THE TWO GREAT NECESSITIES.

BY THE EDITOR.

There are two great "must be" in the third chapter of John, which we do well seriously to consider—a divine and a human must be. Jesus did not say to us: "Ye must be lifted up on the cross." He did not say: "We must be born again:" thus purposely excluding himself from the company of those who needed regeneration; and in the same discourse he said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," thus purposely excluding us from the great transaction of the cross. Christ could not from the nature of the case, be included in our "must be;" we could not be included in his "must be." On the other hand, he could not be excused from his "must be;" we could not be excused from ours.

The Divine Necessity. "The Son of Man must be lifted up." Did not Jesus Christ choose to die—freely? Voluntarily choose to give his life a ransom for many? How then can it be said that he must die? Because with a divine being, freedom and necessity are entirely compatible. Even God, who is the author of law, is under law; I say it reverently. He made the commandment, "Thou shalt not lie," and he is under that commandment, for we are told that "God cannot lie." Thus authority and obedience belong to the same Almighty Being. So Christ was absolutely free with respect to his life. "I have power to lay down my life," he says, and I have power to take it again; no man taketh it from me." But he adds: "This commandment I have received of my Father." It was the necessity of filial obedience, then, first of all, which he was under. God speaking from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" and Christ looking up to heaven said: "I do always those things which please thee." Thus the divine Father and the divine Son are perfectly agreed upon this point—the faultless obedience of Jesus Christ. The Son of God could die, but he could not disobey; he could surrender his life, but he could not surrender his loyalty. As the needle is free to move upon its pivot, in response to the slightest influence, and yet, however swayed or deflected, always turns loyally to the pole, so Christ's will, while absolutely free, turned irresistibly to the Father's commandment. The "may be" of choice surrendered to the "must be" of authority; the liberty of will yielded to the loyalty of love. Christ could not turn from the cross when his Father called him to the cross. He must be lifted up for the sins of the world.

Consider what this means. Looking to God what do I hear? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life." Excess of love conquered by excess of pity; the yearnings of a Father's heart overcome by a Father's compassion! God so pitied this poor world that he poured out the very "heart of his heart," and flung it among the rabble of Calvary, to be trampled on and crushed by sacrilegious feet, that thereby he might win back a lost race to himself. And looking to Christ what do I hear? "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it can be accomplished." The hunger of compassion absolutely craving the sharpness of the cross; love embracing the crucifixion as a mother embraces her infant child! Truly "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us."

And the necessity of law was behind this necessity of love. It is written in the Scriptures, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins;" and I know not but that this law is just as inexorable as the law of mathematics, that two and two make four. It is a great mystery I confess; and I do not pretend
THE TWO GREAT NECESSITIES.

BY THE EDITOR.

There are two great "must be" in the third chapter of John, which we do well seriously to consider—a divine and a human must be. Jesus did not say to us: "Ye must be lifted up on the cross." He did not say: "We must be born again:" thus purposely excluding himself from the company of those who needed regeneration; and in the same discourse he said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," thus purposely excluding us from the great transaction of the cross. Christ could not from the nature of the case, be included in our "must be;" we could not be included in his "must be." On the other hand, he could not be excused from his "must be;" we could not be excused from ours.

The Divine Necessity. "The Son of Man must be lifted up." Did not Jesus Christ choose to die—freely? Voluntarily choose to give his life a ransom for many? How then can it be said that he must die? Because with a divine being, freedom and necessity are entirely compatible. Even God, who is the author of law, is under law; I say it reverently. He made the commandment, "Thou shalt not lie," and he is under that commandment, for we are told that "God cannot lie." Thus authority and obedience belong to the same Almighty Being. So Christ was absolutely free with respect to his life. "I have power to lay down my life," he says, and I have power to take it again; no man taketh it from me." But he adds: "This commandment I have received of my Father." It was the necessity of filial obedience, then, first of all, which he was under. God speaking from heaven said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and Christ looking up to heaven said: "I do always those things which please thee." Thus the divine Father and the divine Son are perfectly agreed upon this point—the faultless obedience of Jesus Christ. The Son of God could die, but he could not disobey; he could surrender his life, but he could not surrender his loyalty. As the needle is free to move upon its pivot, in response to the slightest influence, and yet, however swayed or deflected, always turns*loyally to the pole, so Christ's will, while absolutely free, turned irresistibly to the Father's commandment. The "may be" of choice surrendered to the "must be" of authority; the liberty of will yielded to the loyalty of love. Christ could not turn from the cross when his Father called him to the cross. He must be lifted up for the sins of the world.

Consider what this means. Looking to God what do I hear? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life." Excess of love conquered by excess of pity; the yearnings of a Father's heart overcome by a Father's compassion! God so pitied this poor world that he poured out the very "heart of his heart," and flung it among the rabble of Calvary, to be trampled on and crushed by sacrilegious feet, that thereby he might win back a lost race to himself. And looking to Christ what do I hear? "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened till it can be accomplished." The hunger of compassion absolutely craving the sharpness of the cross; love embracing the crucifixion as a mother embraces her infant child! Truly "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners, Christ died for us."

And the necessity of law was behind this necessity of love. It is written in the Scriptures, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins;" and I know not but that this law is just as inexorable as the law of mathematics, that two and two make four. It is a great mystery I confess; and I do not pretend
The Watchword.

Present life between the natural man and the spiritual man. No process of refinement or clarification can ever turn oil into water. No enrichment or improvement can ever turn water into oil. The two do not mix or coalesce; water remains water, oil remains oil to the end. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God," said Nicodemus to Christ. "A teacher," answers Jesus, "it is not teaching that is needed. Think you that human nature can be cultured and improved to such a point that one shall be qualified for heaven? Nay, that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again." God's life must be communicated to you before you can be fitted for God's presence. Only "that which is born of Spirit is Spirit." Does this seem like a harsh accusation of human nature? But it is the Lord who makes it, not I. Hear what Christ says in the 6th of John: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." "Lord, that is very severe." My morality and my uprightness: my charity and my benevolence; my self-denial and humility—all profiteth nothing? Not as a ground of acceptance with God? American money will not pass current in England, however good it may be in this country, because it is not the coin of the realm. "Holiness, without which no man can see the Lord," says the Scripture. This is the currency of heaven, and holiness is something of God; it is the gold of his nature, it bears the image and superscription of his person. You must have holiness in order to see God, which is but saying, you must have the divine life implanted within you. "Ye must" is Christ's own word. There is but one way of entering the kingdom of God, and that is God's way; and there is only one life which can live in the kingdom of God, and that is God's life.

Let me illustrate this from nature. There are two worlds on this globe of ours, each with its own kind of inhabitants. There is the world of air and the world of water. Can the inhabitants of one of these worlds pass to the other? Take a man or beast from the world of air and put him into the world of water and death by drowning ensues at once. Take a fish from the world of water and introduce it into the world of air, and it dies immediately of suffocation. Now these two worlds are not more widely separated from one another than the natural world, which we call earth, and the spiritual world, which we call heaven. Put an unregenerated man into heaven and he could not live there, because he could not breathe the air of heaven; for he has not the organs to inhale the atmosphere which is the very life of the very God. Therefore one must be born again in order to see the kingdom of God.

To bring the truth down to actual experience: Do you know why it is that a thoroughly worldly man is ill at ease and wretched when introduced into a fervent and spiritual prayer-meeting? Because he has not the organs of faith and love and hope with which to breathe the atmosphere of the prayer-meeting. He is a fish out of water, and is miserable. Do you know why a thoroughly consecrated Christian is unhappy in a ball-room or a card-party? Because he is out of his element. As the saying is among the scientific men:—everything must be adapted to its environment. Therefore Christ's great demand is reasonable enough. You must be born again in order to be fitted for the heavenly country. If you delight supremely in the pleasures and vanities of the world, how can you be happy in heaven were you transplanted thither? If your highest joy is the service of Christ, how can you be happy in the vanities of this world? Here you have the test whether you would be ready for heaven if called today.

Now how can this new birth be attained? Hear Jesus' words which immediately follow this announcement of the doctrine of the new birth. "No man hath ascended
into heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." What is this but saying that the stream of life can rise no higher than its source? Christ brought the life of heaven down to us, that by it we might be able to attain to heaven. What a strange sight it is on this earth where everything tends to fall downward, to see a balloon rising upward. Like a war-horse eager for the fray, it sways and pulls at the ropes which fasten it till suddenly, being released, it bounds away to the clouds, leaving the earth in the far distance behind. What gives it this buoyancy? Some of the higher and lighter atmosphere of the heavens has been caught and imprisoned in it, and now it simply seeks its own. Jesus Christ came down from heaven, saying as he arrived: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "He that believeth on me hath eternal life," he says. This is regeneration: the life of God communicated to men. Now we have that within us which being derived from God tends to God. Now we can ascend up to heaven because we have within us that which came down from heaven. And see how simple is the requirement on our part. We are not told that we must accomplish the new birth for ourselves. That were impossible. New birth is new creation, and only God can accomplish that. As well think of creating sun or moon or stars, as to create in ourselves a new heart. Here we are absolutely helpless. But the requirement on our part is faith. "Believe on the Son of God and you shall have life."

And now, my hearer, let me press home the question upon your heart: "Have you been born again?" If not, I have no promise of heaven within my reach for you. No person since Adam, ever came into this world by any other way than by the gate of natural birth. The lowly door of weak and helpless infancy is the only door by which a human being ever entered this life. And you do not complain of that; for it is a natural and universal law. Well, just as natural and universal is the law that through the new birth we must enter the new life, the life of heaven. Now is the time for this great change. Now is the day for this great transaction. To you I appeal, O men and women, this morning. Receive Christ. For it is written, that "as many as receive him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them which believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

THE DAY OF THE LORD.

BY PASTOR F. E. MARSH, SUNDERLAND.

The day of the Lord, as I understand it, begins when Christ comes with his people, and ends when he will deliver up the kingdom to his Father; when the prayer that has been so often prayed—"Thy kingdom come," will be answered.

There are four places in the New Testament where the day of the Lord is specially spoken of, but there are abundant references to the same period in the Old Testament. Christ points on to this time in his answer to the questions of his disciples, as recorded in Matt. 24 and 25. The instances where the specific words, "The day of the Lord," occur, or their equivalent, are 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Thess. 2:3 (R.V.); 2 Peter 3:10; and Rev. 1:10. In the first Scripture the Apostle reminds us that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, as a thief in the night; in the second, the saints are reminded that there are certain things that must take place before the day begins, such as the manifestation of the antichrist, but they are not to confuse that day with the coming of Christ for his people; the third, Scripture points out that there will be great physical changes; and the last gives us John being carried on "in the Spirit" to the time specified as the "Lord's day," where we