time, it implies a spiritual attitude which will not balk at anything.

"On the other hand, we must be careful, in getting

rid as fast as possible of old religious cant, not to create a new kind of cant. Even this very morning I have received letters about ' Guidance ' in certain matters—telling me to do things—in which, it is quite evident, the writers are entirely wrong; because they claim guidance of a character which is obviously quite fantastic.

" Then how do you test your Guidance? " asked the writer of his candid friend.

" To begin with, I find those spiritual promptings which I imply by the term Guidance are so very definite that I have never yet felt any real doubt about them (' My sheep hear My voice '). I am not one of those who can sit down with pencil and paper and take a note of God."

Hugh Redwood spoke feelingly :

" I should like to be perfectly frank about this, and say that I have always felt gravely disturbed when in the presence of a Group so equipped with pencils and paper. Nevertheless, many times the command has come to me in my own privacy, so clear and so explicit that I have immediately made a note of it, and in almost every instance I have been satisfied, after acting on the command, that some Great Intelligence outside myself was leading me in accordance with a definite plan."

" As, for instance——? "

" I can give you dozens. On one occasion a friend had given a certain sum of money to be spent in helping some needy case. I had no special case in mind at the time, but the very next morning I felt certain that I must hurry to Shadwell.

" The story of what happened is too long to be told in detail, but I arrived at the Salvation Army slum post in Shadwell on the heels of a young woman in desperate straits, to whom the money in question was a God-send.

" The matter, however, did not end there! Questioning showed that the young woman had formerly been in the employ of a firm with whom, in

the strangest of fashion, I was to establish a new personal contact that very afternoon, although I did not know it. The result is that she has never since been allowed to know want or friendlessness.

"Rather slowly and hampered badly by ill-health, she made spiritual progress, and as she did so, she seems to have come to the conclusion that it was selfish of her to accept a small allowance paid her weekly that she might have the extra food for which her malady called.

"I think she felt that God was putting her love for Him to the test. She felt He was asking her what she would sacrifice for Him. There was only one thing she could sacrifice, and that was this weekly allowance. She decided to do it, and wrote two letters, one of them to me, giving notice of her decision. Almost at the moment when I received the letter I also received a letter from a girl in Essex, who said she felt 'led' to offer this exact sum every week 'to provide extra sustenance for someone in poor health.' She fancied I should know a suitable case.

"These two people—one poor and in ill-health, the other bright, happy, and in relatively easy circumstances—have now formed a new friendship of untold value to each of them. The whole story is so full of what some folk call 'coincidences' that the law of averages alone must prove it to be something more than coincidence. The fact that in both cases help for this unknown East-End girl was sent through me satisfies me that there was real Guidance in the matter. There is scarcely a week goes by but something like that happens, sometimes big, sometimes small, sometimes merely a letter."

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We dug deeper.

"Do you ever get conflicting Guidance? and if pulled in two directions, how do you decide?"

"I have had such conflicting Guidance, but I have been perfectly sure that the conflict was through

something in me pulling against God's will; so I have prayed desperately hard about it, and though I cannot exactly say how the problem has been resolved, it certainly has been resolved.

"On one occasion at least I have had the sorrow of knowing that evil has resulted from my failure to obey Guidance. It was a matter of writing a letter to a friend—a friend of whom I thought highly, and who to my knowledge had been passing through an extremely difficult time.

"The *urge* came to make a certain proposal. I did not make it, or rather I made it three weeks later. In the meantime, my friend had taken a decision which I believed then, and still believe, to be tragically wrong. That decision, in all probability, would not have been taken if I had written when I was told to do so.

"I am perfectly aware that many people will raise their eyebrows with scepticism when they hear these things from me, and I am free to confess that six years ago, I myself would have regarded such things as perfectly incredible."

* * * * *

"Are you ever refused Guidance?"

"Yes."

"What do you do then?"

"*Wait.*"

As Hugh Redwood knows, a laconic reply rarely satisfies a journalist.

"But supposing the necessity for action becomes imperative?"

"Well, if I am up against an urgent case, then I trust my own common-sense, and simply ask God for His protection and His help."

"And what you do then works out right?"

"Yes, I think so—at any rate, in the main. I should not like to say positively," said Hugh Redwood, "that when things are rather difficult one invariably does the right thing; but I know that when I am con-

stantly committing myself to God's care, I am wonderfully looked after."

"Have you any set formula for obtaining Guidance?"

"None at all; but I have every morning my quiet hour, from seven to eight. I find, indeed, it has become essential, for instead of it becoming a physical burden, it has become almost as great a physical necessity as a spiritual necessity."

What the author of *God in the Slums* had just said about prayer being a physical necessity was News to the writer.

"What do you do in *your* quiet hour?"

"I get up and have prayers, spending the hour in my study."

"Why not pray in bed?"

"It would not be so effective for me. I prefer my study. I have a prayer list—a list of friends for whom I am praying. First I read the Bible, and then I pray for those friends. It is not merely the recital of a string of names; but (on that sacred principle of 'the communion of saints') I pray to be put into intimate touch with those for whom I pray, and with God, Whom I believe to be in the midst of us all."

* * * * *

"Supposing you have urges for two directions?"

"I should expect the right Guidance in time. In such a case, more than once, I have known the answer to my question come with the postman's knock that same morning. On the other hand, it might not come until days later, and sometimes I am reminded of the Prophet Jeremiah, who, after waiting ten days for Guidance, got the reply that the people were just simply to stay where they were."

"Does Guidance come to you in some kind of supernatural whisper, as well as from the postman's knock?"

Hugh Redwood had no experience of supernatural voices.

"Nothing like that. On the other hand, there are times—times which are rare and almost indescribably

wonderful—when *I have been aware of a Presence so real that it has almost seemed tangible.*"

"Would that be an objective Presence?"

Hugh Redwood spoke very reverently:

"No; I have never *seen* anything; but in that Presence I have never felt the slightest doubt or the slightest fear of consequences."

"And you are quite certain that people to-day can be really aware of the Holy Spirit's inspiration and indwelling?"

"I am certain of it."

"Do you think anyone living has had a visual manifestation of Christ?"

"I should not like to say. I have never had anything of the kind myself, but I have quite an open mind on the subject."

* * * * *

"Do you think it good that the Groups have stressed Guidance?"

"Yes, I do; I prefer Guidance to be over-emphasised rather than under-emphasised."

"But when did *you* first awaken to the possibilities of Guidance?"

Hugh Redwood replied that it was before he came i contact with the Groups. His first definite experience was on the Saturday afternoon of the Westminster Floods in 1928, when, on his way home, he felt positively commanded to go to the scene of the calamity as narrated in *God in the Slums.*

"I was returning from town, and had read an early evening paper in the train, describing the misery attendant upon a disaster which, up till then, had impressed me merely as 'News.' I was within three hundred yards of my own home, when there came a very clear prompting to return to Westminster and offer personal service.

"I have told in my book how at first I fought against that prompting, and how, at length, I yielded to it. *But I could never tell in a whole library of books one half of*

the wonderful things that have happened to me through saying 'Yes' instead of 'No'; and this thought frightens me because, whenever I stop to meditate on these things, I realise that if I had said 'No,' I should never have known, or even dimly suspected, what I was missing until the dawn of Judgment Day."

"How did you then distinguish between that first prompting as a guided thought and not just an ordinary human thought?"

"I did not stop to consider it."

"Was there any difference between how that guided thought came and your ordinary thoughts?"

"Oh yes! there are times in all our lives when an idea comes to us about which we are conscious that it is something more *concrete* than a mere idea. We cannot explain it; nobody can explain it. I have told in *God in the Shadows* how I wrote Colonel Colbourne about *God in the Slums*, and she said she had been thinking about it for five days."

The writer mentioned there was an occasional difficulty with young people who magnified their ordinary thoughts into special Guidance, and Hugh Redwood said:

"It is not only a difficulty, but a very grave danger too. I consider that for Guidance the vitally essential condition is absolute surrender: and who is always surrendered?"

* * * * *

Which led Hugh Redwood to introduce an old friend.

"In this matter of whole-hearted surrender to God's will," he said, "I might mention George Müller, who used to live in the next road to me in Bristol!"

There was a peculiar smile of recollection on Hugh Redwood's face as he continued:

"From the windows of my bedroom I could see the chimneys of his famous orphanages. The sight filled me with much the same kind of alarm as did that of another group of chimneys not far away from them. This second group belonged to the gaol, and I always

had a fear that I might end up under one group or the other.

"Whenever Müller passed our house—as he did almost daily—I tried to avoid his penetrating gaze. He was a patriarchal figure with a wonderful white beard, and as I was constantly hearing him spoken of as 'a man of God,' I came to have a half-belief that he was Moses—re-incarnated. Because of this, I supposed him to be endowed with an inner vision that must be fully aware of my many delinquencies, and I thought it not unlikely that something extremely unpleasant might happen to me if he raised his eyes and caught sight of my sinful figure in his path.

"I was at this time about twelve years of age. It never crossed my mind that one day I should not only accept as gospel truth the almost legendary tales told about George Müller's reliance upon God for the supply of his every-day material need; but that I should come to preach and practise that same reliance upon God myself."

"You believe George Müller's contention that any Christian may rely upon God for food and clothes if he carries out God's will."

"Yes, I do."

There was no hesitation with Hugh Redwood—here in the heart of Fleet Street—whose confidence in God's guided supplies was refreshing when contrasted with the qualifications of some of the sheltered and well-paid theologians.

The writer now interpolated something calculated to shake the faith of his fellow-journalist:

"There is a case of a Christian missionary who trusted to God for food and clothes, but died of starvation."

"I never heard that story."

But Hugh Redwood heard it now.

"What do you say to that story?" asked the remorseless interviewer.

"I still hold to my opinion."

"You have seen many people's trust in God for their material need vindicated. But have you ever seen anyone who so trusted God being forsaken?"

"No."

"And what is your most remarkable case of Divine intervention with supplies?"

Hugh Redwood referred to the establishment by the League of Goodwill—a Salvation Army development, which sprang out of *God in the Slums*—of an instructional centre for unemployed lads in the Rhondda Valley. The League had literally no funds of its own—not so much as a penny piece—when this venture was first mooted.

"Prayer—by which I mean intensive concentrated prayer of a group of people summoned (in some cases by telephone) expressly to pray—brought us within two or three weeks all the land, all the living accommodation, that was necessary, and eventually completely stocked and equipped the centre. In many instances needs were met before we had time to formulate them in prayer—almost before we had time to realise them.

"I have never known a more literal illustration of the old belief—'Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'"

Hugh Redwood had mentioned his prayer list, and the writer asked for his answer to a troublesome problem.

"Why pray for others, since God declines to coerce a man's free will?"

"In the task of influencing others," was the reply, "prayer creates an atmosphere—a more spiritually compelling atmosphere than the one in which the person normally lives—whereby it becomes possible for the person or persons concerned to be influenced in the right direction. This may be either personal prayer, or the prayer of a group of individuals."

* * * * *

And then a question which the writer has asked

frequently because he knows many others are awaiting the answer.

"What is the best way to defeat a besetting sin?"

"I know nothing except the experience of sanctification. I believe literally in the experience of which we sing—

He breaks the power of cancelled sin.

"The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit destroys even the most deeply rooted sinful instincts. Take the case of the sodden drunkard, with absolutely no will-power of his own, and further handicapped by living in the devil-ridden environment of the slums. I could quote you scores of cases where men and women have come drunk to the penitent form, and have arisen sober from it, and henceforth from that moment have had no desire for drink.

"Granted there are also innumerable cases where the desire has not been permanently removed—where it has triumphed once more after an interval; but I still maintain that the Resurrection power of Jesus Christ is able to save 'from the uttermost to the uttermost,' and that (unless we have allowed it in our minds to deteriorate into cant) means just what I have said—that a man without will-power of his own may be made a new creature through the will of Jesus Christ realised in him."

* * * * *

The journalist in Hugh Redwood understood a fellow-journalist's desire to ask:

"And do you ever get periods of doubt nowadays?"

"Yes, I do. I get periods when I feel very definitely 'in the wilderness.'"

"What do you do then?"

He grinned.

"I hold on tight. I have to hold tight in the sense that I have to trust where I cannot trace. I have to believe that, however lonely I may feel, I am not really

alone. Sometimes I feel very lonely indeed. There have been times when I have felt myself on the very verge of a precipice, when I have had the cry wrung from me—'Lord, I believe. Help Thou mine unbelief!' Never have I known that cry go without answer."

"Then what is your answer to others who have similar periods of unbelief?"

"You will see it in my book, *The Quiet Quest.* I have come to look on these dry periods, these 'wilderness' periods, as comparable with the times in swimming lessons when the instructor leaves us to try for ourselves. Here let me say this. We must trust our all to God, believing in His upholding power as we do in the buoyancy of the water we swim in.

"I believe that when we are called to make our surrender, we must most definitely surrender our sorrows and our sufferings to God, and I have had ample proof from my point of view that *God can make perfectly wonderful use of a consecrated grief.*

"With it He makes a line of approach—often the only line of approach—to other aching hearts. All of us must know of some cases where we have been able to help, only because of some bitter experience we have had ourselves."

* * * * *

"The Groups first get at people's personal problems, and then lead them to Calvary. Do you think that a good method?"

"I think you are getting in that way to the needs of the individual case."

"What do you think of the prospect of unity in the Church?"

Here Hugh Redwood was most emphatic.

"My experience of the last half-dozen years has told me this—that the people who are fighting in the front line have no time for talking of sectarian differences; they recognise only too urgently that they are facing a

common enemy. They recognise, thank God! that there must be unity of command. I only wish that some of those behind the front could be 'bombed' into a similar recognition of the fact.

"I have a number of friends, admirable people, and, as a rule, generously disposed, even to a fault, towards their neighbours, but they visibly *wilt* if I so much as mention Roman Catholicism. 'Oh, Mr. Redwood,' said one good lady to me at the close of a talk which had been prolonged well beyond midnight, 'you surely do not believe that Roman Catholics will go to Heaven?'

"The terrible thing about this remark was its absolute sincerity. I differ from Roman Catholics on many points, but as surely as I hope one day to enter Heaven myself, so surely shall I be surprised and disappointed if I do not meet some of my Roman Catholic friends there."

* * * * *

"How would you go about influencing another person for his spiritual betterment?"

"The first thing necessary is absolute surrender of oneself to God; surrender of all one's resources, though quite possibly they may be returned to you again."

"You mean that when you surrender to God, you get your sword back?"

"That's it, and, with your permission, I'll use that point in to-night's meeting.

"We may have our own sword handed back cleansed and sharpened, or we may get a new sword, and either of these can be used to fight sin in us and in the world. I first thought that absolute surrender might mean forsaking Fleet Street and the pen, and taking on a Salvation Army commission.

"But my journalistic sword—my pen—was handed back to me, only God showed me how to use it.

"This absolute surrender to God does not mean, as some might imagine, turning your back entirely

upon all that is near and dear to you. On the contrary, it may be in that very environment you may prove a more useful champion for God."

* * * * *

In these days of carefully prepared sermons and typewritten MS. for the pulpit, one felt led to ask :

" Do you ever feel inspired by the Holy Spirit when speaking publicly ? "

Hugh Redwood had felt that experience.

" But I have learned to be very shy of believing in my own powers. I recall that one day I dropped in to see a Salvation Army officer, who joyfully exclaimed that I had arrived just in the nick of time. The Ensign at a slum post had just been called away, and her second was to have addressed a gathering of women. Hugh Redwood could tackle this job instead.

" ' You want me to speak to a mothers' meeting ? ' I queried.

" ' That is about the size of it,' was the response ; so on my way to this meeting I thought out a powerful address ; something which would show the local people how to do it." (This confession is what the Oxford Group call Sharing.)

" I still have no doubt that it was a fine address, but it was never delivered. When I reached the post, I found about sixty women there, plus about fifteen babies, most of the latter squalling lustily, and all crowded in a small room about ten feet by nine.

" My pretentious oration sagged and broke, and I gave a feeble extempore address ; I could not collect my thoughts in such an atmosphere, and I was conscious all the time of the disapproval of the second in command. It taught me a lesson not to prepare too much in order to humour my vanity, but to rely more upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which, I know, can still be experienced as in the days of the Apostles.

" The moment, in any case, will often bring its own solution.

" One day I had to address a congregation some three

thousand strong in the renowned Free Trade Hall, Manchester. The platform was packed with local celebrities, so that I found myself crowded to the edge of the platform, and with barely a few inches between me and a very deep drop on to my friends at the Press Table.

"Feeling in a state of sheer funk, not to say real fright, my uneasiness was intensified when an old colleague informed me in a hoarse whisper that he had seen many celebrated men occupying that platform, one of whom was known as William Ewart Gladstone.

"It was almost the last straw, and I told him I could cheerfully have murdered him.

"Nevertheless, it gave me a good opening story—a laugh in the first line—which prepared the way for the more serious aspect of the ordeal."

But Hugh Redwood is not eager for public appearances in large gatherings, or for crowd applause. He has learned enough to know that vanity is a wily enemy, a snake to be trodden under foot. So he prefers to accept invitations to smaller gatherings where the atmosphere is more intimate and there is greater spiritual liberty, and he is always booked up for months ahead, sometimes for over a year.

Invitations to speak from religious platforms are raining in upon him; and he has to use a printed formula for reply to them all. Some invitations come from Anglican churches, though the majority are from Nonconformists, including many from Salvationists. Bishops readily licence him to preach in the Church of England, though sometimes, as in Stepney, he is not invited into the pulpit, but asked to deliver his message from the chancel steps. Nevertheless, the Bishop admires the author of *God in the Slums*, and has been seen in the first pew, an appreciative listener. The Church of England can appreciate a man of God, even if he comes from Fleet Street with a Salvation Army badge in his lapel.

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The writer's first meeting with Hugh Redwood was in a well-known hostelry in the Strand, afterwards described by Hugh to a large congregation at Wimbledon as "a place *For Sinners Only*—where A. J. bought me a steak-and-kidney pudding."

One day the writer suggested to Hugh Redwood that we might unite to run an up-to-date mission somewhat on Moody and Sankey lines. Two journalists—the two R's; we might be the "Lazarus" of Sam Chadwick.

The idea appealed to Hugh.

"The truth is I am already equipped for the fray," said he, "although I have never told anyone about it.

"I've got a cornet."

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.
Tennyson.

* * * * *

But what to those who find? Ah this!
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.
St. Bernard.

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But the books of the great mystics do not die. They may be forgotten . . . but so soon as they become known again, they are found to be very much alive. "A book only grows old," says Maeterlinck, "by reason of its anti-mysticism."—*Dean Inge.*

SOCRATES says that every man is two persons; but C. F. Andrews must be the exception. For in his presence you are breathing the air of the delectable mountains.

While C. F. Andrews is talking, the Barnum in you quietly slips outside and sits on the doormat, panting. Inside, the spiritual air is too rare; he needs a richer mixture. Two's company—C. F. Andrews and the Bunyan in you—and three's none, when you meet this unassuming saint.

C. F. Andrews is interesting for what he says, does, and is; a man of mark in all three categories. And yet, try to describe him!—his personality is as elusively charming as a spring zephyr. You meet a man somewhere in the sixties, about five feet ten or eleven, slender, lithe, graceful, and active; probably not vigorously strong, but yet of a virile texture with plenty of staying power.

At the first guess—"An artist," you would say.

Face pale, a little bronzed, traces of experiences in India with Sundar Singh, in Africa with Gandhi, his intimate friends. His features are delicately formed, and fronded with an unscissored beard of greyish-brown, reminiscent, perhaps, of Michael Angelo's "Moses," flowing windwards with patriarchal freedom; and yet a refined and sensitive growth, matching the thin, shapely nose and expressive mouth.

But the eye and brow defiantly subtle. A soft hazel eye of wide-open frankness, glowing with kindly intelligence, alertness, with an intuitive knowledge of life, and yet set in a high, moulded head and beneath the unobtrusive brow of the mystic and the dreamer. A voice not at all oracular, of middle register, smooth, flexible, insinuatingly gentle, and yet capable of resonant emphasis, thrilling cadences, and easy-flowing expressiveness. A mind which has discarded the crutches of mere logic, and has attained the resilience and adroitness of a master. In short, a practical theorist and idealistic man of affairs, if need be, glad of small mercies; and with a large-hearted charitableness.

When the writer first met Gladys Cooper, he thought her the most beautiful woman he had seen, so he asked her who *was* the most beautiful woman? When he met C. F. Andrews, because he was the most saintly man he had met, he asked him who was the most saintly man he knew? The interviewed ask their own questions.

"A very difficult question," C. F. replied, "but I should say that Sundar Singh came as near as anyone I have met to living the saintly life."

The writer mentioned the objection of a German professor that the Apostle of India believed he was speaking the truth, but self-deluded. C. F. Andrews shook his head. He had the greatest faith in the saintliness and genuineness of Sundar Singh's amazing experiences.

"You have to read his Life for more light upon that

point. He tested himself tremendously with regard to his faculty of objectivisation which you will find discussed in my book—*What I Owe to Christ.*"

"But Sundar Singh believed that angels came to his assistance in human form, and that when he came out of the Tibetan well, our Lord touched his arm, which had been damaged or broken by his captors, and healed it?"

"Sundar Singh tried his utmost to test those experiences as to their reality. The great and serious question, for example, was, Did he really get the vision of our Lord as a boy, which comforted him when he contemplated suicide, and turned him into a saintly follower of Christ, or was it imaginary? He tested that experience in all sorts of ways, and was absolutely certain of its genuine character."

"How did he test it?"

"He said, for one thing, that he had just had his cold bath in the early morning, and you do not get such visions at that time, and immediately after a cold bath—and other such considerations. Then he went through a fast in an effort to ascertain what was purely hallucination and what was real."

"Did Sundar Singh tell you about our Lord touching him as he was coming out of the well?"

"No, he did not mention that. But I know exactly what happened, when he was crossing a river in the Himalayas—I think it was the Sutlej, which is a terribly rapid river. As he got into the middle of the stream, he was sinking, when either one or two Tibetan hillmen rushed into the water, on seeing his danger, and pulled him out and laid him safely on the bank. He was certain, however, that angels came and pulled him out of the river; and so he had a most wonderful experience then of being saved from death.

"I have no doubt that he was pulled out by those Tibet hillmen; but in those circumstances he might visualise what was not actually there; that does not mean he was telling lies.

"Living with him as I have done, I know his faculty, because I have got it myself. You might say that I saw a ghost, when I tell you that I saw an extraordinarily beautiful and marvellously calm figure, and I cannot account for it. I am not going to say I saw Christ or an angel; but to Sundar Singh, if he saw it, it would be an angelic being.

"I do not want to go too far, but I think that we can be too prosaic, and also too poetical and idealistic. Sundar Singh had an immensely imaginative mind, but things objectively happened to him."

Before passing on to the rest of C. F. Andrews' talk, the writer would interpolate the substance of a conversation with Mrs. Lionel Fletcher, who said that she once spent a whole day in company with the lost mystic, Sundar Singh. He chatted quietly, and all the time she felt in the presence of Christ. There was no boasting, but Sundar Singh was confident that it was the Lord Himself Who drew him up from among the dead men's bones and rotting flesh at the bottom of that Tibetan well, after opening the locked grating at the top. The Visitor made no sign before departing, except to touch the bone projecting through the skin of Sundar Singh's arm. It was well immediately. Only one man possessed the key of the well, and he was the head-Lama, and the key was attached to his belt. When the liberated apostle, who had been thrown into the well to die, was found next day preaching in the town, the head-Lama was terrified, and begged him to leave the district. A doctor who came to look at the Sadhu's arm, said Mrs. Lionel Fletcher, was told that the Master's touch left no marks. "His touch has still its ancient power." Although Sundar Singh's state at the bottom of the death-well was externally horrible, he felt all the time an immense accession of inward peace and joy; this seems to be characteristic of those who are suffering for Christ from the time of Stephen.

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C. F. Andrews and Gandhi have been intimate friends for years, and so the writer asked:

"Is Gandhi a Christian?"

"No, he is a Hindu, but he says: 'I would call myself a Christian if I would not be misunderstood.' Gandhi feels that Christianity has become too much wrapped up with imperialism. You know the story in my book where he was turned out of the church. He went to hear of Christ, and was turned away by the man at the door."

"What does Gandhi think of Christ?"

"In his opinion, Christ was one of the greatest souls that ever lived, and an emanation from God, but he would not say that Christ was the greatest, and he only regards Him as an incarnation. I do not think he would put anyone above Christ, but would say He is one of the incarnations. In many ways Gandhi lives near to Christ."

"Then why does not Christ reveal Himself to Gandhi?"

"I think He does. He does it every day, but in His own way. We cannot ask for the times and seasons."

"Have you ever had a manifestation of our Lord?"

C. F. Andrews paused, and then recalled a remarkable experience which came to him, resulting in an errand of mercy and love to the Fiji Islands. As Father Woodlock points out, we test a mystical experience by its results.

"What happened to me was this," said C. F. Andrews: "I had cholera and was dreadfully weak, after I had almost died. Then I received a Blue Book about Fiji, with an awful account of what was happening under the indentured labour system. I had seen it in South Africa.

"It was hideous how they were treated even there. Shortage of women led to prostitution, and the men sometimes committed suicide after fighting over the women, but I found in these books on Fiji that things

were twice as bad as in South Africa. I was very weak at the time, and when I was in South Africa, I had a sight of one of those indentured Indian labourers which I never forgot. He had run away because he had been flogged.

"The man was crouching as he showed Gandhi his back, which was still covered with the weals from these lashes. The manager had lashed him. As he was showing his lacerated back to Gandhi, I was going towards him in utter pity. But he got a fright upon seeing me approaching, thinking he was going to get another lashing, whereas I had nothing but love in my heart.

"I could not get it out of my head how frightened he appeared upon catching sight of me upon that occasion; so when I got the Blue Book on Fiji, I suddenly had this very clear picture in my mind of the poor man's face, when I saw him shrinking away in agony.

"It was then mid-day, and I was lying on the verandah. Then, as I looked very closely into that man's face, as it appeared quite objectively in front of me, it imperceptibly changed to *the face of our Lord, looking at me.*"

C. F. Andrews spoke with deep reverence as he answered the question, "What was our Lord's face like?"

"It was very like the face of the Good Shepherd; a very conventional face. There was a beard, but no halo. I cannot remember the colour of the eyes. The look was pathetic, an appealing look—the face of our Lord."

"For how long did you see Him?"

"Very doubtful. He seemed quite a time until His message got right into me. There was no real message, but I knew I had to go out to Fiji. *And the result of my going to Fiji was to help in bringing about the stopping of that indentured labour.* There would have been little chance of doing it otherwise, as there were immense sums of money in it.

" This indentured labour was in many of the colonies, such as Natal, Mauritius, Jamaica, and Fiji. It was under regulations, but the regulations were not kept. The suicide rate was terrible. It was very much higher than the normal rate in India."

The writer mentioned an experience of his own.

" It is an amazing thing," said C. F. Andrews. " The image was so clear that my whole heart went out in reverence and worship, as I say in *What I Owe to Christ.* As I lay back there, it was some time after the vision had faded before I realised that it had been a waking dream, created by my own intense imagination and objectively thrown outside of me by my subconscious mind. The effect upon me was in a certain sense the same as if it had been a vision of the Lord Himself. We use these terms—objective and subjective—and we are obliged to do so; but the border line between them must often be very thin, almost to vanishing point. It was as clear to me as daylight that Christ was calling to me to go out to Fiji, and that His call would be fulfilled."

And whether C. F. Andrews says his vision was created by his own intense imagination and objectively thrown outside of him by his subconscious mind, the writer is quite certain that our Lord was in his subconscious mind, producing that projection, and guiding the action which followed.

* * * * *

C. F. Andrews is convinced that every Christian can be used to win others and meet their deepest needs when their own have first been met.

The writer asked him what he said to a man whose deepest need was how to overcome his besetting sin?

Said the Christian sage:

" I would say, ' This is the first thing to remember: *do not be down-hearted and think that because you fail you are done for. It only means that you have to fight better.*'

" I think the saddest of all things is the very nervous person who has a bad besetting sin, and who goes away and immediately does the same thing again; and then he says, ' It is all off,' and so he practically goes to the devil, declaring that he has tried and it is no good.

" I would say, therefore, to such a person, ' You must never think you are going to fall, but if you should fall, do not think all is lost. It may be that this very fall is going to humble you still more, and bring you nearer to God, and make you feel that you are not relying enough upon Christ as your Redeemer. You must go back and say you are sorry, and are now trying to put more trust in Christ than before.

" The second thing to remember is—Do not think of the sin, but (according to St. Paul's instructions) seek those things that are above. A most deadly habit is that sometimes if you think of a thing it will get hold of you. Never think of it. Put it clean out of your head, and think of those things that are above. Keep away from the other thought, and get your mind saturated with something else; then you are safe. You know of the expulsive power of a new affection. It is like St. Peter on the water. As long as he looked towards Christ he was all right, but when he looked at his feet, he went down. As long as his faith is on Christ, he is strong and can do anything.

" When the thought of sin comes into your head, change the thought, change the place, the habit—change anything. If it comes to your night thoughts, get up, light the lamp, start reading—do anything to set your mind in another direction. Do not fight it directly, but fight it the higher way—go round it or over it. You cannot fight these things by thinking of them.

" A good thing to tell the young people is—' If you fall, the first thing is to come and tell me. No need to tell anyone else.' Then you say to them, ' My dear lad, you must put all your heart and soul into your resolution to do better. Do not worry about it.

That fall is going to do you good. Do not draw a long face, but quite the opposite.' This will have an exhilarating effect, just as when Christ said to Zaccheus that He must dine at his house. Zaccheus went up into the air, so to speak. It took him out of all his heaviness, and he joyfully exclaimed—' One half my goods I give to the poor.' "

" But when a man does not and cannot believe in Christ . . . ? "

" As to that kind of doubt I would say first of all I do not think it is right to infer that there must be always some moral fault behind it. There is honest doubt, and that must be treated reverently.

" It may be perfectly true in certain cases the doubter is fighting to retain a sin, and putting up a defence of something he does not admit. But even then it may be best not to argue out the special point of doubt straight away; rather give them the benefit of the doubt for the time being.

" The first thing to is say, ' Is your life—I am not charging you with anything immoral at all—is your life a full life with joy and power in it, or are you feeling that all the power has gone out of it? '

" *That is the point to bring them to, and they nearly always tell you, ' No.' They will say: ' Since I had these doubts, and since I threw up religion and said there is no God, and that religion is just dope, like opium, I cannot say honestly I am living the contented life I should live. I live more on the surface. My life is not like yours, which is all joy.'*

" When they admit that, you say, ' Where is your doubt? ' and then you can begin to argue and get to the point."

" How do you dig down to the reason of his unhappiness? "

" He will probably bring that up himself; he is almost certain to do so."

" Fine ! But in simple truth the writer has to admit he too cannot honestly say he is always radiant with

joy. Nor can most Christians; perhaps most Life-Changers. What do you say to that? "

C. F. Andrews held to his point:

" I would say to him, ' I have the most wonderful time of real joy, and I know there is power in it. It does not mean that I have no despondent times. We see ' through a glass darkly ' and there is ' a little while,' when I do not see and ' a little while ' when I do see. *But I would ask him, ' Have* you *the same experience, or do you merely live for yourself? What would you have to fall back on if you were faced with illness, pain or death, or had to comfort others? Would you have the inner strength to go through with it? '*

And of course before we left C. F. we asked:

" When and how do you seek Guidance? "

And he replied:

" I do not do as the Group do—sit down and listen and then check up; but I am very conscious of Divine Guidance."

" Do you hear His whisper? "

" I can hardly say that. My Guidance is not so objective as that, but now and then Guidance does come very clearly. There was an instance, the other Sunday morning, of one who was very ill indeed. I wanted to get on with my new book *Christ in the Silence.* I was proceeding with it when I had the strongest feeling that this dear man wanted me—wanted me very badly—to have a service with him; so I could not rest until I went round, and when I did so, the first thing he said to me was, ' I am so glad you have come. Can't we have a Quiet Time together? '

" Then we had this ' Quiet Time,' and it was really wonderful to both of us. He said, ' It was on the Mount of Transfiguration.' It meant everything to him, and I am certain he called me, and I know it was Guidance in my case to leave the book and visit him."

" Once this was regarded as telepathy," the writer suggested.

" Probably it was," he responded. " At any rate,

I think that form of spirit meeting spirit is a wonderful thing; it is Christian communion; and this communion of the spirit is real joy."

* * * * *

We asked C. F. Andrews:

"What is your view of the Atonement?"

"The central point is Christ Himself—He *is* the Atonement. Can you really get hold of the fact that the Lord Himself enters into suffering for man, and really takes his sins, as we know He can and did and does? The Prodigal Son is the greatest chapter on the Atonement ever written, the one thing that tells the whole story, and is the Atonement in a nutshell."

"But there is no sacrifice in the Parable of the Prodigal."

C. F. Andrews stirred himself, as we hoped.

"Oh, isn't there? . . . I think the face of the father was absolutely haggard when he met the boy. That is truly the Atonement. People say that God cannot suffer. God revealed in Christ can suffer and can truly feel our sin. Christ said the father *ran* to the boy. Do you think there was no suffering? Was there no agony, that made him *run* for joy when he saw his boy coming home? I know this is all symbolical language, picture language, about the infinite God, but God in His infinite being is *more* than this language denotes, not less. His final name is Love."

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"Two last questions: one—when will our Lord return?"

C. F. Andrews had pondered long on the subject, but he had no special Guidance.

"I think He is always coming. That idea of the outward coming of our Lord has to be sublimated, and when you come to St. John's Gospel, you get complete sublimation. For instance, Jesus says: 'I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' *He comes and goes.* But there is always an eternal coming and going in St. John's

Gospel. In this Gospel He said of John, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?'

"I have no doubt St. John heard when he was quite young about 'coming in the clouds'; but when he grew older, he saw it was not in the clouds, but in those signs of the new coming—the signs he told them would come, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the new age of religious life and other future happenings as given in St. Luke. One of the days of the Son of Man was in relation to the Great War, and I believe that Christ was really there in the Great War."

"The Angels of Mons?"

"No; the whole thing. You get that in the Parable of the tree putting forth new leaves. The Great War meant the breaking up of the old civilisation, and now you see the new shoots springing forth."

"What new shoots?"

"I think the Oxford Group Movement is one of them; and we see the birth among the nations of a completely new conception of life."

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"From our own experience and observation, can God be trusted always to provide? Can one absolutely rely upon a spiritual law of 'seek first . . . and all these things shall be added unto you'?"

"Yes. I have no doubt whatever on that point. The sublimest utterance in the Old Testament is that of Job, 'Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.' The biggest question in life is just that. Can we get that spirit of trust in God and keep it when the dark hours come? It is no opiate. It is the highest act of courage. It is just that very thing that makes life worth living.

"Surely the divinest thing in all history, in all literature, in all man's ideal aspiration and hope, and courage, and faith, was that cry from the Cross, '*My* God, *My* God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' For while Christ had, at that awful moment, the sense of utter loneliness, He clung with all the greater intensity

to His Father. '*My* God, *My* God,' He cries—never, even in that agony, losing personal touch.

"It is only when one has gone to that extreme point that the Divine assurance comes flowing in.

"Man's extremity is God's opportunity."

PART FIVE

IN THE BEAUTY OF THE LILIES

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As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.—*David.*

My Beloved is white and ruddy
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His body is as ivory work overlaid with sapphires
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
His mouth is most sweet, yea He is altogether lovely.
Solomon.

* * * * *

But we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.—*St. Paul.*

WHO is sufficient for these things?

We know that David was "ruddy and of a fair countenance"; that Moses was "a goodly child," and "divinely beautiful"; that Esau, Elijah, and John the Baptist were of a rougher type; but none of the four Gospels of Jesus attempts to describe, not so much as by a single sentence, the appearance of our Lord, or the "fashion of His countenance."

Why?

We can only guess.

Sundar Singh, in his visions, saw Christ as a glorious spiritual body, sitting on a throne, "a figure ineffable and indescribable. His face shone like the sun, but in no way dazzling, and so sweet that without any difficulty I can gaze at it—always smiling, a loving glorious smile. I felt when first I saw Him, as if there were some old and forgotten connection between us, as though He had said, 'I am He through whom you were created.'" *

* *The Sadhu* (Streeter and Appasamy).

The Sadhu was told that God was not to be seen in Heaven any more than on earth, for God is infinite, but Christ was there, the image of the invisible God, and only in Him can God be seen. If ever we should become infinite, we might then see the infinite God. Christ is the image of God—that image in which God created man; but only imperfectly stamped on other men. This explains that feeling of recognition of Christ, as one known long ago, experienced by all on their entry to the Heavenly state. All sinners have within themselves a battered image of their Divine Creator, Whom they recognise and worship when they are changed.

Was a description of Christ omitted from the four Gospels because we carry with us our own battered image of the Infinite? Who can say?

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The visitation of the Spirit has been the most potent proof of the Living Christ down the ages. But that has not prevented most of the great artists from aspiring to portray the outstanding Figure of history. And although the popularly accepted portraits of our Lord are widely different, there is, as we know, a traditional likeness which can be traced in most of the paintings.

Whence came this traditional likeness which we all recognise in different paintings—the only treasure inherited from the time of the Apostles (as Sir Wyke Bayliss contended) about which the Church of Christ has never quarrelled. These traditional portraits, moreover, have been authenticated down the ages, and indeed in our own time, by special manifestations to the faithful, sometimes to the physical eye and sometimes to the inner spiritual or introspective eye; and the writer has no doubt there has been a Divine purpose in thus perpetuating through the centuries the earthly image of our Lord.

As the second Adam, Jesus was a new creation, Who must have been divinely fair, like the first. The

eternal purity, goodness, truth, and beauty which were in Him and flowed from Him must have shone in His countenance, though Isaiah's description of His visage being so marred and His form without comeliness may have been a realistic prevision of His appearance on the Cross.

Probably no one has ever been more favoured with the beatific vision of the Lord Jesus than St. Teresa, who was at no loss to account for the manifestations, the beauty of which was so great that no language could describe them, although her father confessor suggested they might be of Satanic origin. She, herself, has graphically narrated how, on one of the feasts of St. Paul, " there stood before me the most Sacred Humanity, as painters represent Him after the Resurrection, in great beauty and majesty." She attempted to have the actual likeness of our Lord, as she had seen Him, committed to canvas. It is just possible that somewhere in the aristocratic art collections of Spain the picture which she gave to the Duke of Alva may still be preserved.

How much she was impressed by this manifestation is shown by her declaration, " If in heaven itself there was nothing else to delight our eyes but the great beauty of glorified bodies, that would be excessive bliss, particularly the humanity of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

To enable her to bear this transcendent vision, she was dealt with at first, as she duly learnt, according to the *weakness of her nature :* " It pleased our Lord one day, when I was in prayer, to show me His hands, and His hands only. The beauty of them was so great, that no language can describe them. A few days later I saw His Divine Face, and I was utterly entranced." She could not understand why He limited Himself in this way, seeing that afterwards He showed Himself fully, except for the weakness of her mortal nature.

In one of her earlier experiences, she recalls, " Christ appeared to me stern and grave, giving me to under-

stand what in my conduct was offensive to Him. I saw Him with the eyes of the soul, more distinctly than I could have seen Him with the eyes of the body."

Eventually Teresa began to suspect that she had only fancied these things. "But our Lord made such haste to bestow this grace upon me and *to declare the reality of it* that all doubts of the vision being a fancy on my part were quickly taken away, and ever since I see most clearly how silly I was.

"For if," she enthusiastically proceeds, "I were to spend many years in devising how to picture to myself anything so beautiful, I should never be able, nor even know how to do it; for it is beyond the reach of any imagination here below."

"It is not a brilliancy which dazzles, but a delicate whiteness and a brilliancy infused, furnishing the most excessive delight to the eyes, never wearied thereby, nor by the visible brightness, which enables us to see a beauty so Divine. It is a light so different from any light here below, that the very brightness of the sun we see, in comparison with the brightness and light before our eyes, seems to be something so obscure that no one would ever wish to open his eyes again.

"Now and then it seemed to me that what I saw was an *image;* but most frequently it was not so. *It was Christ Himself,* judging by the brightness in which He was pleased to show Himself. Sometimes the vision was so indistinct that I thought it was an image, but still not like a picture, however well painted. . . . If what I saw was an image, it was a living image—not a dead man, but the Living Christ! He comes at times in majesty so great that no one can have any doubt that it is our Lord Himself, especially after Communion. Oh, my Jesus, who can describe the Majesty wherein Thou showest Thyself?

"He who shall have had the true vision coming from God detects the false visions at once; for though

they begin with a certain sweetness and joy, the soul rejects them of itself."

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Sundar Singh, as a boy, saw Christ after listening to readings of the Bible which roused his fighting Sikh blood to fury. One day he took his Bible, soaked it in kerosene oil, and threw it in the fire, because the religion of the West was false and they must destroy it.

Still he was tormented with doubt and unrest. He was just fifteen, but he made up his mind to settle his doubts once and for ever. If there were no God, he had no intention of continuing this miserable life. An express train thundered past the bottom of the garden every morning at five o'clock. On the following day he would throw himself under that train if there was no answer to his prayer for satisfaction and peace.

He woke up at three, had a cold bath, and prayed God to show him the way of salvation; otherwise he would kill himself.

Suddenly the room was filled with radiant, glorious light. Sundar looked up in amazement. What was this light? Was the house on fire? Then in the light he saw a Figure, splendid beyond earthly dreams, and smiling at him in heavenly love. Who was He? The Buddha? Krishna? or some other Holy One, who had heard his prayers? Yet what were those wound marks on His hands? Then the Figure spoke in a voice of melodious sweetness, asking, in Hindustani, how long he would persecute Him, since He was the Saviour of the world and had died for him.

The boy fell at the feet of his Master, knowing Him at last. "Jesus Christ is not dead, but living, and it must be Himself;" henceforward he became the *Lion-Hearted Warrior*, and the Apostle of India.*

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Catherine of Sienna, the greatest female saint of

* *Sundar Singh*, Sanders and Judah, S.P.C.K.

the Order of St. Dominic, looking at the sky above her church, saw a majestic throne, whereon sat our Lord, in magnificent robes, extending His hand towards the little girl in blessing; while beneath Him stood St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John, surrounded by angelic figures. Afterwards He told her that she could have a convent cell within her heart where He could dwell, so that she would still be alone with Him while she was ministering to others.

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Butler relates a remarkable vision beheld by St. Francis during the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, in which there appeared a seraph with six shining wings, blazing with fire, bearing down from the higher part of the heaven with a most rapid flight, and between his wings the Figure of a man crucified.

St. Francis experienced a sudden joy at the familiar presence of His Lord under the figure of a seraph, Who fixed on him His eyes in the most gracious and tender manner; but the sorrowful sight of His crucifixion pierced his soul with compassion. This wonderful vision was shown by an interior light to mean that he was not to be transformed into a resemblance with Jesus by the martyrdom of the flesh, but in his heart by the fire of His love.

The vision disappeared, but marks began afterwards to appear on St. Francis' own limbs and various parts of his body resembling those he had seen in this vision of the Crucifixion.

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The story of Joan of Arc presents one of the most remarkable and pathetic chapters in world history. No reference to visions which are proved by their sequel is complete without passing allusion to this extraordinary girl, who was guided to save the destinies of France. Between her and the local church, one summer afternoon, when seated in her garden, there shone a wonderful light out of which came a simple

message in a soft and beautiful voice. Frightened at first, she composed herself, and out of the light came some vague forms, one of which became defined as a man with wings and wearing a crown—St. Michael—exhorting her to be good, and assuring her that God would help her suffering country; that she must go to help the King of France, and that she would restore to him his kingdom. After her martyrdom a repentant Government wrote in red ink against the name of her village: "Free from taxation for ever—for the Maid's sake."

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In all ages the visions have come, and still He comes and goes; He comes calling sinners to repentance, sustaining His loyal followers during trial or preparing them to be strong against coming odds. A vision of our suffering Lord on the Cross was seen by one man in England a quarter of a century ago, and this resulted in a chain of Spirit-kindled flames now encircling the globe. Frequently one hears stories of the Lord manifesting Himself. A girl meets Him, leaves her work and follows in a new direction, where the task is harder and there is much sacrifice.

Reggie Holme, formerly head boy of Winchester School, says:

"The power worked that night, and I prayed before I went to bed. Strange, but I felt conscious that Christ was standing there. Next morning I had the same sense of Christ being in my room. I always pictured Christ standing by the Lake shore. Here in college He was standing by me, encouraging, strengthening. I knew now I had emerged from a gilded cage. That morning the trees were greener, the skies were bluer, the birds were singing. The New Testament was alive for me at last."

C. F. Andrews saw Him and undertook a successful humanitarian mission as a direct consequence; Hugh Redwood has already recorded his consciousness of a Presence; Olive Jones an unforgettable experience at

the altar rail during Holy Communion; a hospital matron the other evening described to a Group meeting how the Lord came and showed her His hands and said she must give Him the keys of all the house instead of the guest-room only; and the curate of a fashionable London church declared that when in a rage, recently, he saw the Lord standing in the doorway of his own room, looking perhaps as when He "turned and looked on Peter." And the curate became a changed man.

A deep impression was made upon Congregationalists by the Chairman of the Congregational Union, Dr. H. Elvet Lewis, speaking in the City Temple on May 9th, 1933, when he said that one Sunday last October something happened. "What exactly happened—how it came and how it went I cannot tell. . . . I found myself confronted with a question: 'If you were allowed to go back and spend the season with one of the noblest souls of all time, whom would you choose? . . . In a moment faces began to range themselves, so that I could recognise many of them. . . .

fair souls
In one incessant effluence of light.

"The wealth of choice was embarrassing. Suddenly another question filled the air, as with clear sound—But where is Jesus Christ? They, as well as I, seemed to hear that question, for in a moment with one movement they all turned in one direction—all, as far as I could see (Buddha was among them). Their faces were radiant before: now they were suffused with still warmer glow. I also turned. For there He stood, in shining robe: alone, on a little height. Alone, yet not aloof; separate from saints as from sinners, but the most approachable of all. What made Him great brought Him near: Lord indeed He was, but Lord of Light: Prince, but Prince of peace; King, but King of love.

"How the vision ended after that, I cannot recall;

perhaps I passed unconsciously into deeper, duller sleep. But when I awoke it was still vivid. . . ."

While this book was being written, a Dutch business man called and told the writer of a triple manifestation; first his dying father, in passing, had received direct proof that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God"; then his brother-in-law, already a powerful preacher of the Dutch Lutheran Church, received so vivid a manifestation of the Lord that he could talk of nothing else for the next three days; then his sister, who recalled her father's experience, while renewing her efforts to assist her husband, lamented that she had not been accounted worthy of seeing Him Who is invisible. Meanwhile her husband's spiritual convictions deepened perceptibly; he spoke with greater confidence and fervour, his ministrations being signally blessed.

It was several years after the minister's vital experience, that his wife's earnest prayers for this special blessing of our Lord's appearance also found response in a glorious and startlingly beautiful manifestation of Himself to her.

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A friend of the writer prayed many times to be able to realise the presence of God, though she hardly knew what she meant by this prayer, beyond a longing for a more vivid faith. And then one night a vision came:

"I awoke to find the wall opposite my bed had vanished in an unearthly light, radiantly white. It seemed to stream dazzlingly from the left. No words can describe the whiteness of that light, it was instinct with life and love; and there is no comparison with it on earth; the whitest field of snow in dazzling sunlight is incomparable with the uncreated light of God.

"And the light was life, the essence of life, vibrating life, and the light and life were love, almost unbearable in its intensity. And in the centre of this stream of light and life and love, the essence and manifestation thereof, was our Lord.

"On either side were two spirit forms. These I could bear to look upon—radiant beings clothed in light, enveloped in the radiance that came from the Master.

"But I could not bear to look upon Jesus, the radiance was too dazzling, only at the vesture of light and love which clothed Him. Somewhere a silent voice seemed to say, 'You can never again say you cannot realise the Presence of God,' and looking back from the ocean of love, I saw the Crucifixion, and I seemed to think that the awfulness of the Crucifixion was as nothing to this overwhelming love. I mean that the love required to endure the agony was only a very small part of this manifestation. And I remember thinking, There is no sin that this awful, measureless love would not forgive—it covered innumerable times any sin that could ever be committed. I seemed to remember my lifeless body lying on the bed, but I cannot remember going back to it. The next morning my waking thoughts were of prayer, but how many miles and miles away words seemed from the experience! but there came to me the memory of the vision, and it seemed to say, 'Tell the world it is all love, the slightest action that is done in love lifts one up to partake of Divine love,' and in later years the thought I was to cling to to save me from utter despair was this, 'Remember the immensity of that love. There is no sin that it cannot forgive.'"

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The Rev. A. J. Gossip, in his remarkable book *In Christ's Stead,* tells how, on his induction at St. Matthew's, Glasgow, he told the people rashly that he could not preach well, but would give them the very best that was in him, and some months later, when he had forgotten all about it, and was carrying a wretched sermon knocked together somehow in hot and flustered days, he came on Jesus Christ, half-way up the pulpit stairs, saw Him quite plainly, and heard Him saying: "And is this your very best this week?"

He looked Him in the face without fear, for His eyes were the kindest he had ever seen, thought the thing out there face to face with Him, and dared to answer back, in view of the full gaze, that it seemed it almost was the best he could do. He said nothing, but He smiled, and Arthur John Gossip preached with a queer exultant elation, feeling that the wretched sermon he carried was approved.

And again, in the same book, the same writer speaks of those "cruel Glasgow stairs." One day visiting, he turned in about ten at night, dog-tired, to yet another stair, but paused at the foot, determining to go to-morrow. Someone passed him and went up. And he knew Who He was, heard Him say, "Well, if you won't go, then I must go Myself," saw indeed only a dim greyness of mounting shoulders, dreadfully tired shoulders. He ran up after Him, and Christ and he went in together.

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Mary Toms felt protected by a Presence accompanying her through the depths of a wood on a dark night during one of her preaching expeditions as a lay preacher among the Bible Christians a hundred years ago; Shackleton wrote of a mysterious unseen Presence accompanying his party over snow and ice when going farthest south; and Nebuchadnezzar, looking into the burning fiery furnace, into which he had cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, said: "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the Gods."

A friend of ours received a message from the supernatural, saying, "Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God and the greatest Spirit in the Universe." This friend fell ill, and his wife thought he was dying. A Shining One stood at her bedside and reassured her. When he recovered, he asked how she knew the difference between a vision and a dream, and was told the recipient of a special vision is also given the knowledge that it

is an authentic vision whose purpose will be duly revealed.

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Eight years of strain had brought E. Stanley Jones, author of *The Christ of the Indian Road*, to a state of nervous exhaustion, brain fatigue, collapse and unpreparedness to face the call of interpreting Christ to the national movements sweeping over India. Unless help came from somewhere, he must surrender his missionary career. And while in prayer, not particularly thinking of himself, a Voice seemed to say, "Are you yourself ready for this work to which I have called you?"

"No, Lord, I am done for. I have reached the end of my rope," he answered. And the Voice replied, "If you will turn that over to Me and not worry about it, I will take care of it." And he quickly answered, "Lord, I close the bargain right here." For long afterwards he hardly knew he had a body. He went through the days, working far into the night, and wondered why he should ever go to bed at all, for there was not the slightest trace of tiredness. He seemed possessed by life and peace and rest—by Christ Himself. He had never had such health. He seemed to have tapped new life for body, mind, and spirit, for it was more than a physical touch, and he had done nothing but take it. Christ to him had become life. No wonder *The Christ of the Indian Road* was a best seller.

Schweitzer, living a life of self-sacrifice among the most benighted inhabitants of Africa, has discovered that Christ calls, and at some stage of the pilgrimage we undertake in response, He reveals Himself.

"He was there," said the late F. Herbert Stead, in his book *The Unseen Leadership*, describing how, in time of deep sorrow and perplexity, the instinctive verdict of his consciousness was that he was not alone, but that "One walked with me and fain would comfort me; One Who so walked with His disciples of yore."

And one morning at Oxford he set out along the Iffley Road and came under the trees that leaned over the footway, not far from Magdalen Bridge.

"And then—'O moment one and infinite!' He was there beside me. No vision; nothing visible. No sound; nothing audible. No reminiscence: no phantasm, but Himself, Jesus, once of Nazareth. Unmistakably, overpoweringly, He. . . . When His objective Presence impinges on the human consciousness, when His Transcendent Personality invades and masters a human personality, there is no longer need or question of proof. . . . My whole being was one passionate vibration of awe, wonder, gratitude, love, and adoration. It was as far removed as possible from being in any merely passive state. It took all of me, every power within me, raised to its intensest activity to receive what I could of the Infinite Gift. So I reached the very transport of certitude."

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"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Two persons, known to us, have recently received remarkable leading to show that Hofmann's portraits of "Gethsemane" and the "Rich Young Ruler" were inspired and are almost true-to-life representations, if not inspired as works of art; and one was shown that the Spirit likeness, painted "under Guidance from beyond" by Bertha Valerius, which holds pride of place in a Stockholm church, is also a recognisable portrait, though not accurate in detail.

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Instead of preaching a sermon from the text "And they cast Him out," a text rich in possibilities, the Rev. Charles W. Posnett, the famous missionary, back from Hyderabad, told two stories at Swanwick, in May, 1933, which kept the interest tense and strained.

A low-caste Indian had witnessed to a high-caste Hindu, who came to the compound announcing his decision to serve Jesus Christ. He joined the staff,

and revealed qualities of devotion to his new Master which delighted the missionaries. One day he was entrusted with special work among his own people, who hired some of the pariah class, prepared to do anything for money, to attack and maltreat him.

They knocked him down and continued to ill-use him. The greatest insult that can be offered to a high-caste Hindu is to belabour him with their shoes; and this they did.

After his escape and return to the compound, Mr. Posnett asked him if he had been frightened during the attack. The young Hindu said "No," and gave the reason: while his attackers were maltreating him, the Lord suddenly manifested Himself as He may have appeared when He was being flogged by the Roman soldiers. The young Indian heard Him saying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

The missionary was confident that our Lord really manifested Himself to the convert while he was suffering for the Name.

From the same compound there was sent out another young convert, one of the pariah class, accompanied by his wife and child, to occupy a small shack and preach Christ in the village. Each night for the first three nights they were attacked and pelted with every describable and indescribable form of filth, which plastered the interior and the occupants, including the mother and baby. They declined to report their assailants to the police or to desert their mission outpost, but prayed God to support them and to forgive their enemies.

On the morning of the fourth day, the ring-leader of the attackers was arrested for a robbery in a neighbouring village which had occurred at the time he was leading the attack with excrement on the shack. Though he deserved punishment, he had not committed the crime with which he was charged; but he could not defend himself in the courts, nor could he afford a counsel to defend him and prove his innocence.

To everybody's astonishment, the pariah missionary went over and spoke up for him; he proved his innocence, and obtained his acquittal, though the Judge said afterwards that the accused richly deserved punishment.

After that exhibition of forgiving love, the pariah missionaries became accepted by all the village, low-caste and high-caste alike, and were afterwards often to be seen in their humble abode.

The Lord had not manifested Himself personally, but in this indirect way He had nevertheless answered the prayers of His low-caste Indian servants.

Miss A. Mildred Cable, used so remarkably in the China Inland Mission, told the writer she saw the Lord when she was a girl and regarded that manifestation as a call to future service; and her new book *Something Happened* abundantly proves that she has undertaken it.

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After many stumbling attempts to follow the light, there came to one person still living a manifestation of the Blessed One, enabling him to divine a great mystery. He saw that the ceaseless yearning of sinful humanity, issuing in mortal error, unhappy marriages and the soiled atmosphere of divorce courts, was but a pitifully misguided attempt to enter that bliss foreordained for everyone in the state of mystic union which we call the "Communion of Saints," and which is so little understood.

True wisdom comes when man and woman know that not in beauty of form or colour, not in love-light in lover's eyes or in lover's embrace, can there be found abiding joy, wherever sought, or however often experienced; for these and all other human joys are but ephemeral counterfeits, permissible for a purpose, of the abiding bliss into which we may be drawn in the Kingdom of many mansions, planned before the foundation of the world, over which Christ reigns, the King in His Beauty.

"This mystery is great," says Paul, "but I speak in regard to Christ and the Church." The mystery is deepened to most of us through the divisions of sex, and some of these mystical experiences are unwisely discounted as pathological by those who do not understand; but to those who see the vision, like Sundar Singh, who said, "My Bride is Christ," the rapturous and eternal purpose is clear; and so, too, is the necessity for stressing purity of life and the sanctity of marriage; for though they are but symbols of the eternal and mystic union, a violation of those symbols must immediately produce a weakening of the spiritual vision, seeing that "to be carnally-minded is death."

We Christians miss the true understanding because we are prone to think of the departed as wraiths of the vasty deep, instead of glorified spiritual bodies.

> And uncompounded is their essence pure
> Not tied or manacled with joint or limb.

Their delicately conceived and infinitely more sensitised spiritual bodies, freed from the shackles of earth, are now capable of enjoying the inrush of heavenly glory, for Heaven's ecstasy is more than joy in beholding the beatific vision, and moving therein; it is continuous and ineffable holy rapture, beside which all earthly experiences are heavy and dead, and at the best, the vainest counterfeits.

For a full half-hour this state of ineffable rapture was anticipated on this earth by one to whom the Light had come; he saw into past errors and looked forward down a glorious golden highway, guarded by signposts of white purity, while experiencing a foretaste of paradise that was ecstasy intolerable but for the change he seemed to have undergone; transformed awhile into a vibrant spiritual body, burning like the bush in the wilderness, though not consumed. The secret of the ages became clear from this state of Holy Communion with the Infinite; and the eternal esoteric truth in the Lord's words, "For in Heaven men neither

marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels of God ! "

> And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

" High understanding it is," says Mother Julian of Norwich, " to see and know that God . . . dwelleth in our soul; and a higher understanding it is . . . to know that our soul . . . dwelleth in God's substance. . . . I saw no difference between God and our substance, but as it were all God."

And Mother Julian explains that this earth life of ours, this preliminary to our dwelling in God's substance and God's substance in us in ecstasy, is but as a period of penance. " For He beholdeth us so tenderly that He seeth all our living as penance. Nature's longing . . . is our natural penance—the highest as to my sight."

Or, as Father Woodlock expressed it, " Sin has much to do with the suffering, but suffering can be sublimated and sanctified, and can be the greatest source of the spiritual development of the soul, and can increase that measure of capacity for *God's beatific vision which will be the measure of each one's eternal bliss.*"

> When on my day of life the night is falling,
> And in the winds, from unsunned spaces blown,
> I hear far voices out of darkness calling,
> My feet to paths unknown.
>
> * * * * *
>
> There from the music round about me stealing
> I fain would learn a new and holy song,
> And find at last, beneath Thy Trees of healing,
> The Life for which I long.
>
> *Whittier.*

CHAPTER II THE BRIGHT SHADOW

Thine eye shall see the King in His beauty.
Isaiah.

* * * * *

Like some bright dream, that comes unsought,
When slumbers o'er me roll,
Thine image ever fills my thought,
And charms my ravished soul.
Ray Palmer.

* * * * *

Thou art fairer than the children of men . . . because God hath blessed Thee for ever.—*Psalms.*

DAYS of dullness and irritation.

Drab days and days of sympathy with Jonah: "It is better for me to die than to live."

And then—the Day.

* * * * *

Red-letter days arrive occasionally, rarely; and become a memory. Days of colour and warmth and spun gold, glittering in the sombre calendar of our years. Dream days, opening gloriously in morning's glow, flowing in musical rapture around the arc of noon, sinking with joyous abandon into twilight.

The dream-day trembles, shivers, and breaks with the night. Disillusion has come with the shadows; just another broken cistern:

"E'en as I stooped to drink they fled, and mocked . . ."

* * * * *

Heaven glides into our consciousness and vanishes abruptly. Red-letter days may issue in sombre melancholy. Nevertheless, the memory is ours, for when Heaven comes down our souls to greet, we are for once in step with universal life, walking amid "the solemn hush of Nature newly-born."

Sometimes the Day is spent—no! rapturously lived—in the daily round of shop or office, field or pulpit, by thronging duties pressed, among the busy multitude, beckoned and called, calling and beckoning, and distracted during every passing minute. And all the time moving in altitudes so lofty and rarified that nothing disturbs our inward peace, which passeth the understanding of us all.

Whether we are in the body or out of the body, we can hardly tell, and never think to inquire; for we are in step with our spirits, and the marching stars, the rhythms of mighty universes, in tune with the Infinite Spirit of God. Tasks thought impossible, at which we have timidly recoiled, are now unconsidered, taken in a stride, not even glanced back upon over a hurrying shoulder. We were called—yea, challenged—and divinely empowered to respond; and so in the dream-day's forward thrust we became strong and did exploits.

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An old friend, the Rev. Elias Jenkins, invited the writer to Bideford to conduct a week's services. It was a new experience, and the week sped by; there were many meetings and a good deal of personal work with inquirers. So far as we remember, that busy Sunday of January 8th, 1933, was spiritually unclouded.

The day was crowded with activities; six addresses had to be given and, partly because of the busy week that had passed, none had been prepared.

Immediately after breakfast, personal witness began; two addresses followed during church service in the morning; a caller's spiritual difficulties occupied the time intervening between service and lunch—a fruitful

talk, for he joined the evening chorus of witness. There followed a busy afternoon, a busier evening, witnessings continuing unabated till midnight.

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He came that morning.

The congregation were singing in the High Street Church at Bideford, and we were in the pulpit. The church is large, and there is a fine window over the entrance lobby away at the far end. Why this unaccountable moisture in our eyes, on our cheeks, attracting our attention?

Unquestionably He was there; about two-thirds down the church; above the congregation; and moving, moving towards the light.

Unutterable beauty! No halo, the noble head upraised in profile, slightly turning to the window. Incomparable richness of colour and form. Not in art gallery, or in modern ballroom, has such exquisite beauty of form or colour ravished the beholder's gaze. Afterwards we read for the first time that "legendary" description, said to have come from a Roman Pro-Consul, and contained in the Vatican Library; which Sir Edwin Arnold changed to great poetry, reprinted in the opening pages of this book; and there was little difference in what we saw and what we read, though there was nothing terrible in Him.

"His fair hair is long, flowing down to the ears and thence to His shoulders. It is slightly crisped and curled, parted in the middle and falling on either side as is the custom of a Nazarene. His cheeks are somewhat rosy, the nose and mouth are well-shaped, the beard is thick and the colour of a ripe hazel nut; it is short and parted in the middle.

"His look reveals both wisdom and candour. His blue eyes at times flash with sudden fire.

"This man, usually so gentle in conversation, becomes terrible when He reprimands; but even at such times there seems to emanate from His Person a safe

serenity. . . . His voice is grave, reserved, and modest. He is as handsome as a man can be. He is called Jesus, the Son of Mary."

We could not see the colour of his eyes, but

> Wine-colour shone His hair
> Glittering and waved—an aureole folded down.

There was crimson, shading to blue and deepening into purple, showing in the mantle about His shoulders.

He may have been there for five minutes, or even ten; we cannot say. He stayed on, moving slowly towards the light. And presently He was not there.

So far as we know, none other saw Him that morning; for He was not seen with eyes; nor was He imagined; and even if He were an objectivisation from the subconscious, it was because He was there too. We had never knowingly dwelt on the personal appearance of the Lord until the Manifestation.

If His coming had been imagined, a far more adequate description would now be possible; but the imagination is incapable of reproducing what passed before our interior eye, that eye of the Spirit, with which we shall see eternally.

Beholding, it was as though we saw through rain-washed glass, yet the vision was distinct; we read afterwards St. Teresa's dictum that a manifestation is conditioned in degree by spiritual progress.

What mattered afterwards whether our address was clearly-thought-out? in a state of exaltation, words flowed easily from a tongue given sudden release, and a brain miraculously quickened and clarified.

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That evening, in another pulpit, in the same town, we asked, " Shall we see Him again? "

The service had just begun.

And He returned.

In the morning, only His head and shoulders were visible showing entrancingly beautiful through one's

rain-shadowed vision. His full Figure came clear in the evening, again in the same position—two-thirds down the church and above the congregation; a Figure of majesty and deep solemnity; a tall Figure, but kneeling.

In the morning His head seemed small, though exquisitely proportioned; in the evening He was looking towards the pulpit, full-face, a patrician face, pale, suffering, almost an oval, with eyes deep-set and dignity indescribable. The morning's manifestation suggested Hofmann's portrait of "Gethsemane," though reposefully beautiful, and with no trace of agony; and not very dissimilar from the "spirit drawing" in Stockholm. But the evening manifestation was of One motionless, and of far greater regality than is suggested by either portrait.

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He wore a robe, and it was white underneath, a continuation of a pallid face that was almost haggard, praying for the world. And the robe covering the tall Figure shaded into blue and purple, and then into the neutral blackness of the background.

From first to last He made no movement, and presently He vanished. He had been among us and then He was not. Again human eyes did not behold Him; nor was He seen by the imagination; for the imagination cannot recall the majestic picture of that kneeling, motionless Figure, commanding by example.

But He brought encouragement for the evening address; and He supplemented the one that followed. And when the speaker's thoughts were exhausted, not knowing what next to say, he continued speaking, and for the first time experienced the joy of speaking in the Spirit; speaking of One he had just *seen*—that Great White Figure Who has gone striding triumphantly down the ages, and to-day still goes forth, conquering and to conquer.

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Why that Manifestation to a layman, who had

strayed so far away, enabling him, of all undeserving persons, to be " in the Spirit on the Lord's day " ?

Time will supply the true answer.

Perhaps it was to reinforce his faith, and thereby to encourage others with the confident declaration :

ONE THING I KNOW.

THE END