

There are two mothers whose sons are starting for the front to-day, close friends, and both alike devout and loving and full of faith. Both have been praying fervently that their boys may return safely. In the prayer of one there is a serene certainty. She will pray on, till the Evil Thing is over; and all the time she *knows* she will see him again safe and sound. In the other prayer there is from the first the note of resignation. The mother has given her son to her country's need, and she knows that very many will not only offer but lay down life for what is dearer than life—why should her boy be spared when another mother is heart-broken? So in her unceasing prayer there is the burden, 'Father, if it be possible, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done!' What shall we say when the first woman's son comes home unhurt, only to tell how his friend charged him with dying messages of love to his mother? Was there less faith in one prayer than the other? Was the first prayer superfluous and the other unheard on high? Nay, was not the one an unseen agency in God's hand which did its part in keeping that soldier safe from harm? A thousand fell at his side, but it came not near him, for Prayer kept shot and shell away. And as to the other prayer, was it not answered from the first with 'power made perfect in weakness'? We ask wistfully why one was taken and the other left. Ah, but we do not know what ordained tasks were waiting, one here, another There. The prayer that seemingly was not answered will bring the stricken mother grace for her need, and if not vision, most certainly faith, that somewhere her boy is already beginning a more important duty than she dreamed for him to do on earth. Such, I take it, is 'inspired supplication.' How does it work in that faithful community that James portrays? One member is sick,

and there come to him at his call other members, ripe in experience of the things of God. They use an ordinary remedy, praying for blessing on its use; and they pray for him, when he has told them what is on his mind, as they are ready to tell him what is on theirs. In gracious fellowship they seek the Lord together, and a conviction steals into their minds that God still has need of His servant to serve Him here. Who sent it? He who can use both the oil and the prayer to cure the body He made, and accounts the prayer more potent than the oil, or even than our whole modern pharmacopœia.<sup>1</sup>

James does not here contemplate the case where these good men will pray, and pray believingly, but physical 'saving' will *not* follow. But was it not he who told us that our words should always be, 'If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that'? We may be sure he never dreamed that those 'elders' would always have the inspired conviction that their brother would recover. One recalls that picture, familiar to every Methodist, of the dying Wesley in the little room in City Road, with his preachers around him. Some are weeping; all, we may be sure, are praying. Were they wanting in faith if they hardly thought of asking that God would add to those wonderfully fruitful eighty-eight years? Did not faith rather bring to them the message that God would take away their master from their head that day? The prayer of faith pleaded for grace to do God's work without him. And the experience of a century and a quarter tells us that it was answered.

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<sup>1</sup> May I note here that I am trying to interpret an amazing personal experience of Mr. C. T. Studd's in the heart of Africa, as told us by himself at the W.M.M.S. meeting in Manchester this March?

## Entre Nous.

### Illustrations from the War.

The best series of illustrations from the War have been sent by the Rev. J. Allen, Moresby Rectory, Whitehaven. Other ten who sent excellent collections have been communicated with privately. The number of fine illustrations available has been a surprise. It is a surprise also that so many of them directly illustrate texts of Scripture.

The Editor is willing to make the same offer again—that is to say, a set of the *Great Texts of the Bible* (twenty volumes), or their equivalent in other books chosen from Messrs. T. & T. Clark's catalogue—for the best series of illustrations of the Bible on religious and ethical topics from incidents connected with the War. He offers also a set of the *Greater Men and Women of the Bible* (six

volumes)—or their equivalent as before—for the second best series. The texts or topics illustrated should be given, and the source of the illustration, together with the date.

#### An Anthology.

An attractive little anthology of prose and verse has been added to Messrs. Allen & Unwin's 'Sesame Library' under the title of *Life's Pilgrimage* (1s. net). The selections have been made by Edwin H. Eland. Here is a quotation from Mary Cholmondeley :

#### THE ETERNAL THINGS.

Hope, and Love, and Enthusiasm never die.  
We think in youth that we bury them in the graveyards of our hearts, but the grass never yet grew over them. How then can life be sad, when they walk beside us always in the growing light towards the Perfect Day?

#### Conrad Aiken.

Mr. Conrad Aiken's poetry recalls the poetry of John Masefield, and he knows it. But he claims that before he ever heard of Masefield he was experimenting with narrative poems of modern daily life. The volume which he has published contains eleven poems, all narrative, all of modern daily life, and all reminiscent somewhat of Masefield. But there is no slavish imitation. Mr. Aiken is a true poet. The poems are too long for quotation. Here are a few lines out of one. The title of the book is *Earth Triumphant* (Macmillan ; 5s. 6d. net).

Up from the valley's dark, two miles below,  
The light wind brought a fading sound of bells,  
The church clock struck the hour, sweet and slow,  
Some notes they missed, some came with the wind's swells ;  
The wind came soft, sweet with the soft night smells,  
Meadows and pines, and dew on new-mown grass ;  
So time passes, so even earth must pass.

The hymns *O Love that wilt not let me go* and *I think when I read that sweet story of old* have been separately printed and published, adorned happily with pictures and decorations (Abingdon Press ; 25 cents net).

#### R. A. Cumine.

The Rev. R. A. Cumine has put his conception of the gospel into poetry. It is a portrait of *The Messiah* (Century Press ; 3s. 6d. net), but it is the Messiah as interpreted by a theologian and with an unmistakable design. The design is to preach the gospel. And does not George Herbert tell us—

A verse may find him who a sermon flies,  
And turn delight into a sacrifice?

Let us quote a few lines from Mr. Cumine's poem :

And Jesus lifting up His eyes to heaven  
Gave thanks unto the Father, that the Jews  
Might hear Him and believe ; and standing there  
Cried with a sudden loud and startling cry :  
Lazarus, come forth ! And sleeping Lazarus  
heard,  
And straightway from the height or from the  
deep

Returned obedient ; and that awful shape  
Crept out into the sunshine from the tomb.  
Some shrieked and hid their faces ; many stood  
Like men that have been frozen into stone  
Not knowing yet if this were life indeed,  
Or some terrific jugglery with death.  
None moved to touch him until Jesus said :  
Loose him, and let him go ! Then all at once  
Broke forth the mighty tumult of their joy.

#### The Great Text Commentary.

The best illustration this month has been found by the Rev. J. B. Maclean, Huntingdon, Quebec.

Illustrations for the Great Text for June must be received by the 20th of March. The text is Ph 2<sup>9-11</sup>.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful. More than one illustration may be sent by one person for the same text. Illustrations to be sent to the Editor, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.

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